

Reasons to remember:
**public memorials to
lived experiences of loss
in Australia, 1985-2015**

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Doctor of Philosophy
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Certificate of authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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List of abbreviations

AAL	Aboriginal Advancement League
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ALAS	Adoption Loss Adult Support group
AFTER	Art From The Extended Region
APY Lands	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
	‘An Gorta Mor’ is ‘ <i>An Leacht cuimhneachain Astralach I gcomoradh an Ghorta Mhoir I nEirinn</i> ’ or the ‘Australian monument to the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852)’
ASeTTS	Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors
ABS	The Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACPH	Australian Centre for Public History
HRC	Australian Human Rights Commission (formerly HREOC)
ASSI	Australian South Sea Islanders
AIATSIS	Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AVP	The gay and lesbian Anti-Violence Project
BRG	Blackwood Reconciliation Group
BTH	Bringing Them Home Committee (WA)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CLAN	Care Leavers Australia Network
CBERS	Catholic Brothers Ex-Residents and Student Services Network
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DCP	Department for Child Protection
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
EOI	Expressions of Interest
FACT	Forgotten Australians Coming Together

HIV-AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome is a disease transmitted in blood and sexual fluids. It has had a great impact on society, both as an illness and a source of discrimination.
HREOC	Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission
MACC	Marrickville Aboriginal Consultative Committee
MAANZ	Mosaic Association of Australia and New Zealand
PFFP	Parramatta Female Factory Precinct
PAHSMA	Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAV	Regional Arts Victoria
RQI	Reconciliation Queensland Inc.
SCARC	Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee
TRC	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SCAAB	Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau
UAM	United Aborigines Mission
UAICC	Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
UN	The United Nations
VANISH	Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help
VBRRA	Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWA	University of Western Australia
VVM	Vietnam Veterans Memorial
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Abstract

This dissertation is a study of public memorials that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma. The study is focussed on the Australian context but draws links between this and the broader transnational field of memory work related to loss and trauma. I argue that such memorials need to be considered as a distinct and new genre of memorialisation which has come into being through a cultural shift that privileges experience. They are influenced by post-war discourses of trauma, human rights and transitional justice. The dissertation traces a timeline of the emergence of these public memorials in the public sphere in Australia since the mid 1980s, first as community art projects and later as formal memorial projects driven by grassroots groups. Since the mid 2000s, governments at all levels have begun to support or initiate the creation of memorials to lived experiences of loss.

My thesis explores four different ways memorials are expected to do cultural 'work' in the present. First, public memorials are used by marginalised counter-publics to claim a space in the national story. Second, they are used to create spaces where survivors of human rights abuses can have their loss acknowledged and be given space to grieve. Third, they are used as acts of witnessing, to speak back into the dominant public sphere. Finally, and more recently, memorials have been created by governments as part of the widespread adoption of transitional justice mechanisms. Such memorials are seen as acts of symbolic reparation and are used to respond to claims of past human rights abuse on the part of the state. Seven case studies give an in-depth focus on particular memorial projects in relation to the theme explored in the preceding chapter.

This research project grew out of the realisation that a number of marginalised groups within Australian society were working towards or considering the value, for them, of a public memorial that would commemorate a difficult part of their shared history. I have sought to develop a research project that values the experience of those who have a direct involvement in the painful events commemorated, as well as exploring the meanings created by the memorial objects on their own terms. This work contributes to the growing body of literature on memory work in settler-colonial and transitional justice settings.

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, a new type of memorial has begun to appear in the public spaces of Western cities. Like traditional memorials, these are public symbolic objects that bring to mind past events. However, rather than mourning the dead, these new memorials commemorate experiences of pain, loss and trauma that people have lived through. In Australia, public memorials to lived experience emerged in the 1980s as community art projects, and a small number of these were later adopted and given more formal status by local governments. From the late 1990s, such projects took on a more self-consciously commemorative function, with grassroots groups working with government in a variety of ways. Since the mid 2000s, governments around the world have increasingly embraced memorials as a means of offering symbolic reparation for actions of the past now seen as harmful. Formal memorial projects that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma have now emerged as a mainstream practice.

This dissertation is a study of public memorials that acknowledge lived experiences of loss and trauma as an emerging genre of commemoration. It aims to trace a history of their emergence in Australia over three decades, and considers the kinds of cultural ‘work’ such memorials have been expected to do. While this study has a particular geographical focus, it is located within the broader transnational field of memory studies, and considers the Australian emergence of non-death memorials within that broader context. This thesis argues that public memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma need to be considered as a distinct new genre of memorial that is indicative of a broad shift in the kinds of knowledge that can be remembered publicly. Traditionally, monuments were used to celebrate individuals or groups who were seen as having made a particular contribution to society; memorials had a strong connection to funerary rites, which were used to mourn those who died. In contrast, these non-death memorials focus primarily on the experiences of those who have lived through particular events, suggesting a fundamental shift in the cultural meaning of memorials. Such new-genre memorials are influenced by international discourses of trauma, human rights and transitional justice.

Placing this study in the field of memorial research

Memorials, argues Dacia Viejo-Rose, exist on a ‘constantly shifting threshold’ between ‘history and memory, affect and identity, between past, present and future’ (Viejo-Rose 2011, p. 466). Similarly, memorial research operates at an interdisciplinary crossroads. There has been a prolific outpouring of research on memorials since the 1990s by scholars working across a wide range of disciplines

including history, memory studies, cultural geography, post-colonial studies, Holocaust studies, tourism, and architecture, among others. This increase in study has partly been driven by a corresponding increase in public commemorations. It could also be driven by a mistaken idea that public memorials offer a contained 'site of memory' — to use a term taken from Pierre Nora's seminal study of French 'lieu de mémoire' (1996). In my view, the methodological challenges of memorial study are substantial, regardless of the disciplinary approach used to study them. Within memory studies, many researchers have been influenced by Nora. Unfortunately, his conceptual framework has the drawback of being heavily Eurocentric (as one might expect from a study focused on France) and influenced by a fin-de-siècle pessimism common in Eurocentric academic writing at the time. The popularity of Nora's work has led to a generalised acceptance of an idealised pre-modern past where memory was everywhere and organic, and did not need to be fixed to objects. Conversely, this has led to an underlying suspicion of memorials, or indeed any form of material remembrance, which is based on assumptions about the scarcity of memory. Nora's framework suggests that the investment of memory in objects somehow robs the world of 'organic' memory. Nora sees what he terms the 'historical transformation of memory' as being closely connected to the rise of psychology as a discourse (1996, p. 11).

Memorial research is heavily influenced by psychoanalytic theory and particularly by trauma discourse. It is also deeply uneasy about the ways memorials are connected with the traditionally private realm of feelings or emotion — as in Erika Doss's terms, 'archives of public affect' (2010, p. 13). This sense that the rise of therapeutic culture is connected to the 'cultural decline' of late modernity is certainly not limited to memorial scholarship. For example, it has been tracked by sociologist Katie Wright, who points out that such worries are usually influenced by uneasiness about the way therapeutic culture undermines any attempt to maintain a strong division between the public and private sphere. As Wright points out, therapeutic culture has played a key role in breaking down the boundaries between private and public life and 'lifting the lid on pain' (Wright 2008, p. 333). It is largely as a result of the dissolution of boundaries between public and private spheres that most of the stories commemorated through memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma have been able to be made public.

Holocaust memorialisation has had a significant impact on the ways memorial and memory studies have evolved in the postwar period — there is a strand of memorial literature that is closely connected with Holocaust studies. James E. Young's important transnational study (1993) adopts a case study approach I have drawn on for this research project. Such a methodology takes into consideration

the 'chronopolitics' (Gluck 2007) of memorialisation in different places. Using Holocaust memorials as his focus, Young explores the ways various commemorative forms, particularly public memorials, 'collect' memories together in different ways depending on their spatial and sociocultural context. Young's work also outlines some of the struggles that occur when one version of the past is remembered to the exclusion of another. Within Holocaust literature the idea of the scarcity of memory emerges again, but in a different way. The Holocaust has been central to the development of the concepts of genocide and trauma, and yet, for some people it is a singular historical event that should not be compared with other mass atrocities (Rothberg 2010, p. 8). Michael Rothberg argues that attempts to create hierarchies of atrocity create a competitive approach to memory that he describes as 'a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources' (2010, p. 3). In contrast, his *Multidirectional memory* considers the ways the discourse of the Holocaust, as a specifically Jewish trauma, emerged in the context of a time of intense decolonisation. Where Annette Wieviorka traces a genealogy from the Eichmann trial in Israel in 1961 to the development of what she terms the 'era of the witness' in post-conflict 'truth' commissions (Wieviorka 2006), Rothberg contextualises the trial within an era of post-colonial struggle, particularly focusing on France and Algeria. Rothberg argues that the post-colonial era created a space for reconsideration of the Holocaust as a kind of end point of colonial logic, while memory of the Holocaust reframed how certain parts of French society understood their involvement in the conflict with Algiers. Thus the development of certain memory spaces opens up opportunities for others. Rothberg's framework suggests that instead of seeing commemorative projects as competing for attention, it is possible to consider memory work more generously as 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing' (Rothberg 2010, p. 3).

One more theoretical thread is important in situating this thesis within the literature: the field of transitional justice. In the last few decades, memorials have come to be widely used in post-conflict societies as mechanisms of symbolic reparation within broader transitional justice processes such as redress schemes and official apologies. The memorials discussed in this dissertation should be considered within the field of transitional justice memorial work. This is an emerging area of study addressed in a recent volume edited by Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Stefanie Schafer (2014) who identify a division in memorial research which means it either analyses a memorial's physicality (form and aesthetics) or political function, but rarely both. This dissertation aims to address that divide by considering both the *form* and the *process* of memorialisation. In doing so, I adopt a methodology that allows for a critique of the aesthetics and spatial context of the memorial object

alongside a 'biography' of the process by which the memorial came into being. While memorials as symbolic reparation are usually created through bureaucratized state processes, they are often produced in response to grassroots acts of what Macarena Gómez-Barris has called 'witness citizenship': 'forms of cultural, social and political engagement that share an imagination about a traumatic past in order to activate and promote usually collective solidarity' (2010, p. 31). I discuss these two distinct types of cultural work, and their interactions, in Chapters 6 and 7.

Australian memorial literature

As a study focused on Australian memorials, this thesis is indebted to three important Australian studies. The earliest of these is a survey of 'unusual' monuments and memorials conducted by Chilla Bulbeck in the 1980s. 'Unusual', in the Australian context, meant memorials that were not about overseas wars. Bulbeck's research considers the ways the memorialisation of 'ordinary' people differs from more traditional forms that commemorate 'great' leaders and explorers (Bulbeck 1991). Bulbeck's study was conducted in the years leading up to Australia's 1988 bicentenary celebrations. This was a national celebration that marked, not 200 years of the nation of Australia, but the anniversary of the landing of the 'first fleet' of British convict ships sent to the colony of New South Wales (NSW). The bicentenary year is significant as a historical milestone for a number of reasons. In the lead up to the event, funding was made available for a range of nationalistic projects. The large-scale official celebrations drew attention to the ongoing tensions of settler-colonisation in Australia, and the day was marked as a day of mourning by Aboriginal peoples — with a significant minority of non-Aboriginal Australians choosing to attend public events in solidarity with them. The bicentenary also triggered new historical research and memory work, as well as cultural policy shifts. As Paula Hamilton and Kate Darian-Smith reflected in their 2013 survey of Australian memory studies, the public commemoration of 1988 'triggered public discussion about the political legacies of the past'. In their case, this led to the publication of *Memory and history in 20th century Australia* (Darian-Smith & Hamilton 1994), an influential milestone in Australian memory discourse.

Since the mid 1990s, much Australian memory work has focused on war memory (Darian-Smith & Hamilton 2013). In the late 2000s, Ken Inglis published an in-depth survey of Australia's war memorials (Inglis 2008). While war memorials are not the focus of my research, Inglis offers an important insight into the development of themes of 'service' and 'sacrifice' through war memorialisation; themes which also emerge in Bulbeck's work on settler-colonial memorials.

Inglis makes the crucial point that some of Australia's earliest war memorials (from the Boer War and World War I) acknowledged those who served in the war, as well as those who died.

Another thread of Australian memory work since the 1990s addresses the nation's settler-colonial history (Hamilton & Darian-Smith 2013). This thesis can be seen to be located within that body of work. It builds on the Australian Centre for Public History (ACPH) Places of the Heart research project, which was funded by the Australian Research Council and led by Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton. That research produced an online catalogue of Australia's civic memorials from the 1960s up to 2008 (ACPH 2011). The study categorised memorials by the topic according to the type of event they commemorated, and identified a small group of memorials that were commemorations of 'violation' (Ashton, Hamilton & Searby 2012, p. 6). My research project has expanded on the idea of violation, seeing it as one aspect of experiences that can be traumatic, and which involve suffering and loss. I argue that memorials that acknowledge lived experiences, rather than death, are not just a new category but should be considered as a separate genre of memorialisation. Importantly, memorials to lived experience are almost always about collective, rather than individual, experiences. Indeed, on the rare occasions that individual experiences of loss or trauma are commemorated, these are made to stand in for the experience of a broader group.

Since the Places of the Heart research concluded in early 2008, the Australia Government has issued three official apologies to people who suffered loss and trauma because of official policies of the past: the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations (Aboriginal peoples removed from their families); the 2009 Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants (children who spent time in state care during the 20th century and unaccompanied minors sent to Australia under Commonwealth migration schemes); and the 2013 Apology for Forced Adoptions (relating to children who were removed, by force or coercion, from unmarried mothers up to the 1970s). Along with this acknowledgment — and in an international context in which apology and reconciliation¹ processes are increasingly privileged (Hamilton 2003) — public commemorations of such painful experiences have increased. This includes the construction of official memorial sites. The rapid increase in such memorials in the less-than-a-decade since the Places of the Heart study concluded, points to the fact that Australia's

¹ In Australia, the word reconciliation has a specific meaning in relation to a process of building positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens. I will use the word with a capital R when talking about the specific processes of Reconciliation between First and Second peoples in Australia, and with a small r for more general use.

early 21st century ‘memorial mania’ (Doss 2010) is closely tied to its adoption of transitional justice mechanisms and rhetoric.

Australia’s chronopolitics of memory

Young’s *Textures of memory* (1993) shows how memorialisation changes depending on socio-geographical context. Carol Gluck uses the term ‘chronopolitics’ to describe the interaction of the historical and political aspects of the ways global phenomena are addressed in particular ways in particular places (Gluck 2007). In Australia, memorials that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma are part of that country’s chronopolitics of memory in the latter years of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century. The strong connection between the emergence of memorials to lived experiences and the adoption of a transitional justice approach to the past suggests that this is a chronopolitics of (post)settler-colonialism. This is an easy connection to make for memorials that tell the stories of Aboriginal children removed from their families because of policies of assimilation. It is a more challenging claim to make for memorials that commemorate the institutionalisation of children in ‘care’ institutions, postwar migration, or even bushfires. Adding to the complexity of this argument is the fact that not all of the memorials considered in this thesis commemorate events that are connected only to Australia. Experiences of war and of migration, as well as the experience of some people removed from their families, have transnational elements. Nonetheless, these stories are all imagined as ‘Australian’ stories. A special Australian-themed edition of the journal *Memory Studies* published in 2013 was dominated by papers exploring the idea of place. This, as its editors Rosanne Kennedy and Susannah Radstone suggest, is no coincidence. Situated as Australia is, physically separate from other countries and away from the centres of academic power in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (US), Australian writers do indeed know that place matters. However, we are not always completely aware of the ways our understanding of place is constructed.

In the 1991 edition of *Imagined communities*, Benedict Anderson expands on the spatial nature of the development of nationalism. In ‘Census, Map, Museum’ he talks about the ‘grammar’ in which colonial state policies were deployed: the nation was imagined through the logic of the map, and its citizens understood through the categories of the census; the past was filled in by the museumising impulse of Western discourses of archaeology and history (1991, pp. 163–85). Although Anderson is writing specifically about the development of nationalism in the Asian countries to the north of Australia, the same colonial techniques were applied *within* Australia during the settler-colonial period, and have had an

impact on the (post)settler-colonial experiences of Australians — not least in the experience of being ‘Australian’. Colonisation uses words, numbers and images to frame the colonised space and the colonised people. Gassan Hage has argued that Australia has an ongoing cultural fascination with race that is grounded in its colonial beginnings and can be seen in its shifting categories of whiteness; its complicated categorising of Aboriginality by ‘blood’; and its imported ideas of the deserving and undeserving poor (Hage 2002). The majority of the memorials identified through this research relate to the treatment of people who have found themselves at the bottom of this social hierarchy in the 20th century: Aboriginal people; non-British migrants; and those who stepped outside of the social boundaries through poverty or other types of transgression.

Memorials to natural disasters seem to fall outside of this framework. However, as Ashton, Hamilton and Searby point out:

In a country that burns and floods, examining what it means to mourn landscapes lost to natural disasters raises questions about the relationship of Australians to their country and the landscape within it (2012, p. 68).

Memorials that acknowledge the experience of natural disasters often open the way for conversations about the relationships between humans and the landscape. Australians know, for example, of their nation’s Indigenous peoples’ use of fire to manage the landscape, and every bushfire is followed by discussions about whether such practices might prevent disaster. Australia’s natural disaster memorials, then, are also about the colonial logic of containment and control as applied to the colonised land. They are about the trauma of what happens when the landscape cannot be contained. Or, put another way, when the self-image of the settler-coloniser being in control of the land is threatened.

Of the technologies Anderson explores — the census, the map and the museum — the map has become even more important in the age of global positioning satellites and Google maps. Viewing a map of Australia that show maps of other countries jigsawed together inside the nation’s bounds is one way Australians can comprehend the vastness of their country. An alternative map of Australia shows the many different Indigenous language groups spread throughout the continent and reveals the diversity of experience that is masked by the name ‘Aboriginal’. Maps help frame people’s sense of identity, and connect them to other people in other places. The memorials considered in this research project

can be located as points on the vast map of Australia, but they are also located within the imagination of what it means to be Australian.

What is a memorial?

The term ‘memorial’ is used in a number of different ways. I do not find it useful to close down this fluidity of meaning; nonetheless, within this dissertation the word is used in quite a specific way, and I will begin here to define how I understand the term.

Young argues that all monuments are memorials, but sees memorials as a much broader category of objects that bring the past to mind (1993). Art critic Arthur Danto, on the other hand, draws a strong distinction between monuments as celebratory objects and memorials as public symbolic objects that are associated with mourning (1985). My definition comes close to Danto’s understanding, in that by memorials I mean public symbolic objects that have been consciously created or labelled in such a way as to bring to mind a past event associated with sadness and loss. The memorials I consider in this thesis are all material objects located in physical places, although they can and do exist in other ways, such as through websites and digital walk-throughs. Many of these material memorials are self-consciously designed as artworks; however, to be considered within my definition of memorial, they must include symbolic elements and be part of a sacralised space that allows them to be set apart from the everyday. Doss (2010) and Ashton, Hamilton and Searby (2012) emphasise that memorial objects need to be understood as operating within a network of commemorative practices, and this understanding has much to do with Young’s argument that monuments are simply one type of memorial form. However, what Danto emphasises is the distinction between mourning and celebration within commemorative practices.

In this thesis, I will use the term ‘commemoration’ to refer to a broad spectrum of memorialising practices including, but not limited to, public memorials. Following Danto, I will use the term ‘monument’ to refer to celebratory public art that has a historical story to tell, and reserve the use of the term ‘memorial’ for public symbolic objects that point to histories of sadness, and which do this through the sacralisation of space. So far, my definition of a memorial is quite conventional. However, the adoption of traditional memorial forms and practices

to commemorate lived experiences, rather than death, calls into question received understandings of the term 'memorial'.

Memorials as mourning

Practices of memorialisation are always affected by the *present* in which the commemoration takes place as well as by the history it seeks to remember. Nonetheless, there is a strong memorial tradition that developed in Western nations in the modern era and continues to have an influence on memorial forms and practices. Contemporary Western memorials have a strong connection to Christian funerary traditions. Traditional memorials use Christian and pre-Christian symbolism to create a sense of solemnity (or sacredness) through shared cultural understandings of the meaning of their materials and imagery. Because of this shared symbolism, they have much in common with grave sites; including the deceptive illusion of permanence. Memorials often make use of elemental materials, such as granite and other rocks, which have a ritual significance dating back to prehistoric cairns. Rock monoliths have often been used as war memorials, and these have a visual resemblance to ancient standing stones as well as to gravestones. Ken Inglis makes the practical point that these memorials are also cheaper and easier to produce than a figurative statue (Inglis 2008, p. 49). This is important to note because the aesthetic choices made when planning memorials cannot be divorced from practical considerations, including financial ones.

Flowers are another kind of symbolic material used in both funerary and memorial traditions. In contrast with the permanence of memory associated with hard materials, flowers suggest the transient nature of life. It is now common for flowers to be left at memorial sites; not only during the special commemorative ceremonies associated with anniversaries or other special remembrance days, but also at 'spontaneous' memorials, such as the site of a shooting or a car accident.² Poppies are commonly associated with war, particularly World War I, and are often used for commemorative wreaths. Roses are another flower associated with memorials. This may be for their (at times) blood red colour; or perhaps because of the thorn symbolising pain; or for the more practical reason of their hardness as a plant. An added benefit is that it is possible to develop new varieties of roses

² In response to the 2014 Lindt Cafe siege, which resulted in two deaths, the people of Sydney donated what was described as a 'sea of flowers' (Begley 2014). The flowers became the inspiration for a permanent memorial, approved in 2015 (Code 2015).

that can be named for a particular person or event. Commemorative gardens aim at providing a tranquil space in which remembrance can occur, and often make use of earthworks including rocks and boulders as well as flowers, herbs and other plants to achieve this.

Water is another common memorial material. Like granite and other rocks it is elemental, but it can also symbolise tears. It is sometimes used to create reflecting pools — which are a kind of visual pun on the idea of ‘reflection’. Since the 1980s, it has become commonplace for memorials to incorporate other kinds of reflective surfaces, such as polished granite, following the example of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

Post-World War II memorial trends

Just as Holocaust studies have had a significant influence on memory studies, so Holocaust memorialisation has played an important role in shaping postwar commemorative practices more generally. Harold Marcuse (2010) has traced the development of Holocaust memorials as a genre of commemoration that makes use of some specific symbolic elements. Marcuse argues that Holocaust memorials are addressed to a transnational audience, have multiple meanings, and are often experiential sites (Marcuse 2010, p. 54).³ These elements of the genre have been widely adopted in other post-atrocity memorials in the post-World War II (WWII) era. Marcuse argues that Holocaust memorials were usually ‘initiated by Holocaust and concentration camp survivors’, as well as by refugees who had escaped persecution (p. 60). In other words, by those who had direct experience of the Holocaust. Nonetheless, the primary focus of these memorials remains on the six million Jews who died, rather than those who lived.

Perhaps the most influential single memorial of the latter half of the 20th century is Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM), which is situated in the highly symbolic location of the Washington Mall in the United States’ (US) capital. This memorial arguably marked a turning point in commemorative practices and is a good example of the experiential nature of contemporary memorialisation. The memorial was created to be ‘read’ in relation to the other national memorials within its immediate spatial context (Griswold 1986). Visitors need to move along the wall to read the list of the war dead, who are named in chronological order of their time of death, creating a connection between the personal and collective experience of war. Memorial participants see themselves

³ Marcuse also argues that Holocaust memorials draw on a new repertoire of symbols, forms and materials including specific symbolism related to the Holocaust such as the number six (representing six million Jews who died), the menorah, and chimney stacks.

reflected in the black surface of the memorial, thus creating a connection between the privatised experience of the participant and the public story the memorial tells.⁴ The VVM also marks a point on the journey towards the acknowledgment of experience, since its name refers to all ‘veterans’ of the war. However, the list of names puts the focus on the loss of life in war, rather than the experience of the survivors.

While Lin’s VVM was both critically acclaimed and well received by the public, at the time of its installation it met with controversy. Not everyone appreciated the minimalist aesthetic and, as a compromise, a bronze sculpture depicting three servicemen was commissioned to supplement it. The anonymous soldiers — men with Caucasian, African, and Hispanic facial features — have been posed by the artist in an active, though weary, stance. While their forms draw on the heroic tradition of 19th-century figurative sculpture, their dress is everyday battle wear rather than the pristine uniform used in earlier sculptures of soldiers. Lin’s memorial, more than these figurative sculptures, has been the focus of extensive academic research, and its popularity has also led to a proliferation of movable replicas, so that people outside of Washington can experience the memorial. Nonetheless, bronze sculptures continue to be a popular, if critically neglected, memorial form. The challenge of figurative sculpture — its greatest strength and weakness — is that people need to be able to connect with the figure before them. The use of the three racially distinguished servicemen in this example was meant to allow the ethnically diverse US service personnel to ‘see’ themselves in the memorial. The fact that a women’s memorial needed to be added within a decade of the original dedication shows the limits of this type of identification.

Monuments and the public art tradition

Memorials come out of an aesthetic tradition and, indeed, most contemporary memorials are also public artworks. While the memorial practices outlined above have an aesthetic element, the artistic side of public commemoration is most closely associated with the celebratory tradition of the monument. Architectural monuments have usually been associated with victory arches in eras when the focus of war commemoration was on the celebration of battles won, rather than the mourning of soldiers’ lives lost. Figurative sculptures have most often been used to celebrate the life or achievement of a ‘great’ public figure. However, the

⁴ Russel Rodrigo’s 2009 PhD thesis looks at how minimalism, the aesthetic approach used by Lin, has been adopted by other memorial designers with less subtlety. He argues that these designers failed where Lin succeeded because they did not recognise the distinction between minimalism as an aesthetic form versus an architectural understanding of minimalism as a lack of decoration. Rodrigo claims that many minimalist memorials elements of Lin’s design — the list of names, or the polished granite, for example — but combine them in ways that fail to create an emotional connection for memorial participants.

20th century saw the tradition of art in public places diversify so that memorial artworks are now only one strand of the diverse discipline of public art. Both Harriet F. Senie (1992) and Tom Finkelpearl (2000) offer historical narratives of the development of contemporary public art practices. Senie emphasises modern and postmodern public art as breaking with the older tradition of the monument, whereas Finkelpearl emphasises continuity, arguing that all public art needs to be understood as a deeply modern practice, enmeshed in modern ways of thinking about art and 'publicness' (Finkelpearl 2000). Malcolm Miles argues that monuments and other public artworks share a commonality that, 'both define and make visible the values of the public realm, and do so in a way which is far from neutral, never simply decorative' (1997, p. 61). Miles's point is that the 'public' of public art — and of memorials — is more than a matter of location.

The earliest memorials identified in this research project date from the 1980s and 1990s and had their genesis as community or public art projects. The increasing adoption of 'per cent for art' projects in Western cities during this period saw an increase in art in public places and a corresponding critique of its role. Much of this discussion revolved around the question of whether public art articulates the values of society, or whether it provides an intervention into a debate about such values. Rosalyn Deutsche argued that public art is 'a practice that constitutes a public, by engaging people in political discussion or by entering a political struggle' (1996, p. 288). Hilde Hein suggested that the very idea of public art is oxymoronic in a modern context where art has come to be understood as an individual creative expression, and its appreciation as a 'private act of contemplation' (Hein 1996, p. 1). This points to a central challenge for public artists, and is one reason memorial artworks rarely receive the same critical attention as art created for a gallery or other exhibition setting. Public art tends to be received with suspicion that the public processes involved in the creation of the work may impact on the creative process. In terms of memorials, Hein's point challenges any romantic notion that memorial participants are involved in a private, rather than public, act of contemplation.

Text and the sacralisation of space

One of the most important elements of the funerary tradition is text. This is an underexplored aspect of memorialisation, although a recent monograph by Quentin Stephens and Karen Franck devotes considerable attention to it, which may signal a change (2016). Traditional memorials almost always include a formal engraved plaque, and even contemporary memorials that include other Interpretive signage often include a formal plaque as well. Plaques are most often

made of bronze, although memorials that make use of granite will sometimes have words engraved into that surface. Both the materiality of the plaque and the words it contains are important. The formal plaque operates as a declaration of the purpose of the memorial and of the importance of the events it commemorates.

Plaques often include a poem, a short statement of intent, or an exhortation to remember. Sometimes, plaques will also include an interpretation of the memorial artwork. Alongside this formal text, words are important in other ways. Names are often used on memorials that commemorate death in war or civic tragedy. As Rodrigo has argued in his analysis of Lin's VVM, names can be used as 'figurative' elements that bring to mind a person or, at least, the idea of person-ness (Rodrigo 2009). Naming in another sense — the telling of a particular 'truth' — is privileged within the transitional justice framework (Klep 2014), and important in memorials influenced by that discourse.

Words are used within memorialisation to assist in the creation of a sacralised space. A plaque is often the most important signifier of memorial status, although it needs to interact with other material, symbolic and aesthetic elements. I do not consider a historical marker that says, 'on this day, something (or nothing) happened' to be a memorial, because such a statement contains no sense of loss or declaration of sacred space. By sacred space I mean a space set aside from the everyday as special in some way. Usually memorial spaces are expected to be solemn. Public artworks become memorials when they take on aspects of the funerary tradition outlined above.

Negotiating tradition

Artists and memorial designers working in the late 20th and early 21st century are usually well aware of the constraints and limitations of the traditions they inherit. In many situations, artists have attempted to work outside the practice of formal memorialisation and public art processes, working as street artists, community workers or within museum or gallery settings (Till 2008); others have embraced the title of memorial and have worked with local communities to find creative ways to create memory spaces (see, for example, Milton 2011).

A number of artists and architects have tried to avoid the triumphalism of the monument by creating what Young calls 'countermonuments'. Perhaps the best-known example is that cited by Young, of the Hamburg 'Monument Against Fascism' by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz (Young 1993, pp. 28–37). The project began in 1986 as a 12-metre tall pillar coated in a soft lead surface on which citizens and visitors of the West-German city were invited to inscribe a

message or their signature as a sign of commitment to work against fascism. Year by year, the pillar was lowered into the ground, and today visitors see only a metal plaque in the pavement of the Harburg-Rathaus S-line train station. The countermonument played with the monumental trope of 'never again'. The artists' hope was that, rather than a material object people might walk past and ignore, the 'true' monument would be the work of all those who added their signature and pledged their commitment to work against fascism. Similarly, Australian landscape architect Sue Ann Ware has championed a practice she terms 'anti-memorials', which rely on ephemeral approaches (Ware 2008). Ware uses this term in a similar way to Young's use of the word 'countermonument' to refer to commemorative projects that reject the myth of permanence and closure.

A recent survey by Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck and Ruth Fazakerley uses the alternative term, 'anti-monument'. They outline five ways in which monuments can be considered 'anti-monumental': 'subject, form, site, visitor experience and meaning' (Stevens, Franck & Fazakerley 2012, p. 955). According to this schema, all the memorials considered in this dissertation are anti-monumental, since they all address subject matter that is outside the scope of traditional memorial or monumental approaches. That is, the memorials considered here commemorate lived experiences, not death. In doing so, they reflect a shift in Western understandings of grief in the late 20th century. It is now widely accepted that people may experience grief as a result of trauma or of loss not connected to death (Doka 2002), and the adoption of elements of the funerary tradition by non-death memorials shows that they are considered by those who create them to be part of a public mourning practice. Some of the memorials identified in this research project could be considered anti-monumental in form, but many others adopt traditional styles. This suggests that those who create them are not necessarily creating memorials as a 'counter' to tradition. Many are co-located with other, more mainstream, memorials or monuments. Indeed, as Sabine Marschall has pointed out through her analysis of post-apartheid memorials in South Africa, in certain situations the adoption of monumental forms and high nationalist motifs can be important for claiming legitimacy (Marschall 2003, p. 319). The fact that there are so many ways in which memorials can be considered 'anti-monumental' suggests that a fundamental shift has occurred in the last 40 years, so that the 'traditional' monument is no longer the dominant practice.

In light of this, it is worth questioning whether the concepts of 'anti-monument' or 'anti-memorial' retain any analytical power. The objects I am interested in are perhaps best described as monu-memorials in the sense that they carry aspects of both the memorial (funerary) and monumental (celebratory aesthetic) tradition.

They are part of a public performance of mourning and they are also political. They lay claim to a particular narrative of the past, with sadness, but also with a political impulse to use that narrative to teach future generations. However, I question the usefulness of adding yet another term to the already confusing array of descriptors of material commemorations. Rather, I suspect that the concept of memorialisation is more capacious than many scholars have given it credit for, and I will continue to describe these objects simply as public memorials.

How this thesis approaches memorial analysis

The memorials considered in this study are commemorations of lived experience. Since, as I have outlined above, memorials come from a mourning tradition, the kinds of experiences they commemorate are not happy ones. They are at best ambivalent, and often devastating. The kinds of experiences commemorated by memorials can be described as traumatic. The use of the term ‘traumatic’ to describe catastrophic events has become problematic because, as Maria Tumarkin points out, trauma has a particular meaning that doesn’t only mean ‘bad’ (Tumarkin 2005, p. 12). However, although the word has become over-determined, its use may be justified in relation to many of the memorial projects considered in this thesis. Since, as Rothberg argues, trauma is an experience of the living, not the dead (2009, p. 90), these memorials have perhaps more claim than most to it.

Trauma discourse is grounded within the psychoanalytic tradition, beginning with Freud and his Mourning and melancholia. This particular body of literature about memory and trauma has a Eurocentric bias, which is slowly beginning to be addressed.⁵ Nonetheless, despite positive developments, one of the central challenges of trauma theory is its reliance on a psychoanalytic model. Rosanne Kennedy and Tikka Jan Wilson (2003) argue for an alternative approach to analysing narratives of trauma, which shifts the focus away from the interiority of language and silences emphasised by much trauma writing. Instead, they draw on Michael White’s narrative therapy practice to offer an analytic approach focused on the tactics used by those talking about difficult experiences, including talking about silence. A recent monograph by Stef Craps, *Postcolonial witnessing* (2012), uses Rothberg’s multidirectional memory framework (2009) and Kennedy and Wilson’s narrative analysis (2003) to look at literature that moves away from

⁵ For an excellent critique of the failures of trauma theory and its inability to break free of the Eurocentric origins of its founding texts, see Stef Craps, *Postcolonial witnessing* (2012).

avant-garde styles and which deals with post-colonial narratives of suffering. I have drawn from this approach in my analysis of non-death memorials.

The loss and trauma that memorials commemorate is experienced on a personal level, but the move to memorialise is always a social process. Those who instigate the memorial process are not always the people directly affected by the events commemorated but are usually driven by a sense that this is a story that ‘needs’ to be told. This research project has sought to identify the emergence of this new genre of memorials, and to explore the question of why these memorials have been created. After all, the creation of even the simplest memorial plaque requires time, money, and energy to negotiate the many social and policy issues involved. Thus, the ‘need’ to tell the story the memorial commemorates must be widely shared, or at least understood, by some key people. Memorials to lived experience usually come into being only when the experience they commemorate has come to be seen to be of social or historical significance.

I have found education theorist Deborah Britzman’s term ‘difficult knowledge’ to be a useful description of the subject matter of many, if not all, of these commemorations. ‘Difficult knowledge’ draws attention to the stories behind these memorials: stories that are often difficult to hear; knowledge that is often difficult to receive (Britzman 2000). Britzman’s term foregrounds the struggles that are involved in bringing into the public sphere the kinds of stories that seem to be most often commemorated in non-death memorials: stories that in previous eras would have been considered too private or taboo to share. I come to the concept of difficult knowledge via Lehrer, Milton and Patterson’s edited collection, *Curating difficult knowledge* (2011), where it is described as knowledge that is disruptive, unwelcome or painful — knowledge that ‘does not fit’ (Lehrer & Milton 2011, p. 10). The concept of difficult knowledge, and the approach outlined by Lehrer, Milton and Patterson, foregrounds the importance of an ethics of care in considerations of memory. Using this term also raises questions about the role of memorials as ‘sites of practice that are social, embodied, and generative’ (Lehrer & Milton 2011, p. 3).

Memorials as public and aesthetic interventions

Contemporary memorials are part of a public art tradition that is commonly understood as an intervention into the public sphere. However, one surprising absence in the literature concerning memorials is its lack of engagement with ideas of the public sphere, particularly as articulated by Jurgen Habermas (1989). Despite the fact that interest in memory studies peaked in the 1990s, at a similar time when a renewed interest in Habermas’s work followed the English translation

of *Structural transformation of the public sphere*, and despite overlapping concerns in relation to nationalism and democracy, there is minimal crossover in the literature. In 2010, Paula Hamilton argued that, although there had been ‘much debate’ about different terms such as ‘collective’ or ‘social memory’,⁶ ‘less consideration has been given to questions of what social relations make memory public or how we understand the publicness of memory’ (p. 299). Some recent scholarship has started to address this gap and to engage with the literature on the public sphere.⁷ Despite new directions in memory research, the term ‘collective memory’ seems to be declining in scholarly use, largely because it still causes conceptual confusion.

As objects located in public spaces, which are used to commemorate shared history, memorials cannot be fully understood without taking into account the concept of the public — both in terms of the physical public space on which they are located and the public discourse in which they are discussed and come into being. As I have outlined above, public memorials, like other public artworks, are not public by definition of the land on which they are situated, or way they are funded, but because of the way they function to allow the co-production of meaning. Because of this, they must be seen as interventions into the public sphere. This, indeed, is one of the contradictions of public memorials: they require public support to come to fruition but also work to create a public around them. I will return to this point in Chapter 3.

Erika Doss has emphasised that memorials are part of the performance of public mourning in late-capitalist secular societies (2010, pp. 80–2); they mediate the private realm of grief and the state’s need to maintain social cohesion. Memorials not only commemorate historical events in public space, they are also created as a result of conversations in the public realm and by means of negotiation between public actors and the state. Their final form and location will be influenced by a variety of government policy approaches which, in turn, are influenced by the public sphere.

The public sphere is sometimes very tightly defined to make it synonymous with the idea of civil society or the ‘third sector’ of community groups and not-for-profit organisations, separate from either formal Government or the private sector. My understanding of it is closer to the broader understanding found in Habermas’s work, of ordinary ‘private’ people coming together to share ideas. Michael Warner

⁶ I have chosen not to give a detailed discussion of that literature here. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz’s *Memory: histories, theories, debates* (2010) offers an excellent survey of the existing literature.

⁷ For example, Rothberg has discussed Charlotte Delbo’s published letters about the Algerian War, *Les belle lettres*, as a ‘counterpublic witness’ (2009). The edited collection, *Transnational memory*, by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (2014) includes a number of papers that discuss memory in terms of a transnational public sphere (for example, Kennedy 2014; Ebron 2014).

frames the concept of the public helpfully when he writes of it as ‘constitutive of a social imaginary’ (2002, p. 12); this has echoes of Anderson and helps to consider publics as post-national ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1993). The public sphere is the imaginary space where various communities negotiate their shared meanings and ideas. However, as John B. Thompson points out, Habermas’s conception of the public sphere does not incorporate mediated forms of dialogue (Thompson 2011, p. 54) or what Thompson terms ‘mediated visibility’ (2005). Whereas for both Habermas and Warner the public sphere is all about rational debate (Calhoun, 1992; Warner, 2002), I do not see it as limited to either speech or text, but as inclusive of visual and other forms of communication.

Memorials as art objects are aesthetic objects that are encountered physically and affectively. Here I am using the definition of aesthesis used by Jill Bennett as ‘perception through the senses’ (2012, p. 1). Bennett is influenced by Deleuze’s idea of the ‘affect-image’ — in cinematic terms, the interval between perception and action. He claims that, ‘Affection is what occupies the interval, what occupies it without filling it in or filling it up’ (Deleuze 1986, p. 65). This sense of an interval that is kept open is crucial to Bennett’s critique of art that addresses themes of trauma. She has developed the idea of a ‘practical aesthetics’ as:

the study of (art as a) means of apprehending the world via sense-based and affective processes — processes that touch bodies intimately and directly but that also underpin the emotions, sentiments and passions of public life (2012, p. 3).

Memorials, as Hamilton has described them, are material objects that can be ‘touched, scratched, venerated, visited, photographed or defaced’ (Hamilton 2011, pp. 11–2). They are also affect-rich. For contemporary memorials, the experiential nature of their materiality is important. As Terri Tomsy describes, affect refers to, ‘an emotional force, relating both to sensation and to an intensity of feeling, which compels or inspires a subject to (re)act in the world’ (2009, p. 58). It is this ‘compelling’ aspect of affect which Jill Bennett sees as an important way of understanding the role of art. Bennett’s work, and particularly *Empathic vision* (2005), considers art that deals with traumatic memory and argues that, rather than separating the emotions of an artwork from its critical or political function, the emotion created by an artwork is actually the starting point for a more critical response.

The way affect and publicness interact is complex. Warner talks about publicness as the circulation of discourse. Memorials arise out of stories that must be shared and negotiated in order to make it to the construction phase. As aesthetic objects, they are encountered and made meaning of by memorial participants. Part of

the way memorials ‘constitute a public’ is through the circulation of meaning produced through the creation of affect. As Karen Till points out, Bennett’s understanding of affect allows for an understanding that places (and therefore memorials) have ‘distinct presences — material, sensual, spiritual, and psychic’ but that they are also shared (Till 2012, p. 269).

In this thesis, my analysis of memorials draws on Bennett’s critical approach, considering memorials as ‘encountered signs’ that should not be understood simply as objects for critical thought, but as critical contributions in their own right. Susan Sci (2009) suggests that Bennett has rejected the possibility that memorials can be ‘critically engaging’ because of the constraints imposed by their design and construction processes. However, I read Bennett as echoing the caution expressed by Young and by many postwar artists and architects (Maya Lin included) about the constraints imposed by the memorial form (Young 1993, p. 27–48). The positivist tradition of the monument lends itself to the telling of neat stories, and this can lead to the closing down of the critical ‘interval’ which Bennett sees as crucial to an ethical response to trauma. An important question to ask of memorials, therefore, is whether they are able to negotiate the constraints of the memorial and monumental traditions they inherit in such a way as to leave space for the ‘interval’. The alternative approach relies on forms of empathic engagement that risk appropriating the stories they tell. This creates what Lauren Berlant might call an intimate public sphere (2008), where visitors are called into a shared identification with the story told, but the wider politics are missing from view. Taking these constraints seriously does not preclude an aesthetic reading of public memorials, but it does acknowledge the political and triumphal legacy of the monumental tradition.

The meaning people make from their memorial experiences also circulates within the public sphere through images and text about the memorials and the histories they represent. So, memorials can be understood as interventions into the public sphere that not only serve as an address to a particular ‘community’ but also expand that community to constitute a public.

Memorials as and in place

In a digital age, it is important to emphasise that all of the memorial sites identified in this research project are located in place. That is, they are material objects positioned in specific geographic locations. These memorials draw on post-WWII commemorative and public art traditions to create experiential places that are deeply embedded in their physical environment. If they are places of memory, the places in which they are situated, and which they help to create,

are an important part of the way they form memory and meaning. However, while there is extensive literature within the field of cultural geography relating to memory (Hoelscher & Alderman 2004; Dwyer & Alderman 2008; Till 2008), there is a tendency towards romanticism about place within memory studies literature. The commonly used metaphor of memory as palimpsest implies a passive landscape onto which memory is 'layered' rather than place playing an active part in the process of public remembering. Yet, despite the persistence of this metaphor — and in the same way Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (2003) criticise trauma studies for making a moment of trauma the defining moment of a subject's existence — writing about place and memory sometimes forgets that no place has only a single moment of history, however difficult that moment may have been.⁸

Studies that explore post-colonial sites of 'dark tourism' offer some useful insights into the ways multiple histories must be negotiated within any single site; and explorations of Alcatraz in the US, Port Arthur in Australia and Robben Island in South Africa offer useful points of comparison (Deacon 1998; Smith & Bergman 2010; Frew 2012). Each of these sites has multiple histories which means choices have to be made about which stories will be told and how. In each of these sites, the geography that led to its earlier life as an isolated prison now frames it as a purposeful tourist destination rather than a place people might accidentally visit. This, along with the impulse to create tidy narratives, can have an impact on the way certain versions of history are constrained. These examples suggest questions that need to be asked about the importance of location in framing the ways memorials and their stories are experienced and understood.

My understanding of place is drawn from the work of cultural geographer Doreen Massey (1993a, 1993b, 2005). Place, in this framework, is where the specificities of the local — including landscape and ecology — meet the global flows of power and capital. This means no single place can be understood in isolation from the rest of the world. Neither can a place be 'anyplace' — a free-floating example that could exist without the lived realities of the local. Massey's approach also brings an ethical understanding that the actions and decisions made in one place have an impact elsewhere. Or, as Karen Till writes, 'places are never merely backdrops for action or containers of the past,' (Till 2005, p. 8). Memorial places, then, are not 'just' part of the landscape — not only a garden, a rock, or a sculpture in the corner of a park — but relationships, collections and connections of time, history, politics, infrastructure, flows of capital and local culture that are each

⁸ See Bertolini (2013) for a critique of the metaphor of palimpsest.

distinct. It is for this reason that I have adopted a case study approach that uses both an aesthetic reading of the finished memorial and a consideration of the process by which that memorial came into being (since the finished product is a result of that process).

Memorials are more than physical places. As Shelley Hornstein argues (2011), architectural objects (such as memorials) exist not only in their actual location but also as powerful ideas of place. Hamilton's analysis of the impact of the Prisoner of War (POW) miniseries *Changi* on public discourse about Australians' WWII experiences suggests the same is true of events (Hamilton 2010); meaning memorials are sites where ideas of place and event may collide. Chris Healy has developed the idea of 'companion memory' (2013) to describe the ways ideas and memories formed through the experience of popular culture, such as TV shows, are carried with us. This concept offers a helpful way to begin thinking about how the real and imagined experience of place and event are negotiated. Place is a crucial part of the way that memorials need to be considered as both public and aesthetic objects. Massey and Rose (2003) argue, following Deutsche (1996), that the publicness of artworks (and I would argue memorials) is 'dependent on its insertion into and its effects on those complex intersections which go to make up "place"'.

How to read this thesis

In this introductory chapter, I have briefly located this research project within the field of memorial research. In doing so I have outlined my understanding of what constitutes a memorial, and the key concepts I intend to use when analysing the memorial sites identified through my research. In the following chapter, questions of methodology and research methods are addressed in more depth. This includes a discussion of the significant methodological challenges of memorial research.

Chapter 2 takes a broad view of the research findings. I outline the timeline of the emergence of memorials to lived experience in Australia; trends in memorial style; and the kinds of subject matter that are commemorated. Chapter 3 develops the ideas briefly sketched in this chapter about the connections between trauma and human rights discourses. I consider some of the ways the stories commemorated by these memorials have emerged into the public sphere, and some of the

memory practices with which public memorials interact. I also, briefly, discuss the digital life of memorials.

The following four chapters consider particular kinds of cultural ‘work’ these memorials are expected to do. Chapter 4 considers the relationship between memorials and nationalism, and I argue that public memorials are sometimes used to claim symbolic space in the national story. Chapter 5 looks at memorials created for an ‘internal’ community of those who have experienced loss or trauma directly. It addresses the question of memorials and mourning, when memorials create space for grief to be expressed and acknowledged. Chapter 6 explores the way memorials are created as acts of witness citizenship — expanding the community of memory to include those who did not directly experience the loss or trauma the memorial commemorates. Finally, Chapter 7 examines state-funded memorials and the ways they have been used as mechanisms of transitional justice to offer symbolic reparation to those harmed by the state.

Interspersed with these chapters are case studies that give an in-depth focus on one particular memorial in relation to the theme explored in the preceding chapter. I have chosen to separate the case studies from the chapters because this approach offers more freedom to explore the process and meaning of the particular memorial without being tempted to constrain the analysis in the terms of the chapter theme.

I end this dissertation by offering some reflections on the need for memorial research to move away from discussions of terms such as ‘counter’ and ‘anti’ memorialisation and towards a deeper analysis of the social needs that memorials serve. The methodological challenges involved are extensive; however, only through a greater understanding of what drives the need to memorialise will we be able to make informed judgments about whether memorials are ‘good’ for the publics they help to constitute.

*Chapter 1***Methodology**

This thesis is an exploration of the emergence of a new genre of public memorials: those that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma. Within the Australian context, it aims to identify when and why these memorials have appeared. In the previous chapter, I located this research project within the broad international and interdisciplinary field of memory studies, and outlined the key concepts I have drawn on to approach this study. Here I will further articulate the conceptual framework I have brought to this research — where I am coming from. By outlining the methods chosen for this study, this chapter also offers a map of the development of my ideas. Finally, I discuss some of the stumbling blocks and challenges for memorial research.

Situating myself

Taking welcome advice from Radstone (2011, 2012), I begin by locating myself. Physically, I completed this research project while living in Perth, on the west coast of Australia, and making semiregular visits to my university in Sydney, on the east coast. If Australian memory studies is located ‘on the edge’ of an international field dominated by North American and European researchers, (Kennedy & Radstone 2013) my location in the most isolated city in the world, in the south-west corner of the huge expanse of mainland Australia, makes me ever more peripheral. I point this out not to create the impression of a poor, isolated researcher — after all, this is the age of social media and relatively cheap air travel. Instead, my location matters because this peripheral experience has perhaps led me to draw from a wider range of sources and approaches than may have been the case if I had been embedded within a particular school of practice. And if, as Kennedy and Radstone argue, ‘Australian memory studies is characterised by bricolage, eclecticism ... and by its testing of the claims of accepted approaches’ (2013, p. 243), then by a topsy-turvy chain of events this study has landed right in the centre of such a tradition.

Another way to locate myself is to mention that this PhD is a kind of sequel to an honours project undertaken 15 years ago, which explored the public artworks of the East Perth urban redevelopment. That dissertation, written from within the discipline of cultural studies, considered public art as a hegemonic practice, and examined the ways non-dominant histories — such as working class and Aboriginal history — were repackaged in a newly affluent suburb. Contemporary

public memorials, although not always commissioned as self-conscious public art, share many characteristics. Given that this thesis is, for the most part, also about non-dominant histories, I approached the study of these memorials with a high level of scepticism about whether the voices of marginalised groups were able to be heard in the process of memorial creation.

One other important aspect of this locatedness is my position as a British migrant, aware of the ‘unfinished business’ of settler-colonisation in this place which is both home and not home, and having done most of my growing up in the far north of Thatcher’s England, a background that has made me particularly aware of the importance of class and geography. This slightly peripheral or uneasy identification with Australianness is shared with some of those whose experiences are commemorated in these memorials. As Alexandra Dellios has argued, inclusions and exclusions are by no means straightforward in commemorative practices, where meaning-making is characterised by ‘constant dialogue’ not simple contestation or co-option (Dellios 2012).

Research design

This research project grew out of the realisation that a number of marginalised groups within Australian society were working towards or considering the value, for them, of a public memorial that would commemorate a difficult part of their shared history. An initial literature search made it clear that this type of memorial — memorials that acknowledge lived experiences rather than death — had not been previously considered as a separate kind of commemoration. For example, a study by Patrizia Viola (2012) compares three different memorial-museums, two of which have few or no survivors; at the third, Villa Grimaldi in Chile, the majority of torture victims survived the experience. It seemed likely to me that memory would be treated differently at sites where the primary objective is to commemorate the experience of people who are still living.

In the first instance, I sought to determine whether there was indeed enough of a body of commemorations of lived experiences to consider them as a separate group. Aware of the ways non-dominant histories have often been coopted, I also considered how to design a research project that could value the experience of those people who have a direct involvement in the painful events commemorated by non-death memorials, as well as consider the meanings created by the memorial objects on their own terms. If, as Massey says, place is a process, then the same can be said of memorials. My aim has been to develop a research methodology

that privileges talk, relationships, interactions and process, and which has allowed for the possibility of new ideas to emerge from the research.

This research project deployed what Gibson and Hartman (2014) might describe as a 'grounded theory perspective', making use of a social science research methodology. There is an extensive body of literature on grounded theory (see, for example, Corbin & Strauss 2014; Charmaz 2014; Gibson & Hartman 2014; Birks & Mills 2015); by using the term here I indicate that this study adopts its practices of continual comparison and theoretical sampling, driven by the data (Suddaby 2006, p. 640). Among the many possible approaches, this study owes most to the work of Corbin and Strauss (2014). However, whereas grounded theory methods are usually used to code and analyse qualitative data such as interviews, I adapted the methods in my analysis of the physical spaces of the memorial sites. In this I was also helped by an important survey of memory research by geographers Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman who found that there are three main metaphors used within memorial research—text, arena and performance—each of which leads the researcher to ask questions. The paper offered a reminder that adopting an existing set of questions creates a frame through which to understand the information. During the first phase of the research, I gathered as much rich data as possible about each memorial and then coded the material to develop a classification system. This approach allowed me to gain a broad overview of the historical and spatial trends of the emerging genre, which I discuss in Chapter 2. Chapters 4 to 8 further discuss the themes that emerged out of this analysis.

The case studies which intersperse the main chapters of this dissertation move away from thematic analysis. Here I move away from the social sciences and instead draw on more traditional humanities research methods. Each case study is approached on its own terms, although my starting point has been the public symbolic object of the memorial itself. I have approached this analysis using Jill Bennett's concept of aesthesis (2012), while also considering the history and relationships at play in the memorial's development. I have considered both what memorials do, by critical analysis of the material object, and the cultural work they were meant to do, by adopting a 'biography of a memorial' approach, similar to that used by Young (1993).

Identification of sites

Memorials to lived experience have not previously been considered as a separate genre in their own right. Because of this, it was difficult to determine exactly how many memorials of this kind there were across Australia. In order to develop an extensive, if not comprehensive, list of non-death memorials across Australia,

I used three primary methods to source information. The first of these was a survey of all Australian local government areas, requesting information about memorials that were not about death. The letter asked for memorials or public artworks 'designed to bring to mind an event or experience that has been painful for those involved'. The second method drew from secondary sources, looking at existing databases and online information about memorial projects using keyword searches. Alongside the Places of the Heart database, the Monument Australia volunteer research project (Monument Australia 2016) has been an invaluable source. Finally, I also used word of mouth. This has often been fruitful in the early identification of new projects, as a number of memorials have been created while this study was underway.

Local governments are not always aware of all the memorials and public artworks within their bounds. There are a number of reasons for this. Sometimes, the council is not the owner of the memorial, and is not actively involved in its maintenance. Often, councils have amalgamated in the time since the memorial was constructed, and records have been lost. In the case of many smaller or rural local government areas, the maintenance of such records is simply not a priority. Where records do exist, memorials that acknowledge lived experiences may not be included, since memorials are usually understood as relating to death. It was not unusual for a request to a local government area to return an empty response, only to find out through another source about a memorial project in that area.

As part of this research project's contribution to knowledge, the memorials identified have all been mapped on a public website, www.notacelebration.blogspot.com. Initially, I created the website to support the word-of-mouth search for memorials. I began to write a short blog post for each memorial that I had visited, and found that this became part of the process of developing my understanding of the site.

The majority of the memorials are clustered around Australia's southern capital cities. This may be because resources and energy for memorial projects is more available in these areas, or it could equally be because these are the places I was physically able to visit to conduct field research, and through that process to discover other memorials in the area. I have undertaken on-site research at approximately half of the identified memorials. The majority of these visits took place during two field trips. These covered the majority of sites within the bottom half of Australia that had been identified by the initial survey process. The field research ranged from short visits of one or two hours, to longer or multiple visits. It also included oral history interviews with those involved in the design process, often

conducted on site. All field research has included observational research, textual analysis of the memorial object, and critical photography.

Identification of themes

Many surveys of memorials categorise them by topic and location. This can certainly be a productive approach. For example, Ashton, Hamilton and Searby's comparison of different commemorations of natural disaster in *Places of the heart* (2012) offers important insights into Australians' relationship to land, and the way this is socially constructed. So, for example, this dissertation could have been divided into chapters looking at Stolen Generations, migration, institutionalisation of children, settler-colonial history, and natural disaster. However, it became clear that there were themes emerging in terms of what these memorials were 'for' rather than what they were 'about'. The approach I have taken in response to these emerging themes is to adopt a conceptual approach of trying to understand the kinds of cultural 'work' being asked of the memorials. In doing so, I have drawn on the writing of Jill Bennett, who argues that we should pay attention to what an artwork does — for example, how it makes you feel — as well as what it looks like (2005, p. 2). The final four chapters of this thesis, therefore, address four broad themes of the cultural work that memorials to lived experience are expected to do. It is not within the terms of this dissertation to provide a comparison between these types of cultural work and the cultural work expected of traditional memorials. Since this is the first study to consider memorials to lived experience as an emerging genre, my aim is to present the themes as they have emerged from the research.

A question of visiting

Many of the memorials identified by this research, particularly those located in northern or central areas, remain known to me only through what I have read and via images viewed online. I have been able to physically visit some of those memorials located in major cities because of my relative mobility and ability to take regular interstate trips. For example, the Mary's Place rape memorial, in inner Sydney, is close to my 'home' university, the University of Technology, Sydney. Regular meetings with my supervisor meant I had multiple opportunities to spend time there and to get to know the surrounding area. Further, Mary's Place was one of the starting sites identified before this project began, through the Places of the Heart research project (ACPH 2011). Other sites were located later, as the project progressed, meaning I have had fewer opportunities to visit. The Perth Culture Centre, in which both the 'Unfolding Lives' (2010) and 'Der

Rufer' (1983) memorial artworks are located, is a place I walk through regularly, and has become familiar and comfortable.

Two important international surveys of memory places, James E. Young's seminal *Textures of memory* (1993) and Maria Tumarkin's *Traumascapes* (2005), emphasise the importance of the researcher physically visiting memorial sites. Young argues that the 'dialogic quality' of memorial sites means the visitor plays an essential role in the creation of meaning (1993, p. xii). However, as I argued in the introduction, I understand the dialogic quality of memorials as coming from their publicness and their participation in the circulation of meaning. Therefore, the meaning of a memorial does not rest only in the relationship between one viewer and the object itself, but in the way the memorial — through the memorial participant's response to it — enters into the public circulation of meaning. Thus, while on-site research can certainly give insights into a place, particularly in terms of the experiential nature of these particular memorials, every experience of place is partial. Online and other materials about places are also part of those places.

As Radstone has pointed out, it is also important to consider what experiences people bring with them on their visits, whether in person or virtually (Radstone 2011). Dickinson, Blair and Ott (2010) claim that memory places require a certain amount of investment and energy to visit, and this predisposes visitors to respond in a certain way. During field research, I became aware of feeling that I should put myself into a kind of solemn frame of mind. At the same time, I was also aware that my background as a free, middle class, straight, white, British-Australian woman made it all but impossible for me to 'enter into' many of the experiences represented through these memorials. While archaeological findings, historical records or testimonies may help in some ways to tell the stories, any understanding can only be partial, and physically visiting the site does not necessarily give a privileged insight. As Katrina Schlunke (2004) has discussed, landscapes are often 'dumb' in the sense that they are not inherently able to share the story of the events they may have witnessed in any way that is directly accessible to those of us who come later.

Memorials, therefore, cannot be understood as little islands of meaning without taking into account their wider context, physical as well as social and economic. The understanding of place which lies at the heart of this thesis includes the physical landscape as well as the networks of social, economic and power relationship at play within that place. Memorials — as Massey writes of places — are collections of 'stories so far', as well as articulations of 'the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and ... the exclusions' (Massey 2005, p.130). What visiting a place can



Figure 1: Display at entry of Hay Gaol Museum, Hay, New South Wales.

do is offer insight into the interconnections and flows — as well as the dissonance — Massey is talking about. For example, to visit Hay, in rural NSW, and to feel as well as see on a map how far it is from the nearest town, gives a sense of what kind of town Hay is—a country town in a particular Australian sense. To visit that town in the heat of summer gives a sense of the conditions faced by the teenagers sent to the Hay Institution for Girls, and also offers some insight into the reasoning that may have led bureaucrats to imagine that sending them there was a good idea. At the same time, visiting the museum and seeing the box on the wall into which entry fees are paid, and the bulldog clips used to create displays, gives a much better understanding about the constraints placed on the way the Hay girls' stories can be told in the context of a regional heritage site. What is much harder to pay attention to is the silences and missed connections.



Figure 2: Display at entry of Hay Gaol Museum, Hay, New South Wales.

One further factor is important when considering the role of visiting. As I indicated in the introduction to this thesis, part of my analysis of these places is through an aesthetic reading of the memorial site. For such a reading, two-dimensional photographs are rarely enough. To get a sense of the materiality and aesthetics of a memorial site, I have drawn on an ethnographic approach that requires me to have firsthand experience of the site. For that reason, I have made sure that I have visited each case study site at least once, and usually on multiple occasions. At the same time, taking extensive photographs of each memorial, and of the surrounding area, allowed me to 'return' to the site at the analysis stage. Reflecting a broader commemorative trend (Ashton, Hamilton & Searby 2012), many of the memorials considered in this dissertation are located at historic sites of loss, trauma or 'difficult knowledge'. Jessica Neath's comparison of the ways photographers Anne Ferran and Ricky Maynard have considered 'empty'

landscapes has offered an encouragement to start to look at what is left out of what is commemorated, as well as at what is included (Neath 2012). My approach to photography was informed by Jessica Neath's article. If the images that appear in this dissertation appear badly framed, that is because I have attempted to use photographs to document but not to create the kinds of well-framed images of memorials that appear on postcards or public art maps.

Case study approach

In selecting a number of different case studies, I have aimed for diversity in terms of location, form and subject matter. In doing so, I do not imagine that I can cover all bases. Rather, I am influenced by feminist geographers Doreen Massey (1993a) and Jane M. Jacobs (1996), who both use the local as a microcosm through which to examine wider trends without resorting to universalising. Each case study explores in more depth the issues raised in the preceding chapter. At the same time, separating the case studies from the chapter offers more freedom to investigate the material without being too constrained by the theme.

Case studies have drawn on observation, including auto-ethnography, archival research and critical photography, as well as oral history interviews with key actors involved in advocacy or planning for the memorials. Waterton and Watson (2015) have experimented with research techniques such as walkthroughs — asking people to record their thoughts as they walk around — and go-alongs, where the researcher accompanies the visitor. In some cases, I have used a version of this method, which I have called site-elicitation. That is, similar to interviews that use photo-elicitation to prompt responses (Prosser 1996; Pink 2006), some interviews were conducted on-site, allowing the person to respond to the site while they talk about its meaning for them. Where this was not possible, interviews used photographs or archival materials as prompts. Interview subjects were identified through the archival documentation and recommendations of other participants (snowball sampling). This approach allows for consideration of the groups and individuals involved in producing such memorials: what they hope to achieve, which voices are given prominence in the final products. In undertaking research in this way, I am aware that there will always be gaps and silences.

Scoping the edges of the genre

As this is an emerging genre, the edges of it are often blurred. As I stated in the Introduction, the definition of memorials used in this dissertation is a public symbolic object that points to histories of sadness, and which does this through the sacralisation of space. I have not included virtual memorials, although a number

of the memorials also have an online presence. Much of the memorial literature fails to draw a line between memorials as objects and what Paul Williams (2012) has identified as 'memorial museums'. In contrast, all of the sites identified in this research are objects rather than museum spaces. Some of these 'symbolic objects' are garden spaces rather than art or architecture. Some of them are co-located with museums, and a number are integrated into official heritage sites.

The question of what defines 'lived experience' has also emerged through the research. A number of the sites I identified do acknowledge people who died; these memorials have been included where the overall focus seems to be more on the shared experience of loss or trauma than the death. And while all of the sites included in the study commemorate the lived experience of a loss or trauma, not all of them commemorate the experiences of those still living. A small number of retrospective commemorations have been included in this study. In these instances I have paid more attention to the way the commemoration is framed as being about experience than to the time frame of that experience.

Another area where the edges are blurred is between memorials that mourn and those that lean towards the monumental or celebratory side of the tradition. This is the case for a number of migration memorials, in large part because of the constraints of the migration discourse in Australia, which I discuss in Chapter 4. I have included examples that seem to leave some space for reflection as well as for celebration. The 'Enterprise Tribute Garden' (2013) at Springvale, chosen as one of the case studies, falls into this category.

Limitations and methodological challenges

Memorials are not easy to research. Writers often ask questions about the social 'outcomes' of memorial projects. Do they heal or divide societies? Are they noticed or ignored? Scholars are increasingly questioning whether this is a productive approach (see, for example, Giblin 2013). Certainly, it is an approach for which there has not, so far, been a well-developed methodology. Critical heritage theorist Laurajane Smith has done extensive work developing research methods to understand visitors' experiences of heritage sites, and some of these may be useful for memorial research (see, for example, Smith 2006, 2015). The key difference is that most visitors to memorials to lived experience are accidental visitors. The initial research plan for this project did involve on-site interviews with memorial participants. However, the sites vary widely in their accessibility and in the intentionality of those who are in the space. The sites that are most accessible have a high volume of passers-by who may or may not pay attention to the site; other memorials are built at a place connected to an experience, and

may be considered sites of 'pilgrimage', but visitor numbers are not large enough to develop a meaningful sample without many months of loitering.

This dissertation aims to offer a broad overview of an emerging trend, rather than in-depth analysis of responses to one, or a few, specific memorials. Case studies were chosen to allow for some deeper analysis, but do not pretend to exhaust the possibilities of research at these sites. The use of snowball sampling carries with it the inherent danger that only 'compliant' voices will be referred back to the interviewer. Sometimes key players are unavailable, for a variety of reasons. It has been more possible to talk to the people involved in the structural or official work of memorialising — the work of applying for grants, sitting on committees or designing the work, for example. Talking to people who have a more general connection to the memorials as survivors of the events they commemorate has proven much more challenging, and was not possible in all cases.

Trauma survivors who have previously participated in either judicial inquiries or oral history projects often come to the conversation with an expectation of the kinds of questions they will be asked. They are familiar with the process of speaking about their experience of trauma, but are less comfortable when asked to articulate what a memorial might mean to them. Talking about an 'interview gone wrong', Lindsey Dodd suggest that one problem may be lack of 'cultural script' (2013, p. 37). This is a fruitful area for further methodological work.

This is a preliminary study. By limiting the study to Australian memorials, I am taking into account practical constraints and acknowledging the importance of context in any analysis of public memorials. It is my hope that the research may prove of use to survivors of painful pasts, in assisting them to better understand the role such memorials play in the public sphere and to make informed choices about their involvement in commemorative projects.

Case Study 1

Instant memorial: just add plaque?

Many of the memorials identified in this research project have been consciously created to commemorate difficult or painful histories in public spaces. This case study, however, compares two public artworks that were not created for a commemorative purpose, but have been claimed as memorials through the addition of a plaque. The first, from 1998, is among the earliest examples; the second plaque appeared in 2015 and adds a full stop and a question mark to the end of my research project. This short case study is based on observational research, critical photography and documentary analysis. It does not rely on interviews with memorial instigators or participants, since these were unavailable. Indeed, unlike the other case studies in this dissertation, there is very little information available to explain how or why these memorials came into being. By offering a comparative reading of these two (potential) memorials, I raise questions about what makes a memorial, and the methodological challenges of analysing them.

'The Caller'

The bronze sculpture 'Der Rufer' by Gerhard Marcks was installed in 1982 in the pedestrian area outside of the Art Gallery of Western Australia (WA), in central Perth. This may be considered the first of the Australian memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma, except that for the first 15 years of its existence, 'Der Rufer' was still 'just' a public artwork, donated to the Art Gallery of WA by CSR Limited, a building products company. Some fifteen years ago in June 1998, the sculpture was dedicated to 'victims and survivors of torture', in acknowledgment of the first United Nations (UN) International Day in Support



Figure 3: 'Der Rufer' (The Caller)' bronze sculpture by Gerhard Marcks (1983).

of Victims of Torture (ASeTTS 1998). A ceremony was held, during which a plaque was added to the plinth on which ‘Der Rufer’ continues to stand.

‘Der Rufer’ has another history. It originally appeared outside Radio Bremen in 1967. The bronze statue is slightly larger than life-sized, and is dressed in a long, flowing tunic, which falls in simple, stylised folds. You can see the marks of the sculptor’s hands and tools on the texture of the bronze surface. ‘Der Rufer’ means ‘The Caller’ in English, and he stands with his hands cupped to his mouth as if calling out. The original Radio Bremen calling man can be understood as a monument to democracy, representing freedom of speech. Free speech was probably an important value for Marcks, who lived through the Third Reich in Germany and was blacklisted by the Nazi regime (Hausamman et al 1961; Reith 1961). In early 1989, this original bronze calling man was moved to West Berlin and installed in front of the Brandenburg Gate, facing the Berlin Wall, which was then still standing (Gamboni 2013, pp. 127–28). A plaque at its base was inscribed with the words of Italian poet Francesco Petrararch, ‘I wander through the world and cry “Peace, peace, peace”’ (Berlin.de 2006).

Half a world away, Perth seems an unlikely location for a monument to democracy. The Art Gallery of WA has no documentation to explain why ‘Der Rufer’ was thought to be an appropriate sculpture for Perth. For longer than I can



Figure 4: ‘Der Rufer’ (*The Caller*) bronze sculpture by Gerhard Marcks (1983 copy), side view, Perth Cultural Centre, Western Australia.

remember, it has stood in the centre of one of the city’s main pedestrian thoroughfares, and is one of those sculptures that have become part of the fabric of the city. Indeed, despite having visited the Art Gallery of WA regularly since the early 1990s, until I started this research project I was only peripherally aware of ‘Der Rufer’s’ existence, and had never considered that it might have a meaning other than as an artwork. When I did pay attention, and tried to find out more, it seemed as though no one else had noticed it either. It is listed on the City of Perth’s public art map, but as a sculpture only, not as a memorial.

Aston, Hamilton & Searby observe that memorials are ‘far more likely to induce widespread amnesia than provide a constant

presence in the mind's eye' (2012, p. 12). However, this sculpture-turned-memorial suggests that such a fate is not limited to memorials. Pedestrians making their way through the Perth Cultural Centre on a busy day are skilled at avoiding the large statue. Thousands of people pass it by each day, often having to redirect their steps to avoid him, yet without seeming to even notice his presence. For those who do notice that there is some kind of object in their way, a few more cognitive steps are required to pay attention to its form — the giant man, the bare feet, the way he holds his hands to his mouth, his earnest expression.



Figure 5: Plaque attached to the base of 'Der Rufer' dedicating it to victims and survivors of torture (ASeTTS 1998).

For those who do notice the sculpture itself, even more active engagement is needed for them to stop and read the small plaque attached near his feet. If, as I argued in the introduction to this dissertation, plaques are a key part of what makes a memorial, the addition of this plaque raises the question of exactly how much power they have, as text and as a material object, to transform a sculpture into a memorial.

One limitation of text is that it must be read. Eleanor Bavidge's analysis of the Tower of London memorial, installed in 2006, asks about "The "when" of memory" and questions the use of contemporary memorial forms for the commemoration of events long since past (Bavidge 2013). However, Bavidge pays less attention to the impact of the location of the memorial in a busy tourist area. While very different in form and content, 'Der Rufer' and the tower memorial share a similar challenge of being located in a busy, pedestrian leisure space. If, as I argued in the introduction, a key aspect of memorialisation is the creation of sacred space, this is a difficult task in such a context. This raises a controversial question of memorialisation: if a memorial is not widely known, does it cease to be a memorial? If 'Der Rufer' became a memorial only through the addition of a plaque, does it only exist as a memorial for those who have read the plaque, or who know, through some other means, about its status as memorial?

On the other hand, the story of how 'Der Rufer' became a memorial emphasises the importance of taking into account the nature of the experience memorial participants bring with them. In the 1990s, some people did notice 'Der Rufer' and ascribed meaning to him long before the plaque appeared at his feet. These people were torture survivors and clients of the Association for Services to Torture

and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS). In a letter to the Art Gallery of WA requesting permission to have the statue dedicated, an ASeTTS representative stated that, over a number of years, clients had commented on ‘the comfort that they get from looking at the statue’ (Art Gallery of WA 2016, pers. comm., 19 January). In other words, survivors of torture associated something about their experience with the sculptural figure. As a result, ASeTTS decided to claim the sculpture on behalf of its clients. The letter continues:

I do not know the artist’s intention with the piece but both the workers and clients of ASeTTS feel that the statue represents what torture survivors and organisations like ours are trying to do; break the silence around human rights violations at an individual and societal level. (Art Gallery of WA 2016, pers. comm., 19 January)

The Art Gallery of WA agreed to the request, drawing on knowledge of the artist and his previous statements about the work to give legitimacy to this new reading. The gallery also gained support from CSR, the original donors of the sculpture. A dedication ceremony was held in June 1998 on the first International Day for Victims of Torture.

Despite this auspicious beginning, the sculpture, again, faded from consciousness. A tree planted at the dedication ceremony died, as did its replacement. The then chairperson of ASeTTS only vaguely remembers being present at some kind of ceremony, and little documentation of the event remains: ASeTTS lost its documentation in a fire, and despite anecdotal evidence that at least one local newspaper reported on the event, searches have not returned any results.

‘Youngster’

Almost two decades later, another public artwork has been called to action as a site of memory. ‘Youngster’ is one half of a pair of public sculptures installed in 2012 as part of Sydney’s Art and About Festival (City of Sydney 2012). While its twin, ‘Handstanding youngster’, shows the playful, carefree side of youth, performing a handstand in the street outside the upmarket store Burberry, this youth stands with hands in pockets, face hidden by a hoodie.

One thing the ‘Youngster’ has in common with ‘Der Rufer’ is the use of bronze, the traditional medium of grand public sculptures. In contrast to the classical figure of ‘The Caller’, ‘Youngster’ references an everyday, contemporary ‘youth’. Another commonality is their placement in a pedestrian walkway, although again, there are differences. ‘Der Rufer’ is raised above eye level on a plinth, whereas ‘Youngster’ is small and slightly below an adult sightline. It was not, however, designed to be ignored. The artist, Caroline Rothwell, is reported to have said she

hoped ‘Youngster’ would, ‘Maybe create a moment of consideration as people walk past’ (Taylor 2012).

At least one Sydneysider has found Rothwell’s ‘Youngster’ sculpture unsettling. A post on the *Sydneyland* blog in June 2014 was titled, ‘We need to talk about the hooded kid statue at Martin Place’. In it, Nicholas Fonseca claimed that, ‘every time I encounter Hoodie Kid, I nearly jump out of my shoes’ (Fonseca 2014). Perhaps it was this unsettling impact of the sculpture which led to its adoption as a memorial. Whatever the reason, in late May 2015, a small plaque appeared on the wall nearby. The plaque reads:

Lest we forget them. Children seeking asylum in Australia are kept in detention as part of a government policy which inflicts harm on refugees fleeing violence and persecution. Their suffering is our shame. Here at this site we remember them and together call out for change. (Anonymous 2015)

In contrast to ‘Der Rufer’'s plaque, which is relatively restrained, this plaque pulls out all the emotional stops. The refrain of ‘lest we forget’ is most often associated with war memorials, but also references the title of the Australian Human Rights Commission (HRC) report into children in immigration detention, released at the end of 2014 and titled, *Forgotten Children* (Australian HRC 2014).⁹ The overreliance on emotive language could be because of the less obvious emotional pull of the sculpture itself. On the other hand, the sense of unsettlement that Fonseca’s blog post articulates may be part of the reason the sculpture was co-opted as a memorial. Read in the context of the other memorials identified in this research, this suggests a move towards the creation of memorials designed to embrace and elicit affect for reasons other than mourning death.

The appearance of the plaque was reported by *Sydney morning herald* journalist, Nick Galvin, on 1 June 2015. Despite the article originating from a mainstream news outlet, and being re-posted extensively on social media, the author of the plaque has remained anonymous. It has therefore not been possible to find out anything more about their motivation, or whether the plaque was the



Figure 6: ‘Youngster’ by Caroline Rothwell (2012), George St, Sydney, New South Wales.

⁹ That report’s title in turn references the 2004 Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee’s *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

work of a solitary individual or a collective.¹⁰ Despite this lack of an identifiable group associated with the memorial, the wording of the plaque calls out to an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1993) with its claim that ‘their suffering is our shame’. Like other memorials, its continued existence has required acceptance by a wider public. In this case, the City of Sydney had already declared itself one of the Refugee Council of Australia’s ‘refugee welcome zones’. Because of this existing policy, the council agreed to leave the plaque in place. The artist, too, has declared herself supportive of this reinterpretation of her work (Gavin 2015).

There is another connection between these two memorials that is not initially obvious. Many of the clients of ASeTTS have come to Australia as asylum seekers and refugees, and so, in many ways, the two memorials are commemorating the experience of the same group of people. The difference, of course, is that ASeTTS clients are free to become part of the Australian community and to begin the work of recovery from their traumatic experiences whereas, as *Forgotten Children* outlines, for the children (and adults) in Australia’s offshore detention centres, the trauma is ongoing. Although there has been consistent activism that seeks to raise public awareness of the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, ‘Der Rufer’ has not been put to work as an active site of memory to draw attention to this issue. ‘Youngster’, on the other hand, makes an explicitly political claim,



Figure 7: ‘Youngster’ bronze sculpture by Caroline Rothwell (2012) and anonymous plaque (2015), George St, Sydney.

addressed to an external audience. (The young people acknowledged by the author of the ‘Youngster’ plaque have no chance of seeing their memorial except online.) The moral force of ‘lest we forget’ is used to challenge the public to action. However, the plaque is tiny and, after the initial online discussion it generated, there seems to have been no further attempt to activate the site.

When considered as artworks, both of these memorials trouble the received wisdom about figurative sculpture. Figurative sculpture tends to be seen as part of the positivist, triumphalist tradition of the monument, and therefore treated with suspicion because of that tradition’s

¹⁰ Small granite plaques like this can be easily ordered online, so it is possible whoever installed it intended it to be an anonymous act. It is certainly an unusual act of ‘graffiti’.

association with imperialist movements, including Nazism. And yet Marcks, an artist considered 'degenerate' by the Nazi regime (Reith 1961), turned away from abstraction in art and embraced the figurative form (Hausammann et al 1961). His postwar work included a number of German war memorials that incorporate figures that, similar to 'Der Rufer', draw on classical imagery and mythology to give expression to human emotion (Koep 2004). Marcks's memorials can perhaps be seen as prototypes of the countermonument movement. His work, and the work of Caroline Rothwell, serves as a reminder that artists do not create art without an awareness of the history of their form, and an understanding of what has gone before.

Rothwell is from a younger generation, born after Marcks had already created the original 1967 'Der Rufer'. She brings to her work an awareness of the history of the monument, of figurative sculpture and of the particular medium of bronze, and her work reflects that awareness. In an oral history interview she talks about 'Youngster' as coming out of an artistic inquiry into the idea of the 21st century monument (Rothwell 2013). Rothwell's work plays with this in a number of ways, most obviously in the diminutive stature of her figure. She used an experimental casting process: creating the maquette using a mannequin added to with clothing and sculpted wax before creating a silicone cast into which the bronze was poured. The result is a bronze, very different from Marcks's, on which the hand of the artist is still visible. Rothwell describes it as, 'a solid sculpture that looks soft and defies its materiality' (Rothwell 2013, p. 9). Rothwell's bronze is coated in a black patina that has become polished from the everyday wear of passers-by touching it. This brings in a historical reference to classical Italian sculpture.

Like Marcks, Rothwell also draws on myths for her figure. But rather than looking back to ancient mythology, Rothwell plays with the urban mythology of the hoodie as a 'subversive uniform' (Rothwell 2013, p. 9). The figure wears a hoodie and is slightly hunched, giving it a streetwise aspect, but its plaits convey a childlike vulnerability. Rothwell was influenced by observing her own daughter and, while she has not said the sculpture is a portrait, perhaps that sense of connection comes through in the sensitivity with which the small person is rendered. More broadly, Rothwell's work has been described as inhabiting a fictional universe. A catalogue essay for her *Borderlands* exhibition of 2012 argues that, 'Any serious reading of Caroline Rothwell's oeuvre must consider her erudite relationship not only to science but to her chosen profession' (Loxley 2012). My point, in touching on these comparisons, is that those of us who attempt to critique and analyse memorials too rarely take into account the background, interests and skill of the artist. Artworks that are created as memorials rarely attract

the same kind of artistic critique directed at other kinds of work by high-profile artists. And yet, very few artists working in the 21st century are unaware of the baggage of history attached to the forms they work with. Their attempts to play with those forms, subversively or otherwise, will be influenced by the wider artistic practice they bring to the work.

Conclusion

In this comparative case study, I have considered two public sculptures that have become memorials through the addition of a plaque. Their memorial status is therefore unstable, since the plaque can potentially be removed. Both 'Der Rufer' and 'Youngster' raise important questions about the limits of memorialisation, as well as about the importance of figurative sculpture. The story of 'Der Rufer' raises a number of questions about what actually makes a memorial, and the relationship between an art object and its memorial function. It also offers an example of why Jay Winter argues that memorials should only be understood as sites of memory if 'commemorative acts' take place there (2010, p. 312), raising the question of whether 'Der Rufer' can be understood to be a memorial if no one actually remembers it is one. The obelisks that memorialise WWI do not require every passer-by to read their plaque in order to retain their meaning, but they do require that the majority of those passers-by know what they are there for. A question for all memorials remains: how, and at what point, do they cease to be a memorial? Both 'Der Rufer' and 'Youngster' suggest that research focused on the existing site and object is not enough, since this kind of research would not make visible the hidden public for whom a memorial sculpture offers a point of connection with their experience. These sculptures also problematise any attempt to dismiss figurative sculpture as an antiquated form of memorialisation. They suggest that the skill and sensitivity of the artist plays an important part in whether or not figurative sculptures are successful in, in Deutsche's terms (1996), constituting a public.

*Chapter 2.***Memorial trends 1985–2015: the emergence of a genre**

At least 70 public memorials around Australia commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma, and this number appears to be steadily increasing. Australia's memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma have much in common, but they address a variety of different historical experiences. They also make use of the whole spectrum of memorial forms and materials. This chapter offers a broad overview of the findings of my research into these memorials. It begins with a discussion of the main topics that Australians have considered suitable for this type of commemoration. It then outlines a timeline of the emergence of memorials to lived experience into the Australian public sphere and landscape from the mid 1980s, and considers what these memorials have in common with each other and with the wider field of memorial practice. I offer a few examples of specific memorial projects to demonstrate a broad trend over the past 30 years toward more formal and bureaucratised memorialisation. I end with a discussion of the importance of place, and look at some of the trends in the locations of memorials to lived experience. This discussion includes the digital 'presence' of material memorials.

Memorial topics

The range of experiences Australians consider appropriate topics for public memorials to lived experience is quite narrow (see Table 2). As discussed in the introduction, the majority of these memorials commemorate experiences related to Australia's (post)settler-colonial history. While a few memorials deal directly with the experience of settler-colonisation, others address its effects, such as the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and culture (the Stolen Generations); the institutionalisation and abuse of children; and the experience of South Sea Islanders brought to Australia to work in sugar plantations, often in slave-like conditions. Experiences of postwar migration are also connected to Australia's particular chronopolitics as a (post)settler-colonial nation. Some of these stories are part of the (very) slow move away from the White Australia policy implemented at Federation in 1901 and the corresponding widening of definitions of 'whiteness'. The experience of Child Migrants is part of that narrative, since

Memorial topic	Description	Number of memorials
Colonisation (Aboriginal or shared perspective)	Memorials that tell some of the history of settler-colonisation from an Aboriginal perspective rather than a 'settler' perspective, including loss of land, loss or disruption of culture and struggles for self-determination or other forms of justice and recognition.	5
Forced labour (South Sea Islanders in Queensland)	Between 1860 and 1904, South Sea Islanders (also known as Kanakas) were brought to north-east Australia as indentured labourers to work on northern sugar plantations. Many were not paid or lived in slave-like conditions. In 2013 the 150th anniversary of their first arrival precipitated a number of commemorative projects in Queensland.	3
Family separation (Stolen Generations)	In 1996, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission found that Aboriginal children had been removed from their families and home communities as a result of assimilationist government policies, amounting to an act of genocide. Most Stolen Generations memorials are created at the site of an institution; however, their focus tends to be on the experience of separation, rather than institutionalisation.	18
Institutionalisation/ abuse of children	In 2004, the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee found that Australia's state care system of the 20th century was damaging to children and often led to cases of abuse and neglect. Only one memorial pre-dates this inquiry.	11
Migration/ family separation (includes child migrants)	Migration memorials focus on experiences of migration in the post-WW2 era. Includes the separation of families as a result of indentured labour practises and refugee experiences. Just over half of these memorials (6) commemorate the experiences of Child Migrants.	11 (6)
War	Memorials that acknowledge experiences of war, rather than death in war. Includes civilian and POW experiences, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk, which acknowledges the broad experience of the Vietnam War.	4
Natural disaster	These memorials sometimes include recognition of lives lost in natural disasters (usually bushfire), but their focus is on the shared experience of those who survived.	13
Other	Homophobic rape attack; loss of home and community; torture; famine; and cancer.	6

Table 1: Memorial topics. Note: some memorials are listed in more than one category. See Appendix for full list.

these children were exported to Australia as ‘good British stock’ expected to help with nation building.

Only one memorial directly acknowledges the experience of war that led people to seek refuge in Australia, although others hint at this background.¹¹ Of the other three memorials that acknowledge experience of war, one recognises the experience of civilians interned during World War II (WWII), one acknowledges Australian prisoners of war (POWs) held captive overseas, and the other is the ‘Vietnam veterans memorial walk’. These are all war experiences that are seen as having been ignored or not given enough recognition.

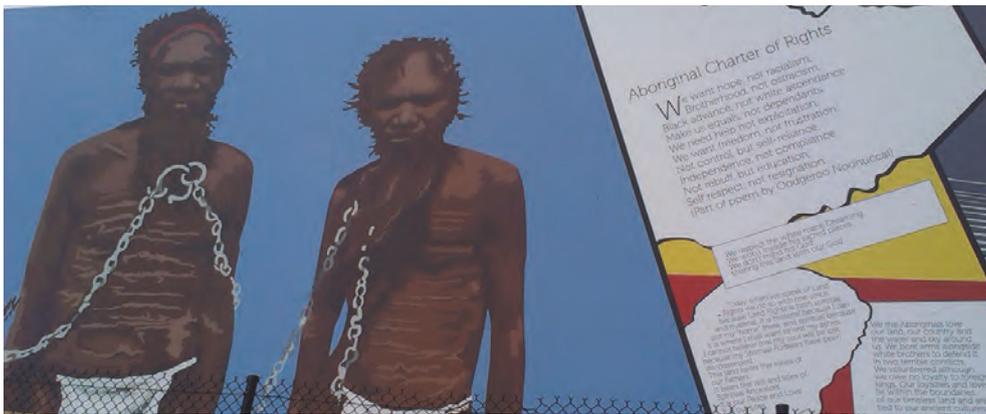
The 2003 Canberra bushfires marked a change in the way natural disasters are memorialised in Australia. Since then, the creation of public memorials has shifted from a focus on lives lost to the shared experience of living through catastrophe. In response to the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, the state government developed guidelines to assist communities to create memorials as part of the ‘community recovery’ effort. Conventions and protocols are being developed that acknowledge different levels of suffering. Vernacular memorials are sometimes developed in response to bushfires. As Australia’s extreme weather events increase each year, it remains to be seen whether formal or vernacular styles of commemoration will become the norm.

Early adventures in commemoration: the ‘Koori mural’

Australia’s early public commemorations of lived experience are not immediately recognisable as memorials. Many of those created in the latter part of the 20th century could be characterised as activist artworks, part of a body of art practice since the 1970s, which has ‘called for an art of place that encourages conversations about contemporary issues, including social memory’ (Till 2008, p. 102). The only example to survive from the 1980s is the ‘Koori mural’, completed in 1985. The mural is a large, billboard-style design, which gives a visual history of colonisation and the struggle for justice by Aboriginal people. The mural is important because of the role it played in giving a public voice to Aboriginal people at a time of political struggles over land rights and self-determination. Although not immediately recognisable as a memorial, mostly because of the billboard style, it nonetheless plays a role in bringing to mind difficult knowledge.

The ‘Koori mural’ grew out of a relationship between Megan Evans, a local non-Aboriginal art teacher, and the Aboriginal Advancement League (AAL) based

¹¹ Some plaques at the Adelaide Migration Museum do address the experience of war. These are discussed in Chapter 3.



Figures 8-11 (from top): 'Koori mural' (1985), view across St Georges Road, Thornbury, Victoria; 'Koori mural', detail showing reproduction of photograph by Hermann Klaatsch; 'Koori mural', front half, Thornbury, Victoria; 'Koori mural', new section by Gary Saunders (2013). All images courtesy Che Sutherland.

in the north-east Melbourne suburb of Northcote. Inspired by a young Aboriginal student and the everyday racism she saw him experience from his peers, in the early 1980s Evans developed a mural design to work on with the young man at Northcote High School. Having created a design that made use of Aboriginal motifs, Evans had sought approval from the AAL and, when the organisation moved into their new premises on St Georges Road, they approached her to design a banner for their hall. That conversation led to the ‘Koori mural’.

Despite the key role played by Evans, she does not consider the ‘Koori mural’ as her artwork. Evans developed the overall design but the elements were taken from other sources, and often from images found in rarely read books in the State Library of Victoria. For example, the striking image of the men with chains around their necks is a reproduction of a photograph by Hermann Klatsch in 1906 (Lydon 2012 p. 13). A committee of Aboriginal elders and leaders, Lin Onus, Molly Dyer, Ron Johnson, Ray Thomas and Elizabeth Hoffman, guided the design process. The wider AAL community also provided input (City of Darebin 2011). The result is a powerful artwork that expresses sorrow and struggle, as well as celebration. It is a memorial in the tradition of war memorials, in the sense that it acknowledges the pain and loss of a just struggle, but also celebrates the victory of survival.

Edmonds and Clarke, in their survey of Aboriginal art from south-east Australia, talk about the ‘Koori mural’ as a contemporary expression of the concept of *tanderrum*,¹² which is an expression of hospitality and the exchange of information with outsiders (2009 p.28). Certainly, for Evans herself the process of designing the mural was both educative and life changing. Part of her own motivation for taking on the project was the realisation that, even though the Northcote Council officially supported land rights and the AAL, the local non-Aboriginal community was largely ignorant of the history of settler-colonisation and the struggles faced by Aboriginal people. In her words, ‘There was a large Aboriginal population but no presence’ (M. Evans 2013, pers. comm., 13 February). The positive community response to the Northcote High School mural encouraged her to develop the idea for the ‘Koori mural’ as an artwork that used the tools of commercial advertising to express Aboriginal presence and history in the community.

Evans was able to source funding from the Australia Council of the Arts and other bodies, and Molly Dyer from the AAL put together a team including prominent Aboriginal artist Lin Onus and five emerging artists, Ray Thomas, Ian Johnson, Millie Yarran, Les Griggs and Elaine Trott. However, finding a site for the mural proved difficult, despite council support. The initial opposition consolidated

¹² *Tanderrum* is a word from the Kulin people of south-east Australia.

Evans's belief that the mural was necessary; it also proved unexpectedly beneficial. The mural eventually had to be created on a purpose-built freestanding wall on council land, an important reason why this work has survived for 30 years. In the 1990s, the mural was able to be relocated to its current St Georges Road site on the AAL's land, and in 2013 the faded images were given a new lease of life after being digitally restored. The digital version of the mural incorporates a new panel by Aboriginal artist Gary Saunders, added to the right of the iconic black, white and red head (Irwin 2013). While its adoption of a bold street-art style and its location on a busy main road work against the 'Koori mural's ability to create the sacred space associated with memorials, I would argue it has still achieved this, in part through its longevity as well as through its use of confronting imagery and evocative text. As part of the regeneration project, the Darebin City Council intends to create a plaque that will offer an interpretation of the mural design (C. Rogers 2014, pers. comm., 26 November).

In this story can be seen a pattern that emerges again and again in the development of memorials that commemorate lived experiences. Such developments are often driven initially by a memory activist who feels a personal interest in the story but is not someone characterised as a 'survivor'. This person builds relationships and networks with a wider group, particularly those more closely affected. Memorial projects are rarely instigated by survivors in the first instance but, in order to reach completion, the project must have the support of survivor groups. For a memorial to be built on public land, the project also needs some level of government support.

The 'Koori mural' again raises the question of how to measure the impact of a



Figure 12: 'Always was, always will be' (Rennie 2012), Taylor Square, Sydney, New South Wales.

memorial. In many ways, it is the epitome of a 'taken-for-granted' artwork, placed at the side of a busy intersection where few people would stop to look at it. However, another building in another city hints at the influence it may have had on at least some of those passers-by. On the corner of Sydney's Taylor Square (an important place for Australia's LGBTQI community and a few hundred metres from the Mary's Place commemorations discussed in Case Study 2) is a building painted all over in a pink, blue and black geometric design. The pink colour is well understood in this particular context as being associated with the oppression and resistance of LGBTQI people since World War II. The other components of the design are drawn from the Aboriginal heritage of the artist, Reko

Rennie, who grew up in Melbourne and cut his teeth on graffiti and street art. On the front of this bold building are the words, 'Always was, always will be' (Rennie 2012). Again, the meaning is contextual. Many Australians would know that the next line of this statement is, 'Aboriginal land'. Rennie credits 'Koori mural' as an important influence on him as an Aboriginal urban artist (Australian Centre for the Moving Image 2013). Like the 'Koori mural', 'Always was, always will be' is an act of reclaiming, but its boldness and confidence suggests that the right to claim the space is now taken for granted in a way it could not be in the 1980s. What is impossible to quantify is the impact 'Koori mural' has had on this sense of confidence.

Community and public art commemorations, 1990s and early 2000s.



Figure 13: 'Peace park mosaic', two of four freestanding panels at the War Memorial Reserve, Noble Park, Victoria. Image courtesy Peter Waldie.

There is a gap of almost ten years between the creation of the 'Koori mural' and the next oldest memorials. 1994 saw a flurry of activity in which three commemorative artworks were created. The 'Peace park mosaic' in Noble Park, south-east of Melbourne is another community art project. Artist and museum curator Kitty Owens, then a recent university graduate, led an oral history project working with young refugees and migrants from the local area. They included Christine Mae Chua, DC June Isiderio, Carlo Rivas, Hawaa Fikak, Wajesta Ezadyar, Chan Chiem, Siemchou Vongsikeo and Liam Chi Dang. At the time, the Springvale Migrant Hostel had only recently closed, so it seems likely that some of the participants had passed through its doors (see Case Study 4). The mosaic mural that grew from the project is a war memorial with a difference, expressing the experience of conflict from the perspective of civilians. The printed tile plaque reads:

This mural is dedicated to the friends and relatives of this area who died in war and to those people we have been separated from in the process of migration.

It is also a celebration of peace (City of Greater Darebin 2004).

The plaque is primarily dedicated to those who died, showing the hierarchy of loss that is still a part of public commemorations. However, it also acknowledges another form of loss; that caused by separation. The images on the mural depict some of the stories recounted in the oral history project, and give an insight into the experience of living through war.

Like the ‘Koori mural’, the original artwork has survived because the wider community accepted it and recognised its value. Originally attached to the wall of the Noble Park Returned and Services League (RSL), it was removed when the building was renovated in 2003 — but reconfigured as four separate panels, with part of the original mosaic on each panel. Ann Clark and Libby McKinnon had also been involved as leaders in the original project, and McKinnon, a mosaic artist, was engaged to undertake restoration work. Although it does not have the same sense of storytelling as the original artwork, it still manages to convey the sense of loss and the pain of separation caused by war.

What the ‘Koori mural’ and the ‘Peace park mosaic’ seem to have in common is a public that connects with and feels a sense of ownership of the work. It is this that has led the local councils to invest in retaining and restoring them, long after the lifespan of many other community artworks. The choice of form and medium has also played a role in their survival. It seems safe to assume that other community projects around Australia also resulted in commemorative artworks that acknowledged difficult or painful experiences. For example, a ‘Commemorative pathways’ community project was undertaken in 1997 in the wake of a bushfire and resulted in a series of four paths at sites in the Victorian country towns of Ferntree Gully, Ferny Creek, Sassafra and Kalorama. The paths incorporated pavers carved, engraved and painted by the locals at community workshops. Having faded over time, they are hidden in plain sight, raising the question of how many other such community artworks still exist. Some may have been physically destroyed, either through neglect, accident or purposeful destruction, while others have simply been forgotten.



Figure 14: 'Peace park mosaic', section depicting loss through separation. Image courtesy Peter Waldie.

Having faded over time, they are hidden in plain sight, raising the question of how many other such community artworks still exist. Some may have been physically destroyed, either through neglect, accident or purposeful destruction, while others have simply been forgotten.

A number of other memorials created in the 1990s can be characterised as public rather than community artworks. From the 1970s onwards, cities around the world adopted public art policies that incorporated public art into urban development (Miles 1997). By the 1990s, most states and many local governments around Australia

had adopted ‘per cent for art’ schemes, meaning that a percentage of the budget for any capital works scheme was put aside for art, and such practices continue today (Atkinson-Phillips 2001). Often, the artworks funded through such schemes are commissioned from individual artists or, in the case of a large-scale redevelopment, artists working with an architectural team. The artworks created in such contexts are often ‘site specific’, meaning they respond to the location in which the finished work will be located. This can be a response to the physical environment, or to the history of the site. A number of artists and writers in the 1990s criticised these schemes as leading to the appropriation of working class and marginalised histories for the benefit of developers who were pushing such people out of the neighbourhood (Miles 1997 pp. 104–31; see also Baca 1995). An alternative reading is that these schemes gave artists access to public space to make visible stories that had previously been marginalised.

‘Maria’s story’ by Julie Shiels (2003) is part of a series of public artworks in south Melbourne that explore local stories and memories of place. It was created when the area was going through a time of gentrification,¹³ and sought to acknowledge and value long-term residents who were becoming marginalised in this process (Mulligan, 2005). In the context of the above discussion, an alternative reading is that the project appropriated the experiences of working class and other marginalised groups to make the now gentrified area more ‘interesting’ for newer, wealthier residents. This sculpture, cast in bronze, is a small chair with a pair of small girl’s shoes placed side-by-side underneath. The seat of the chair is inscribed with part of the life story of Maria Starcevic, a local community leader, also known as Diamond Lil. Maria was raised in the St Vincent’s Girls’ Orphanage. The building where she spent part of her childhood is now the MacKillop Family Services and it takes over a large block just behind the artwork. The text explains that the nuns did not tell Maria she was Aboriginal. It also says she was considered uncontrollable and eventually ran away.



Figure 15: ‘Maria’s story’ by Julie Shiels (2002), bronze sculpture of chair and shoes, South Melbourne, Victoria.



Figure 16: ‘Maria’s story’ by Julie Shiels (2002), view of memory space with bench seating and rosemary bushes.

¹³ See Mills 1993 for a discussion of the ‘Myths and meanings of gentrification’.

Despite the tragic elements of her life story, the sculpture allows Maria's own voice and sense of agency to come through. 'Maria's story' is the only memorial, apart from the 'Lamp for Mary' (2010), that acknowledges an individual experience. It does not attempt to universalise Maria's story but the artwork itself and the way it is framed work to connect that story with the broader histories of the Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians.

'Maria's story' plays with the monumental tradition through the use of the bronze figurative sculpture. Instead of representing Maria/Lil, only the chair and her shoes are left behind, which allows the meaning of the work to open up. The chair and the shoes speak of loneliness and confinement. The handwriting engraved into the seat replicates the copperplate script taught by the nuns, adding to the sense of entrapment that contrasts with the spontaneity of Maria's voice in the text. Originally, the sculpture was framed by a neat, rectangular green space, edged on the roadside by a hedge of rosemary bushes, and on the other side with three wooden benches. However, when I visited in January 2014, the hedges were overgrown and covered the artwork signage. The wooden benches were dilapidated and the shoes filled with garden debris. The chair sculpture was originally placed in the corner of the green space in order to create a sense of the isolation Maria experienced in her childhood; the sculpture's subsequent neglect only serves to underline that meaning.

'Maria's story' and other public artworks have been included in this research where there is evidence that they are understood by others to be a memorial. This has been on the advice of local government representatives, through work by other researchers, or through multiple informal conversations. The majority of these artworks adopt memorial conventions — for example, in the case of 'Maria's story', the use of rosemary bushes, a symbol of remembrance, and the creation of a sacralised space around the work. I discuss a number of these projects in more detail in Chapter 6.

Embracing traditional forms

In terms of quantity, the number of memorials created in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s is fairly consistent (Table 2). The big difference from the mid 1990s to the 2000s is the increase in formal memorials, rather than community or public artworks that play a commemorative role. By formal memorials, I mean memorials that claim the title and status of memorial. The formal memorials of

Decade	Total # of memorial sites created	Formally recognised as memorial	Commemorative public art/ community art/ other
1990s (from 1994)	20	12	8
2000s	28	21	7
2010s (to 2015)	22	16	4

Table 2: Memorials by decade of dedication.

the 1990s use traditional memorial forms such as plinths, simple plaques and bronze figurative sculpture.

The move towards the creation of formal memorials to lived experiences begins with the plaque. One reason for this may be that plaques are relatively inexpensive to create. Perhaps more importantly, when considering the development of a new genre of commemoration, they represent a relatively minor incursion into the memorial tradition. By this I mean that plaques are often used as historical markers, and the line at which they move from being ‘just’ a historical marker and becoming a memorial can be hard to judge. The text, the choice of materials for the plaque itself and the location all play a role. For example, Colebrook Reconciliation Park in South Australia, now one of the most extensive memorials to the Stolen Generations, began with a simple idea to place a plaque at the site to acknowledge the existence of the former Colebrook Home for Aboriginal Children. The original plaque uses very restrained wording and, if the commemoration of Colebrook relied solely on the plaque and rock unveiled in 1997, it is debatable whether it could be considered a memorial rather than a historic marker. However, the layering of the site with sculptures and other more emotive text has now created an experiential memorial space, which draws heavily on traditional forms but is not traditional in feeling.

A plaque used in Brisbane in 1998 to respond to the story of the Stolen Generations shows no such restraint. Circular in design, around the top edge are the words, ‘They took the children away, Our souls will cry no more, For now we are going home’ (Brisbane City Council 1998). The centre of the plaque is an abstract image of two people comforting each other and another smaller figure is in the background. The plaque also includes a brief history of Australian child removal policies and a description of an apology event associated with the plaque’s dedication:

On this site in 1998, a ceremony was held at which the people of Brisbane, civic, church and community leaders acknowledged the hurt and sorrow caused to these children and their families, sought

their forgiveness, and pledged themselves to the process of reconciliation and cultural understanding. (Brisbane City Council 1998)

Within the compact space of the plaque, then, is contained the story of the event being commemorated and the use of artistic expression to create a moment of encounter. Importantly, such plaques are also intricately connected with the ritual of apology and acknowledgment, a subject I will return to. Six of these plaques were installed in locations across Brisbane in February and March 1998. Each place was chosen as a site of significance to the Stolen Generations, and each plaque is installed in a slightly different way, usually attached to a boulder and often accompanied by seating. As part of the installation of each plaque, a ceremony involving the local church and civic leaders was held. This is probably the earliest Australian example of the use of a memorial by government to offer symbolic reparation for past human rights abuses. I discuss this example further in Chapter 7.

The majority of the formal memorials created in Australia in the late 1990s (nine of 11) commemorate the experiences of the Stolen Generations. It is tempting to see these memorials as developing out of *Bringing them home: report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families*, published in 1997. However, it is probably more accurate



Figure 17: Stolen Generations monument, George Brown Darwin Botanical Gardens, Northern Territory. Image courtesy Richard Telfer.

to say that the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) inquiry, which resulted in the report, was part of a broader movement to recognise the history of separation of Aboriginal families in Australia. Certainly official, state-funded memory work opened up the space for this history to enter the mainstream public sphere. The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which was an important part of the impetus for the HREOC inquiry, found that 43 of the 99 people whose deaths it had investigated had been part of what is now known as the Stolen Generations (HREOC 1997, p. 15). The Hawke/Keating Government of the late 1980s and early 1990s also began

to respond to Aboriginal activism, establishing the Native Title Tribunal and declaring 1991–2001 the Decade of Reconciliation.

The first Stolen Generations memorial, now part of the Colebrook Reconciliation Park, is located at the site of an institution in South Australia that had housed Aboriginal children. It was dedicated just days after *Bringing them home* was tabled in the Australian Parliament. This timing was planned to coincide with the already established Reconciliation Week. The event planning was not specifically influenced by *Bringing them home* but the resultant publicity had a major influence on the development of the memory site. Importantly, it resulted in financial donations, which provided the funds for the development of the site, including the creation of two major sculptures that make use of traditional memorial forms — a fountain and a bronze figure.

Sabine Marschall offers two possible interpretations of post-colonial monuments that adopt European visual forms. The first, taken from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, is that within the logic of colonisation, colonised peoples need to adopt the language of the colonised in order to ‘speak’ (Marschall 2003, p. 317). Her alternative reading offers more agency to a post-colonial subject who consciously adopts the language of the powerful. In this reading, “The post-colonial agent expresses him/herself in similar ways, appropriating the same means utilised by the coloniser in order to “write back”” (Marschall 2003, p. 318). This approach is most obvious in the Stolen Generations memorial in Darwin’s Botanical Gardens, installed by the Northern Territory Stolen Generation Aboriginal Incorporation in 2005. A large stone monolith covered in plaques on four sides, it demands to be taken seriously. For individuals and groups working for acknowledgment of lived experiences of loss and trauma, the adoption of traditional memorial forms offers a visual way to suggest that their suffering is equivalent to that associated with death.

Retrospective commemoration

Five of the memorials to lived experiences created in the 1990s are part of a broader trend identified by Ashton, Hamilton and Searby (2012, p.9) of retrospective commemoration since the 1980s, and reflect a movement to acknowledge marginalised settler-colonial history influenced by the events of 1988 (which saw Australia’s bicentennial celebrations trigger debate on Australian national identity, Aboriginal rights, historical interpretation and multiculturalism). All of these retrospective memorials are transnational in focus.

A ‘Garden of reflection’ is located in what was originally Yard 3 of the Cascades Female Factory in Hobart, Tasmania, one of the 11 dispersed Australian convict



Figure 18: 'Garden of reflection' (1995) and new plaque (2009), Cascades Female Factory, South Hobart, Tasmania. Image courtesy Denise Savage.



Figure 19: Cascades Female Factory view from 'Garden of reflection' across Yard 3. Image courtesy Denise Savage.

sites that are part of the World Heritage List. It is dedicated to the women and children that passed through the Female Factory's doors. The garden dates back to 1995, when that part of the Female Factory was owned by a commercial business that made Island Produce Confectionery in the building on the site. This origin hints at the link between heritage tourism and commemoration. The Cascades Female Factory is now managed and promoted alongside the two other Tasmanian sites that form part of the World Heritage listing, the Port Arthur penal settlement and the Coal Mines Historic Site, a prison within a prison. All three sites could be characterised as memorial museums (Williams 2007), a memory approach that is discussed further in Chapter 3. The 'Garden of reflection' is a secluded and sacralised space in the outdoor courtyard (Yard 3) of the Female Factory

site. In 2009, a new plaque and commemorative tree were planted by the then Governor General of Australia, Quentin Bryce, which suggests a significant level of public engagement with the memorial. The plaque directs visitors to understand the garden as a mourning space. Since the redevelopment of the Female Factory as part of the World Heritage site, the 'Garden of reflection' has not been given prominence. A staff member at the museum expressed the view that the whole site is now a museum, and the garden sits uneasily with the broader direction of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA), which now manages the site.

Another retrospective memorial is '*An Leacht cuimhneachain Astralach I gcomoradh an Ghorta Mhoir I nEirinn*' or the 'Australian monument to the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852)' (Valamanesh & Valamanesh 1999). It is part of a network of transnational memorials that commemorate Irish history from various perspectives (Kelleher 2002). In this case, the Australian perspective means that the focus is on those who survived the famine and who came to Australia as migrants. The location at the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney draws attention to the stories of the 4114 orphan girls who were housed there on arrival. Their Australian

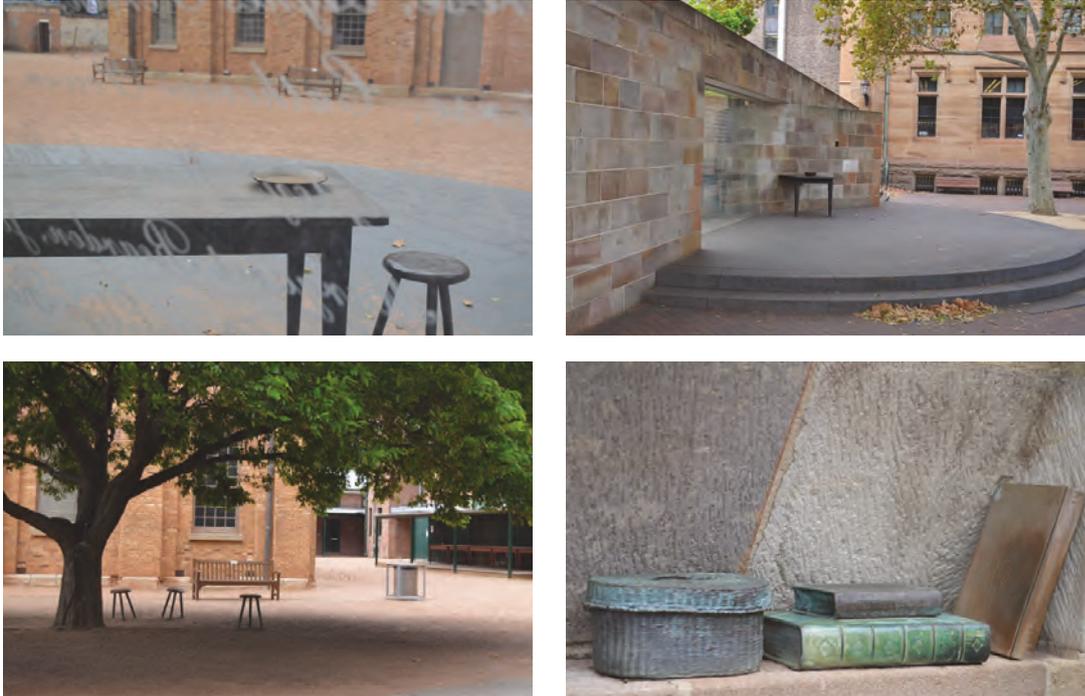
experience was in many ways similar to that of the women in the Cascades Female Factory, even though they had not been transported as convicts.

The memorial was created in response to a challenge from the then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, during a visit to Sydney in March 1995, the time of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the famine. Finally dedicated in 1999 at a cost of A\$350,000, it remains one of the most expensive of this group of memorials due to: the use of high-quality materials including cast bronze and etched glass; and the need to reconfigure one of the limestone walls of the barracks courtyard. However, this cost is modest in comparison to the New York ‘Hunger memorial’ designed by Brian Tolle and landscape architect Gail Wittwer-Laird at a reported cost of US\$5 million (Kelleher 2002, p. 269). The funds were raised by a combination of government and private donations, and the ability to meet the relatively high budget is indicative of the high profile of the Irish Famine commemorations internationally, as well as the strength of Australia’s Irish community’s continuing identification with the country of their ancestors. An annual memorial service held at the site is attended by many people with Irish ancestry, despite the fact that the dominant culture in Australia is often described as ‘Anglo-Celtic’, eliding the class and cultural differences between peoples from different parts of the former ‘British Isles’.

‘An Gorta Mor’ is a major work designed by internationally recognised artists Hossein and Angela Valamanesh. Designed to cut through one of the exterior walls of the barracks courtyard, the memorial creates an outside and inside story. Outside the relative sanctuary of the barracks is hunger, symbolised by a bowl that is missing its bottom and a few shrivelled potatoes on a shelf. The table cuts through the middle of the wall and a sheet of glass, which allows memorial participants to look through to the other side, is inscribed with names of some of the migrant women. Small holes in the wall also allow glimpses of the inside of the barracks. On the other side of the wall, the table is set with an institutional plate and cutlery. A shelf displays simple comforts: a needlework box and books. Nearby, in the shade of a mature tree, are three three-legged stools. Participants can sit on the stools and listen to a soundscape in Gaelic by Paul Carter.

The memorial is part of a transnational memory project that saw a proliferation of memorials to the Irish famine in the 1990s.¹⁴ However, it tells the story in its own way. Unlike the memorials in Ireland, this memorial does not focus on those who died in the ‘great hunger’ but on those who survived. However, in contrast to

¹⁴ Until the official 150th anniversary of the famine, 1995–1997, there were only a handful of memorials, and all were located within Ireland itself (Kelleher 2002).



Figures 20–23 (clockwise from top left): ‘The Australian monument to the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852)’ (Valamanesh, Valamanesh & Carter 1999), glass panel etched with names of Irish women who migrated to Australia, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, New South Wales; ‘Monument to the Great Irish Famine’, street view; ‘Monument to the Great Irish Famine’ view of tree with stools where soundscape plays; ‘Monument to the Great Irish Famine’, detail, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, New South Wales.

North American memorials in Boston and elsewhere, which have been criticised for their too-celebratory depiction of the migration experience, the memorial deals sensitively with the challenges of migration. The Australian side of the wall is more comfortable than the outside, but is not un-problematically triumphant. The three-legged stools are the furniture of the poor, and the dinner setting is a reminder of the institutionalisation that Irish women were subjected to on arrival in Australia.

What is interesting about this memorial in the Australian context is that it is one of the first memorials to lived experience to demonstrate an ability and willingness to embrace complex imagery and to experiment with memorial forms. The relatively high budget and profile of the project attracted internationally recognised artists, and required that the finished work could stand up to critical scrutiny. The interpretive nature of the artwork suggests that Australians in the 1990s were not unaware of international trends towards using more abstract artistic forms to engage with memory. Hossein Valamanesh had dealt with questions of belonging and migration in his art practice for many years before. The association of the Irish famine with the traditional focus of memorials — death — and the famine’s high international profile in the years set aside to celebrate its 150th anniversary, meant the case for the memorial was relatively easy to make. At the

same time, resistance to placing the memorial in the more prominent front wall led to its placement in its current, less visible, location (McIntyre 2012), indicating that the need for acknowledgment was not universally accepted.

Government-funded memorials

‘An Gorta Mor’ is the earliest example of the federal government providing funding for a memorial to lived experience. This type of situation, where the government provides funding, but a separate group or a state government body develops the memorial, is the most common pattern. A number of the migration memorials discussed in Chapter 4 have been assisted by grant funding from the Australian Government. The only memorial in Australia both initiated and funded by the federal government is Reconciliation Place in Canberra, and that was developed by the National Capital Authority.¹⁵ In response to recommendations of the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee (SCARC) after two separate inquiries — into child migration (SCARC 2001) and children in institutional care (SCARC 2004), the federal government made funds available to each Australian state towards the costs of public memorials. Memorials have been created in each state, but some of the projects pre-date the federal funding, and the final cost of the majority of the projects was significantly higher than the amount provided.

Government-funded projects often follow a particular bureaucratic process, although with variations. Often, a call for expressions of interest is advertised to artists and other design professionals who might be interested in taking on the project. This follows practices for other types of public artworks. The artist is selected by a committee appointed by the funding body. The involvement of survivors varies, and is often limited to an advisory role.

Funding support for commemorations of natural disaster is increasingly provided as part of a ‘recovery’ package. Natural disaster memorials often acknowledge the contribution of national and state governments, but these are usually administered within the local government area where the event took place. While these funds are administered by the state, they can include private donations made to special disaster funds.

Geography of remembrance

The placing of commemoration is important. As Chilla Bulbeck’s research into Australia’s memorials in the 1980s identified, there is a spatial hierarchy when it comes to the placement of monuments. Monuments that commemorate the

¹⁵ Specifically, within the larger Reconciliation Place monument (2001) there are two ‘slivers’ that commemorate the experiences of the Stolen Generations, both dedicated in 2004, see Chapter 7.

'great men' (and queens) most likely to be found in the highly visible, symbolic spaces of Australia's state and national capitals. Commemorations of 'the rest of us' are more likely to be elsewhere, in 'the friendly surrounds of parks and gardens, or on private property or lonely roadsides' (Bulbeck 1991, p.414). Ashton and Hamilton identify a trend in public memorials from the late 20th century to locate them as close as possible to the place of death (2008, p.4). So what about these monu-memorials, which serve a dual purpose of mourning and reminding? Are they, too, more likely to be found as close as possible to the place where a painful past was experienced? Are these commemorations of shared experiences of 'ordinary' people able to counter the symbolic hierarchy of space? Are they more likely to be found in highly visible places of capital cities, or tucked away in suburban parks? The answer is, it depends.

Location is often one of the most controversial and widely contested aspects of any memorial. A public artwork to commemorate a 2010 bushfire in Toodyay, Western Australia, did not go ahead after disagreements about location delayed the project past the time frame the artist could make themselves available (Shire of Toodyay 2014, pers. comm., 1 May). Unlike mass death, which can often happen in very high-profile locations, the types of lived experiences considered appropriate for public commemoration have not often taken place in public. Human rights abuses are likely to be committed away from the public gaze, and natural disasters are more likely to affect rural areas.

I have argued that memorialisation requires the creation of sacred space. However, this does not mean that the kind of behaviour expected at these particular kinds of memorials is necessarily solemn. Even war memorials have often been used as social meeting places, somewhere to sit and eat your lunch, and memorials that commemorate lived experience are likely to be integrated into the everyday fabric of a city or town. Those that are more urban are less likely to use overt symbols of sacredness and more likely to draw on experiential aspects of their design so that visitors can engage with the memorial on whatever level they choose. As discussed in the second half of this dissertation, the cultural 'work' the memorial is expected to do will influence the choice of location as well as the kind of memorial space that is created.

Broadly, there are three different types of places in which the memorials identified in this project are located:

1. everyday urban spaces
2. symbolic spaces
3. heritage sites

State/ Territory	City Centre of State or Na- tional Capital.	Suburb of State or National Capital	City Centre or Suburb, Regional City	Town Centre or Suburbs, Rural Town	Botanical Garden/ Arbore- tum	Rural/ Remote	
ACT		1			1		2
NSW	4	4		4	3		15
Victoria	4	7	2	6	1	1	21
Queensland	3	5	2	1		2	13
South Australia	2	4	1				7
Western Australia	3	1	3	1	1		9
Tasmania	1	1		1	2		5
Northern Territory		1			1	2	4
	17	24	8	13	9	5	76

Table 3: Locations of public memorials in each Australian state and territory.

By ‘everyday’ spaces, I mean places where people pass by during the business of daily life, and where the majority of visitors will pass on foot doing ordinary things, like going to work or doing their shopping. Symbolic spaces are those set aside from the everyday, such as botanical gardens or areas where a number of memorials are grouped together. The most obvious and high-profile use of a symbolic space for a memorial to lived experience is Reconciliation Place in Canberra, located within the ‘parliamentary triangle’ of the national capital. An example of an everyday space would be the ‘Lamp for Mary’, located in a small laneway named Mary’s Place on the side of a pub in Surry Hills, NSW. By contrasting these two types of places, I do not deny that the choice of an everyday location for a memorial can also be highly symbolic. For instance, Mary’s Place is the laneway in which Mary, a young lesbian woman, was raped in January 1997. The laneway was understood as an important place where LGBTIQI people gathered at Mardi Gras and where they had a right to feel safe. Its location close to Taylor Square and Oxford Street, places almost synonymous with the Gay Pride movement in Sydney, add to its importance. Nonetheless, the laneway is an everyday space in the sense that it is used by various groups on a daily basis. Memorials located in everyday spaces do not always have the high status associated with traditional memorials, such as war memorials. They are less likely to have

visitors that come to see them on purpose and more likely to be stumbled up, passed by, and perhaps taken for granted.

Symbolic spaces are most often areas set aside for leisure or ceremonial occasions, such as parks or botanical gardens. They can also be spaces that are associated with the symbols of state power. For example, the 'Sorry space' (2014) in South Moran, Victoria, is located in an area off to the side of the main flagpole area outside the City of Whittlesea's offices. Council workers and visitors might pass the memorial regularly, but the 'Sorry Space' is set aside as special, and its location near the flagpoles gives it a sense of status.

Memorials can be associated with heritage sites in two ways. The first is through co-location with an existing site. For example, the majority of state-funded memorials are co-located with a state museum. Research by Aston and Hamilton (2012, p. 78) has shown that Australians have a high level of trust in museums as cultural institutions. Placing memorials for marginalised groups such as Child Migrants and Forgotten Australians alongside such trusted institutions allows these potentially contested objects to draw on their cultural authority. Other memorials are placed at sites where human rights abuses took place, and where memory activists have worked or are working towards, having the site recognised as a heritage site.

The experience of memorials to lived experience

The distinctions between place types are not always clear-cut; however, the immediate spatial context of a memorial makes a difference to the way it is experienced. Put simply, how we arrive at a memorial will have an impact on the meaning it has. For example, the 'Unfolding lives' memorial in Perth, Western Australia, which commemorates the experiences of people in state care, is located on a raised grass area outside the WA Museum. This location gives it symbolic value, as does its elevation above the main pedestrian pathway. At the same time, it is near a bus stop used by many city commuters, and would be experienced by people as part of their everyday commute. For other visitors, its location within the Perth Cultural Centre means it is experienced as part of their leisure-time visits to the city. Its frequent use by children as a climbing frame attests to the difficulty many visitors seem to have in distinguishing the memorial from the playground on the other side of the museum's entrance.

Most of the memorials considered in this survey have some element of 'everydayness' to them, and this leads to an essential strangeness about memorial places: those that are located in highly symbolic landscapes risk being cut off from everyday life and rarely visited, while those that are integrated into the everyday

become invisible through overfamiliarity. Sometimes memorials may be ignored because people do not wish to engage with the history they represent. Another challenge is the difficulty in negotiating the social expectations of an encounter with sacred space. A purposeful memorial participant may expect to enter into a solemn frame of mind when they remember the events of the past, but it is unlikely that such sadness or solemnity can be maintained by people who pass a memorial each day on their way to work.

As mentioned above, the Canberra bushfires of 2003 marked a shift in the way natural disasters are commemorated in Australia. The 'ACT bushfire memorial' is an experiential mourning space located in the Stromlo Forest Park. While it has a special plaque dedicated to those who died in the fire, the overall memory



Figure 24: 'ACT bushfire memorial', detail of memory posts. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant.



Figure 25: 'ACT bushfire memorial', brick detail. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant.



Figure 26: 'ACT bushfire memorial', wall made of bricks commemorating individual loss. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant.



Figure 27: 'ACT bushfire memorial' (Horwitz, Steel & Jolly 2006) view of central memory space, Stromlo Forest Park, Australian Capital Territory. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant.

space is about the shared experience of fire. This approach has been repeated for memorials commemorating the Black Saturday bushfires. For example, the 'Garden of reflection' commemorates the experience of the fires at Kinglake West, a small town in rural Victoria where a number of people died in the fire. The entry is marked by a quote from Lewis Carol that points to the impact the fires had on people's lives: 'I can't go back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.'

This shift to the commemoration of experience has been accompanied by a shift in the experience of commemoration. Although earlier memorials to lived experience continued to draw on traditional forms and materials, later examples are more likely to be commissioned public artworks. Rather than stand-alone sculptures, these are often experiential memory spaces. In other words, they tend to use a combination of visual elements and text to create a space that requires some kind of movement in order to be experienced fully.

Online presence

Memorials exist in digital form as well as materially. However, just as some memorials are in more high-profile locations than others, some memorials have a stronger online presence. Very few memorials have no digital footprint at all. The online presence of the Kanaka memorial in the remote Queensland town of Fishery Falls is limited to a listing on the Monuments Australia crowd-sourced database, my own listing on the www.notacelebration.blogspot.com blog, and a conference poster by Julie Mitchell, a researcher from Flinders University (Mitchell 2014). So far, no bloggers seem to have stumbled across this object and felt the need to blog about it, and the Cairns Regional Council's website contains no information about the project. Other memorials are connected to substantial digital projects. Generally, those that are well funded and are national in scope (discussed in Chapter 4) fall into this category. Many of these memorials, including the 'Enterprise tribute garden' and the 'Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial', started life online, with the website being the starting point for their fundraising or awareness-raising efforts. Many of the memorials that are located in capital cities or well-resourced local government areas are included on public art walking trails where they are incorporated as tourist attractions.

Conclusion

Memorials to lived experience have developed as a genre in the 30 years from 1985 to 2015. Over that time, conventions have emerged, and standard processes and protocols have developed around the creation of memorials. In the 1990s, community art projects and site-specific public artworks were created that explored various subjects related to loss, including the loss of home, the

experience of colonisation, civilian experiences of war and the experience of childhood institutionalisation. Some of these public artworks have survived as memorials, and a number can now be seen as fitting within a broader theme that, over time, has become an accepted topic for formal memorials. The majority of memorials created since the early 2000s have been initiated by governments using increasingly bureaucratised processes.

Governments at all levels (in Australia this means federal, state and local government) have embraced the creation of public memorials as acts of symbolic reparation, in acknowledgment of human rights abuse. However, this only happens as a result of grassroots activism and government inquiries. To date, topics that have been considered worthy of government-funded memorials as symbolic reparation are the separation of Aboriginal children from their families (the Stolen Generations); child migrations schemes of the 20th century; institutionalisation and abuse of children in state care in the 20th century (the Forgotten Australians); and forced adoption. The north-eastern state of Queensland has begun to address the history of the 'Kanakas'; South Sea Islanders brought to work on the sugar plantations in slavery-like conditions. So far, all of the memorials that commemorate that experience are local rather than state government-funded projects. Only one memorial commemorating the experience of forced adoption has been created, in Tasmania. However, conversations have been held with survivor groups in other states to discuss whether they would find this helpful. The link between witness citizenship and symbolic reparations is discussed in Chapter 7. Memorials to colonisation, war and migration are rarely instigated by the state, although a number have been created or supported by state-funded agencies. These memorials can all be seen as an expansion of the national story of settler-colonisation in the years since 1988. This topic is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5.

Case Study 2.

Commemorating a rape

In January 1996, a young, lesbian woman named Mary was verbally abused and physically and sexually assaulted in a laneway in Surry Hills, an inner suburb of Sydney. She was attacked after attending a female-only lesbian night at Kinsella's bar. Two men who had been denied entry to the pub followed her down the street when she left the club, walking a few steps behind her and calling out homophobic abuse. She passed by the Beresford Hotel, a venue with a strong identity as a gay male pub. But rather than entering the male-only space, Mary turned into Flood Lane to reach her car. It was here her abusers caught up with her, bashed her and raped her. The verbal, homophobic abuse continued throughout the physical attack (*Mary's Place* 1998). This case study compares two place-based responses to that experience of homophobic violence. The first response, developed in the immediate aftermath of the attack, was led by volunteers under the auspices of a community organisation, the Anti-Violence Project (AVP). One of the outcomes of this response was a painted mural, which was destroyed in 2008. Its replacement was a high-profile public artwork developed through a process overseen by the City of Sydney. Through a comparison of the similarities and differences of the two responses, this case study offers some insights into the way place-based commemorations of lived experiences have become bureaucratised forms of state intervention. It also demonstrates some of the ways the finished product of memorialisation is influenced by the social and political context in which the commemoration takes place.

The Mary's Place project was set up in the months following Mary's attack and ran from 1996–1998. It was initiated by Nicole Asquith and Liza-Mare Syron from the AVP, a local community organisation, and funded by the South Sydney Council. The main project team also included local art curator Sinead Roarty and Mary.¹⁶ Outcomes of the project were: the renaming of the laneway where Mary's attack took place, from Flood Lane to Mary's Place; new bylaws to limit parking in the laneway; the installation of a new mirror and improved lighting in the laneway; and mural artworks painted on the road surface. My research for this case study involved interviews with Nicole Asquith, Liza-Mare Syron and Sinead Roarty but not with Mary. Quotes from Mary are taken from the Melissa Lee documentary project, *Mary's Place* (1998). The material in the documentary

¹⁶ Mary's full name is on public record, but I have chosen not to use it here. With this one exception, throughout this dissertation I use the full or first name of people who I have spoken to directly, and the full name or surname of people when I am referencing other sources.

corroborates statements made by the other participants about Mary's involvement and motivation.

In 2008, the Mary's Place laneway was resurfaced and the mural artworks were destroyed. The City of Sydney commissioned a new public artwork to take its place, the 'Lamp for Mary' (2010) by Australian artist Mikala Dwyer, with words by internationally renowned poet and academic Michael Taussig (2011). I conducted interviews with Mikala Dwyer, with council workers from the LGBTIQ community liaison and public art teams, and with former City of Sydney public art worker Danella Bennett. Mary was involved in the second project, but again I did not interview her about her involvement. Mary was made aware of the research project, via the City of Sydney, but did not choose to participate.

Mary's Place project, 1996–1998

Rape is an everyday occurrence in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012 Personal Safety Survey found that 17 per cent of women and 4 per cent of men have experienced sexual assault from the age of 15, and these statistics have been relatively consistent since the survey was first introduced in the 1990s. In contrast to the attack on Mary, most rape occurs in private and is a crime that is usually carried out by someone known to the victim. Nonetheless, there are no other memorials in Australia that commemorate the experience of rape, which raises questions about why this particular event drew such a response.

The mid 1990s were an important time for Sydney's gay and lesbian community.¹⁷ There was increasing social acceptance of homosexuality, in part driven by increased visibility. In 1994, two successful Australian movies, *Priscilla queen of the desert* and *The sum of us*, featured high-profile actors in gay, transsexual and transgender roles. The Sydney gay and lesbian mardi gras, which began in 1978 as a solidarity protest on the anniversary of the New York Stonewall riots, had become an increasingly accepted event. A report in the *Sydney morning herald* in January 1996 identifies the mardi gras as a 'fixture' in the Sydney calendar, and the previous year's official party CD as one of the biggest-selling dance albums in Australia (Hornery 1996). At the same time, the increased visibility of gay and lesbian people meant ingrained homophobic attitudes were confronted, sometimes with tragic results. As was the case in the US, HIV-AIDS had mobilised the gay and lesbian community. By the 1990s, the epidemic was no longer at

¹⁷ A note about terminology. Today, many people used the acronym LGBTIQ to describe gender diverse people (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer). In the 1990s, the most prevalent term was 'gay and lesbian'. Throughout this case study, I will use 'gay and lesbian' to refer to that community in the 1990s, and LGBTIQ to refer to the community as it has emerged in the 2000s.

its height, but antiretroviral drugs were not yet widely available, and the disease was a visible presence. Homophobic violence was commonplace. At the time of writing, a cold-case review is examining 88 possible 'gay hate' deaths from the 1970s to the 1990s, which at the time were often dismissed by police as suicide or 'misadventure', or simply as opportunist crimes (Benny-Morrison 2016). By the mid 1990s, the term 'hate crime' was increasingly used to describe violence directed at gay and lesbian people. Violence was increasingly politicised, with gay and lesbian vigilante groups known as 'street watch' proactively patrolling 'gay and lesbian' neighbourhoods in response.

In this context, the gay and lesbian AVP was set up in response to research by the Equal Opportunities Commission, which identified a high incidence of street violence. It was funded by the South Sydney Council. In January 1996, the time of Mary's attack, the AVP employed two workers, Bruce Grant, whose role focused on education and awareness raising, and Nicole Asquith, a client advocate. Nicole Asquith reported that the AVP received around 300 calls a year, with the vast majority of assaults taking place around the day of the mardi gras. Most of the street violence was focused around the Taylor Square area of Darlinghurst, a well-known 'enclave' for gay and lesbian people.

The response to Mary's attack centred around practices of publicity. The attack took place in the street, and so in that sense it was already public; however, that publicness was limited in two important ways. Firstly, Mary was attacked behind a parked car in a dark laneway, not in the middle of a big open space. Flood Lane was a narrow, crooked, badly lit street. This allowed the attack to take place away from the view of 'the public'. Yet the laneway's borderline publicness was also one reason why the response of the gay and lesbian community or counterpublic was able to engage so directly with the site of the attack. The Beresford Hotel, which is on the corner of Flood Lane/Mary's Place, is a well-known gay-friendly pub and at the time was a financial supporter of the AVP. So the gay and lesbian counterpublic already had a connection to the space, which was used as a meeting place, particularly around Mardi Gras. However, this connection was not 'ownership'. Apart from local residents, the laneway was also regularly used by homeless people, due to the close proximity of both Wesley Mission's Edgar Eager Lodge and the St Michael's Anglican Church, and by drug dealers. It must be recognised, then,

that the work of the Mary's Place project to 'claim' the laneway had an impact on those other marginalised groups.

The other important reason why the response to the attack was focused on practices of publicity is to do with the understanding of the crime as an act of control. As queer theorist Michael Warner has claimed:

Just as feminists since Fanny Wright have found that to challenge male domination in public is to change both femininity and the norms of public behaviours, lesbians and gay men have found that to challenge the norms of straight culture in public is to disturb deep and unwritten rules about the kinds of behaviour and eroticism that are appropriate to the public (2002, p. 25).

Feminists and the gay and lesbian activist movements from the 1970s had used public acts to counter efforts to control their bodies and identities in public spaces. The Sydney mardi gras was an example of these practices, and the fact that the AVP reported a spike in street violence around this public event shows that the event was still contested. Similarly, feminist groups had held public 'reclaim the night' marches since the 1970s as a means of countering the control of women's bodies in public spaces. Such actions were increasingly accepted as practices that countered the social control that affected non-dominant bodies; that is, anyone who was not white, male and heterosexual.

The initial community response to the attack on Mary was in this tradition. Organised by a group called the Lesbian Avengers, it was a public 'convert the anger' rally (*Mary's Place* 1998). Like other activist rallies, it engaged with the mainstream practice of festivals and parades as a means of claiming the right to occupy public space and engage in the public sphere. As the Mary's Place project developed, the twin strategies of public naming and (re)claiming the right to the physical space of the laneway converged.

Mary's public statements show that she understood publicity as an important weapon to fight back against her attack, but her initial response was a desire to remain silent (*Mary's Place* 1998). Rape is a tactic of control, partly because it is so taboo: sexual violence is still not often reported or spoken about openly. So, although people knew the attack had taken place, Mary was reluctant to be named out of a sense of shame. In the documentary, Mary made an explicit link between her personal experience and the collective:

When I did speak out I talked about converting anger to positive action. And I was hoping that other people would join with me, and speak out with me, so what starts out as one voice becomes two and it's going to become a wider group action (*Mary's Place* 1998).

As I have already pointed out, at the time of Mary's attack homophobic hate crime was understood as an issue that needed to be addressed. In Mary's case, it seems the explicit nature of the verbal and physical homophobic attack combined with the use of rape as a weapon of heterosexual and patriarchal control touched a raw nerve for many people. From the beginning, then, the response was not only about this one attack, but also about the broader issue of homophobic violence. Mary herself helped to make that link. There is a sense that this was a tipping point around which it was possible to act. The hate crime was something the gay and lesbian public understood well, and the rape of a young woman was something many members of the non-gay and -lesbian public could empathise with. The publicity generated by the attack provided an opportunity for non-gay and -lesbian people to express opposition to such acts of violence.

Despite the very individual nature of the attack, and despite the use of the victim's name as a core part of the response, 'Mary's Place' was always more a collective than an individual memorial. However, calling the Mary's Place project a 'community' response masks the fact that the attack had an impact on different individuals and groups in different ways. Mary had first reported the attack to the AVP and Nicole Asquith, as first responder, was deeply affected. She lived in the Surry Hills neighbourhood and Flood Lane was very close to her workplace and her home. After hearing about the attack, she began altering her behaviour to avoid the area where the attack took place, meaning she moved into 'less safe' areas, putting herself at risk. Nicole credits Liza-Mare Syron with the idea of taking the response further than an initial march or protest. Liza-Mare said the initial motivation came from her and Nicole wanting to find a positive way to respond that would have an impact that lasted longer than a march.

In many ways, the Mary's Place project is an example of a group of young women adopting established place-making practices and adapting them as they searched for an appropriate way to respond to an event that had ruptured their sense of place. As an Aboriginal woman, Liza-Mare Syron was familiar with the practice of holding smoking ceremonies to cleanse or clear spaces. She brought these ideas into the gay and lesbian cultural context, and the laneway was blessed by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. The renaming of Flood Lane as Mary's Place was, like the marches and other public actions, a political act designed to claim the right of Mary and other women and homosexual people to occupy that space without fear of violence. Council by-laws



Figure 28: Original Mary's Place plaque by South Sydney Council (1997), Surry Hills.

were changed to restrict parking, since Mary's attack had taken place behind a parked car that blocked her from view. The group also convinced the council to install a mirror to reduce the blind spot. A local business owner donated lights, which the council installed so that they were activated when someone stepped on them.

Officially, the Mary's Place project was part of the South Sydney Council's crime prevention strategy. It was funded under the auspices of the AVP's 'Homophobia: what are you scared of?' campaign, and won the council's 'Community event of the year' award on Australia Day 1998, for crime prevention through environmental design (South Sydney Council 1997, letter to Sinead Roarty, 10 December). The plaque, provided by the City of South Sydney for the official launch of 'Mary's Place' in February 1997, does not follow the conventions of traditional memorial plaques in emphasising the importance of memory or working to sacralise the space. Instead, it emphasises the role of the council in working to combat homophobic violence (South Sydney Council 1997).

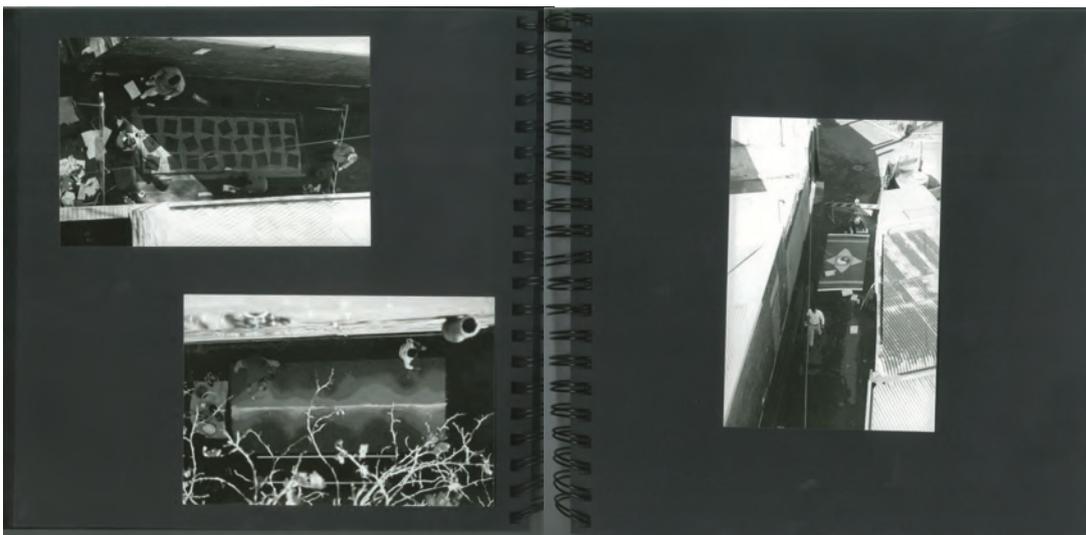


Figure 29: Scan of Nicole Asquith's project album showing Mary's Place laneway on the day the mural was painted. Copyright Nicole Asquith.

'Mary's Place' (1997) was, nonetheless, about more than crime prevention. The laneway mural was a political and celebratory statement of gay and lesbian identity. Sinead Roarty put out a call for artists which she described in the documentary as a 'call to action' to create a site-specific work that responded to the event of Mary's attack. Four artists were selected, each responding in very different ways. The concept of painting the laneway itself came from the artists, and was seen as a good way to proceed from a practical perspective, because of the relatively low cost of paint, and also in relation to the idea of claiming and reactivating the

space. Roarty said she chose the works to be able to reach out to other publics who might come across them unexpectedly (*Mary's Place* 1998).

The original 'Mary's Place' road mural now exists only in photographs and film. The *Mary's Place* documentary shows the painting as it is taking place, and contains short interviews with each artist about the meaning of their work. Nicole Asquith has an archival album that contains a photo of each artist and a photo of each artwork, taken on the day. However, there is no image to capture the whole laneway or even to fully capture each individual artwork. I describe each painting here to give an insight into the varied ways the original project acknowledged and told the story of the attack.

Each artist responded differently to the brief. Lachlan Warner's painting engaged most explicitly with the experience of the attack. Mary had described seeing the contents of her bag spilling out onto the laneway as the attack took place, and Warner's painting was framed by words that ask 'What would you do?' and 'What would you see?' if you were attacked and your personal items were strewn across the ground? Within this frame were 27 squares each painted with X-ray images of items that might be the contents of a bag. The painting used stencils, giving it a forensic, crime-scene feel. Jane Becker's work was abstract and more painterly. The image was like a strip of white-hot fire burning out to orange and red at the edges. In the documentary, Jane Becker described imagining the pain and anger Mary would have felt at being attacked, but said her work also represented cleansing and purifying fire. Juan Carlos Camacho's work was even more positive in its approach. A black silhouette of a female body was framed by two buildings, but the sizing suggested the woman was dominating rather than being controlled by the urban landscape. A peace symbol dominated the night sky overhead, a pink triangle covered the woman's genital area, and a bold red heart-shape was in the centre of her chest. Camacho said he wanted to focus on the future, rather than the past in his work.

Stephen Brunner's work has been the most influential to the next version of the project. It offered a 'welcome mat' to people entering the laneway, making use of gay and lesbian icons including the rainbow as the edges of the mat, and pink triangles which frame a yin/yang symbol in the centre. This work was about covering a place of pain with something welcoming and comforting. Similarly, at the other end of the laneway the 'logo' used a female symbol ♀ with a rainbow background to symbolise gender diversity, and the words 'Mary's Place'.

The artworks were painted in one day, directly onto the surface of the laneway. Those involved emphasise the importance of the ritual of the painting day itself,

which offered an opportunity for a wider group of people to get involved and show support in a practical way. Flyers had been distributed around the local area to explain what would be happening. Nicole recalled an elderly woman who was a local resident getting down from her walking frame to join in the painting. AIDS patients from the palliative care ward at the local hospital were brought along to watch, and staff of the Beresford Hotel set up tables and chairs outside, making a festive atmosphere. Significantly, Mary and her family participated in the painting day. The documentary showed Mary and her children participating in the painting of the logo. Liza-Mare Syron identified this as a symbolic way Mary's family, including her sisters, were able to show their acceptance of Mary's lesbian identity.

The involvement of this wider group of people reflects the comments made at the official opening of the memory space, where Mary's attack was once again linked to a wider community. Liza-Mare Syron told listeners, 'When Mary was attacked last January, it wasn't just an attack on Mary, it was an attack on all lesbians and gay men.' Mary used her own speech to acknowledge all survivors of violence. She stated that, 'We're looking at increasing community awareness, making our streets safe. Not just Flood lane, but all streets. And it's got to start somewhere'. The following October, Mary participated in another march, this time an annual 'reclaim the night' women's and children's march against sexual violence. To the sound of many whistles and drums, Mary took to the stage to speak out, and to urge others to speak out about abuse, saying, 'An abuse against one woman is an abuse against all women' (*Mary's Place* 1998).

Following the completion of the laneway project, all three of the women who had participated in this research spoke about the need to walk away. Nicole and Liza-Mare framed this as a need for 'the community' to take ownership of the project. Roarty was ambivalent about whether this was simply the end of an era. She suggested that, to an extent, their fight had been won and it was time to move on.

Lamp for Mary

The neighbourhood of Surry Hills in the mid 2010s is very different from the place it was in the mid 1990s. The Beresford Hotel still exists, but has a very different feel. It markets itself as a 'casual neighbourhood pub' (Merivale 2016), reflecting changing demographics and a decreased need for gay-only spaces. The laneway, Mary's Place, has also undergone significant changes. Partway down the laneway there is a set of double doors made of reflective stainless steel that lead into the back of the Beresford. Near these doors, a kitchen worker or two is often found resting on an upturned milk crate. There might be a car parked near



Figure 30: 'Lamp for Mary' (Dwyer & Taussig 2010), view of text and lamp, Surry Hills, New South Wales.



Figure 31: Mary's Place laneway, Surry Hills, New South Wales

to the doors, which suggests that the by-laws that were changed in the wake of the rape are no longer rigidly enforced. Along the wall a narrow window creates a connection between the laneway and the bar. Underneath this window runs a strip of words in pink cursive text:

This is a lane with a name and a lamp in memory of the woman who survived being beaten and raped here. She happened to be lesbian. When the sun sets this lamp keeps vigil along with you who read this in silent meditation (Dwyer & Taussig 2010).

The mural is gone from the surface of the road, but about halfway along the wall the original brass 'Mary's Place' plaque has been joined by a newer, circular marker. This one is white with black lettering and refers to the newer words, written by internationally renowned poet and academic Michael Taussig, and to the lamp overhead, designed by well-known Australian artist Mikala Dwyer (2010). This new artwork is called 'Lamp for Mary'. The lamp is pink, like the words, and made of layers of circular metal. It draws from the ready-made tradition. In contrast with the immediacy of the painted murals, the lamp is fabricated and purposefully generic, suggesting a link between this laneway and other places. It looks a little like an oversized lounge-room lamp, connecting ideas of safety and security. If you visit at night, holes cut into the sides of the lamp transmit little circles of light, like a disco ball. The lamp's refracted light sends out rainbows, another symbol of the LGBTIQ community. The wording of the text breaks through this sense of

safety and celebration. The pink colour of the lamp and the accompanying text reference the iconic pink triangle, a symbol that has come to be associated with resistance to oppression.

The ‘Lamp for Mary’ was created to replace the original mural after it was accidentally removed in early 2008. The details are a little vague, but it appears that the council needed to do road repairs and the work was completed without concern for the paintings. When South Sydney Council and the City of Sydney merged, the paintings had not been listed on the City of Sydney’s public art register, and it seems the part of the council responsible for roadworks had no idea about their importance.¹⁸ Some Beresford customers saw the destruction and tried to stop it. They were unsuccessful but alerted the City of Sydney to the mural’s demise. Around the same time, there had been a return of homophobic violence and abuse in the area and the City of Sydney’s LGBTIQ community



Figure 32. ‘She happened to be lesbian’, text by Michael Taussig.



Figure 33. ‘Lamp for Mary’ text by Michael Taussig and view of Beresford Hotel window.



Figure 34. ‘Lamp for Mary’ atwork by Mikala Dwyer, Mary’s Place, Surry Hills.

program officer was working on a strategy to reactivate the area around the nearby Taylor Square. Responding to community concern about the disappearance of the original mural dovetailed with the council’s plans and, as was the case with the original Mary’s Place project, the decision to respond was influenced by factors other than a desire to acknowledge Mary’s experience.

The original Mary’s Place project was under the auspices of the AVP, with support from South Sydney Council. However, the AVP was the kind of not-for-profit organisation that ran on a shoestring budget with the help of volunteers. The divisions between paid and unpaid staff were blurred, and the Mary’s Place project was driven, in the end, by a group of four women working together with some structural support from the AVP and the local council. The ‘Lamp for Mary’ public art project, in contrast, was driven from within the Council using established bureaucratic

¹⁸ Like the ‘Koori Mural’ and the ‘Peace Park Mosaic’ discussed in Chapter 2, this story raises the question of how many other such projects have disappeared from sight and from memory.

processes. Groups or individuals outside the council were positioned as ‘stakeholders’ rather than participants.

The development of the second memorial began with a call for expressions of interest publicised among the art community. Mikala Dwyer was the sole respondent. She described having an immediate sense of connection to the project brief when her gallery sent it through to her, despite the very small budget — about A\$30,000 — which would have included production costs. The information pack provided by the City of Sydney included some images of the original work, and Mikala was also able to access Melissa Lee’s *Mary’s Place* video. Keenly inspired by the images of Stephen Brunner’s carpet mural, she knew she wanted to create a similarly domesticated space within the laneway. The City of Sydney’s public art advisory panel approved the proposed new artwork, and the public art officer emphasised that this was not because there were no other proposals, but because there was an immediate feeling that Dwyer’s design captured something important about the *Mary’s Place* story. From this acceptance, the concept was developed further, with the involvement of community stakeholders through a series of council-facilitated community forums.¹⁹

Mikala said that as the concept developed, she was aware of the need to find a way to counter the risk that the lamp would simply be seen as decoration. This was reinforced by comments made in the consultation process. She invited poet and academic Michael Taussig to contribute the text. In interviews, the City of Sydney staff emphasised how well the text fit with the project.²⁰ Mikala, on the other hand, focused on the struggle to find an agreed form of words. She recalled that the first draft of Michael Taussig’s text was influenced by Mary’s description of the attack in the *Mary’s Place* documentary, in which she talked about having her used tampon shoved in her mouth and struggling to breathe. The current form of words is the result of negotiation and redrafting.

Whereas the original artwork clearly positioned Mary within the gay and lesbian community/counterpublic, in the current artwork Mary’s sexuality is almost incidental. She ‘happened’ to be a lesbian. Perhaps in the intervening decade the LGBTIQ community has moved into a more central role, and, because of this, claiming the attack as a ‘hate crime’ has become less important than mainstreaming the event — it could happen to anyone because ‘she [just] happened to be lesbian’.

¹⁹ Stakeholders involved in the consultation process included Haughton Design, Wesley Mission, NSW Police Force, ACON Anti-Violence Project, ACON, Wesley Mission, St Michael’s Anglican Church, ACON Young Lesbians Project and Twenty 10.

²⁰ Danella Bennett also emphasised that the combination of Taussig and Dwyer’s names ensured the artwork would be maintained and valued by the City of Sydney in its own right, apart from any value the community might place on it as a memorial.

Perhaps this was a function of the process already developing during the first Mary's Place project, in which Mary herself made the link between her experience as victim and survivor of a homophobic attack and the wider experience of all people affected by violence and abuse.

Mary's involvement and emphasis on the power of speaking out continued to be important as this second project developed. She agreed to participate in some community consultations and was willing to speak publicly once more. When local business owners complained about the use of the words 'lesbian' and 'rape' in the final version of the text, Mary spoke out at a community forum. She explained that she had always *named* her attack, even when explaining it to her young children, and that the power of language was important. Although I have not been able to hear directly from Mary herself, the impression I have is that she agreed to be involved because of a sense of social obligation, rather than because the renewal of the memorial was personally important for her. In a media interview she again reinforced the importance of speaking out and naming homophobia, offering her own analysis of the meaning of the new work:

Hot pink is a colour that talks about future and recovery and healing, while through the story it tells, the artwork is saying that we aren't going to remain silent and allow the perpetuation of violence to go unnoticed (Mary qtd in Potts 2010).

This interpretation is consistent with Mary's public speeches during the original Mary's Place project, making a connection between her experience of violence and a collective response. This consistent message coming from Mary had an impact on the council, and convinced them that it was important to stick with the 'difficult' words.

Although opposition to the wording only came from a few local residents, it almost derailed the entire project. When the lamp was installed in December 2010, the owner of the Beresford, Merivale, was yet to give its permission for the text to be attached to the wall. The pub supplies the electricity for the lamp, so their support was crucial. Mikala Dwyer started up a Facebook page to encourage people to contact the council and the Beresford with messages of support. The range of people joining the support group reflected a diverse audience, including people from the art world, LGBTIQ activists and community workers, and others who were interested in the project. One person wrote at length on the Facebook page about the use of the term 'vigil', in the sense of keeping watch. She suggested that perhaps the real offence was not in the words (rape lesbian) but in the call to get involved in the task of paying attention: 'If there is offence for any words, it

could easily be for this request as it calls us to reflect upon fear and hatred — both uncomfortable human emotions.’

Conclusion

This case study shows how processes of commemoration have developed over time. Whereas in the 1990s, the local council was happy to provide some funding and a plaque while allowing the project to run relatively autonomously, by the late 2000s the process had come within established public art guidelines. The original memorial was created out of a particular community, and had the ownership of that community, leading them to fight for its renewal. The bureaucratic processes adopted for the second project took ownership away from the LGBTIQ community, but broadened the meaning of the memorial. The more formal processes adopted for the second memorial also led to the involvement of an established artist. The ‘Lamp for Mary’ memorial represents a significant investment by the City of Sydney. The inclusion of text by a respected poet adds to the prestige of the work, making it much less likely to be accidentally removed without anyone noticing.

The initial impetus for the Mary’s Place project was to stand up against the violent oppression of lesbian and gay people and to reclaim a space. That act of reclamation has only ever been partial and, for this reason, the memorial has remained important, despite its radical change of form and broadening focus. For Mary, despite having participated in painting the murals in 1997, returning to the laneway for the ‘Lamp for Mary’ (2010) launch was difficult. At night, when the light is turned on, Mary’s Place is a beautiful space, but it is not a comfortable one. Yet that sense of discomfort is part of what makes this commemoration important. ‘Lamp for Mary’ is a memorial in the ‘lest we forget’ tradition. It does not offer a sentimental memory of loss but a sense of ‘unsettlement’ that asks people to take on the responsibility of paying attention.

Memorials and other public memory practices

The previous chapter offered an overview of my research findings. It outlined the emergence of memorials to lived experience as a new genre of public memorial from 1985–2015. I noted that memorials to lived experience converged around a very narrow range of experiences and that they are all experiences that can be described as traumatic. Importantly, they are also collective experiences that have a level of public acceptance. This says something about the role of the public memorial as an inherently conservative commemorative form, which requires a degree of public consensus. And yet, the stories commemorated by memorials to lived experience are often still spoken of as being ‘forgotten’ or ‘silenced’. Indeed, apart from commemorations of natural disasters since 2003, there is usually a gap of many years between an event and its commemoration. In this chapter, I expand on the brief discussion in the introduction to this dissertation, about the interconnection between ideas of trauma and the need to ‘bear witness’ to suffering; and the discourses of human rights and transitional justice as they have developed in the latter half of the 20th century. I explore what it might mean for a memory to be hidden or silenced, and consider the processes by which memories move from the private to the public sphere. When memories become public and collective, they circulate within the public sphere in a number of forms, not only as public memorials. To understand the role of public memorials, therefore, it is important to consider other ways the stories they tell are addressed publicly, including through activism, artistic practices, popular culture and the heritage and museum sector.

Publics and communities

Within this dissertation, I have tended to use the words ‘public’ and ‘community’ interchangeably. This is partly due to some overlap within the memory studies literature in the way these terms are used. However, before continuing further, I need to interrogate these terms further. The Habermasian idea of the bourgeois public sphere is based around the circulation of meaning, and a public in this sense is made up of people who interact with texts and participate in this circulation through ‘rational debate’ (Habermas 1989; Calhoun 1992). Warner revisits the concept at the turn of the 21st century, arguing that the public sphere must be grounded in forms of communication that address a public. So, for example, he argues that lyric poetry cannot be considered a form of public communication, since it is addressed to an interior self and is experienced by audiences as being

'overheard' interior dialogue rather than a form of address (Warner 2002, p.81). Thompson points to the continuities between communication mechanisms in the modern era and contemporary new media as forms of 'mediated visibility', and argues that this needs to be understood as 'a principal means by which social and political struggles are articulated and carried out' (Thompson 2005, p. 49). Although Thompson has primarily used this concept to explore the shifting boundaries between public and private life, the idea of visibility is crucial for understanding the role of public memorials. As Michael North, Rosalyn Deutsche and others were arguing in the 1990s, public art becomes public when it takes the form of an address. It moves from being an 'overheard' individual reflection to a text around which a public can form (Deutsche 1996; North 1990). Similarly, public memorials are a form of address that take on the role of making a collective experience visible.

It is now widely acknowledged that there is no such thing as 'the public'. Whereas Nancy Fraser spoke of subaltern counterpublics to emphasise the existence of groups in which meaning circulates differently from the dominant culture (Fraser 1992), Warner argues there are many counterpublics, and not all of these are marginalised in such a way as to be considered 'subaltern' (Warner 2002). When I have used the term 'community' in this dissertation, it has usually been in reference to shared identity that forms around certain counterpublics, since a public, once formed, can become an 'imagined community' in Benedict Anderson's terms — that is, a community where people understand themselves as connected in some way to other members of that community, even though they may not physically interact with or know each other (1991, p. 6).

Throughout this dissertation, I use the term 'communities of memory' rather than the Halbwachian term 'collective memory' in order to emphasise the ongoing circulation of meaning. Communities of memory are formed not by people all having the same memories, but by memory 'work' done through public practices including: the circulation of shared texts; public art and forms of public activism; public history in popular media; heritage practices; and everyday conversations. These communities sometimes lead to or are sustained through formal groups and associations, but they are never absolute. Their members will move between a number of different communities and their sense of themselves as a member of such a community may be highly contingent. So, we may talk about the LGBTQI 'community' or 'counterpublic' but the people who form that group will also be part of a number of different publics. Rothberg, drawing on the work of Avishai Margalit, uses the term 'shared memory' in a similar way, to describe, 'memory that may have been initiated by individuals but that has been mediated through

networks of communication, institutions of the state, and the social groupings of civil society' (2009, p. 15). Rothberg also emphasises that, 'the borders of memory and identity are jagged' (2009, p. 5). In the revised edition of *Imagined Communities* (1991), Anderson includes a chapter on 'memory and forgetting' in which he points out that national identity is based on shared 'memory' (of events many generations before) that is instilled in citizens precisely so that it can be taken for granted and 'forgotten' (1991, p. 201). The events commemorated by memorials to lived experience are not yet able to be taken for granted in that way, because they are not yet incorporated into a wider sense of communal memory.

An important question is how these communities of memory or counterpublics are formed in the first place. In relation to the questions addressed in this dissertation, how do the memories that memorials to lived experience give voice to, the stories they commemorate, become public? Within the tradition of Halbwachs, there is an understanding that memory is a social process, and that memory requires a shared language in order to come into being. As Rothberg puts it, 'The frameworks of memory ... provide a shared medium within which alone individuals can remember or articulate themselves' (2009, p. 15). This process has been well understood within feminist and other activist traditions, where the use of language has been privileged. For example, as I discussed in the Mary's Place case study, existing language that could frame an assault as a 'hate crime' — rather than simply an attack on an individual — allowed public engagement with that event. Or, to put it another way, in order for the memory of Mary's attack to move from being an individual and private event, to being a shared, public memory, a shared understanding and language was necessary. The shared understanding and language that forms the framework for memorials to lived experience is the discourse of human rights. The concept of trauma is also vital. Both of these ideas came into language in the post-WWII era.

The language of human rights

As Amos Goldberg points out, international legislative processes enacted in the aftermath of the Second World War sought to make the vision expressed in the 1948 United Nations (UN) Declaration of Human Rights a reality (2015). The Declaration (UN 1948) and the shared understanding of human rights it articulates offers a framework in which people could challenge instances where people were denied full 'humanity'. Goldberg argues that this happened by putting the 'racist thinking, so popular even within the scientific sphere prior to WWII, beyond the pale' (2015, p.9). However, he suggests that human rights did not really achieve international acceptance until the 1990s with the end of the Cold

War. Goldberg makes a link between the increasing adoption of the Holocaust as a founding event for the newly unified Europe and the rise of human rights discourse:

Since the 1990s, a new dictionary of terms has aggressively entered dominant arenas in the public sphere, where it has proposed a reshaping and even a new perception of the past. Among these terms are, 'crimes against humanity,' 'war crimes,' 'genocide,' 'ethnic cleansing,' 'testimony,' 'trauma,' 'victims,' 'compensation,' 'restitution,' 'human rights' (Goldberg 2015, p. 11).

In making this link, Goldberg ignores an alternative link between a wider range of governmental transitions from the 1980s, including the fall of South American dictatorships and the end of apartheid in South Africa. Paige Arthur has traced a history of the development of the field of transitional justice in this context by looking at the emergence of the term as a new way of talking about human rights (Arthur 2009). She argues that non-government human rights organisations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch had understood their role as 'witnessing' to human rights abuses, but without much hope of influencing the outcomes. With the move to less oppressive forms of governance, many of those involved in human rights witnessing began to question their role. People who had been exiled from their country were now able to return, and had a role to play internally, rather than externally. The emergence of the idea of transitional justice, therefore, signifies a desire to find a new way to balance the need of 'justice for crimes of the past and a more just political order in the present' (Arthur 2009, p. 323).

Nonetheless, Goldberg's argument that the Holocaust has played a central role is still relevant. Numerous writers have pointed to the Eichmann trial of the 1960s as pivotal for the development of what Wieviorka has called the 'era of the witness' (2006). Wieviorka's central point is that Adolf Eichmann's trial moved away from a focus on legal justice that had been used in previous trials of war criminals, to a focus on witness testimony. It has come to be seen, therefore, as a key moment in the development of the idea that a significant part of ensuring justice for victims of human rights abuse is the right for their story to be heard. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that this key moment did not happen in isolation. As Deborah Cohen's *Family secrets* documents (2013): throughout the 20th century, the lines between public and private and the boundaries around what was seen as a healthy level of public 'confession' were in flux. The increasing social acceptance and even veneration of public testimony owes much to Freud and the psychoanalytic tradition of the 'talking cure'. Trauma theory initially

developed out of that tradition, which accounts for its Eurocentric bias and focus on the Holocaust.

Testimony and truth-telling are key ways human rights advocates have responded and encouraged others to respond to human right abuses. Key to this is an understanding of language as a means of power. Another way of thinking about witnessing and testimony in relation to trauma comes from a radical tradition that takes the language of oppression and turns it back on the oppressor. This happens in everyday ways as marginalised groups reclaim the name that was once used to belittle them. As Anderson has shown, naming and categorisation were tools of colonial control (1991, p. 163–70). In the post-colonial era many marginalised groups have grasped the power of words as a means of re-taking control. This brings me back to my original point, that for traumatic experiences to be remembered publicly there first needed to be a shared language to tell the story. For example, the trauma of Stolen Generations dates back to before Peter Read coined the term in 1981 but, by claiming this name, people were able to develop a strong counterpublic sphere in which it was possible for the many different stories of family separation to be understood as a shared experience.

Witnessing trauma

Trauma and human rights are, then, in many ways two sides of the same coin. Trauma can be seen as the response to events that disrupt the ‘normal’ human life articulated in the Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948). The event-based model of trauma has been developed and expanded over the years since Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was first described by the American Psychiatric Association in 1987 as ‘outside the range of human experience’ (Brown 1995, p. 250);²¹ however, the link between trauma and human rights can be found in the description. Disaster recovery takes the idea of ‘an event which disrupts’, and applies it to a group setting. Meaning: disaster is often defined as an event that overwhelms a community’s ability to cope. This takes the experience of trauma and makes it social. The events that are acknowledged in memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma are all human disasters though some are ‘natural’ disasters; and others are much more obviously disasters of human making. While trauma theory focuses on the need to ‘bear witness’ as a means of healing the individual, human-rights discourse focuses attention on the human actions and,

²¹ See Stef Craps (2013, pp. 20–37) for a discussion of the expansion of the meaning of trauma.

to some extent, the structural oppression that disrupts 'normal' life and leads to the experience of trauma.

Memorials to lived experiences conform to the event-based model of trauma. However, as cultural theorist Ann Cvetkovich has argued, specific events can be used to draw attention to broader experiences of structural oppression. For example, 'violent crime sparked by racism and homophobia ... points to the existence of other, more systematic forms of violence that may not be traumatic yet deserve attention' (2003, p. 273). Memorials tell the story of specific experiences of human rights abuses, but these events are rarely 'contained'. Many of the memorials discussed in this dissertation tell one particular story but link this with other stories in other places.

As Cvetkovich outlines in relation to queer culture, 'cultural production that emerges around trauma enables new practices and publics' (2003, p. 10). Memorials to lived experience often make use of direct witness testimony, but they are also acts of witnessing themselves. Although I have claimed that memorials are an inherently conservative memory practice, I also argue that, to some extent, all public acknowledgment of trauma holds within it the possibility of radical action, if it can avoid sentimentality. Such public acknowledgment can counter an individualist focus on the experience of the victim and enable a sense of agency — creating the category of 'survivor' and refocusing attention on the social conditions out of which the trauma emerged.

Speaking through popular culture

Experiences commemorated in the memorials examined in this study have usually emerged in the public sphere towards the end of the 20th century. The rest of this chapter will outline some of the different ways such experiences have circulated in the public sphere. Often such experiences are considered to have been 'silenced'. However, in many cases it is more accurate to say that public discourse around these events was constrained. Partly this may have been because the concept of trauma had not yet gained popular acceptance. However, it was also because the links between individual traumas and public events had not yet been made. As Hamilton points out in her discussion of the convergence of Australians POW memory around the screening of the miniseries *Changi* (2010), sometimes people need to see the story represented in popular media before they recognise their own experience. The experience exists before that act of recognition. Hamilton talks about 'the little stories' that are told in private (2010, p. 305), although these are not necessarily the full articulation of the event. For many

people, that story remains untold in a narrative form until formal processes such as an oral history project or a government inquiry commence.

It might seem likely that these stories would enter the public sphere through journalistic endeavours, but this has rarely been the case. Often, stories of human rights abuse and trauma have emerged first in the public sphere through literature and through memoir. Indeed, since 1987, the Australian Human Rights Commission (HRC) has given awards in multiple categories including, in some years, for song writing, drama and fiction. For example, the 1990 song-writing award went to Archie Roach for 'Took the Children Away', a song that has become the unofficial anthem of the Stolen Generations (Australian HRC 2015).

In 1991, the winner of the HRC TV drama award was *Brides of Christ*, a miniseries set in the 1960s about a convent boarding school. The series provided an opening for conversations about the repressive nature of the Catholic Church, institutions such as boarding schools, and the way women's rights and reproductive choices were controlled in the 1960s. At the end of the series one of the young women, Rosemary, is single and pregnant. Although what happens to her next is not shown, when I think about her now, knowing a little more about the history of the time than I did then, it brings to mind the history of forced adoptions around Australia in that era. I mention this as an example of what Chris Healy has talked about as 'companion memory': my understanding of the repressive social environment of the 1960s was initially formed by this significant popular culture event. Similarly, my early knowledge of child migration and child abuse in Australia's institutions was influenced by another important TV miniseries shown the next year, 1992. Like *Brides of Christ*, *The leaving of Liverpool* was produced by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) although, in this case, it was a joint production with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Whereas *Brides of Christ* addressed human rights themes indirectly, this drama confronted the history of British child migration head on. Both these miniseries addressed the experience of young people roughly my age at the time, and both prompted extensive conversation with my peers. Two years on from my own migration from the north of England, *The leaving of Liverpool* made a deep impression on me.

In her memoir *Oranges and sunshine* (2011), social worker Margaret Humphreys offers another perspective on the importance of *The leaving of Liverpool*. In 1992, she had been working for six years to uncover the stories of British children sent to Australia through child migration schemes. Slowly, as the work developed, the stories began to cohere into a public narrative, and the production of the teledrama was another example of the emergence of the story into the public

sphere. However, many Child Migrants had still not made the connection between their individual experience and the broader history. As Humphreys describes, the screening of the show provided an opening for that connection to be made:

When the drama finished, shortly after 10pm, the phones began ringing. There were tears and pleas for help; more stories of abuse and desolation. Our lines were so jammed that people began calling the ABC's general switchboard (Humphreys 2011, p. 296).

Despite the fact that this story was already circulating publicly because of Humphreys's work and through an earlier documentary and other media reports, for some people *The Leaving of Liverpool* demanded such an urgent response that they actually got in their cars and drove, or even caught planes, to Sydney so that they could connect with others who understood their experience. This example shows the way that a 'community of memory' can form around the active memory work of a few people. There are numerous examples of this in the memorials to lived experience.

Interventions in art and place

Artists have often engaged with memory work, either using their own memories or those of the society around them. Jill Bennett's work on trauma art has focused on work shown in the formalised settings of the gallery or art festival. Bennett argues that such art can create a moment of 'empathic unsettlement' (a term she takes from LaCapra) that can create a shift in people's understanding (Bennett 2005, p. 8). A number of the artists she looks at have been addressing one particular experience of trauma through their art practice over a long period. For example, installation artist Doris Salcedo's work engages with human rights abuses in Colombia (Bennett 2002, 2003, 2005). Aside from a preoccupation with

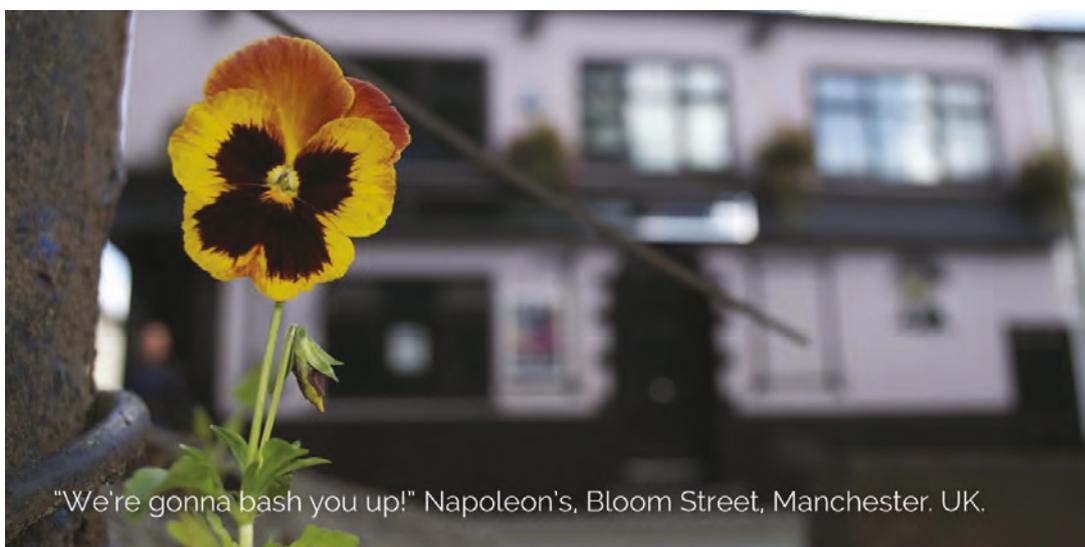


Figure 34: "We're gonna bash you up!" Napoleon's Bloom Street, Manchester, UK', by Paul Harfleet. Image courtesy the artist

experiences that might be considered traumatic, the works Bennett is interested in share a sense of being public, not in the sense of being out in public space, but as being addressed to a public. For example, Australian painter Gordon Bennett describes himself as a 'history painter' (Bennett 2005, p. 125). Gordon Bennett's work sometimes seems to be a personal meditation on his own experience of colonisation as a contemporary Aboriginal man and inheritor of the legacy of assimilation (Bennett 2005, p. 132). Instead, Jill Bennett argues it should be understood as a visual form of public address.

Outside of the gallery setting, politically motivated artists often take to the streets. Graffiti has come to be understood not simply as an act of vandalism, but as a means by which marginalised voices can be expressed creatively. As McCormick, Schiller and Schiller's survey of uncommissioned street art, *Trespass*, demonstrates (2010), this unconventional approach to art has evolved to take on a variety of mediums but shares a sense of direct address that is sometimes lacking in art made for the gallery. As they point out, 'in a form based on immediacy, accessibility and directness, that which is simple, rudimentary, rude and even barbarous often trumps the nuances of civility' (McCormick, Schiller & Schiller 2010, p. 282).

The pansy project is an artistic intervention into public memory that crosses the boundaries of street art, gallery and even virtual setting (<http://www.thepansyproject.com/>). Started by artist Paul Harfleet as a response to his personal experience of homophobic abuse in public places, like Mary's Place (Case Study 2), the pansy project began an act of reclaiming the right to a place where abuse took place. However, it has developed into a wider project. It now offers a template of ritual practice that people can use to respond to experiences of verbal or physical abuse, and aims to draw attention to homophobic hate crimes.

Influenced by the contemporary practice of roadside memorials, the Pansy Project plants a single living pansy as close as possible to the site of abuse. A photo is taken of the pansy and named using the words used during the abuse. So, for example, one photograph is titled, "'We're gonna bash you up!' Napoleon's, Bloom Street, Manchester' (Harfleet 2014). Naming is also important in the project's choice of flower. The word pansy has a dual meaning: it is used as a homosexual insult and comes from the French verb *panser* (to think). Harfleet explains that 'the bowing head of the flower was seen to visually echo a person deep in thought'. The pansy project allows people who experience this particular form of oppression (homophobia expressed through verbal or physical assault) a means of responding to the attack without adopting the subject position of victim. Harfleet argues that 'the action of planting the living pansy', and of photographing

it and sharing it with a sympathetic public, 'adjusts the memory of each location which has the effect of overlaying the remembered event in the mind of the participants with a more positive association' (Harfleet 2016). In other words, the site of abuse is reclaimed as a site of resistance. A pansy project video posted on the site in November 2015 contains the information that, 'In 2015 the number of homophobic hate crimes increased by 22 per cent across England and Wales ... Many believe this is due to more people reporting these crimes to an increasingly sympathetic police force ...' In this statement, it is clear that the language of 'hate crime' used by the Mary's Place project in the mid 1990s remains useful for talking about a particular form of violence directed at LGBTQI people.

These kinds of public interventions are both the result of and the impetus for the creation of counterpublics that form around the discussion of certain experiences of human rights abuse or trauma. Once these publics have formed, more collective interventions are possible. As urban historian Dolores Hayden points out, festivals and parades have a long tradition as a means of publicly defining cultural identity, 'by staking out routes in the urban cultural landscape' (Hayden 1997, p. 38). 'Reclaim the night' is a Western feminist tradition with roots going back to the March 1976 International Tribunal on Crimes against Women held in Belgium. Since then, night-time rallies have been held in many Western countries, in which women walk collectively through public spaces to draw attention to the everyday fear of violence that often prevents women from accessing those spaces at other times. The sense of celebration often brought to these events, for example through blowing whistles and chanting, is itself a form of resistance against the fear women feel at other times. The movement uses the language of human rights to argue that, 'freedom from sexual violence is a basic human right' (Reclaim the Night Australia 2010). Although such events have declined in frequency since the early years of the movement, the practice is easily reactivated, as was seen in Australia in the aftermath of the 2012 rape and murder of ABC journalist Jill Meagher (Lallo 2012).

Interventions into the public sphere can happen through more conventional forms. As discussed in Chapter 2, some of the memorials considered in this dissertation are public artworks commissioned as part of urban regeneration projects. Such artworks may be the result of individual artists working within state or bureaucratic processes, but government officials involved in such processes often have a role to play. Sandage's analysis of the role of the Lincoln memorial as a powerful symbol in the US civil rights movement of the mid 20th century begins with the story of a childhood experience of one of the government officials who allowed the memorial to be used as an open-air venue for a civil rights concert

(1993). Sandage does not offer any concrete evidence that this experience really did have an impact on the history he goes on to outline. Nonetheless, the story is a reminder that not only are there multiple publics, but the individuals who make up those publics have multiple personal experiences that may make a difference to how they act and respond in public life. ‘Edge of the trees’, a public artwork commissioned by curator Peter Emmett for the Museum of Sydney’s opening in 1994, is an example of how people in certain positions can make critical interventions in public space possible.

Katherine Gregory’s PhD thesis (2004) tells the story of the commissioning of ‘Edge of the trees’ as part of a history of the ways artists’ work has been incorporated and integrated into museums since the 1970s. She argues that over the same period curatorial practice has become more artistic, and credits Emmett as a contributing artist to the installation by Fiona Foley and Jennifer Lawrence. Emmett wrote the brief for ‘Edge of the trees’, including choosing the title, which is taken from a description by Rhys Jones of the moment of first contact between Aboriginal people and Australia’s colonisers. That passage forms the text of the plaque:

... the discoverers struggling through the surf were met on the beaches by other people looking at them from the edges of the trees. Thus the same landscape perceived by the newcomers as alien, hostile or having no coherent form, was to the Indigenous people their home, a familiar place, the inspiration of dreams. (Jones 1984 quoted in Foley & Laurence 1994)



Figure 36: ‘Edge of the trees’ by Fiona Foley and Jennifer Lawrence (1995), Sydney, New South Wales.



Figure 37: ‘Edge of the trees’ by Fiona Foley and Jennifer Lawrence (1995), partial view.



Figure 38: ‘Edge of the trees’ by Fiona Foley and Jennifer Lawrence (1995), view inside looking up.

Although most often referred to as an art installation, Gregory reads 'Edge of the trees' as a memorial, commemorating not just the local Eora peoples or the colonisers and convicts but 'their *interaction* that was beset by conflict, misunderstanding and dispossession' (2004, p. 230, emphasis in original). Nonetheless, 'Edge of the trees' operates at an uneasy boundary, physically and conceptually. Physically, the work is located outside the entry to the Museum of Sydney. In this location, it falls into all three of the locational categories outlined in Chapter 2. It is an everyday space, in that hundreds if not thousands of pedestrians pass by it every day on their way up and down Bridge St in the heart of Sydney's business district. It is a symbolic space, because it is also located within the forecourt of the museum, which is part of a broader network of cultural tourism sites stretching from Sydney Harbour up to the Botanical Gardens. It is also a heritage site with a particular history, located where the state's original government house once stood. Indeed, just on the other side of the entry path, visitors to the Museum of Sydney can view the excavated foundations of this early colonial building through a glass display case.

For those people who choose to enter 'Edge of the trees', the installation provides an immersive experience. The work consists of a number of posts, made of materials that reference the history of Sydney, including aged timber, sandstone, and industrial-steel girders. Some of the posts are inscribed with words: Eora place names; the names of convicts; and fragments of colonial text. Others contain materials that reference the kinds of keeping and categorising that might be found in a museum but also in a ritualised context — such as ash, sand and shells. Alongside these visual and tactile elements are sound recordings in Eora and English. The artwork does not tell the story of colonisation, and may be 'unreadable' for an uneducated visitor. However, for someone who understands something of the story, it works at the level of affect to create a sense of complexity and sadness.

Memorials and museums

I have so far traced a trajectory from vernacular and popular culture forms of public memory to official forms. Along with memorials, museums are probably the most widely accepted official forms of public memory. Australia has more than 1000 museums, depending on the definition used.²² These vary from large national and state institutions to community based museums and heritage sites run by groups of volunteers. 'Edge of the trees' was commissioned at a time of changing understandings about the role of museums. The affective experience

²² The ABS lists 1019 museums (2009), but Ashton & Hamilton say there are more than 2000 (2007, p. 75).

of the installation creates a starting point for the visitor's engagement with the museum as a whole. From the late 1970s, museums have increasingly moved from presenting collections of historically or scientifically significant material artefacts to interpreting history and addressing current social issues. This awareness of the importance of interpretation is a defining feature of what is sometimes called 'new museology' (McCall & Gray 2014). Increasingly, the kind of affective space that 'Edge of the trees' seeks to create has been brought inside the museum itself. Andrea Witcomb argues that much recent museology is characterised by an awareness of the need to critically engage with the past in the present, and does so 'by modelling the process of historical inquiry through the use of affective strategies of interpretation' (2013, p. 256).

This shift has blurred the line between memorials and museums. As Paul Williams explains, there was until recently a distinction between the two, in that memorials were seen to 'honour' history, whereas museums have increasingly come to be seen as 'concerned with interpretation, contextualisation and critique' (2007, p.8). Williams claims that:

The coalescing of the two suggest that there is an increasing desire to add both a moral framework to the narrative of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts' (2007, p. 8).

While my research maintains the distinction between memorials and museums, recent scholarship into the role that affect is increasingly playing in museum exhibits is also helpful for understanding the ways affect can operate in memorialisation.

The Port Arthur Historic Sites — which includes the Port Arthur Penal Settlement, Coalmines and the Cascades Female Factory heritage places — is an example of the type of 'memorial museum' that has developed during this period. The Coalmines site was Tasmania's first mine, and a place of what would now be seen as cruel punishment for recalcitrant convicts. In some ways, the interpretive signage at the site works to encourage visitors to 'put themselves in the shoes' of the convicts. This has become a familiar approach taken at heritage sites that address traumatic experiences. The Port Arthur penal settlement includes an interpretive space and visitors are given a playing card on entry, which matches up to the name and story of a particular convict. At the end of their tour they can



Figure 39: Playing card given visitors on entry to Port Arthur heritage site in Tasmania.



Figure 40: The convict story behind the eight of diamonds. Port Arthur, Tasmania.

find out if ‘their’ convict survived. This is what Williams calls the ‘identity card tactic’ (2007, p. 148), used in the Washington Holocaust Memorial and Museum (Young 1993, pp. 342–5) and now widely adopted. These approaches attempt to encourage the visitor to connect empathically with the stories they tell. However, such approaches risk appropriating those stories and creating sentimental rather than critical engagement. By sentimental I mean, in Lauren Berlant’s terms, ‘the presumption of emotional clarity and affective recognition in the scene of the mediated encounter’ (2008, p. 271). Sentimentality assumes there is a right way to respond to difficult knowledge — it fails to acknowledge the gap between the past and the present, and the difference between my experience and yours. Alternatively, as Witcomb’s work demonstrates (Gregory & Witcomb 2007; Witcomb 2013), some museums create affective spaces that use ‘the subjectivities of their viewers to create a tension with the narratives they are using’ (2013, p. 256). Such approaches work like Bennett’s encountered sign, and can potentially open up an interval for critical engagement. Like memorial museums, memorial objects must negotiate this difficult line.

A national study conducted by Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton found that Australians have a high level of trust in the institution of museums (Ashton & Hamilton 2007, pp. 78–9). While curators may increasingly see their role as being to challenge, as much as to educate — visitors, themselves, it seems, still



Figure 41: ‘Reasons to remember’ wall of plaques, Adelaide Migration Museum, South Australia

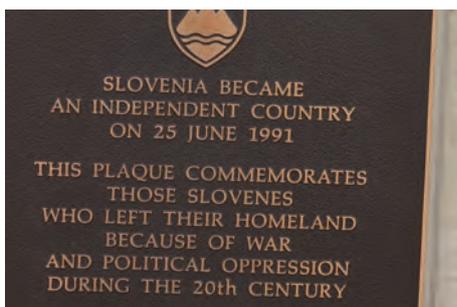


Figure 42: Slovenian plaque, part of ‘Reasons to remember’ wall at the Adelaide Migration Museum.

understand museums through a more traditional lens. The memorial plaques placed within the forecourt of the Adelaide Migration Museum offer an interesting insight into this relationship. These are memorials that push the boundaries of my definition of ‘public symbolic objects’, since their materiality is confined to an engraved metal plaque. Yet their location on the wall of the museum gives them a different kind of life than they might have in another location. The wall itself has become a symbolic object through its relationship with the plaques and the stories they tell. This relationship has its genesis in 1992, when the Baltic Council of South Australia approached the museum for permission to construct a memorial to honour those killed in their homelands while under Soviet occupation (Finnimore 2006). The museum’s memorial wall now houses 12 plaques, each placed

there at the request of a community group. Some, like the Baltic one, commemorate a genocidal event. However, a number also commemorate lived experiences of turmoil, often a catastrophic period of history which led to the establishment of a diasporic community in South Australia. The wall has become a place where communities can come and remember, as well as performing a role in asserting the group's identity in that place.

In a number of cases, requests for plaques have developed out of a relationship between the community group and the museum after an exhibition hosted in the Forum—a temporary exhibition space where community groups can tell their own stories in a relatively unconstrained way (Szekeres 2011). The role of the museum as a state institution is particularly important for community groups where their home country has not been a democracy (Paul M. 2015, interview). Both the Forum and the plaques require a community to have coalesced around a shared interest or identity. However, for a temporary exhibition, there is more 'room to move' both physically and metaphorically. The Forum exhibitions allow for a level of nuance in telling the politically complex stories which the plaques can only hint at. The permanency and publicness of the plaques requires a carefully managed process of negotiation. Past curator of the Migration Museum, Christine Finnimore, has described the process:

each version of past events that is inscribed on a plaque has been carefully negotiated between the needs of the two owners — the community group and the museum. What emerges is what each community wants to remember but also how the Museum allows them to say it (Finnimore 2006).

The fact that community groups are willing to work through this complex negotiation process points to the high level of importance they place on having a permanent place of remembrance.

Memorials to lived experience are often placed within museum grounds, and this may be partially influenced by a desire to make use of the museum's sense of authority. Memorials co-located with state museums are those that are state funded and commemorate events for which the government has issued an official apology. There are practical reasons for the choice of such sites, since the land is already



Figure 43: Commemorative sculpture to the child migrants (2004), Fremantle, WA.

under the control of the state and easily accessed for a memorial. However, survivor groups also seem to favour such co-location. This may be because the contested and 'difficult' nature of their stories makes it helpful to draw on the trust of the museums as cultural institutions to add weight to stories that have previously been discounted.

One such memorial is the Western Australian memorial to Child Migrants (2004) located within the grounds of the Western Australian Maritime Museum. This is a traditional bronze sculpture, depicting two children carrying suitcases. It stands near the wharf, as if the children have just disembarked their ship and are contemplating their unknown future. There is no mention of the memorial on the museum's website. Similarly, there is no permanent display within the museum that gives any further information or tells the story behind the sculpture, although there is a brief mention of the child migration scheme on one of the sections of the 'welcome walls' that stand between the memorial and the museum entrance. Nonetheless, the Maritime Museum was one of only a handful of major museums to host the 'Inside' exhibition about children in institutional care. This exhibit, created by the National Museum of Australia, was a partial response to a recommendation of the 2004 inquiry of the Australian Senate which resulted in the *Forgotten Australians* report. The report drew attention to the inadequate care and systematic abuse of Australia's care institutions in the 20th century, and 'Inside' sought to tell that story. Although there is not an obvious connection with the maritime theme of Fremantle's museum's permanent collection, it had previously hosted the 'On their own' exhibition about Child Migrants. It seems likely that the decision to host the exhibition may have something to do with the memorial outside, since the Child Migrants were sent to Australian institutions and were part of that story. However, there may have also been other factors at play in the decision to host 'Inside' at the Maritime Museum, rather than at the main Museum of WA.

Close by, on High Street, Fremantle, is a community house for Australian care leavers. Tuart Place offers social and counselling support for people who spent time in state 'care' as children; they are the people whose stories are told through the 'Inside' exhibition. A number of Tuart Place regulars and committee members have been involved in advocacy for recognition of care leavers and Child Migrants, and it is likely that this was known to museum curators through the process of installing the memorial. During the time 'Inside' was in Fremantle (14 March to 29 June 2014), Tuart Place was very active in promoting and supporting it, including hosting tours and debriefing sessions for social work students, assisting them to understand the impact of institutionalisation on children into adulthood.

Tuart Place was not the only survivor group to engage with the exhibition. A government-funded service, Find and Connect, offered weekly 'tea and chat' sessions every Thursday at the museum. Within the exhibition itself, a space was set-aside for visitors who needed to take time for contemplation. Visually referencing the Perth memorial for Forgotten Australians, the 'Unfolding lives' sculpture, paper chatterboxes were photocopied and made available for people wanting to write their thoughts and comments, linking the exhibition back to the city memorial.

The example of the 'Inside' exhibition shows the tensions between different understandings of the role of the museum, and also points to some important boundaries between museums and memorials. At memorials, affective displays have come to be expected. Leaving flowers or other tokens is an accepted way of expressing mourning, or at least expressing a sense of solidarity with the remembered story. In contrast, museums are not always sure of what to do with emotional responses, even when this is what the exhibition has been designed to create. One of the curators of 'Inside', Adele Chynoweth, tells the story of a rosebud left by a visitor to 'Inside' during its showing at NMA. The flower had been left on a cot mattress that was embroidered with the story of a baby who died in care. The cot itself was not an 'authentic' object from one of the institutions, but representative of the era. The choice to use a different cot was conscious in that it would allow visitors to interact with the object (Read 2013). Nonetheless, after inviting this interaction, when faced with a response that most memorial designers would welcome, the museum staff made the decision to remove the rose.

Chenoweth has been vocal in criticising the lack of engagement with the 'Inside' exhibition by the Australian museum sector. Only three museums, apart from the National Museum of Australia, agreed to host the exhibition as part of its national tour. There are a number of ways of reading this situation. Chenoweth argues that the lack of engagement signals an ongoing reluctance of the Australian public to acknowledge the stories of the Forgotten Australians. In an example of what Michael Rothberg talks about as the 'zero-sum game' of competitive memory, she offers the figures of six museums who hosted a touring exhibition about British Child Migrants and also points out that a display about the Stolen Generations titled 'Losing Our Children' is part of the National Gallery of Australia's permanent exhibition. However, while her criticism does point to a low priority given to the exhibition, it does not necessarily follow that this is the result of a reluctance to acknowledge the Forgotten Australians. Australia is characterised by politics and competition between states and between local and national levels of governance, in all areas of government and civil society. The fact that the

exhibition was developed by a national museum may have counted against it being accepted by some curators. Other factors include the availability of more 'commercial' exhibitions. For example, at the same time as 'Inside' was showing at the Maritime Museum in Fremantle, the WA Museum in Perth hosted the 'Dinosaur discovery' exhibition. Since the Perth museum has an extensive natural history collection, the dinosaur exhibit was a natural fit, and was very popular with families.

Trauma and heritage

Since the 1990s, people have increasingly made the connection between 'the little stories' (Hamilton 2010) and the grand narrative of trauma. Indeed, for a while trauma seemed to be everywhere. At the end of that decade, Kerwin Lee Klein claimed modernity was the 'age of trauma' (2000). This claim comes with a deep Eurocentric bias and assumes a particular, Western experience of the 20th century without clearly articulating these parameters. Nonetheless, the shared understanding and language of trauma made it visible in places it might not otherwise have been seen. But a key part of the ways the connection has been made with personal histories is through new technologies which have revolutionised history and heritage in terms of research and sharing of materials. The success of the transnational TV program *Who do you think you are?* is used by Deborah Cohen to talk about the changing social mores around privacy and shame in families. As Ashton and Hamilton's research has shown in Australia, 'the democratisation of the past from the 1970s and the growth of local family history groups' (2007, p. 27) resulted in an exponential growth of interest in family history as well as a change in the kind of 'distinction' people are looking for in their genealogies. Previously, people wanted to know they had an aristocrat in the family tree, now they are just as likely to be pleased to discover a criminal. Indeed, the reframing of criminals as 'heroic victims of British Imperialism' (2007, p. 27) is one of the reasons for the increased popularity of heritage sites such as the former penal settlement of Port Arthur.

Shame and trauma are closely connected. Many of the experiences commemorated by these memorials were previously untold because of feelings of shame; they contain difficult knowledge for people to hear, but also to tell, because they cross taboos around ideas of what is public and private. In other cases, simply talking about emotions was potentially shameful. Jo Hawkins has traced the radical change in social etiquette around the display of emotion at Anzac Day ceremonies. In stark comparison to the public display of emotion that has come to be expected at 21st century events, a 1927 observer of that year's Anzac Cove



Figure 44: Street view of '1967 bushfire memorial' (2007), Middleton, Tasmania.



Figure 45: '1967 bushfire memorial' (2007), commemorative seating using metal salvaged from local Methodist church, Middleton, Tasmania.

anniversary service approvingly reported that, 'If grief submitted to classification probably every sub-division of sorrow was to be found ... Yet there was no outward sign of it' (quoted in Hawkins 2014). Joy Damousi has similarly argued that, 'there has been a discernible shift at the end of the 20th century towards emotional openness, and a return to a 19th century frankness in mourning and grief' (2001, p. 4). These historical shifts — the development of a shared language for speaking about trauma, a move to social openness and the development of new technologies of publicness and visibility — have all influenced the way difficult experiences are thought about and spoken of.

This can be true even for seemingly straightforward stories, such as those related to natural disaster. Explaining why the small Tasmanian town of Middleton decided to create a memorial 40 years after the 1967 bushfires, Gloria Lonergan of the South Channel Ratepayers and Residents Association began by outlining her personal connection to the town through her maternal grandmother. What began as a family history project developed through a recognition that the fires had devastated the small community and 'that there was need for a time of healing' (Lonergan 2016, pers. comm.). Joy Damousi argues that, 'Much of Australia's past has been written without a recognition of the trauma its history has created' (2002). The small roadside memorial, and the 40th anniversary event that accompanied its dedication was a local way that the trauma of history could be acknowledged. The project has developed into a heritage walk. However, such stories often have a commercial edge to them. In the case of Middleton, the reawakening of the town has come through a growing tourism industry, and telling the story of the town is also a part of that. Just as in the decision of where to host the 'Inside'

exhibition, choices about what heritage is promoted and what stories are told are influenced by financial considerations, however subtle.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, I suggested that describing these stories as ‘forgotten’ or ‘silenced’ was inaccurate, but that their entry to the public sphere required language. In this chapter I have attempted to give some context to the emergence of memorials to lived experience. I have offered a brief outline of the emergence of the language of human rights and trauma, and their connection to the field of transitional justice. I have suggested some of the ways these stories have been engaged with in the public sphere through a wide range of commemorative practices. However, as the examples of the Child Migrants’ reaction to *The leaving of Liverpool* demonstrates, even though stories circulate in the public sphere, a further conceptual leap is needed before people can connect their personal stories with a broader historical narrative. The histories acknowledged in memorials to lived experience are rarely hidden, and have often been circulating in the public sphere for a number of years through a wide range of media including literature, film, government reports and oral histories before they are commemorated through memorials. At the same time, they are rarely universally known or understood. The ‘Inside’ exhibition toured as recently as 2014, and yet Chenoweth has described people being ‘shocked’ at the material displayed (2014, p. 190). The following chapters explore some of the different kinds of cultural work memorials to lived experience are expected to do. One aspect of this work is to make stories of loss and trauma permanently visible, so they can no longer be ‘silenced’ or ‘forgotten’.

Case Study 3

Patchwork memory: telling the story of the Hay Institution for Girls

The Hay Gaol Museum serves as a general purpose local history museum, displaying artefacts from various periods of the town's history, as well as telling its own story as, at various times, gaol, maternity hospital, prison hospital for mentally ill prisoners, POW detention centre and, from 1961–1974, the Hay Institution for Girls. The institution was a place of punishment for teenage girls and, in the courtyard of the museum, a memorial plaque is attached to a simple plinth in one of the well-kept rose gardens. It reads:

Dedicated to the girls aged 13–18 years of age who were
incarcerated here 1961–1974 by the NSW Department of
Child Welfare.

Hay Girls Reunion 3–4 March 2007

Forgotten Australians

'Let no child walk this path again'

In this case study, I briefly outline the emergence or reinterpretation of the memory of the Hay Institution for Girls. I then discuss the event at which the memorial was installed: a reunion of 'Hay girls' over the weekend of International Women's Day 2007. Finally, I consider the memorial within the context of the Hay Gaol Museum as it is now. This case study draws on the rich documentary archive curated by Bonney Djuric at the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct (PFFP) Memory Project, additional archival information from online sources and material provided by Wilma Robb, an ex-detainee of Hay. Interviews were conducted with key people involved with the Hay Institution for Girls reunion event of March 2007, Wilma Robb, Bonney Djuric, Tertia Butcher of the *Riverina grazier*, and Amy Hardingham, former director of Outback Theatre. The second half of the case study, in which I discuss the way the memorial at Hay interacts with other aspects of the museum and heritage sites, is based on on-site ethnographic research and critical photography.

The geographical context of Hay is important to understanding the Hay Institution for Girls and



Figure 46: Commemorative plaque (Robb 2007) at Hay Gaol Museum, Hay, New South Wales



Figure 47: View along Mid Western Highway near Hay, New South Wales.

its commemoration. The town is located in the Riverina area of rural NSW. To the north is the wide, flat expanse of the One Tree Plain, also known as the Long Paddock. The town spans the Murrumbidgee River, and is the meeting point for three major inland highways: the Sturt, running from Adelaide to Canberra, the Cobb, running from Melbourne to the north, and the Mid-Western to Sydney. It is a small rural town, and local tourism materials suggest its main source of identity is as a site for nature-based and settler-colonial heritage tourism. Hay's remote location had an impact on the logistics of arranging for the women to return for the reunion event, and continues to affect the use of the site as a way of telling their story.

Memory (re)discovered

The Hay Institution for Girls was a maximum security facility for teenage girls, which replicated a similar prison for boys in Tamworth (SCARC 2001, para. 2.163). The old colonial building was closed as an adult prison in 1915, considered too outdated, and yet it was opened for teenage girls in 1961 following riots at the Parramatta Girls Home in Sydney. Up to 12 girls at a time could be housed in two rows of individual cells running off a central corridor. The girls were expected to conform to strict discipline, given hard physical labour to do instead of education, and were only allowed to speak or make eye contact with other inmates — or indeed the wardens — for ten minutes at the beginning and end of each day. Girls who did not conform were denied food or sent to solitary confinement. Some of the women report being beaten and raped by male officers. Over the period of the institution's activity, there were variations in practices, but the overall purpose of the Hay Institution for Girls remained consistent: it was a place designed to break the spirit of children. At Parramatta Girls Home and other child institutions, the threat of Hay was used as a method of control. As archaeologist Denis Byrne points out, this means that Hay had a 'dispersed

existence' (Byrne 2014, p. 77), in the sense that it existed in the minds of girls living many hundreds of kilometres away.

Hay is long way from anywhere that could be considered urban, and the decision to base the Hay Institution for Girls there was clearly motivated by a desire to have the prison out of the public gaze. Although the gaol is located close to the centre of Hay, the girls were transported at night and removed from the train one stop before the town. They travelled the rest of the way in a closed in van, which had the dual impact of disorienting the girls and ensuring there was no contact between them and the people in the town. Some of the guards were brought from Tamworth — bringing with them its brutal regime — and locals were told that the girls were the 'worst girls in NSW' (*Exposed to moral danger* 2009) and 'deserved all they got' (A. Hardingham 2016, interview, 11 April). In reality, only a small percentage of the girls at Parramatta had ever been convicted of a criminal offense; the first group of girls sent to Hay in 1961 had participated in a protest against their mistreatment within the system, which escalated into a 'riot'. However, it is easy to imagine that, in a small country town, girls transported from a Sydney prison would be assumed to be hardened criminals. Hay, then, is part of a long tradition in Australia and elsewhere of placing prisons in out-of-the-way places and dehumanising detainees.

When the story of the Hay Institution for Girls re-emerged in the public sphere in the mid 2000s, it was described as having been 'secret' and 'hidden', but this was only ever partially true. Hay Institution for Girls was a contested site from the beginning. An August 1962 edition of the local *Riverina Grazier* reported screams coming from the prison at night. A representative of the then Department of Child Welfare insisted there was no ill-treatment. During a radio documentary recorded in 2007 (*Exposed to moral danger*), a woman who grew up across the road from the gaol said they would often hear the girls' screams, and that her mother complained to the council but was told it was out of their hands. A former worker also described her feeling of powerlessness; recounting a conversation with her daughter who asked if she could 'get them' — meaning get them out — she replied, 'you can't do nothing' (*Exposed to moral danger* 2007). The *Forgotten Australians* report indicates that some prison staff saw there was abuse but did not report it for fear of retaliation (SCARC 2004, para. 5.39). The *Find and connect* government web resource reports that Hay's closure in 1974 was

‘due to community concerns about the treatment of girls and after protests by leaders of Sydney women’s movement’ (Find and Connect 2016).

Following the closure of the Hay Institution for Girls, in 1975, the building was handed back to the Hay community and reopened as a local history museum. One cell within the gaol was dedicated to the story of the institution, told within the museum as a very small part of the town’s and the gaol’s history. A local history booklet, written by Bill Donnison, was published by the Hay Historical Society in 1976 and reprinted in 1980. It tells the story of the institution using information from the NSW Government archive, describing it as an ‘experiment’ that was ‘aimed at taking the glamour out of making trouble’ (Donnison 1976). In 1978, Wilma Robb returned to Hay with another ex-inmate and was encouraged by a former guard to tell her story. However, life took her in other directions. For those who were not its inmates, the memory of the institution seems to have faded into the background. It re-emerged in the early 2000s, when the Australian SCARC launched its inquiry into children in institutional care.

In June 2004, as the senate inquiry was coming to a close, a group of four women returned to Hay to visit the old gaol and to participate in a television documentary called *State secrets* for the ABC program Stateline. It was during this visit that the women met with Tertia Butcher, editor of the local newspaper, the *Riverina grazier*, and leader of the Women About Hay group. Tertia is a long-term resident of Hay but comes originally from South Africa and so was able to bring an outside perspective. She described seeing a huge change in the women before and after their return to the institution site, and became a local advocate for telling the story of the Hay girls. Tertia said she was motivated by seeing the positive impact the visit had on the women, but also wanted the town itself to ‘face up to its past’.

At around this time, a community of memory was developing around the Parramatta Girls Home in Sydney, where many of the Hay girls had been originally detained (some Hay inmates were also sent from the Cootamundra Home for Aboriginal Girls). Some of the Aboriginal women who had been through the Parramatta home had reconnected through the process of the HREOC inquiry and the resultant *Bringing them home: report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families*. These women initiated a Parramatta reunion event in 2003. At around this time, Bonney Djuric had returned to the Parramatta Girls Home to undertake a residence as part of her honours degree in visual art, and she worked with other former inmates to form the Parragirls collective. Through an exhibition of ‘Forgotten Australians’ artworks held at the NSW Parliament House, Bonney made a connection with

some of the women who had been at Hay, including Wilma Robb and Christina Riley Green, who had taken part in the Stateline visit. Although she had not been sent there herself, Bonney Djuric has repeatedly described the impact Hay had on her and other girls at Parramatta as a threat (Djuric 2011; Djuric cited in Byrne 2014) — and felt a need to see the place for herself.

The government inquiries had brought the issue into the public sphere, and for many of the women it provided the impetus to speak about their experience and to make connections with others. Personal timing was also important. Wilma Robb described it as a time when, ‘my children were grown and I had free time to look into my time in institutions’. She made contact with the Hay Historical Society and requested an opportunity to go back and ‘tell the community the way really was’. Bonney Djuric was also invited to show her short film, *Asylum*. In November 2005 the visit took place; three ‘Hay girls’, Christina Riley Green, Toni Cameron and Wilma Robb were joined by ‘Parra girls’ Bonney Djuric and Lynette Aitken. Christina and Wilma addressed the gathering at Hay. Bonney described a sense of, ‘tremendous guilt and desire to make amends. And to witness’. Perhaps because of the small size of the local community, people expressed a sense of responsibility that the women had not experienced in the responses to Parramatta. Out of this visit, and with support from Tertia Butcher, the Women About Hay group and the Hay Historical Society developed a plan for a much larger reunion event to be held in March 2007 on International Women’s Day.

The 2005 visit received extensive coverage in the *Riverina grazier*. One of the stories included a photograph of Toni Cameron remaking the cell at the Hay Gaol Museum. The cell had been set up as an imagined replica of what it would have been like, but had included a doll on the bed and carpet on the floor — perhaps reflecting the government propaganda at the time, which suggested that the girls were being given special training and individual attention. In the interview, Toni Cameron explained that she had had to scrub the cell with a wire brush, and was given no comforting items except a Gideon Bible (‘Toni’s cell’ 2005). Another article in the same edition included an interview with Wilma Robb, in which she stated, ‘We do not want sympathy; we just want the history to be recorded correctly’ (‘History must be rewritten’ 2005). This is a recurring theme for both the survivors of Hay and their supporters within the town. The inclusion of the doll on the bed seemed to the women a lie, like so many other lies that had been

told about them. Being able to demonstrate the ‘truth’ of their experience was a small step towards justice.

Reunion and reconciliation

The choice of International Women’s Day shows the way such official days can be used by local memory activists to draw links with a wider movement. In the case of the Hay reunion, connecting the event with International Women’s Day offered a practical point of connection with the Women About Hay group. It also allowed the Hay survivors to frame their experience as part of an ongoing women’s struggle and solidarity movement. The women had been very open about the impact their experience at Hay and other institutions had on them, and this included their ability to parent. Wilma Robb described the aim of the reunion:

It was to return and meet up with other women and family members that were there as children, to see how everyone managed their lives ... It also gave the children and families time to speak to other siblings of women. Many women had lost their children because we were much damaged, other children did well but struggled. Others, both mother and children had addictions or were in prison, in violent relationships.



Figure 48: Corridor of cell block, Hay Gaol Museum. Hay, New South Wales.



Figure 49: Hay Gaol Museum, view from street. Hay, New South Wales.

The focus on them as women helped them talk about these aspects of their experience. However, in doing this they ignored or downplayed connections with the Tamworth Institution for Boys.

Women came from all around Australia for the event. Many gathered in Sydney and travelled by bus overnight to Hay. Each woman was encouraged to bring a support person, and the organisers had arranged for counsellors to be present. After checking in to their accommodation, the women had the opportunity to visit the gaol as a group. For some of the women, this was very important, as it was difficult for them to make the physical return to the place of their trauma. They needed to be able to do so for the first time without being subjected to a public gaze. In the evening, they returned for a public event. Each woman was met at the door by Ethel Gray, one of the few officers who had tried to report mistreatment. She handed

each woman a rose and a personal apology. Some of the women were able to accept the rose, others did not.

Alongside plans for the reunion, a play was developed based on the women's experience. Amy Hardingham from Outback Theatre had been in the audience for the 2005 event and commissioned the play, *Eyes to the floor*, after hearing Wilma Robb's vivid description of the sounds and smells of the gaol. Like Tertia Butcher, Amy was motivated by a need to set the record straight and have the people of Hay understand their history. She was put in touch with Alana Valentine, a well-known verbatim theatre writer who had already worked with some of the women on the play *Parramatta girls*, and commissioned Alana to write the script. However, at the time of the reunion, the focus was on creating a piece of physical theatre for the event, based on Wilma Robb's descriptions. Amy Hardingham worked with a group of local teenagers to produce the play, which was choreographed by Lee Pemberton. Because of the difficult and potentially traumatic history they were working with, parents needed to be involved, and Amy described the process becoming a whole-of-family event, with some of the girls discovering that their grandparents had worked at the Institution. There was tension leading up to the event, as some of the women questioned how a 'dance' could capture their experience.

The central part of the gaol is a long corridor, with individual cells running off either side. On the night of the performance, a girl was in each cell, acting out part of the experience of the inmates through marching, scrubbing or other repetitive actions. A soundtrack created by Scott Howie used pre-recorded sounds of locks clanging and doors creaking. Small groups entered at one end, and the doors were closed behind them as they made their way through the performance. For some of the survivors, this was too confronting and they chose not to participate. For others, however, the lack of words seemed to be helpful. The women all brought their own personal experience to meet what was being expressed in the play; meaning they could come together as a 'community of memory' without having to negotiate a solid, shared expression of that memory.

After the performance, people gathered in the courtyard as the sun set. Instead of the scripted words that would eventually form the play, at this event the women themselves shared their stories. They were given the opportunity to speak and to act in ways they had not been able to as children. Bonney Djuric described the event:

It was really like sloughing off those sort of controls that they'd had in there, and liberating themselves. And actually lifting their heads and looking up ...

As the evening progressed, the mood lightened. Sharyn Killens, a former Hay girl who became a professional singer, performed the song, ‘You light up my life’ dedicating it to warden Effie Ray.

Many of the teenage girls who performed *Eyes to the floor* formed a connection with a particular Hay survivor. Amy Hardingham said it seemed significant for the women to be able to speak about their experience with these teenagers, who were about the same age as they had been but who had lived much more protected lives. The women reframed the way they told their stories to shield the girls from some of the difficult knowledge. One of the women said it was the thought of the effort the teenagers had put into the play that gave her the courage to return to the gaol. Maria Delbridge was reported as saying,

It took everything I had to step through that gate this morning. I so was not coming tonight. But then I thought of these kids who have put so much into a play for us. As a child everything was taken from me — I was not going to take anything from these kids. So I came, and I wouldn’t have missed it for the world (‘I am free!’ 2007).

This quote suggests the importance of exchange in the giving and receiving of memory in different forms and through relationships.

The installation of the memorial plaque took place on the Sunday morning, during what was described in the *Riverina grazier* as a ‘memorial service’, led by a local Catholic priest, Father Brian Ebert. Despite the fact Hay was a secular institution, each girl had a bible in her cell, and some have recalled taking comfort from it. It is unclear whether this is the reason for the decision to include a religious element to the service, or whether such an inclusion was a way to add a level of ritual and solemnity to the occasion. Planting the rose garden around the



Figure 50: Wilma Robb with the plaque at the dedication event, March 2007. Courtesy Wilma Robb.

plaque was incorporated into the service. It may be that, as the event was planned to be held on a Sunday morning, it seemed appropriate to include a religious component on the traditional day of Christian worship. Another explanation is that the liturgy took the form of a kind of surrogate funeral for those women who had not recovered from their Hay experience. Many of the women had died before the reunion could take place, as a result of suicide.

The cover of the liturgy booklet reads, ‘Let your light shine’, and the service was very much in that theme. Two readings were used in the ceremony — a bible reading from the book of *Isaiah*, which includes the phrase, ‘I have called you by your name and you are mine’, which

is perhaps a curious choice given the repressive, controlling nature of the women's experience, but chosen to reflect a sense of care and support. The reading continues, 'Because you are precious in my eyes you are honoured and I love you.' The other reading was a famous quote attributed to Nelson Mandela's inauguration speech of 1994,²³ which similarly states, 'You are a child of God,' and ends:

As we let our light shine, we unconsciously give people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

The hymns chosen seem to have been picked so that as many people as possible would know the words or tune — as well as continuing the theme of love and care. They included 'Amazing grace', a song written by an ex-slaver about the possibility of redemption; 'Swing low, sweet chariot', an old gospel anthem dating back to the days of American slavery and sometimes associated with the underground railroad that helped people escape; and an old children's hymn, 'He's got the whole world in his hands', which is another American spiritual. I mention this because those preparing the liturgy would have put thought into these choices, and it is clear they were making transnational links with other human rights struggles of slavery and apartheid. The prayers also included reference to all people who were locked up, and asked that the inhumane treatment the girls experienced would not happen again. The ceremony tried to keep the difficult balance of acknowledging both the women's pain and their strength of spirit in surviving what they had been through, while also suggesting that those who had not survived were in some way loved and welcomed 'home' in death. The inclusion of 'Amazing grace' sounded a note of reconciliation towards the people of Hay who either participated in or ignored what happened. After the service, the women were each given a rose and a candle, and encouraged to light the candle in difficult times.

Two other important supporters of the event were Sue Vardon and Senator Andrew Murray. Vardon was at that time chief executive of the South Australian Department for Families and Communities. Back in the 1970s, at the start of her career, she had been one of those involved in the closure of Hay and was keen to offer support. Through her advocacy and networks, the Department of Community Services had provided funding for the reunion's transport and accommodation. The plaque, however, was personally donated by Vardon, rather than by the government. This meant there was no need for negotiation about the form or text, as has been the case in the majority of other such projects, but the choice of wording was still influenced by concerns of outsiders. In this case, Wilma

²³ In fact, the quote is from the book, *A return to love* (1992) by Marianne Williamson, but is often attributed, as it was here, to Nelson Mandela.

Robb had chosen the words, ‘Let no child suffer this way again’ but the plaque makers were worried about making claims of suffering against a government body. Wilma consulted with Legal Aid and on its advice the wording became, ‘Let no child walk this path again.’ The emphasis on ‘never again’ remained strong. It was unveiled by Senator Andrew Murray, a Western Australian politician who has been an ongoing advocate for Australian care leavers. Murray also made a connection between the Hay Institution for Girls and other human rights abuses, calling the gaol an ‘appalling concentration camp’.

Hay Gaol Museum now

The story of the Hay Institution for Girls is now given a place of prominence within the Hay Gaol Museum. Nonetheless, it has to be integrated with many other stories. The museum remains a local history museum, and has to find a way to integrate the gaol’s and the town’s different histories. One significant legacy of the reconnection between the Hay girls and the Hay Gaol Museum is that Hay is now listed on the NSW heritage register. Another is the professionally curated display located in the main ‘reception’ room at the gaol, which attempts to articulate the various aspects of the building’s past. Above the fireplace on the wall facing the door, a sign reads:

Gaol, maternity hospital, prisoner of war camp and girls’ institution: Hay Gaol has had many uses. Every chapter in its story has brought new characters inside its high walls and behind its barred gates (Seer n.d.).

To the right, a large patchwork wall hanging takes up nearly the whole wall. The squares are printed with texts and images using the same sepia tones and design scheme as the sign. The patchwork tells the story of the gaol in chronological



Figure 51: Large sign in ‘reception’ room, curated by Martha Sear, Hay Gaol Museum.



Figure 52: Detail of printed patchwork wall hanging in ‘reception’ room, curated by Martha Sear, Hay Gaol Museum.

order, and although some periods of use are given a few more tiles than another, there is not a strong privileging of one particular history.

In contrast to the professional finish of these two orienting objects, on the left side of the fireplace, a grid of six A4 pieces of paper is attached to the wall. The first two offer a careful explanation of the Gibson collection: part of which is displayed in a glass cabinet; and part, as the sheet explains, is held in the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. Three other pages on the grid of six tell some of the story of the Hay Institution for Girls. Further along the wall, a photocopied newspaper article tells a more personal version of the Hay girls' story, through an interview with former detainee, Sharyn Killens, about her memoir.

This entry room, which was once the matron's room, was also the 'reception' area where Hay girls were stripped, searched, and given their uniforms. The printed sheets explain this, but visitors can easily avoid this room and simply wander around the grounds and through the cellblock, which is a separate building. The museum is not permanently staffed, and visitors leave a donation in a box on the wall just inside the heavy wooden doors. Within this entry area, which may be the main point of orientation for some visitors, two laminated pages are devoted to the history of the gaol, with the first page focusing on a physical description of the gaol's construction and colonial beginnings. A large display tells the story of the Henry Nickless Collection, a large collection donated by a long-term farming family and which is presented as an example of 'make-do' farming ingenuity. For visitors who did not turn left into the reception room, this would be their main frame of reference for the rest of the museum.

The cell block is in the centre of the gaol compound, surrounded by well-kept lawns and pot plants. The Hay Institution for



Figure 53: Hay Gaol Museum, view inside from entrance.



Figure 54. Cell now used for 'communications' display, Hay Gaol Museum.

Girls' display instructs visitors to pay attention to the first cell on the left. This was where girls spent their first 10 days of solitary confinement. It was known as the scrubbing cell, because they were expected to spend those 10 days scrubbing it. Some reports suggest the room was freshly painted and the girls were required to scrub away the paint. However, the cell itself is not used to tell this story — instead it is filled with telecommunications equipment dating back as far as the early days of telegraph communication in the region. This pattern of using the cells for thematic displays is repeated along the corridor. Some are in glass-fronted display cases, while others are behind mesh cages. Some groupings are what you might expect in a settler-colonial history museum, others are a little quirkier. One room is filled entirely with bottles. Along the corridor, between the cells, are other displays. One glass cabinet is titled, 'A trip down memory lane?' and has a collection of local photographs with a request for information about who



Figure 55: 'Cabin' cell room styled as it was during the time of the Hay Girls Institution, Hay Gaol Museum.

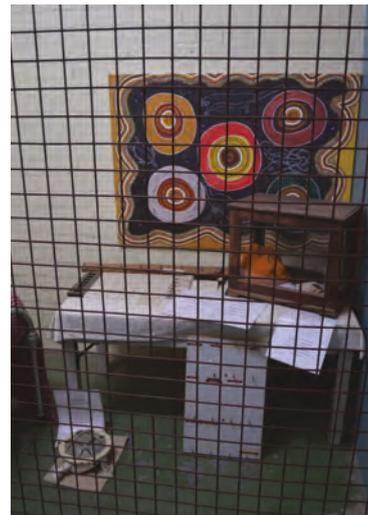


Figure 56: Display within 'cabin' cell, painting and various artefacts.



Figure 57: Plaque and rose garden in courtyard of Hay Gaol Museum, New South Wales.

is in them. On the wall a cross-stitch embroidery is dedicated to, 'Our dear Ellen who died at Hay May the 23 1881 ages 9 years and 8 months'.

The solitary confinement cell is the only one without restricted access. In this cell, it is possible to walk inside and imagine how it might feel to be locked up here. For me, it brought an awareness of how impossible it was to understand how it would feel to be locked up here: either as a colonial prisoner; an early 20th century person with a mental health issue; or a teenage girl.

Along with the era of the Hay Institution for Girls, two other periods of the gaol's history are given prominence through a dedicated cell. The 'escape cell' focuses on the story of an Italian POW who escaped during WWII, but also contains various military artefacts. On the wall is a reproduction of correspondence related to the 'distinguished service' of Sister H M Harris in the Middle East, but no other background or context is offered. The museum's web page claims it has 'Australia's best preserved Aboriginal canoes', and these are presented in a cell titled 'Aboriginal relics'. They are consigned to the distant past, and given no context.

The main Hay Institution for Girls exhibit is both integrated into, and set apart from, the rest of the museum display; located almost at the end of the corridor, next to the 'escape cell'. It is labelled the 'cabin', but without the explanation that this term comes from early colonial days, when juveniles were held on prison ships. A sign above the door explains that the room is set up exactly as it would have been when the girls were detained here, with the bed at a slight angle to the wall. Girls were expected to sleep facing the door and, if they rolled over in their sleep, they would be woken and made to stand for some time before being sent back to bed. An audio recording on the wall can be activated to play the ABC Radio National documentary, *Exposed to moral danger* (2007), which gives this and other background information. The documentary explains how the girls' handiwork, which is on display, won awards at the local agricultural show. It also notes that a third of the women who attended the 2007 reunion were Aboriginal, and above the handiwork display is a painting in a distinctively Aboriginal style, using earthy colours, circles and dot painting. The picture is slightly incongruous. Unlike the other items on display it is not labelled, and seems unlikely to have been created at the time the institution was operational. Perhaps it is there as a subtle reminder that many of the Hay girls were also part of the Stolen Generations.

The memorial itself is in a small rose garden, in the central courtyard, next to the part of the building used for kitchen and laundry. On the wall behind it an aerial image of the Hay District and Murrumbidgee River is etched onto metal,



Figure 58: Gibson Collection cabinet showing ‘crazy’ patchwork by Marian Gibson, Hay Gaol Museum.

acting as a frame for the memorial. The website, after all, says the museum tells ‘our town’s story’. Part of ‘our story’ is the story of a town where young girls were brought to be abused; where neighbours heard screams of pain and terror but were unable to find a way to respond; and where locals worked as guards, sometimes providing a level of comfort but, at other times, being complicit or even perpetrating abuse. The town of Hay has accepted this history, but continues to struggle with how to tell this story in the context of the town’s other history. Indeed, telling of the story in a way that privileges the

perspectives of the girls may be an ethical approach aimed at giving a voice to those most marginalised but, as Jonathon Skinner argues in the context of Northern Island’s Maze prison, telling one version of the story ‘also means not telling other stories. It is a selection as well as a silencing’ (2014, p. 86).

Conclusion

In the Gibson display case in the reception room is one item that offers a useful visual metaphor for the Hay Gaol Museum: a patchwork sample by Marion Gibson, one of the early settler-colonisers of the area. Unlike the neat, printed patchwork on the opposite wall, this one is described as ‘crazy’. It is made with irregular shapes, colours and textures — presumably dictated by what materials were at hand — which are nonetheless pulled together into a more or less coherent design. Wilma Robb argues that the gaol, ‘has a history of human cruelty and that is what this heritage museum should be about’. The Gibson patchwork offers an alternative approach to remembering that draws the linkages between seemingly disparate times and objects, and their historical context and legacy.

Nadia Bertolini, citing Andreina Ricci, argues that ‘objects accumulated without meaning are mere “islands of the past” — both spatially and temporally — that populate the urban fabric’ (2013, p. 13). It is by giving these objects a context that the richness of their meaning emerges. This challenge is particularly striking at Hay because of the traumatic history it seeks to acknowledge and because of the limited resources available to a remote, local history museum. However, it is a

challenge that is relevant everywhere. What if, for example, the story of the local Wiradjuri people could be told alongside their well-preserved canoes and alongside the stories of the settlers who, having taken over the land, were at times taken over by it? What if these stories could be told in such a way as to make the connections between the Aboriginal families whose children were taken away and the other women — perhaps some of the babies born in the maternity hospital days — who because of poverty or because there was not support for single families, ended up the parents of the children we now know as the Forgotten Australians.

Archaeologist Dennis Byrne writes about the fact that heritage always deals with places individually, and how this makes it more difficult to see the links between them. In this case study, I have suggested some links I can see with other sites and examples. The various curators of the Hay Gaol Museum have likewise attempted to make the links between the different pieces of their patchwork of history, always constrained by the materials at hand. I have tried to demonstrate the importance of the many strands of memory work that come together in any memorial project. In this particular example, the memorial was an integral part of a reunion event that offered an opportunity for survivors to return to the site and for the town to acknowledge its history. That event has an ongoing legacy in the form of the play *Eyes to the floor*, which has become Alana Valentine's most-performed play. It also has an ongoing presence at the museum itself. The plaque is small but direct. It offers a signal that within the many different stories the gaol has to tell, this story, and the women who passed through the Hay Institution for Girls when they were teenagers, are valued. But it is only a plaque.

Memorials used to join in the story of Australia

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways the histories and events commemorated by memorials to lived experience emerged into the public sphere in the latter part of the 20th century. In doing so, I claimed that memorials are a conservative memory practice. By this I mean they require a level of social consensus in order to be built. In this chapter, I want to consider the ways memorials to lived experience have embraced the conservatism of the memorial form in order to claim a space in the national story. Despite the move to what John Gillis calls the post-national era of memorialisation (Gillis 1994), the idea of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1991) still holds strong conceptual power. In Australia, this is demonstrated through a wide range of public conversations including those that explore what it means to be 'Australian' or 'Un-Australian', and what should be included in the national history curriculum. The memorial form continues to offer a sought-after signal that people or experiences are not only remembered but also valued as part of the narrative of the nation. In this chapter, I chart the way the narratives of service and sacrifice found in Australia's early war memorials were adopted in the post-WWII era to tell the stories of 'pioneers'. I will consider how these narratives converged with the language of trauma in POW and Vietnam War commemorations. I will also discuss the ways marginalised groups have, at times, adopted traditional memorial forms, along with conservative narratives, in order to tell their story within the national story. And how, in the process, incrementally, the narrative frames that memorials use have opened up to allow new stories to emerge.

Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1991) retains conceptual power into the 21st century. Whereas it has been argued that the development of international human rights frameworks, including the International Criminal Court and the United Nations, place limits on sovereignty (Henkin 1995), the nation is still the recognised international unit of governmental currency. Yet the increasing fluidity of the world's population means that the country named on a person's passport may not be their only source of identity. As the memorial plaques at Adelaide's Migration Museum demonstrate,²⁴ diaspora communities may retain a strong sense of connection to their country of origin years, or even generations, after they have left. At the same time, the desire to tell those stories in a formal way, through a plaque on the wall of a state institution,

²⁴ See Chapter 3.

suggests that those groups also want to have acknowledgment of their story as a part of the story of their current nation. As I discussed in Chapter 4, the kinds of stories that have been able to be told in memorial form have been limited by the shared meanings available for those stories to circulate. This chapter explores how shared meanings around the story of the nation have been mobilised by marginalised groups using the memorial form to gain space to tell their story within the story of Australia.

Service and sacrifice

April 2015 marked 100 years since the battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey, which is commemorated in Australia as the national Anzac Day public holiday.²⁵ In the lead up to the centenary, the Australian Government distributed A\$17.9 million in community grants to local electorates for a variety of commemorative projects (Minister for Veterans Affairs 2015). Many projects involved the creation or renovation of war memorials.²⁶ Such national government interest in local commemoration of war is symptomatic of the link between nationalism and war memorials. However, that association has changed over time. Mark McKenna (2010) argues that Australia's politicians have promoted the Anzac myth as a less controversial alternative to the January 26 commemoration of colonisation since the mid 1980s. The conservative Howard Government (1996–2007) consciously promoted the commemoration of Anzac as a 'key pillar of national pride' (McKenna 2010, p. 124).

Ken Inglis's seminal study of Australia's war memorials suggests a level of ambivalence in the early commemorations of WWI that is lost in contemporary understandings (Inglis 2008). While the obelisks of WWI are often understood as being within the celebratory monumental tradition, Inglis's reading of them is much more nuanced, and suggests a level of ambiguity normally associated with minimalist memorials such as Maya Lin's VVM. He argues that obelisks were chosen both because they were relatively cheap and because of the openness of their meaning:

A war memorial may signal exultation, pride, gratitude, mourning. It may even, though this is everywhere rare, express opposition to the war in question. People can pick and choose among the messages (Inglis 2008, p. 49).

25 Anzac as an acronym stands for the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps. However, the acronym has become a word within the Australian lexicon, meaning any Australian (or New Zealander) soldier, or even more broadly someone who displays the 'Anzac spirit'.

26 Through a separate program, funding was also allocated for the redevelopment of major state war memorials around Australia (Minister for Veterans Affairs 2014).

Inglis found that a significant minority (about a quarter) of Australia's memorial for the Boer War and WWI acknowledged soldiers who 'served' as well as those who died, which was a departure from British military tradition. One possible explanation, Inglis suggests, is that all Australian soldiers up until WWII were volunteers, making them seem worthy of a higher level of respect than 'career' soldiers (pp. 42–43). In some cases, a 'roll of honour' was created when local men signed up for military service and, over time, became memorials to the dead as well. Such memorials, then, are precursors to today's memorials to lived experience; however, rather than acknowledging the soldiers' experience of the war, they acknowledge their service. At the time of WWI, this service was understood as being in the name of 'Empire', although it is now framed at Anzac ceremonies and more broadly as being in the service of the nation and the Australian 'way of life'.

The rhetoric of service and sacrifice seems to have developed from war memorials to other memorial forms. Chilla Bulbeck's survey of 'unusual' monuments in the 1980s identified a number of sites that commemorated Australia's colonisers through the lens of service and sacrifice (Bulbeck 1991). In the latter part of the 20th century, and particularly in the lead up to 1988 (the year Australia commemorated its bicentenary), monuments and memorials that celebrated colonial explorers and 'great men' were supplemented by commemorations of more 'ordinary' settler-colonisers. As Bulbeck tells it, these were commemorations of those who 'travelled in the footsteps of more famous and named explorers' just as the ordinary soldiers celebrated in war memorials were 'the collective cannon fodder around which tales of nationhood were forged' (Bulbeck 1991, p. 407). While most retain the celebratory tone of the monumental tradition, many carry a subordinate



Figure 59: Highbury plaque showing locals who died alongside 'those who served' in WWI and WWII, Western Australia. Image courtesy Andrew Hobbs.



Figure 60: 'Pioneer women's memorial', King's Park, Perth, Western Australia.

theme of sadness or sacrifice. For example, the 'Pioneer women's memorial' (Priest & Summerhayes 1968) in Perth's Kings Park is a bronze sculpture set within a lake in one of the park's formal gardens. A woman holds a baby close to her chest and looks forwards. According to the plaque, she and her child are moving 'through the bushland of surging jets towards their destiny'. Read in accordance with the words of the plaque, she participates unproblematically in the settler-colonial project.²⁷ However, her wistful expression and the reassuring way she holds the child, not to mention her placement, precariously balanced on a stepping stone in the middle of a lake, suggest difficulties in this 'destiny'. The emphasis on the challenges faced by early colonisers has been a key theme of settler-colonial memorials, with the emphasis being on the difficulties overcome in the service of the nation. The national narrative of service and sacrifice, primarily associated with soldiers and settler-colonisers, continues to marginalise Aboriginal Australians and others whose history does not fit within the narrative of 'outback pioneers'.

Prisoners of war

Australia's war memorials may demonstrate more social inclusion than those in other countries, but some parts of the war experience have been more easily incorporated into a national narrative than others. The war memorials created in the first half of the 20th century usually recognised only white, male soldiers. Those who did not fall into these categories have had to fight for recognition of the part they played through the creation of separate memorials. For example, memorials commemorating the service of Aboriginal soldiers in overseas wars were dedicated in Adelaide and Sydney in 2015.²⁸ In the latter part of the 20th century, POWs mounted a successful campaign to have their experience separately commemorated.

Joan Beaumont argues that POW narratives circulated in the public sphere continuously from the end of the war, and incorporated the Australian Anzac myth of mateship and resilience (2005). However, Hamilton suggests there was a gap between popular culture accounts and the transmission of memory within families, such that when the POW story began to re-emerge in the 1990s, within the context of a newly accepted trauma discourse, there was a sense that the story had not previously been told (Hamilton 2003). Hamilton argues that the 2001 screening of the ABC miniseries *Changi* characterised a transition from a

27 In *Myths of Oz*, Fiske et al point out the disturbing fact that the memorial mobilises feminist histories that have recognised the previously ignored role of women, but done so 'to neutralise the even more disturbing fact of white expropriation of the land' (1987, p. 144).

28 Aboriginal soldiers' names were not often included in memorial engravings. They also missed out on land grants given to returned soldiers, and in a number of cases were denied access to the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) as it was then known.

perception of POWs as 'victims' to 'survivors', a shift which returned a sense of agency and allowed the POW narrative to be recuperated within the narrative of national service (Hamilton 2010). Rather than being unmanly soldiers, who had sat out the war without 'seeing action', POWs became understood as heroes who had suffered in the service of their nation. Twomey argues that the reinvigoration of the Anzac myth in Australia since the 1990s cannot be understood outside of the international context of the 'rise to cultural prominence of the traumatised individual' (2013, p. 91). Certainly, from the late 1980s onward, the POW experience began to be reframed through the lens of trauma. Slowly, it began to be incorporated into the national story and in 1995 a major event was held at the Australian War Memorial to mark the anniversary of the fall of Singapore. Nonetheless, some POW veterans continued to feel that their experience was not given full recognition by the state.

The 'Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial' was built and dedicated in 2004 in the Victorian regional town of Ballarat. Its location outside of the national capital is indicative of the challenges POWs continued to face, or felt they faced, in having their story incorporated into the national narrative of war service. Veterans became disillusioned when vague plans to build in Canberra came to nothing, and took matters into their own hands. They formed a committee, sourced funding and gained permission from the City of Ballarat to build the memorial in the regional botanical gardens.

The need to claim legitimacy can be seen in the monumental nature of the memorial. It repeats the now-familiar practice of inscribing all names into polished black granite. Whereas in the VVM names are listed in chronological order of death, here they are divided by conflict and category of service. The memorial was designed by Peter Blizzard, and a black granite slab at the entrance is engraved with a detailed explanation of the symbolism of its various elements. These include, along with the wall of names, a walkway designed to reference the railway sleepers that were a horrific part of many WWII veterans' experience, and a wall of water above which the words 'Lest we forget' are engraved. Those who died in captivity are remembered along with those who survived: in slightly over-determined imagery, seven obelisks stand in a shallow pool of water, with one laid on its side representing the fallen. This is not representative of the percentages of those who lived versus those who died, as up to a quarter of POWs did not return (Twomey 2013). Opposite the obelisks stands a single stone with the names and dates of each of the wars. The stone is surrounded by flagpoles. In between is a slab on which wreaths can be placed on special days engraved with the words, 'We will remember them.' The physical memorial is also connected to educational material,



Figures 61-64 (from top): 'Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial' (Blizzard 2004), view along path towards water feature, Ballarat, Victoria; 'Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial', interactive screen; 'Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial', view of wall of names; 'Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial', view of standing stones engraved with locations of imprisonment, Ballarat, Victoria.



including a touchscreen console at the memorial site, and a website containing more information. The project cost A\$1.8 million, making it arguably the most expensive memorial to lived experience in Australia,²⁹ and indicating the level of public support for the POW story by the time of its completion.

In 2008, the memorial was recognised as officially ‘national’. In an ABC interview at the time the memorial’s official status was conferred, trustee Les Kennedy focused on the surviving veterans, and their need to have the suffering and sadness of the POW experience acknowledged. Christine Twomey argues that the POW story has become firmly enshrined in the Anzac legend of ‘mateship, resourcefulness, egalitarianism and courage’ through the recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder in the post-Vietnam period, and the ‘narratives of trauma it at once unleashed and legitimated’ (2013, p. 325). Twomey draws on Michael Rothberg’s concept of multidirectional memory to show how POWs mobilised post-colonial narratives such as the Stolen Generations as well as the discourse of human rights to gain traction in the public sphere. However, as Twomey acknowledges, ‘not all articulations of memory are equal’ (2013, p. 329) and the experience of the mostly white and male POWs has been accepted as part of mainstream Australian history with much less controversy than the story of the Stolen Generations.

The ‘Vietnam veterans commemorative walk’ serves as a contrast to the POW Memorial, in terms of its need to claim legitimacy. The project, which officially opened in 2011 but is still developing, grew out of a local government desire to recognise that many of those Australian soldiers who fought in the Vietnam war were trained at the Puckapunyal army base, near the northern Victorian town of Seymour (Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk 2014). Like the POW Memorial, this commemoration includes a wall of names — and all those who participated in military service during the war are listed. However, this list of names is displayed on digiglass panels that allow visitors to take a step back and view historical images that tell the story of the war. This means that instead of seeing only a reflection of themselves, the memorial participant sees themselves within the narrative of the war. The landscaping at the site has been created to reflect, as closely as possible, the landscape of Vietnam. The site also includes

29 Reconciliation Place in Canberra cost A\$3.5 million, but for the purposes of this project I only consider the ‘Separation’ segments of it to be memorials to lived experience.

military artefacts and a replica of the Luscombe Bowl entertainment pavilion where visiting performers entertained the troops.

The walk's website claims that the local RSL group, having been approached by the council in 2005, agreed they did not want another memorial, as they felt this had already been done. Instead, they wanted a space where veterans could visit to remember and reflect. The website claims, 'It is also for those people who opposed the war to reflect upon their part of this history for they too need to contemplate.' In other words, rather than needing to claim a space in the national story, the Vietnam veterans are comfortable about their place in that story, and were more focused on the walk being a place to reflect on their own experience of that history.

Gratitude

Another counterpublic whose history is closely connected with the Vietnam War era is made up of those Vietnamese Australians who came to Australia as refugees in the wake of the conflict. That this group is not so comfortable about their place in Australia's national story can be seen from the much more self-conscious commemoration created in Perth in 2013. The 'Vietnamese boat people monument of gratitude' is located in a small park on the edge of Perth's central Northbridge district. Although it serves as a memorial for those Vietnamese refugees who died during the journey to Australia, its name frames that loss within a narrative of gratitude towards the new host nation. Media reports and interviews conducted at the time of its dedication suggest that the project offered an opportunity for Vietnamese Australians to reframe their story as an Australian story. Anh Nguyen, President of the WA chapter of Australia's Vietnamese Community Association, stated his belief that, 'The monument will be a tribute to Australia, and also will remind the next generations, and the public, about the ordeal that the first Vietnamese settlers went through on the high seas and in the jungle' (Wynne 2013). By reframing the Vietnamese refugees as 'settlers' the monument helps to legitimise their position as just one of the many migrant communities who have come to Australia. Nguyen states that the monument 'marks our footprint in Australian history'— yet the fact that this story needs to be told through a statement of 'gratitude' suggests the Vietnamese people do not yet feel confident that their story is part of the Australian story.

Migrant contribution

Australia's postwar history is marked by the constant negotiation of shifting boundaries of who is considered to be a 'worthy' Australian. Closely tied up with this is the expansion of the category of 'whiteness'. In memorials that aim

to draw minority groups into the national story, the need to claim to have made a 'contribution' to the nation is an indicator that these groups are not yet fully accepted as part of the dominant culture.

Jayne Persian's 2011 PhD thesis documents the ways the narrative framework of 'contribution' has been adopted in representations and commemorations of refugees brought to Australia from Europe's displaced persons' camps in the years immediately after WWII. Known as DPs, these and later postwar migrants came by assisted passage as indentured labour. In order to combat any potential racism or fear about migrants taking Australian jobs, the Australian Government worked hard to explain them as contributors to Australia's postwar reconstruction effort (Persian 2011, p. 73). Indeed, Australia's postwar intake of DPs was not driven by humanitarian ideals, but by a desire to increase the population of 'white' Australia to mitigate the perceived threat of Asia in the north (Neuman 2015, p. 81). Official government policy of assimilation transitioned to a celebratory multiculturalism in the 1970s, and this led to broadening of the kinds of contributions migrants might be said to make. So, for example, the media release from the town of Vincent that accompanied the 'Monument of gratitude' lists the contributions Vietnamese migrants have made to the locality including 'producing diversity' as well as 'entrepreneurial activities'. The emphasis on contribution continues to be an important way migrants have gained entry to the national story of Australia.

Due, at least in part, to the strength of the 'contribution' narrative, and the celebratory aspect of multiculturalism, few commemorations of migration focus on what migrants have left behind. Often, like in the Vietnamese monument, that story is pushed to the background. For example, a sculpture in the courtyard of the Adelaide Migration Museum titled 'The immigrants' (2006) is engraved with the words 'courage, pride, dreams, achievements'. These words, clearly chosen to be inspirational, contrast to the worn and worried expressions on the immigrants' faces — parents and a young child — who face in different directions, the father and son looking forward, the mother looking back. Although the sculpture is a copy of a statue in Italy, the migration museum's curator reports that it is popular with migrants from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, with families often using it as a stage for photos. Further research would be needed to determine if this is because there is something in the sculpture that captures the migrant experience, or whether it just seems a fun thing to pose with on a family day out.

A comparison of the seven state-funded commemorations of Child Migrants shows how the emphasis on 'contribution' has competed with the need to tell a story of loss and trauma. Child migrants in this context are children sent to

Australia from Britain and Malta under Commonwealth migration schemes. These children were sometimes orphans, but were as likely to be children of parents who were unable to care for their children because of poverty, or the social stigma attached to unmarried parenthood, or a combination of both. In 2001, an inquiry conducted by SCARC found that children had suffered loss of identity, because their connections with family were damaged or destroyed in the process of migration (Committee 2001). They had also often suffered abuse and neglect in institutional settings isolated from the wider community. Following the reference committee's recommendations, memorials were created for Child Migrants in each state of Australia. The gradual loosening of the 'contribution' narrative, and the increasing willingness to acknowledge the suffering of those children through the lens of trauma and human rights can be tracked by looking at the wording of the different plaques for state child migrant memorials.

The first memorial for Child Migrants was the plaque installed at the Adelaide Migration Museum in 2001. This plaque acknowledges the contribution Child Migrants have made to South Australia, but makes no mention of suffering or hardship. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the Western Australian memorial (2004) says only that, 'Hardships were endured, benefits were derived,' before going on to speak of the 'valuable contributions' Child Migrants have made to Australian society. It is perhaps understandable that, in trying to make sense of such difficult knowledge, there is a desire to balance the bad with the good. The Western Australian committee of former Child Migrants formed to work with the government on the memorial had offered its own suggestions for words. Some of these suggestions were poems and testimonial texts that attempted to express something of the trauma described in the *Lost innocents* report; others give much more emphasis to the contribution narrative. The wording of the final plaque attempts to bring these two strands of meaning together, but does so in language that is formal and bureaucratic.

The two plaques of memorials installed in Hobart in 2005 and Melbourne in 2006 have almost identical wording: although the Hobart one is dedicated only to those 265 children sent to Tasmania, whereas the Melbourne one is national in scope. Both emphasise the innocence of the children, and the fact that they were 'removed from their families and loved ones'. Their emphasis, therefore, is on the act of separation, rather than on what children experienced on arrival. They neither talk about 'contribution' nor trauma. The Sydney memorial, dedicated in 2006, acknowledges that, 'Many endured personal hardships, some experienced

great suffering.’ Nonetheless, the plaque adds, ‘They and their families have made and continue to make a valuable contribution to their communities and to Australia.’

The inscription for the memorial sculpture installed in the Adelaide Migration Museum courtyard in 2007 continues to speak of the ‘valuable contribution’ Child Migrants made to South Australia. However, the acknowledgment of suffering is much more clearly stated. This plaque once again mentions the fact that children were separated from their families (it uses the word ‘taken’) and reads: ‘Alone, they endured many years of hardship and suffering but with courage and determination have survived.’ The fact that the Adelaide memorial is the one to most strongly express the sense of suffering suggests a shift in public understanding of the experience of Child Migrants from the time of the publication of. It also suggests that the Adelaide Migration Museum has been successful in creating space for a more nuanced discussion of the migration experience.

Family separation

It is sometimes difficult to remember the difference cheap air travel has made to the migration experience. Since the 1980s, many migrants have been able to make regular return visits to their country of origin, whereas, in previous eras, they would have said goodbye to homes and families with little or no expectation of return. Australia’s settler-colonial history, then, is also a history of separation leading to strained, damaged or lost relationships.

In the years after World War II, nation building required blue-collar workers for projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme and later for the growing manufacturing industry. In the early postwar years, new migrants arriving as indentured labourers were housed in remote migrant centres. Often these had been hastily converted from the many army barracks used in the war years to provide basic training to military personnel. Families who had travelled to Australia together were soon separated as men were sent to work on infrastructure projects and women and children were left behind in the migrant centres. This pattern of family separation can be seen to be replicated in the modern mining industry’s fly-in, fly-out workforce; however, rather than staying behind in their own homes

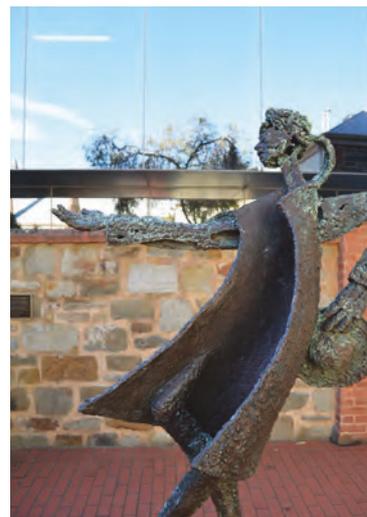


Figure 65: ‘Swept’ by Tim Thompson (2007), memorial for Child Migrants at the Adelaide Migration Museum, South Australia.

as women do now, migrant women were left waiting in isolated locations, often with very basic facilities and under a rigid institutional regime.

Near the small town of Uranquinty in rural NSW one migration hostel was created through the conversion of a camp that had been used during WWII to train Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilots. A small rest spot on the Olympic Highway opposite the Uranquinty Hotel incorporates commemoration of both the migrant and RAAF histories; including a small cenotaph for the region's war dead and a mosaic that tells a white, settler-colonial story. The memorial was dedicated during a reunion event titled, *Uranquinty Remembers*, held over Easter 2001 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Uranquinty Migrant Centre (NSW Migration Heritage Centre 2010). The commemoration was instigated by a former hostel volunteer, Erwin Richter, and gained the support of the Uranquinty Progress Association and the Wagga Wagga City Council. Richter said he, 'believed it most appropriate the significant chapter of the region's past history and contribution made by countless number of migrants towards the development of the district be acknowledged' (quoted in Persian 2011, p. 376). Migrants are reported to have been appreciative of the efforts made on their behalf, with some making repeated visits to the memorial (Persian 2011, pp. 378–9). Richter's words suggest a focus on regional, rather than national, remembering. However, the context of the sculpture within the small town's other important memorials points to

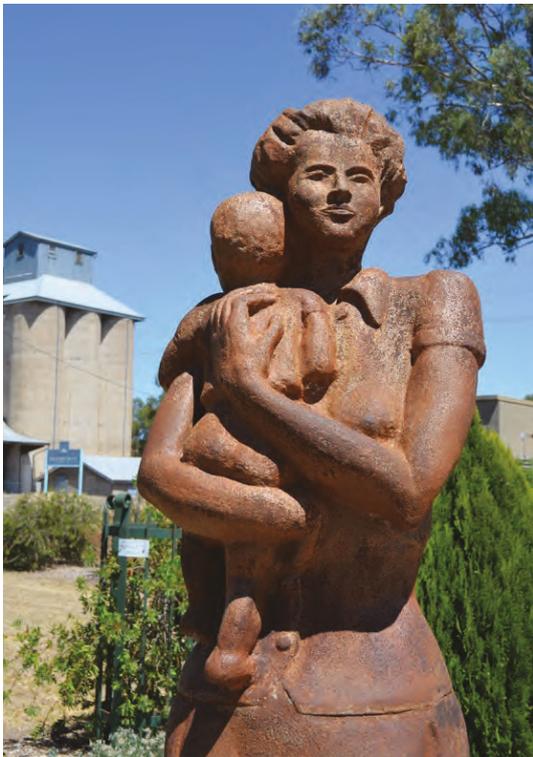


Figure 66: 'Kaia' by Cathy Kinlock, cast iron sculpture commemorating the Uranquinty Migrant Centre, view of top half, New South Wales.



Figure 67: 'Kaia' by Cathy Kinlock, view of young girl figure at base, Uranquinty, New South Wales.

something broader. A war memorial, after all, tells a local story as it connects with a bigger national and transnational event. Similarly, the commemoration of the RAAF training camp is important because of the sense that, through the camp, the region was contributing to the wider war effort. So the memorial not only commemorates the experience of the migrant women but also makes a statement about the role Uranquinty played in the story of postwar Australia.



Figure 68: Uranquinty memory space opposite the Uranquinty Hotel, Olympic Highway, New South Wales.

Named ‘Kaia’ (Kinloch 2001), the memorial is a cast iron sculpture of a woman holding a baby, staring out towards the horizon. A young girl looks out from the edge of her mother’s skirt, and just behind them is the rectangular, cardboard suitcase that has become the ubiquitous symbol of postwar migration in Australia. The accompanying plaque offers no interpretation. Is the woman gazing towards her future, like the ‘Pioneer women’s memorial’ in Perth? Is she wondering when her husband will return, or hoping there are no snakes or other dangerous bush creatures out there waiting to attack her children? The sculpture is accompanied by three informative signs that give some background to the Uranquinty story within the wider context of postwar migration and nation-building efforts. The second sign tells the story of the Uranquinty Migrant Centre, focusing on the difficulties caused by the clash of cultures and the isolation the women experienced there. It states that, ‘Lonely, isolated and frightened they were unable to express their needs and fears because of language difficulties.’ The third sign focuses on the positives that came out of the scheme, including telling the story of John and Ilsa Konrads who won medals for Australia in the 1960 Rome Olympics. The text ends:

The displaced persons who passed through the Uranquinty Migrant Centre from 1948 to 1951 contributed to Australia’s economic progress ... By 2001 Australia had become one of the world’s most culturally diverse multicultural societies.

Again, the story of suffering can be told only in the context of a contribution to the nation.

In the plaza of Melbourne’s Rialto Building, another Italian sculpture, ‘The reuniting family’ (Meszaros 2008), is much more explicit in its acknowledgment of the ambiguities of the migrant experience. This figurative sculpture tells a story common to Italian migrants in the postwar years. It depicts a family about to be reunited after years of separation — a common story at a time when young men would travel to Australia to set up a new life, bringing their family later when they

could afford it. As the man and woman wave to each other across the plaza, an older brother has to point out their father to a younger one. Two smaller children hang back with their mother, the smallest holding onto her skirt. This is not an airport scene, where a family greets each other after a short separation. While the artwork captures the sense of hope and new beginnings, it also acknowledges the pain of separation and the sense of fear of what is and may be lost. An extended plaque reads:

The battered trunk and suitcase represents the family's past and future. They have taken all their belongings to start anew. Although more importantly this luggage holds the hopes, ambitions and dreams for a successful future together.

The bunch of flowers consists of the calla lily, a common white flower that grows profusely around northern Italy, symbolic of the common people that migrated to Australia from Europe. The eucalyptus branch, native to Australia symbolises and recognises the Indigenous people, the traditional owners of this land.

The Rialto site is most appropriate for these sculptures as this was the busiest area of commerce in colonial Melbourne.

The fact that this memorial has been privately funded by the Grollo-Ruzzene Foundation and placed within a private plaza may be one explanation of why the 'contribution' narrative is muted in this plaque. Nonetheless, the need to situate this specific, if shared, story of Italian migrants within the wider narrative of settler-colonial Australia is present.

'The reuniting family' is also unusual for its acknowledgment of Australia's first peoples. As far back as 2002, Joseph Pugliese called for a 'decolonising migrant historiography' that would not be complicit in the continuing dispossession



Figure 69: 'The reuniting family', detail, Melbourne, Victoria.

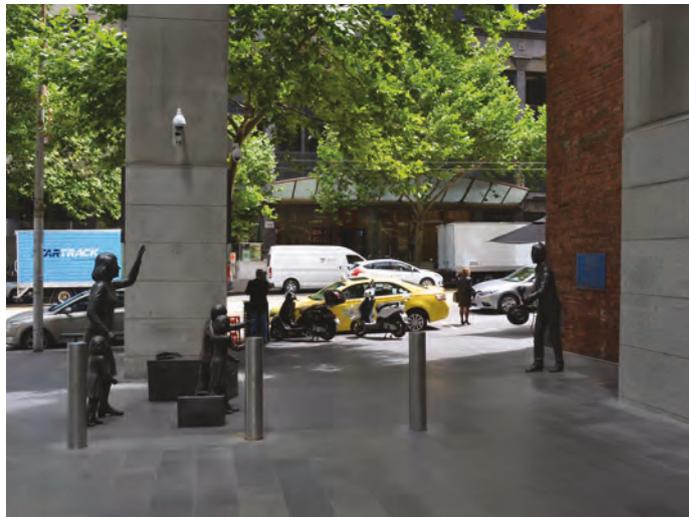


Figure 70: 'The reuniting family' by Michael Meszaros (2008), view from Rialto Plaza, Melbourne, Victoria.

of Aboriginal people. He argued that the myth of terra nullius was an ongoing issue for the way Australians imagined their history, not in terms of a legal concept but as ‘something that filters down into the practices of everyday life’ and renders Aboriginal people’s history and heritage invisible. ‘Cadi jam ora’ (‘First encounters garden’) in Sydney’s Botanical Gardens is one of the few memory sites that tells a shared story of settler-colonisation. It includes a 52-metre story wall and a heritage garden planted to reflect the pre-invasion landscape of the area. The memory space also creates a dialogue with First Farm exhibit nearby.

A different example of such dialogue is the Pennington Gardens Reserve in South Australia. The majority of the space is dedicated to the memory of the Finsbury or Pennington Migrant Hostel, which operated from 1949–1985. In the centre of the reserve is a barbaque area, its cover shaped like the Nissan huts that have become a symbol of the migrant hostel era in some parts of Australia. Towards one end, a circular formal garden is punctuated by memory books that tell the stories of a few of the migrants who passed through the hostel, including former Primer Minister of Australia Julia Gillard. In between these two spaces stand two abstract sculptures, ‘Tjrin tjrin—the messengers’ by Karl Telfer and Gavin Malone. These are part of an ongoing project to create Aboriginal cultural markers on Kurna land — the area around the city of Adelaide. A Kurna plaque is also installed at the Adelaide Migration Museum,



Figure 71: ‘Pennington gardens reserve 1949–1985’ (Arketype 2013), view of barbaque area, S.A.



Figure 72: ‘Tjrin tjrin—the messengers’ by Karl Telfer and Gavin Malone, Pennington, S.A.



Figure 73: ‘Cadi jam ora’ by Cloustan Associates Landscape Architects (2001), heritage garden and interpretive signage, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales.

and sits alongside the ‘Reasons to remember’ wall of plaques, a subtle reminder of the displacement experienced by the original owners of the land.

Negotiated meanings

One example Pugliese uses for his essay is Bonegilla, a key site of postwar migration heritage. Bonegilla is an ex-army barracks on the border of Victoria and NSW in rural Australia. In the post-WWII era it was one of the country’s largest migrant reception centres, and is now a listed national heritage site. Sara Wills suggests that ‘in the rush to be Australian,’ migrants’ identities become invested in places like Bonegilla as an original story (Wills 2009, p. 272) that ignores the before — either of the migrants themselves or of the violence and dispossession of settler-colonisation. This is not to argue that the identification of postwar migrants with the settler-colonial project has been a purposeful strategy to gain entry to the national story at the expense of another marginalised public.³⁰ Alexandra Dellios’s research into the development of Bonegilla as a heritage site found that migrant groups have negotiated with official ‘discursive frameworks of Australian multiculturalism and national heritage’ (2012, p. 40), at times working within these narrative frames, at times stepping outside them to enable other stories to be told. These ‘other stories’ include stories of hardship, loss and ambivalence. Dellios outlines the convergence of ‘vernacular’ forms of commemoration such



Figure 74: ‘Pride of place: block 19’ by Stephen Anderson and Ken Raff (1999) at Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Victoria.

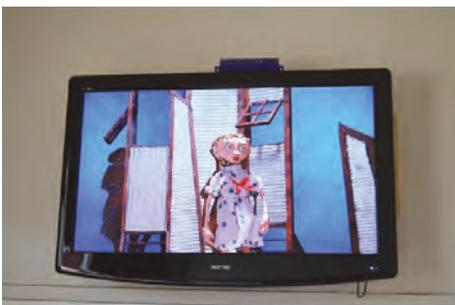


Figure 75: Remembering Bonegilla (3Hand Studios 2010) stop motion animation played onsite at Bonegilla Migrant Experience.

as reunion events alongside strategic use of formal mechanisms including applications for heritage recognition. Indeed, Bonegilla seems to me an indication that, although in hindsight migrants seem to have adopted a particular strategy, such memory spaces often develop by trial and error.

Interest in Bonegilla as a site of memory developed from the mid 1980s, in part influenced by the Australian bicentenary and the celebratory narrative of multiculturalism dominant in the 1980s (Dellios 2014). From 1987 to 2002, visitors to Bonegilla were predominantly ex-residents and their families. During a 1999 reunion event, a sculpture commissioned by the City of Wodonga was placed in the middle of an oval that formed part of the last remaining section of what had

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Though, as Pugliese argues, this does not change the outcome.

previously been an enormous temporary township. The installation, 'Pride of place: block 19' by local artists Stephen Anderson and Ken Raff, is a stylised outline of a hut and includes a number of corrugated iron figures in silhouette; a woman, man, girl and boy. The sculpture does not have the status of a memorial, despite having been installed during a commemorative event. There is a small plaque giving details of the artists and a date, but nothing about the text serves a sacralising function, and the sculpture does not seem to have captured the imagination of visitors or volunteers.³¹ If anything, it functions as a kind of logo. The corrugated iron silhouette motif is repeated at the entry to the site, and is used as a starting point for an animated short film that plays in one of the huts (*Remembering Bonegilla* 2010). Bruce Pennay says the anonymous figures 'suggest the fleeting experiences of transients at the site' (2009, p. 59)

In 2004, another creative exploration of memory was installed at Bonegilla. Known as the 'Beginning place', it has been described as both a memorial and an interpretation centre. Developed by COX architects, it offers a purpose-built place of memory alongside the remaining section of army barracks. When I visited

31 During a visit in January 2014 I asked one of the volunteers in the visitor's centre about the artwork. Their response was that it was 'just some art thing'.



Figure 76: 'Beginning place' by Cox Architects (2005), view from side featuring collage of faces, Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Bonegilla, Victoria.



Figure 77: 'Passages: listening for home' (Kirby et al 2005) inside 'Beginning place' (Cox Architects 2005), Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Bonegilla, Victoria.

in November 2014, a new cafe was under construction, which may alter the way visitors arrive at the site. For a decade, however, 'Beginning place' has been the entry point to the Bonegilla Migrant Experience. For most of that time, a covered corridor was lined with name plaques, paid for by ex-residents and their families, although these have now been relocated to a memory wall on another part of the site. Further in, a sound and visual work by Thylacine Art Projects called 'Passages: listening for home' introduces an affect-rich art experience. Visually, a sea of undulating blue tiles, this in itself is overwhelming in the enclosed corridor. When it is working, 'Passages' also includes a soundscape which starts off as a babble of noise but, as you draw near, resolves into a number of short recordings of the experiences of ex-residents.

The corridor opens out into a larger area where a TV screen plays a documentary and the end wall displays a timeline to give a historical context to Bonegilla and



Figure 78: Museum display at Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Bonegilla, Victoria.



Figure 79: Display inside shared accommodation hut, Bonegilla Migrant Experience.



Figure 80: Space for reflection at Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Bonegilla, Victoria.

Australia's postwar migration scheme. A cabinet display of an open suitcase reflects a motif used throughout Bonegilla and at the exhibition at the local museum in Albury. The outside wall is covered in a pixelated collage of many faces. Designed to be viewed from a distance, the collage creates an impression of the diversity of the people who came through the camp. Bushes and a bench provide a space for people wanting to sit outside, and a bench is also provided inside in front of the TV screen. On a wooden path that runs along this wall, each plank is engraved with the year Bonegilla operated as a migrant camp.

The remaining army buildings of Block 19 house a minimalist display which tells some of the story of the camp and attempts to use a few props to give the impression of what life was like. In other sections, it also houses more traditional museum displays based around the experiences of particular migrant communities, focusing especially on the Dutch and Greek, and featuring donated objects as well as newspaper clippings and other visual materials. Educational materials for children, such as the 'Suitcase trail' or the 'Block 19 passport' encourage them to imagine

themselves as a Bonegilla migrant. Bonegilla is a memorial-museum (Williams 2007) in the sense that it offers a range of affect-rich encounters across the site.

One hut in the accommodation area is set aside as a reflective space. In this room a couch and coffee table are provided for people to sit, and cards are available for people to write their thoughts. A grid of nine words on the wall provides prompts: destruction, fear, travel; peace, beginning, mutton; family, hope, loneliness. The incongruous ‘mutton’ points to a significant migrant story about the importance of food. Some of the completed response cards are attached to the wall, and suggest that the majority of people who make use of the room are ex-residents or their children. A common theme is that children have gained an insight into the hardship their parents endured and that they’re very grateful their parents were willing to go through so much to give them a ‘better life’ in Australia. Indeed, the cards offer multiple micro-examples of the ways the twin narratives of suffering and contribution are negotiated by people attempting to make sense of the migrant’s place in Australian history. The contemplation space was created after the existing chapel on site had to be closed to visitors because of white ants. This suggests an ongoing search to create a ‘sacred space’ within the affective experience of the heritage space.

Welcome walls

At various points around Australia, a form of user-pays commemoration has developed in the form of ‘welcome’ walls or paths. Usually, a set payment amount allows a person to nominate a name to be engraved on a wall panel or paving stone. The Uranquinty memorial incorporates a red brick path, while Bonegilla has a wall of names, each name engraved on a single metal tile. Bulbeck traces an evolution of the ‘roll of honour’ used to acknowledge soldiers to its use in the Stockman’s Hall of Fame. She argues that the hall of fame draws on architecture and other elements from the Australian War Memorial, ‘that other national shrine in which the ordinary bloke is made heroic’ (Bulbeck 1991, p. 408). However, at the hall of fame, only prominent names are displayed in



Figure 81: ‘Welcome wall’, Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney.



Figure 82: ‘Welcome walls’, Western Australian Maritime Museum, Fremantle.



Figure 83: ‘Welcome walls’, Western Australian Maritime Museum, detail.

physical form. The roll of honour is a virtual database on which names and stories supplied by ‘pioneer’ families are recorded. The practice adopted by the National Maritime Museum includes the electronic database. However, the name of anyone willing to pay the A\$150 fee can be added to the physical ‘Welcome wall’ (Australian National Maritime Museum 2013). Similar to the listing of names on a war memorial, which removes distinctions of rank or length of service, the individualising of the migration experience serves to mask inequalities. Convicts, free settlers, displaced persons, assisted migrants and skilled workers are all given equal space. We are all migrants now, and all have a story to tell, if you want to visit the website.

The National Maritime Museum’s ‘Welcome wall’ in Sydney was the first in the country, announced in 1997. This ‘wall’ is a construction of bronze sheets, which can be changed and added to as new people contact the museums with their requests. The museum website reports that in 2012, there were approximately 24,000 names on the wall. This site pays lip service to Aboriginal protocols of hospitality and respect, naming the ‘lands of the Cadigal, the Burruburragal and beyond’. The Fremantle ‘Welcome walls’ are a series of glass and metal panels that take over the Maritime Museum’s entry courtyard. They attempt to give an overview of the history of Australian migration through telling a few personal stories and giving some historical background. A central panel leading into the museum follows local Aboriginal protocol by including a welcome in language, ‘Wanju wanju Nyoongar boardjar Derbal Yaragan Whadjuk boardjar: Welcome to Nyoongar country, to Derbal Yaragan the land of the Whadjuk people.’ This is a start, but while the panel goes on to acknowledge that ‘migration is a complicated emotional and physical journey’ that involves ‘uprooting and confronting an unknown future’, it skirts

the fact that migration has also involved the uprooting of the Whadjuk and other Nyungar people, along with the internal migration, forced and voluntary, of other Aboriginal peoples onto and within Nyoongar boardjar.

The Melbourne Migration Museum’s ‘Tribute garden’ takes the idea of the welcome wall closest to a memorial function, drawing on a number of traditional memorial elements to create a sense of sacred space. The wall forms the boundaries of a sunken courtyard at the back of the Immigration Museum site, near the Yarra River in central Melbourne. The entire space is a study in polished metal, granite and concrete. Names are engraved into plaques which line the walls of the space, but are also engraved

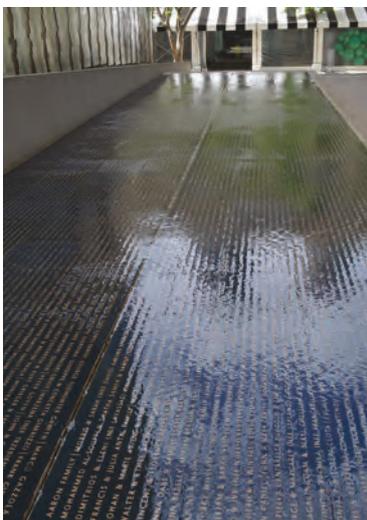


Figure 84: ‘Tribute garden’, Immigration Museum, Melbourne.

into the base of two reflecting pools, drawing on imagery from war memorials and adding a sense of solemnity missing from the Sydney site.

In South Australia, the Migration Museum Foundation runs a program called 'Settlement square', through which people are able to buy a tile in the museum courtyard to be engraved with a migrant's name. Like a welcome wall, new tiles are installed periodically and dedication ceremonies are held. The program acts as a fundraiser for the museum and is very popular, with tiles often given as a gift to older family members. A ritual has been created with installation marked by a special morning tea. This ritual of individualised plaques is repeated in other places, usually, though not exclusively, associated in some way with migration or 'settlement' and is often a fundraising strategy.

The meaning of the welcome wall is ambiguous, and in fact they point to the ambiguities inherent in the Australian migrant experience. The title of 'welcome' is anachronistic, since protocols of hospitality do not usually require people to pay to be welcomed. Nonetheless, the popularity of the practice suggests that this is one way ordinary people are able to connect their individual story with a wider narrative of Australian migration. For example, the Child Migrants interviewed as part of this project all mentioned the 'Welcome walls' in connection to the Fremantle memorial. Perhaps like a war memorial, what looks like 'just a name' to a stranger takes on a new level of meaning for the family who know the story behind it.

Emerging stories

Looked at through the lens of Rothberg's 'multidirectional memory' (2009), these various mobilisations of memory suggest that the memory work done to tell the story of Australia's postwar migration has opened up space to tell other stories. Through these fissures difficult histories are able to emerge. Retrospective commemorations have made use of these openings to tell old stories in new ways. So the 'Australian monument to the Great Irish Famine 1845–1852' has adopted the narrative frames of trauma and contribution to tell the story of the famine as a story about the way Irish migrant women changed the shape of Australia. Similarly, the international human-rights discourse, and the growing awareness of the trauma associated with both slavery and family separation, has framed the telling of the story of Kanakas in Queensland.

Kanakas is a colloquial term for Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI), descendants of people brought to Australia from a variety of Pacific islands between 1860 and 1901 to work on sugar plantations. The process became known as 'blackbirding', a name which hints at the racial discrimination these people



Figure 85: 'Kanaka memorial', partial view, Childers, Queensland. Image courtesy Julie Mitchell.



Figure 86: 'Kanaka memorial', view towards street, Childers, Queensland. Image courtesy Blake Bath.



Figure 87: 'Kanaka memorial', detail, Childers, Queensland. Image courtesy Blake Bath.

faced, often working in conditions of slavery. Like the Great Irish Famine, commemoration of this history was triggered by an anniversary event. In 2001, at the time of the Australian centenary of Federation, a number of memorials were created to acknowledge the impact of the event on ASSI, as many were forcibly deported in the wake of the

White Australia Policy. More recently, 2013 marked the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first boatload of South Sea Islanders in Queensland. New memorials were constructed and some older ones were renewed during this anniversary. While some Kanaka memorials are centred around grave sites, others focus on lived experience, including the exploitative labour practices and the separation from family and culture. The memorial in the remote town of Fishery Falls takes the form of a simple plinth with a sign attached which gives some historical background. Memorials in the larger towns of Childers and Maryborough, in contrast, use contemporary public art to give expression to this history.³² The Kanakas memorials, while claiming a space in the national story, have more in

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This information is sourced from the unpublished work of PhD researcher Julie Mitchell.

common with the memorials discussed in Chapter 6, and suggest an opening up of the frames through which marginalised groups are able to speak.

Conclusion

South Africa, like Australia, has embraced the international trend towards memorialising the difficult knowledge of its colonial past. Marschall argues that such memorials are driven, at least in part, from a 'desire to create a new national identity through a process of selective remembering, thereby simultaneously legitimating the present socio-political order' (2004 p. 96). Australia is influenced by the same colonial logic of which apartheid was a brutal extension. As Anderson has argued, the colonial era was marked by a need to control through endless and minute categorisation. This hierarchical world order led to the kinds of racial segregation that mark apartheid and Australia's White Australia policy. Some writers argue that this same colonial logic can be seen in Australia in deep class divisions (Hage 2002) that have tended to be masked by an official mantra of 'mateship'. Benedict Anderson argues that, 'Having to 'have already forgotten' tragedies of which one needs unceasingly to be 'reminded' turns out to be a characteristic device in the later construction of national genealogies' (1991, p. 201). This is one reason why memorialisation of marginalised groups is so difficult: because their history has rarely been incorporated into ideas of Australian-ness, it has not yet been remembered enough to be forgotten. As the memorials discussed in this chapter demonstrate, marginalised groups continue to find value in having their story told within a national frame. Traditional memorial forms and conservative narratives have been adopted by migrant groups in order for their history to be incorporated within the story of Australia. However, as the frame of what can be considered an Australian story has broadened, non-traditional memorial forms are able to be used to explore these stories in more nuanced ways.

*Case Study 4***Enterprise as an entry point to memory**

The following case study considers a suburban memory project that aims to claim a space in Australia's national story. A small group of memory activists in Springvale, in the south-eastern suburb of Melbourne, has worked to gain support of state and local government to commemorate the government-run Enterprise Migrant Hostel. The hostel operated from 1969 to 1992 as a reception centre for new migrants and refugees as they made the transition to life in Australia. Mobilising recognised narratives of multicultural Australia has been key to gaining this official support. In addition, the group has sought public statements of endorsement from prominent public figures such as Australia's former prime minister, the late Malcolm Fraser, and 2011 Australian of the Year, Simon McKeon. This support has framed the project as part of a broader conversation about welcome and hospitality that connects with contemporary concerns about refugee and migration policy. This case study explores how the memorial both celebrates the history of the hostel as part of a broader Australian story, and attempts to leave space for more complex experiences and emotions. It also offers some comments about the difficulty in drawing a clear line between government and civil society in Australian memory work.

The Spirit of Enterprise project is a long-term project to commemorate the Enterprise Migrant Hostel in Springvale. It began in the mid 2000s with an exhibition titled, 'A worthwhile Enterprise: the migrant hostel in Springvale', which ran at the Community Gallery of the Immigration Museum in Melbourne from 24 November 2008 to 13 April 2009. After the exhibition closed it was moved to the Springvale Historical Society, and funding from the Victorian Multicultural Commission enabled the material to be digitised and expanded for a website titled, *Spirit of Enterprise*, www.enterprisehostel.org (Enterprise Migrant Hostel History Project 2013). At the time of writing, the Enterprise memory project includes the website, the 'Enterprise tribute Garden' (2013) at the site of the original hostel, and a number of historical markers at other sites connected to the hostel history. While my focus is on the 'Enterprise tribute garden' as a memorial, I consider it within the context of this other memory work. My research for this case study included multiple site visits and interviews with a representative of the City of Greater Dandenong and three members of the



Figure 88: 'Enterprise Tribute Garden' by Sinatra Murphy (2013), view from entry point, Lexington Gardens, Springvale, Victoria.

Enterprise History Project Organising Group, Merle Mitchell, Betty Wilderman and Heather Duggan.

The 'Enterprise tribute garden' takes the form of a rose garden within the privately run Lexington Gardens retirement complex, on the site of the old Enterprise Migrant Hostel. At the entry point, near the car park, a red information panel gives some background to the history of the Enterprise Hostel and the broader Spirit of Enterprise history project. The garden beds are in the shape of petals and are planted with the Enterprise rose, which was specially cultivated for the project. A spiral path leads to the central area, where two 'petals' of red glass are printed with the image of two open hands below a map of the world. Water droplets run between the hands and the many countries on the map. A semicircular bench seat faces the panels. It is inscribed with numbers — one board for every 1000 migrants who arrived and stayed at Enterprise.

The naming of this place as a 'Tribute' suggests it is more a monument than a memorial — more celebratory than reflective. Yet the space itself is more complex than that. The memory space has been designed to emphasise the positives of the Enterprise experience. The entry plaque states that the garden is a tribute to migrants' 'experiences of welcome, support and hope'. At the same time, in the background is the question of why this is so important. After all, welcome, support and hope are only necessary in times when isolation and discouragement are otherwise likely.

The rose garden is a reminder of the contextual nature of memorials. The main reason roses were included in this project is that there was a rose garden at the entry point of the Enterprise Hostel. For those who lived or worked there for extended

periods, the rose served as a symbol of the good things about the hostel. The rose garden was often the first thing people noticed about the hostel and for some of the migrants it made a big impression. Betty Pardo's reminiscence about the roses was included in the Immigration Museum's exhibition catalogue. She recalled her arrival in Springvale from Uruguay, 'The sun was shining and the garden was full of roses, welcoming us with its brightness.' Similarly, during community consultations to develop the memorial project, another migrant explained that the rose of the Enterprise Hostel had become symbolic of hospitality and care:

Roses so beautiful, the first thing we see when we come to hostel.
Hostel open the door for us, beautiful country, thank you Australia
... Roses are symbolic — pruned and cared for just like the people,
and they all bloomed ... At my place there's always a red rose (quoted in Sinatra Murphy 2011).

The quote suggests a cross-cultural association of the rose with cultivation and therefore caretaking. The plaque provides an explanation of this symbolism, but there will be other associations. Roses are a symbol of love, but they are also often planted at cemeteries or memorial gardens. Because of this, there is potentially a layer of sadness to the meaning expressed in the 'Enterprise tribute garden'.

The garden beds on which the roses are planted are in the shape of petals, and the path winds in a spiral to the central area. Betty Wilderman described the spiral as symbolic because, 'People's journeys to get here were not straightforward'. The design echoes the form of medieval labyrinths that provide an opportunity for 'pilgrims' to undertake a symbolic journey to a central point, where they undergo a spiritual unburdening before returning to the outer world. The bench seat provides a rest spot in this central space. Despite being physically close to a parking area, the design of the space makes this central area feel secluded and protected.

The numbers inscribed on the bench seat seem to have been important as a means of proving the national significance of the memory project, in terms of its wider impact. However, for those who have reached the centre and sat down to rest, the focus would be on the images on the glass petals, rather than the numbers. The map of the world is configured so that the space where Australia should be, in the centre, is filled by the



Figure 89: 'Enterprise Tribute Garden' by Sinatra Murphy (2013), *digi-glass panel*.

hands held open in welcome. The water droplets are described on the plaque as a symbol of new life, running from the countries of origin to the welcoming hands. Alternatively, they might also be seen as tears, symbolising sadness at what was left behind. A more confronting reading of the red panels might suggest the red symbolises the blood shed in the conflicts many migrants and refugees came to Australia to avoid or escape.³³

The 'Enterprise tribute garden' is unusual among Australia's migration memorials in form and focus. In contrast to most of the memorials discussed in Chapter 4, it does not use either figurative sculpture or a formal metal plaque. While drawing on the traditional memorial element of the rose garden, it combines these with other elements to create a contemplative space that is open to a range of meanings. Rather than focusing on the contribution of migrants to Australia, the entry plaque focuses on the contribution the now-lost place of the Enterprise Hostel made to the lives of the migrants and refugees who passed through its doors. By focusing on the roses as a symbol of a moment of happy arrival, the 'Tribute', like other migration memorials, places a focus on the moment of migration as an 'origin' story. However, it does not completely ignore the before or after of the migration experience; the labyrinth form suggests that the burden of the past has not yet been put to rest.

The memory activists

As with the Uranquinty migrant memorial, the idea for this memorial came from local people who had been involved with the hostel while it was in operation. In this case, the key person was Merle Mitchell, who has lived in Springvale since before the hostel was announced in 1969. She was one of 150 people who attended a special council meeting in 1970, called by the Springvale Council's first welfare officer, Dianne Bell. At the time, Springvale was a small suburb



Figure 90: Heather Duggan (standing), Merle Mitchell and Betty Wilderman (seated) at 'Enterprise tribute garden', Lexington Gardens, Springvale, Victoria.

of 15,000 homes and relatively few services. Providing not only for residents but also for the extra 1000 new migrants who would be housed in the hostel at any one time would be a challenge. Merle subsequently joined a committee and participated

³³ The 'Peace Park Mosaic' (1994) discussed in Chapter 2 is located in the next suburb to Springvale. It was created by recent migrants and tells stories of war from a civilian perspective.

in an extensive community survey which led to the establishment of the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB) in 1971. She became its director, and in retirement continues to serve as its patron (SCAAB 2016). In the 1980s, Merle served for four years as director of the Australian Council of Social Services, so she has been involved in community work much more widely than Springvale. She is a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and is recognised as a 'Greater Dandenong living treasure' (City of Greater Dandenong n.d.).

In the mid 2000s, Merle gathered together a project committee to tell the story of the Enterprise Hostel in the form of a community exhibition at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne. Committee members are predominantly long-term residents of the area, and have good connections with civil society and government. A number of them, like Merle, had been involved with the hostel through the provision of services to migrants. Among them were Betty Wilderman, who had worked with Merle at SCAAB, and Heather Duggan, who had been coordinator of the Springvale Neighbourhood House, which opened in 1983 at a time when most Enterprise residents were refugees. As retirees, Betty and Heather have both been part of the Neighbourhood House committee of management, along with a number of the Enterprise's ex-residents. Another member of the group, Joyce Rebeiro, worked as the access and equity officer, while other members, Rosemary and Don Macleod and Jan Trezise, all taught in the area. Jan also served on the local council in the 1980s, becoming Springvale's first female Mayor in 1983. This demonstrates not only Springvale's relatively progressive character as a local government area, but the close and potentially blurred relationship between government and civil society that characterises a number of memorial projects.

The 'Enterprise tribute garden' shares other similarities with 'Kaia', the migrant women's memorial at Uranquinty. In both cases, the narrative of contribution is relatively muted. At Springvale, the emphasis is on the contribution the Enterprise made to the lives of the people who passed through it, rather than on the contribution migrants have made to Australia. However, in order to make this claim, memory activists have first had to justify why the support offered to migrants is a good thing. Merle said the group was united by a 'passion for diversity', and the story of the Enterprise is framed by a celebration of the benefit of having a culturally diverse community. In her history of the hostel, titled 'Springvale — rich because of its diversity', Merle argues that, 'Some people have described the Enterprise Migrant Hostel as the refugee and migrant gateway to the Australian community. Many of us describe it as Springvale's gateway to the world' (Mitchell in Sinatra Murphy 2011). The celebration of diversity is a familiar trope in the

celebratory multiculturalism that became dominant in Australia during the time the Enterprise was operational. Its continued emphasis by the memory team suggests not only a strategic adoption of this narrative, but a personal identification with it. Those involved in commemorating the Enterprise experience genuinely wanted to emphasise that it had given them the opportunity to meet people from different cultural backgrounds, and to have their lives and social environment enriched. Indeed, this was a positive experience for many of the migrants as well as the Anglo-Australians. One ex-resident of the Enterprise, Geraldina Alvarez-Poblete, reflected, 'When I left Chile in 1975, I had had very limited contact with people from other countries. I was so impressed by the diversity of people living in Victoria ... I feel "privilege" by this experience' (Alvarez, 2009). Having seen their community and their own lives transformed by the hostel and the people who passed through it, the Enterprise memory group are driven by a desire to have this history celebrated and acknowledged as a small but important part of the wider transformation of Australian society.

The past in the present

The Enterprise memory project needs to be understood in the context of changes to migration policy, which first began to take effect while the hostel was operational. Whereas the Enterprise Hostel existed at a time of official celebration of multiculturalism, the memory project has developed at a time when Australia's migration policy, particularly towards refugees, has been punitive and divisive. Australia's migration policy post-WWII has traditionally been driven by a need for workers; even postwar refugees and displaced peoples were accepted as indentured labour rather than under a true humanitarian program. There is not, therefore, a tradition of offering hospitality to refugees as a gift, except, arguably, for a brief period from the mid 1970s. Migrants arriving at Enterprise during the first decade of its existence made use of the hostel accommodation as they settled into a new life, and rarely stayed for long, often securing jobs in the local manufacturing industry. By 1983, there was less need for migrant labour, and policy changed so that only refugees were able to use the facilities. The length of time refugees were allowed to stay in the hostel was reduced, and government support in the form of funded services was gradually withdrawn.

In the early 1990s, the hostel was used as a place of detention for a group of Cambodian refugees. Although officially not allowed to leave the grounds, the rules were relatively relaxed. However, in August 1991, some of the refugees breached the terms of their detention, resulting in a dawn raid in which the whole group was removed to Villawood Detention Centre in Sydney. Merle described this event as

‘traumatic’, and said the description applied to both the refugees and to the workers and community members who had developed relationships with them. This is not to suggest an equivalence of impact, but as Sara Wills points out, ‘To be touched or moved by another’s pain does depend on the sociality of being with others, of getting close enough to touch’ (2009, p. 276). In this case, people had become involved in each other’s lives, and affected by each other’s pain.

By the time the exhibition project began in the mid 2000s, refugees arriving in Australia were not offered transitional housing support of the kind available in the hostel era. Asylum seekers arriving by boat were subject to mandatory detention in isolated locations or in offshore facilities. Although the Rudd Government softened the asylum seeker policy when it came to power in late 2007, asylum seekers were still being detained in prison-like conditions on the remote Christmas Island, which had been ‘excised’ from the mainland so that asylum seekers arriving there were not eligible for full refugee rights.

The exhibition catalogue and the now-digitised exhibition panels make it clear that ‘A worthwhile Enterprise’ mobilised the memory of the hostel in a very strategic way. The Enterprise Hostel was named for a colonial ship, the *Enterprize*, which sailed from Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) in 1835 with Victoria’s first permanent settler-colonisers. The opening of the Immigration Museum exhibition emphasised this continuity. A group of 40 ex-residents, from various times in its two decades of operation, re-enacted their arrival by taking a boat ride on a replica of the *Enterprize* sailing ship. An ABC news report featured the tag line ‘boat people’, the disparaging term often used in Australia to refer to asylum seekers (ABC quoted on Enterprise Migrant Hostel History Project 2013). The video clip showed the ‘diverse’ group on the boat and then being taken on a retro 1970s bus to the museum. Individual interviews demonstrated the mix of people and backgrounds — Ahn Nguyen described how she came on a sailing boat from Vietnam, with viewers expected to know the reasons for that journey. Isabelle Stix emphasised the draw of the Australian weather and lifestyle in contrast to Britain, although her accent suggests she was not English originally. The choice to name the Enterprise Hostel after the original colonial ship, and the mobilisation of that



Figure 91: ‘Spirit of Enterprise’ website showing ABC news reporting of ‘A worthwhile Enterprise’ exhibition, www.enterprisehostel.org.au.

connection by the memory committee, emphasises the integration of non-British migrants into the broader history of 'settlement'.

As Heather Duggan put it, one reason for drawing attention to the story of the *Enterprise* is that, 'that model was so wonderful and this one we've got now is so bad'. Although she emphasised that this was not a conscious strategy in the beginning, it is evident on the *Spirit of Enterprise* website and particularly in the supporting statements gathered from prominent Australians. Within the short video, 'Spirit of Enterprise: a project of national significance', Australian actor Simon Palomeres describes his experience of arriving at *Enterprise* as a young boy in the mid 1970s and states, 'Every time I read about refugees and new migrants I always think about that day and the huge part *Enterprise* played in our lives.' The home page of the *Spirit of Enterprise* website includes a video of a former prime minister, the late Malcolm Fraser, who in his later years was an outspoken critic of mistreatment of asylum seeker and refugees. Fraser states that the *Enterprise* story,

shows quite clearly what happens when new migrants to this country are welcomed with open arms, brought into the community, made part of the community. They add to its diversity, diversity becomes a strength, and enriches all our lives.

The 'Worthwhile *Enterprise*' exhibition catalogue acknowledges the variety of emotions migrants might go through on arrival in Australia, and includes quotes from migrants and workers. There is a strong emphasis, in the storytelling, of the effort made by the Springvale (and wider Australian) community to support and welcome new migrants. Stories about misunderstandings are told as humorous 'getting to know you' anecdotes but also as important challenges to be overcome. A section in the catalogue titled 'Closure and lost opportunity' outlines reasons for the closure of the hostel, including the diminished employment options in the area and a reduction in the federal government support offered to refugee arrivals. While the catalogue ends on a positive note, outlining the 'legacy' of the *Enterprise*, there is a subtle message that this is in contrast to the current government policy.

Many people were involved in the 'A Worthwhile *Enterprise*' exhibition alongside the core project committee. Over 100 people, including former residents and workers, participated in one way or another, including by contributing display materials. This high level of engagement indicates that the memory work was valued by a wide range of people. Following the closure of the exhibition at the Immigration Museum in April 2009, the display was moved to the Springvale Historical Society. A grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission also allowed for further material to be gathered and digitised for a permanent online

display as part of the 'Spirit of Enterprise' website. Digital reproductions of the exhibition panels are now available to view on that site. However, the committee felt there was more work to be done. In 2010, it received funding to undertake a consultation about a permanent memorial of some kind. The project was under the auspices of the Springvale Neighbourhood House. Funding came from the Victorian Government and the City of Greater Dandenong's Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

From the beginning, this consultation was framed by a desire to celebrate the good things about the Enterprise experience. The consultation report, *I'm home*, articulates two questions that guided the discussions:

1. Where is the most appropriate location to honour the Enterprise Hostel?
2. What is the most appropriate medium to honour the Enterprise Hostel?

It is important to see the experience of putting together the Immigration Museum exhibit and the Spirit of Enterprise website project as an ongoing process out of which these questions developed. The exhibition catalogue does include stories of difficulties — as does the website. Heather Duggan said they made an effort to tell a balance of good and bad stories, but the overwhelming response was positive, leading to the positively framed consultation questions. However, one of the consultation respondents did suggest that, 'People who worked here probably look more through rose coloured glasses than the people who lived here' (Sinatra Murphy 2011).

The consultation report was published with the emotive title of *I'm home* (Sinatra Murphy 2011). It outlined a 'vision' for a multi-stage commemorative project, the first two parts of which were the development of the memory space at Lexington Gardens and the cultivation of the Enterprise Rose. Stage 3 would be the creation of a new place, possibly associated with a new community library, as 'A living and ongoing memorial entrenched in daily life.' Stage 4 suggested a walk that would 'symbolically link' the old with the new.

The consultation report suggested the important symbolism that such a memorial would need to include, but did not yet offer a final design. The key elements were a garden, including roses, but also a 'human element'. The consultation also identified the number of people who passed through the hostel (30,000) as significant, and suggested that it was important to acknowledge the links the site had with other sites, and the role of the Enterprise as a 'gateway'. Other aspects identified in the consultation were the creation of a sense of protective, safe space



Figure 92: Plaque in recognition of the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau, and in particular Sherron Dunbar, first point on the 'Enterprise Trail' (ongoing project), Springvale.

and of belonging, but also acknowledgment of difficult emotions of despair and loneliness.

The development of the rose proved relatively easy. It was cultivated by local company Treloar Roses and is available to purchase from them. The development of the 'Tribute' was more challenging. The consultation was completed by early 2011, but it was by no means clear where the funding would come from for the next stages. The City of Greater Dandenong was supportive in theory, but concerned about the idea of having the memorial located on private land, since the hostel site was now a private retirement village owned by Lend Lease. The company had been supportive of the memory project, allowing consultations to be held on site, but there was no guarantee this would continue. In the end, these concerns were assuaged by a memorandum of understanding. In the

meantime, the memory committee approached the state government for funding. They were offered A\$50,000 if this could be matched by private sponsorship. Much of the matching funding came from private donations from local businesses and former Enterprise residents.

This project offers another example of networked heritage (Byrne 2014). It could be argued that the Enterprise site has connections to a wide network of migration sites across Australia, including the older, postwar reception centres and contemporary immigration detention centres. However, the aims of the memory group have been much more localised, and are focused around the development of a trail that follows an 'orientation' walk given weekly to new arrivals. The walk starts with the 'Tribute' and a second site has been created at SCAAB, consisting of a smaller rose garden and a plaque mounted on an angled wooden stump. In late 2014 the memory committee advised that it had been a 'difficult year' for the trail, and that it hoped the council would eventually take ownership of the project. It seems the committee was successful in this as, in August 2015, the City of Greater Dandenong published a media release to announce the launch of the second official marker at Centreline, formerly the Department of Social Security office, which worked closely with the local groups that supported migrants. The statement lists four other planned markers at locations already described to me by the memory group: the Community Health Centre (previously Springvale Hospital); the Springvale Rise (previously Springvale Primary School) and where the Multicultural Teacher's Aide program was founded; Springvale

Neighbourhood House; and Springvale Shopping Centre. The final marker will be part of a new civic precinct at the site of the old Springvale Council. The old council buildings have been demolished, following Springvale's amalgamation into the City of Greater Dandenong, and the memory group has advocated for some form of commemoration of the Enterprise to be incorporated into the plans for the new building.

Despite the memory committee's goodwill and its commitment to diversity, it is important to recognise that the Enterprise project fails to negotiate the violence of the 'settlement' project it celebrates. The celebratory narrative of 'diversity' draws heavily on the idea of a pre-multicultural Australia that was bland and lacked culture, in contrast with a contemporary multicultural society. This narrative reproduces the settler-colonial logic because it counters the 'diverse' present with the monocultural past. What is hidden underneath that story is that the past was never monocultural, but is layered with cultural interactions predicated on uneven power relations.

The term 'settlement' is a word that has been used relatively widely within the field of Australian migration. For example, Settlement Services International is a NSW-based non profit organisation that supports refugees and asylum seekers. Being settled or unsettled is about a feeling of comfort or discomfort; feeling 'at home' or out of place. These are feelings inherently connected to migration. But in a settler-colonial context like Australia, settlement, like migration, can never be apolitical. As Sara Wills suggests,

most of us are unable to empathise with asylum seekers because we fail to acknowledge personal and national struggles with the difficulties of arrival in an alien place — with the crisis of belonging and sense of loss engendered by this event. And this is partly because we have suppressed memories of our own successive arrivals on these shores (2001, p. 73).

I would emphasise that the 'crisis of belonging' affects both migrants and the first peoples of Australia. One reason the Enterprise team does not engage directly with the Aboriginal history of its local area may be the very small percentage of Aboriginal people living in Springvale. The 'success' of settler-colonisation in this area means that only 0.4 per cent of Greater Dandenong residents identify as being Aboriginal (City of Greater Dandenong 2016). If the Enterprise commemoration makes the mistake of silencing the Aboriginal history of Springvale, at least it

does not make the mistake of telling the story in a way that confines Aboriginal people to history.

A way back

By focusing on the roses as a symbol of a moment of happy arrival, and by drawing on the continuity of the 'settlement' narrative, the Enterprise project risks creating a celebratory narrative that smooths out the rough edges of its history. Yet memorials can also open a door to a past that seemed finished, and there is potential for the 'Tribute' to take on this role. Two stories are significant here. These were told to me by members of the memory group, and are filtered through their understanding. The first story is of an East Timorese refugee who was one of a group of 27 women who were all pregnant when they arrived in Australia in 1975. Her son, who was born at the Enterprise, said the memory project offered them the first opportunity to talk about the past — not only the experience of leaving East Timor, but 'where he had come from'. The second story is of a person who was part of a group of Cambodian refugees held in detention at the Enterprise. The refugees had been taken away at very short notice to Villawood Detention Centre, before being transported back to Cambodia, but this man eventually made his way back to Australia. At the opening of the 'Enterprise Tribute Garden', he told one memory team member it was 'cathartic' for him, and that, 'he finally felt at peace, because everybody else recognised what a hard journey he had had'. Merle Mitchel suggests the Tribute has become a place for migrants to be able to remember and acknowledge the past they couldn't bring with them to Australia. A place to remember good times as well as bad times; trauma often, and loss always.

Chapter 5

Memorials for mourning lived experiences

The previous chapter explored the legacies of the nationalist monument in contemporary memorials to lived experience. I suggested that part of the cultural ‘work’ of some of these contemporary memorials is to claim a space in the national story. In order to enter the space of the national story, however, expressions of loss were often (though not always) constrained. In this chapter, I move to consider what Julia Viebach has called the ‘intimate interior’ or inside function of memorials (2014, p. 701): the work they are expected to do for the people who experienced or were affected by the events they commemorate. Such work can be understood as mourning work, and this chapter considers the symbols and rituals memorials make use of to create spaces where grief can be experienced. This chapter discusses the importance of location and the materiality of the memorial. It also explores the public nature of mourning, suggesting that mourning memorials assist with the creation of communities of memory in which experiences can be shared and acknowledged. Finally, I discuss the ways the meaning of mourning memorials change over time.

Mourning lived experiences of loss

As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, memorials often draw on a Western (mostly Christian) funerary tradition, and are associated with mourning or grieving processes. Grief was traditionally understood as a response to death, but in the second half of the 20th century it became possible to think about grief as a response to other kinds of loss, as well as to trauma. Although not all trauma comes directly from loss, it is widely accepted that emotional reactions to traumatic experiences can involve feelings of grief, and that certain kinds of losses can be the source of trauma. This expansion of the idea of grief has happened gradually and seems to be taken for granted in the memorial literature.³⁴ However, this shift is relatively recent. In the late 1980s, Kenneth J. Doka’s *Disenfranchised grief: new directions, challenges, and strategies for practice* (1989) gave a name to experiences of grief that fall outside traditional social norms, including situations where the loss is not the result of death. The concept of ‘disenfranchised grief’ has been influential; for example, the Victorian Adoption Network for Information

³⁴ See for example, Gillian Carr’s (2011) analysis of the Channel Islands ‘memorialscape’, in which she points to a shift in the mid 1990s that allowed the emergence of ‘minority voices’. Her analysis focuses on the power dynamics that have allowed and constrained different types of commemoration, and does not discuss the difference between memorials that acknowledge war deaths and those that commemorate the lived experience of Nazi occupation.

and Self Help (VANISH) referred to Doka in its submission to an Australian senate inquiry into forced adoption. It argued that, 'An adoption results in loss, of which grief is the anticipated outcome' (VANISH Inc. 2012).

The 'inside' function of a memorial refers to the way it is addressed to an internal public of survivors and others with a close connection to the experiences it commemorates. I talk about this as 'mourning' rather than grieving or even healing — a word sometimes used by interviewees — to emphasise its external or social nature. Whereas Doss talks about grief as the 'expression' of anguish (2010, p. 80), Doka's work considers grief as the experience of anguish resulting from loss. Mourning, then, is the public or cultural work of grieving. Doss argues that public expressions of grief in the late 20th and early 21st centuries 'problematise' the distinctions between public mourning and private grief, yet, as noted in Chapter 3, Joy Damousi's work suggests this distinction has never been particularly stable (2001, 2002). Regardless of how emotive mourning practices might be, the distinction between internal experience and external expression remains important as a means of thinking about mourning as performance or social action.

If mourning is a public practice, then the loss that is being mourned must be made public. In this sense, all memorials are an act of mourning, since all memorials acknowledge a loss — although, as discussed in the previous chapter, some memorials acknowledge loss more explicitly than others. Russell Rodrigo argues that memorial spaces actually create a sense of shared memory because, 'In their setting as part of the public domain, these spaces provoke the visitor to see themselves in relation to others' (Rodrigo 2013, p. 9). The dominance of psychoanalytic discourse has led to assumptions about the therapeutic benefit of speaking, with 'truth' coming to be associated with healing. Here I wish to emphasise Kennedy and Wilson's point, that the healing power of speaking about loss or trauma lies not necessarily in 'speaking per se, but rather in challenging the particular historical relationship of speaking and listening' (Kennedy & Wilson 2003, p.129).

Location

In keeping with a trend identified by a number of recent investigations into memorial practices (Doss 2010; Ashton, Hamilton & Searby 2012), mourning memorials are often situated as close as possible to the place where the loss or trauma occurred. The practice of placing objects of material remembrance at the site of death might be understood as also marking the moment of loss. For mourners, then, return to this site is bittersweet. It may mark a painful death, but it is also the last place where the person they love was alive. For non-death

memorials, the connection to site is even more complex, especially when the loss or trauma being commemorated is not a one-off event, but an experience that took place over an extended period. For those who have lost their home in a bushfire, there are strong, positive memories at the site, as well as the pain of loss. In situations where the site of commemoration is an institution, the memories may be both positive and negative. For example, the Colebrook Reconciliation Park, on the site of the Colebrook Home for Aboriginal Children, includes a mural showing children playing together, and for some ex-residents, there are good memories associated with their childhood there. For others, the bad far outweighs the good.

Returning to the physical space can mean a return to trauma. Bonney Djuric is a memory activist and artist who is an ex-resident of the Parramatta Girls Home, a prison for teenage girls. She explained that when most people visit such places, knowing the history, they are ‘working in two time zones’ — the past and the present. In contrast, she described visiting the Hay Institution for Girls, a place she had not been incarcerated herself, with some ex-detainees:

For the women, they’re actually back in their time and not observing or taking in the superficial layer, a room of bottles or whatever it is. They’re inside in their trauma in that lonely place (Djuric 2015, interview, 1 September).

The sense of return is not always so strong, but a number of interviewees described the difficulties of going back to the site. As Dolores Hayden points out, it is the physicality of place that makes it so powerful; its ‘assault on all ways of knowing (sight, sound, touch and taste)’ (Hayden 1997, p. 18). For some people the return is too difficult, and they refuse to get involved in on-site commemoration. Chris Healy has reworked his own idea of companion memory to think about how, for survivors, ‘the pain of experience is a constant companion to remembering’ (2014, p.87). Karen Till, citing Fullilove, claims that, ‘in societies that have experienced violence, individuals return to particular places to revisit difficult feelings of loss, grief, guilt and anger’, suggesting that, while returning to the site can be difficult for survivors, it can also be productive (Till 2008, p. 108). Like the ‘Mary’s Place’ memorial discussed in Case Study 2, one important function of mourning memorials can be to reclaim a space of pain, and to work towards bridging the gap between the past and the present. This seems to become possible when memorial



Figure 93: 'The rose walk' for Forgotten Australians (2008), Royal Botanic Gardens, Hobart, Tasmania.



Figure 94: 'The rose walk' (2008), close up of roses.

sites are able to have continuous use and a new emotional connection to the site can be created that is positive, rather than being connected to the original trauma.

Creation of spaces of mourning

Mourning memorials need to create a space in which grief work can take place. Such spaces need to be both public and intimate. This is the sacralising aspect of commemoration — the creation of a public space set aside from everyday life. In order to create such spaces, memorial designers use socially recognisable cues, including landscaping, visual symbols and the suggestion of ritual. Gardens, symbolic walks and water are all commonly used.

Certain plants have a particular association with mourning. Two public art memorials, 'Maria's story' by Julie Shiels (2002) and 'Cell' by Gavan Felon (2011) incorporate rosemary, a plant explicitly linked to remembrance. A few memorials include roses, a flower often found in cemeteries. Apart from the 'Enterprise Tribute Garden' (2013), where the meaning of the roses is ostensibly about welcome and care rather than loss, there are three others. The Hay Institution for Girls memorial is located in a rose garden at the Hay Gaol Museum, and in the Royal Hobart Botanical Gardens a commemorative rose walk is dedicated to Forgotten Australians. Both of these are old, colonial sites, and roses fit in with the European landscaping of the setting. Occasionally, a simple plaque is used to claim an already existing garden or green space. Where memorial gardens are created from scratch, plants that are native to Australia are most commonly used.

In a few instances, sculptures of native plants have been incorporated into the memorial design. 'The reuniting family' (Meszaros 2008) in central Melbourne uses explicit imagery: the father of the family holds a bunch of flowers including the calla lily, a flower from northern Italy, symbolising the ordinary people who migrated to Australia, and a native Australian eucalyptus branch, which the plaque explains is in recognition of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Bushfire memorials often incorporate native plants as imagery, but the meaning of these is ambiguous. For example, the bushfire memorial at Kyneton in the Macedon Ranges area of Victoria uses a gum leaf motif as a symbol of country

life as well as a reminder that this is one of the ways fire spreads —through dead leaves. However, this is also a symbol that locates the memorial within Australia, and therefore connects the sacred space with symbols of national identity.

The metaphor of journey is often an important part of mourning memorials. The most significant example of a physical journey space is the ‘Stolen Generations memorial’ at the Mount Annan Botanical Gardens. The memorial is located in regenerated bushland, and a semicircular pathway leads through the forest away from the main driveway. One end is near the parking area for the Australian Plantarium, the other meets up with another, longer, woodland walk and is near a picnic and barbeque space. Although the path could be described as leading



Figure 95: ‘Stolen Generations memorial’ (2007), entry sign and view of boardwalk, The Australian Botanical Garden, Mt Annan, New South Wales.



Figure 96: ‘Stolen Generations memorial’ central sculpture by Badger Bates (2007).



Figure 97: ‘Stolen Generations memorial’, central memory space and sculpture by Badger Bates.

to the memorial, the walkway is integral to the memorial experience. The final paragraph of the large entry sign (placed at both entrances) makes this explicit:

... We invite you to walk through the Woodland via a series of boardwalks (wheelchair accessible to the sculpture) and experience this memorial as a journey of healing and reflection, leading to a peaceful meeting place with water and sculpture. Please enjoy the sense of peace, harmony and reflection.

The centre of the memorial is a circular space, in which stands a limestone sculpture by well-known Aboriginal artist William (Badger) Bates.³⁵ One side, facing the entry point, is a relief sculpture depicting a nuclear family of a man, woman, baby and small child. They are in a circular composition, framed by gum branches above and water below. The 'back' of the sculpture connects with the water imagery, but is more abstract. Interpretive signage at the site explains that it represents the anger and sadness of the Ngatyi or Rainbow Serpent, 'over the hurt done to his people who were taken away from their Country'. There is a small pond at the base of the sculpture, and footprints are carved into the stone slabs leading towards and away from the sculpture. Footprints have been used on other Stolen Generations memorials at Bomaderry and Colebrook. Although the symbolism varies slightly, they all represent the idea of a journey that will lead to internal change for survivors.

A memorial to the Stolen Generations at the site of the Bomaderry Children's Home, near Nowra on the southern coast of New South Wales, consists of a circular formal rose garden with an inner circle. The central garden bed contains two plaques and two flagpoles, one each for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags. The memorial was first dedicated in 2001, and the second plaque installed in 2008 to mark 100 years since the United Aborigines Mission started the 'home', on land now owned and controlled by the Nowra Aboriginal Land Council. An image from the New South Wales heritage website suggests the inner circle, like the outer one, once contained roses (Government of NSW 2012); however, when I visited in early 2014 it was planted with kangaroo paw plants. This may have been done as part of the expansion of the memorial, which now includes a memorial garden walking path, making use of plants that are indigenous to Australia. The garden leads from the earlier memorial along the edge of the property, using the plants and large rocks to create a sheltered space. The extended garden was developed as a project led by a local Aboriginal artist Jason Bates and elder Uncle Noel Butler working in collaboration with the nearby Illawarra TAFE (Huntsdale

35 Badger Bates is not a member of the Stolen Generations. He is a Paakantyi man from north-western New South Wales who is well known for his carving work in a variety of mediums, which explores his connection to country (Martin 2013).

2013). The plants are not just native to Australia, but are plants that have a use or symbolic meaning in local Aboriginal culture, and the memorial expansion project provided opportunities for younger people to gain qualifications in land management, building and carpentry (Brent 2012). A similar skills-development project was used to create the boardwalk of the Mount Annan memorial, and is one way to address the social disadvantage and loss of cultural ties that are an intergenerational result of the Stolen Generations history. This is another way to think about the ‘healing’ and recovery memorials might offer.

The central meeting place of the Mount Annan memorial is also a common memorial feature. Few memorials have the luxury of space available at the Mount Annan site, but, in smaller areas, natural materials including plants and rocks help to create a sense of seclusion and a feeling of journeying away from everyday life. Another important part of this creation of sacralised space is time. Having undertaken the ritual journey, seating or pavilions give memorial participants permission to linger. There is, in this, a recognition that the work of grief takes time. At Mount Annan, a wooden bench carved by Chris ‘Snappy’ Griffiths is on the edge of the central clearing; other, less ornate, benches are provided along the walkway. Seating and water are two common elements that signal to participants the idea of taking time. Reflecting pools are a common memorial element — even if the pool is very small — and running water can symbolise tears.

Ritual actions can encourage memorial participants to slow down and engage more fully with the meaning of the memorial. In the centre of Badger Bates’s family relief sculpture are niches that hold small wooden bowls. The sign encourages participants to take water from the pond and pour it out as a sign of their tears. Discoloured stone indicates that visitors engage with this ritual. Such experiential memory spaces can be seen as coming from a post-VVM tradition, making use of bodily movement and encouraging personal ritual acts as part of public mourning practice (Rodrigo 2013). Architect Russell Rodrigo argues that, like the VVM, successful memorial spaces should create opportunities rather than overtly proscribing the actions of memorial participants:

In the case of memorial sites, if designed effectively with ritual action in mind, these spaces will produce a situation where the activities conducted within it are understood as natural and appropriate responses to that environment (2013, p.8).

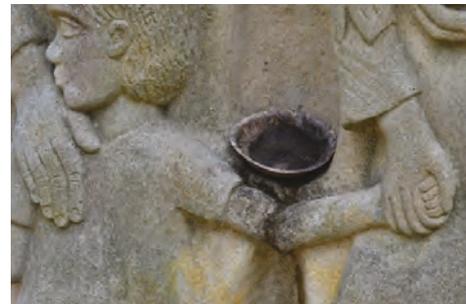


Figure 98: ‘Stolen Generations memorial’, detail of sculpture by Badger Bates.

Although gardens, pathways and water features can be important parts of a memorial space, memorials need to be more than the sum of their parts. Rodrigo claims that memorials need both to tell the story of the event in some way, and to allow a personal engagement with that story. He argues that the reason the VVM has been so influential as a memorial is that it is both 'summative' and 'additive'. It is summative, in the sense that it gathers together the many meanings of the Vietnam War, leaving enough space for multiple interpretations; and it is able to be 'added' to by ritual actions, which are not prescribed but which, again, the design creates space for.

At a very basic level, the memorial participant needs to know that they are in a memorial space in order to participate in the work of mourning. Using elements such as paths and water to create ritual space is common because these are familiar to participants: people recognise what to do in these spaces. One of the comforting things about ritual actions is that, while they are undertaken individually, they are done with the knowledge that others have participated in the same ritual. Mourning memorials fail when participants do not understand how to engage with the space.

The role of art

As I outlined in the introduction, public art is rarely critiqued with the same rigour as artworks displayed in a gallery setting. This has meant that conversation about the importance of the quality of memorial art has been limited. Young argues that it is necessary to move beyond discussion of 'good or bad art' (Young 1993, p. 13), but my research has found that these questions are integral to understanding the role and function of art in memorial spaces. As Hilde Hein pointed out:

Artists do not have privileged vision, but they do have a practiced eye and the ability to speak in a rich variety of languages — verbal, visual, conceptual, sensual, serious, humorous, figurative, and rational. Sometimes and somehow they break through ordinary expectations and cause people to venture upon new perspectives (Hein 1996, p. 5).

The more practised and skilled at their craft, the more an artist is able to create work that 'breaks through' in some way.

Young's call to move beyond a discussion of high and low art (1993, p. 12) in discussions of Holocaust memorials has been echoed by other writers working in the related field of trauma studies. For example, Stef Craps's 2013 *Postcolonial witnessing* calls for a move beyond a canonical 'trauma aesthetics' based on avant-garde literary forms (pp. 38–43). Jill Bennett's analysis of trauma art tends to favour

installation and site-specific work, often artworks that make use of digital forms. She is wary of the ability of permanent memorials to do the complex work needed to address traumatic memory, particularly histories of violence and oppression. I do not read this scepticism as being based on the form itself, but because of the 'impossible demands placed on the public memorial' (Bennett 2003, p.98).

In some ways, artists engaged in smaller project are in a better position than artists commissioned through government expression of interest processes or competitions, because they are able to negotiate directly with the internal audience and find ways to draw their experiences into the artwork. Sometimes this happens through community art processes, where the internal community of memory is involved in the creation of the memorial. For example, the 'Kambah firestorm storytree memorial' was created by artist Bryan Carrick working with the community of the Mount Taylor Estate in the aftermath of a severe bushfire that burned through 70 per cent of the Australian Capital Territory in January 2003. The memorial is the trunk of a tree that was killed by the fire, carved and painted with imagery that imagines what it might have seen in its 200 years of life. The base of the trunk and nearby seating is covered in mosaic tiles created by residents. It is common for mourning memorials to incorporate community art projects that provide an opportunity for individuals to create or donate something personal. These personal creative expressions then go on to have a different, more public life in the finished artwork of the memorial. The 'Firestorm Storytree' carving shows the skill of the artist, both in the technical aspects of the carving and the composition of the design. However, part of the artist's skill was also his ability



Figure 99: 'Kambah firestorm storytree memorial' by B Carrick and the Mount Taylore Estate Community (2005), view of top of carved and painted trunk, Kambah, Australian Capital Territory. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant.



Figure 100: 'Kambah firestorm storytree memorial' seating incorporating community artworks. Image courtesy Katherine Bryant



Figure 101: 'Stolen Generations memorial and healing garden', Andrews Farm, South Australia.



Figure 102: 'Stolen Generations memorial and healing garden', detail showing individual circular tiles used to make Andrews Farm, South Australia.

to understand the nature of the loss suffered by the community, and to find an appropriate way to engage with it.

Memorials often incorporate community art projects into the finished memorial. As is the case for the community made ceramics of the 'Firestorm Storytree' memorial, the quality of the individual elements might not be high, but a skilled artist can bring these together to create something that is meaningful for the community of memory. For example, the 'Stolen Generations memorial and healing garden' at Andrews Farm in South Australia incorporates many of the elements described above. It is a newly planted native garden with a path of coloured rock leading to a central area. Mosaic leaves punctuate the path at certain points, and in the central area is a circular mosaic. These are made of many individual circular rocks painted by members of the Stolen Generations and their families in community workshops. The workshops offered an opportunity for intergenerational sharing. Participants are drawn to the space to find their tile, and bringing together the many individual expressions creates a sense of their shared experience being valued.

The Colebrook Reconciliation Park is discussed in more detail in Case Study 6. The memorial artworks by Silvio Papunya need to be mentioned here as examples of the importance of the relationship between the artist and the community of memory in the development of mourning memorials. The 'Fountain of tears', dedicated in 1998, has a granite base into which are carved four faces. The top of the fountain is a bronze cast coolamon, a traditional Aboriginal vessel used in many parts of Australia to carry children. The water flows out of the empty coolamon (symbolising the missing children of the Stolen Generations) over the faces carved into the granite

and into a pool below. However, it is less the symbolism of the coolamon or the tears that makes this sculpture powerful. Rather, it is the expressions on the faces, each of which was carved directly into the rock while each model, three of whom were ex-residents of the Colebrook Children's Home, allowed the artist to see the pain, sadness and anger of their grief reflected in their faces.

The night before the unveiling of the sculpture, a number of ex-residents and members of the Blackwood Reconciliation Group camped out at Colebrook Reconciliation Park. Avis Gale, a key member of the ex-residents group, the Colebrook Tji Tji Tjuta, gave an interview in which she talked about being constantly drawn back to look at one face. Even though the model for the sculpture had been one of Avis's contemporaries, the face reminded her of her mother, with whom she had never been able to build a relationship: 'The expression on her face ... the pain and the hurt in that she didn't know how to express herself, and just like I didn't know how to express myself.' Gale talked about the 'healing' power of the sculpture giving her understanding of her mother's experience. In the same interview, she emphasised the importance of the process leading up to the dedication event, and how surprising it has been for her to develop relationships of trust with non-Aboriginal people. Similarly, the artist Silvio Apponyi spoke about the importance of the models for the sculpture trusting him, and allowing him to get close enough, physically and emotionally, to be able to sculpt them. The quality of the finish artwork, then, is reliant on relationships and trust, as well as artistic skill.

Shared spaces

As discussed above, many memorial designs incorporate a central gathering point, where memorial participants can linger. When the participant is part of the memorial's internal audience, this is a time to reflect on or acknowledge their own experience. Some memorials create spaces that might encourage talk. Bench seats are rarely big enough to allow for more than a few people, but might be enough for members of the same family or close companions to visit a memory space together and spend some time sharing stories.

The idea of an internal community of memory suggests a well-defined group is waiting to engage with a memorial. As discussed in Chapter 3, communities of memory usually develop out of public memory work. Sometimes the memorial project is the work around which the community of memory forms. In her memoir, *Kick the tin* (2010), Doris Kartinyeri emphasises the importance of sharing memories, when she explains that, because of her involvement in the Colebrook Reconciliation Park project, and in preparation for writing her book,



Figure 103: Shelter and seating at the Stolen Generations 'Garden of reflection' in Alice Springs.

she deliberately sought out the stories of her Colebrook 'family' — the other ex-residents she had grown up with. She writes that, although it was hard to listen to their stories, 'when we share the pain we begin to heal'. The sharing of knowledge is an important part of the process of mourning; Western funeral rituals, for example, involve telling the story of the deceased person's life. A wide circle of family, friends and acquaintances participate in this aspect of mourning, either formally in the funeral, afterwards at a wake, or through personal messages sent to those closest to the deceased person. In many mourning memorials, priority is given in the design for the creation of spaces where stories can be told.

Mourning memorials are often located close to other types of gathering spaces. For example, the Mount Annan 'Stolen Generations memorial' (Bates 2007) is close to a picnic area, allowing memorial participants the option of making the memorial journey alone, or at least in their own time, and joining with a larger group at the end. Picnic areas do not have the sense of sacralised space of the main memorial. In some ways, the comparison might be made between a funeral service and a wake, where the informal environment of the wake allows for a wider variety of sharing, outside of the formality of the memorial service.

Mourning rituals are communal practices, and are always shared more widely than just those most directly affected by a loss. In Australia, it is common practice to attend the funeral of a person you may not know well, in order to offer support to the family or loved ones of the deceased. People may participate in mourning rituals such as placing flowers on the coffin or releasing balloons as a way of expressing solidarity or respect, rather than as an expression of their own grief. They may even experience sadness out of sympathy for those who are grieving. Yet despite these widely accepted practices, public displays of emotion that are connected to the death of public figures or to disaster events have drawn wide criticism from those who label 'conspicuous compassion' a malady of late capitalism. Debra Jackson and Kate Usher offer a more sympathetic interpretation; they suggest that public displays of mourning, or what they term 'sorry rituals', may be driven by a desire to express 'solidarity with those who have been directly affected by the events' (Jackson & Usher 2015, p. 93). Acknowledging that 'grief is too strong a word to explain what it is that drives people to engage in displays of public mourning' (2015, p. 93), they nonetheless suggest that

people are motivated by a genuine sense of needing to respond to a sad situation. Such expressions of solidarity can risk co-opting the experiences of marginalised groups, but they can also be an important way that (previously disenfranchised) grief is acknowledged.

Memorials are often dedicated at special events that function, either formally or informally, as a reunion or coming together of the internal community of memory. The installation itself becomes an important mourning ritual. Sometimes this event is the first time a trauma survivor has returned to the location, which heightens the significance of the event. Such gatherings can be highly emotional, and have a lot in common with funeral services, as the community of memory needs to be carefully led through mourning rituals.

Change over time

As I have argued in the introduction, all memorials to lived experiences of loss and trauma can be considered ‘countermonuments’ in some way. A few are also anti-memorials, as defined by Sue Anne Ware, as memorials that are designed to incorporate the end of their own usefulness as a mourning practice (Ware 2008). It is hard to know whether memorials that are temporary in nature are rare or simply less well documented than permanent memorials. The City of Greater Dandenong has supported two site-specific installations that have responded to the decommissioning of a significant community site. ‘Depot’ (Drake et al 2008), responded to the relocation of Grenda, a local bus company iconic in Victoria, allowing seven artists to move in and interpret the space, which was then opened to the public for a week as part of an overarching memory project called *Moved by Grenda’s*. In 2009, a similar process was used for ‘The offering’, although this time a single artist, Robbie Rowlands, moved in to the space of a 100-year-old church building, again just prior to demolition. Rowlands has worked on a number of public artworks for the City of Greater Dandenong, and was instrumental in convincing the city council to support the Grenda project. This suggests that the relationship between artists and local government may be an important factor in allowing more experimental art responses to loss. These projects have been well documented, but are not necessarily thought of as memorials because of their transitory nature.

Following the December 2012 bushfires in the Margaret River tourism region of Western Australia, a local artist Mark Heussenham called on other locals to create a spontaneous memorial



Figure 104: Remains of burnt tree at Riflebutts Reserve, Margaret River, WA.

of model houses using burned and damaged materials. Residents were invited to hang the houses and other melted and scorched items as part of an art exhibition titled, 'Friendly fires' (2011) at Riflebutts Reserve, a local park near the ocean. Heussenhamm, whose house and studio had burned, saw the unofficial installation as a way of acknowledging the destruction of the fires and mourning what had been lost. One year on, the artist again put out a call to the community, this time to create bird houses as a symbol of renewal. At the time of the first anniversary, Heussenhamm was still 'working through' the feelings associated with the loss of his home and work. He told local media, 'It's a hard slog, there's depression everywhere' (Kennedy 2013). When I visited the site in April 2015, very little remained of this public expression, apart from a small wooden sign reading, 'My life has been turned upside down' and a little plastic house nestled between two branches of one of the burned trees. The original installation was moved to the Vasse Felix winery, and later displayed at the Holmes à Court Gallery in Perth as part of the 'FIRE: some kind of energy' exhibition, 10 February to 2 June 2013 (Holmes à Court Gallery 2013). It has an ongoing life in the exhibition catalogue.

Mourning memorials change in meaning over time. Particularly in the case of disaster memorials, the raw grief and shock of the initial event fades, and vernacular responses like the one organised by Mark Heussenhamm are often taken over by more official processes. The Margaret River fire memorials are a good example of the way one event can be memorialised in a number of different ways, depending on time, place, people and processes. Riflebutts Reserve is significant



Figure 105: 'Totem poles' sculpture by Mark Heussenhamm (2015), Riflebutts Reserve, Margaret River, WA.



Figure 106: 'Refuge' by Kashmire Rouw (2015), Gnarabup Beach, Western Australia.

because, in a popular tourist area, this space is for locals. In recognition of this, funding was provided by the Bushfire Recovery Fund for permanent artworks at the site. At the same time as the anniversary event described above, a Norfolk Pine tree was planted, and 'Rejuvenation' by Simon James was installed. Later, in July 2014, another permanent, government-funded artwork was installed at the reserve. 'Totem poles', created by Heussenhamm, ties in with the playfulness of the recovered/recovering space, with its children's play area and large sculpture of a dog waiting for its owner to throw a stick. The three totems were created out of the stumps of trees destroyed by the fire, and acknowledge the changed landscape after the fire, as well as the effects the fire had on nonhuman residents who also lost their homes. A third sculpture at the site was created independently by Heussenhamm. 'Eternal flame' is metal pole with a flame at the top, almost like a giant matchstick. It was installed at the time of the 'Friendly fires' event, and although the council knows about it, it is not listed on its public art inventory.

Another memorial, more public in the sense that it is clearly labelled for a wider public than the local community, has been installed on the beach front at Gnarabup near the popular White Elephant café. Titled, 'Refuge', the abstract sculpture by Kashmir Rouw marks the spot where people gathered to escape the fire. It is also given an expanded meaning, which is perhaps easier for tourists to relate to. The plaque ends with the words, 'Gnarabup is a place of refuge for all. We all seek refuge within our own lives, homes and hearts, and on this beach.'

Once memorials are created, or even within the creation process, they are often put to work in ways outside of their official 'brief'. Non-death memorials are regularly co-opted by people looking for a way to mourn death or to acknowledge the life of a loved one. Sometimes a key link with a dead person, such as a special object that once belonged to them, has been lost in disaster, and the memorial then becomes connected to that person's memory in a very private way. The Kyneton memorial mosaic includes items chosen in memory of people who died prior to the fires. Colebrook Reconciliation Park now incorporates a small, hand-painted plaque in memory of Dora Hunter.

The shift to the commemoration of experience rather than death itself has led to a blurring of the boundaries between the two types of mourning. Perth's 'Place of reflection' is a shared mourning space that developed because a number of different community groups had all applied to Western Australia's community funding body, Lottery West, for assistance to create a memorial. The five groups (the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS); The Compassionate Friends; Healing Hearts Foundation; Soroptimist International



Figure 107: Plaque in memory of Dora Hunter, Colebrook Reconciliation Park, SA.



Figure 108: 'Place of reflection', central space, Kings Park, Perth, WA



Figure 109: 'Place of reflection', seating, Kings Park.

of South Perth; and SIDS and Kids WA) worked together for over a decade to bring the project to fruition. Speaking at the dedication ceremony in 2011, Perth radio presenter Graham Mabury described the shared experiences that brought the group together as, 'the loss of family members, the realities of torture and the deprivation of human rights, the loss of country, the ongoing journey towards Reconciliation' and termed it a 'fellowship of sufferance' (*Place of reflection* 2011). The different kinds of loss, whether through death, separation or other kinds of suffering, are brought together in this space, which offers a walking trail through a native garden overlooking the river, secluded seating areas and a pavilion that can be booked for ceremonies.

The City of Darebin's 'Spiritual healing trail' offers another kind of shared mourning space. The project was the idea of local Aboriginal leader Uncle Reg Blow, and is described in promotional material as a 'gift from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as a gesture of reconciliation'. The brochure includes a map and guidance about how to respond to different stages on the trail, which is 1.4km in length. Group walks are

sometimes organised by the council. Although they are very different in form, these sites are both places where mourners are encouraged to bring a variety of different experiences of loss, and suggest that this kind of shared space might become more widely used.

Changed relationship

Like other memorials, memorials that commemorate natural disasters are part of Australians' attempts to negotiate their (post)settler-colonial history. For example, in his bushfire memoir, historian Robert Kenny writes that, 'It's hard not to see Black Thursday's underlying cause in the ending of Aboriginal fire regimes and the enacting of European ones' (quoted in Otto 2014). In Margaret River, the fires were caused by government burning in inappropriate weather conditions. Despite the shift to the commemoration of experience, none of the fire

memorials really acknowledge the lasting impact of the fire on people's relationship to the environment, yet a number of interview participants who were involved in bushfire commemorations spoke about a heightened awareness of their natural environment and some mentioned a sense of unease on particular days when the fire risk is high. Natural disasters seem only to be acknowledged when nature affects humans. On the other hand, these memorials should not lead us to think that Australians are always in conflict with their natural environment. A local government representative from the Balonne Shire in Queensland pointed out that flood markers in the town of St George should not be considered memorials, because floods are understood as bringing prosperity in a region that relies on irrigation water.

Conclusion

When memorials acknowledge lived experiences of loss and trauma, their function as a mourning practice remains important. Memorials to lived experiences are public spaces that make use of symbols and rituals traditionally associated with mourning to create intimate environments where 'grief work' may be carried out. Alongside the solemn mourning rituals associated with 'healing journeys' and spaces of personal reflection, mourning also involves sharing stories. Mourning memorials assist in developing communities of memory by creating gathering places where stories of loss can be shared with others. The installation or dedication of a memorial can become an act of mourning, but memorials also have an ongoing life. Memorials sometimes incorporate practical projects that are understood as assisting with healing and recovery. In the following chapter, I consider memorials that reject the sense of 'closure' that has come to be seen as the end point of mourning, and instead move from grief to politics.

*Case Study 5.***Bushfire memorials for mourning and recovery**

'Black Saturday' is the name that has come to be associated with bushfires that burned across a large part of south-eastern Australia on Saturday 9 February 2009. However, although bushfire affected much of country Victoria, there is more diversity of experience than the umbrella name suggests. The Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) reported attending or patrolling '316 grass, scrub or forest fires' on that one day, and a Royal Commission later investigated the 15 most significant fires, some of which burned for weeks (Parliament of Victoria 2010). Each of these fires is remembered in different ways. This case study compares two of the Victorian bushfire memorials that commemorate the events of Black Saturday. 'AFTER (art from the extended region)' commemorates the Redesdale fire, in the Macedon Ranges Shire, which burned across an area of about 19 kilometres, destroying 14 homes, the Sidonia church, and non-residential property such as sheds and fencing, as well as killing farm livestock and other animals. The memorial was initiated and designed by a local artist, Kathryn Portelli, and could be described as a vernacular memorial facilitated by the state. The Bendigo memorial commemorates a fire that burned through suburbs in the north-west of the large regional centre. The Bendigo fire was smaller in size than the Redesdale fire, but had a bigger human impact: one person died, and 58 homes were destroyed. The Bendigo bushfire memorial was funded through the Bushfire Appeal Fund as a community recovery project. It was developed by the City of Bendigo in accordance with guidelines developed by the Victorian Government. This case study offers a comparison of these two approaches to creating a memorial space in response to the loss and unsettlement caused by natural disaster.

The Kyneton memorial has been thoroughly documented by Kathryn Portelli on her website, www.kpmosaicwords.com/AFTER.php (Portelli 2015). This case study makes use of that archive, as well as drawing on on-site research and an interview with Kathryn Portelli and Andrea MacDonald, the Macedon Ranges arts and culture officer. Kathryn brought photos and other images to the interview in the Kyneton Town Hall, which she continued outside the building while looking at the memorial.

The Bendigo memorial was a two-stage project funded through the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA). Documentation was available through their reports and Bendigo Council made design plans available.

Some local news documentation was also available. Two on-site interviews were conducted using object-elicitation methods, one with the landscape architect, Karoline Klein, and another with Gail Allen, a member of the memorial reference committee whose house had burned in the fire.

AFTER art from the extended region

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council's memorial for the Black Saturday bushfires is in the small country town of Kyneton, approximately 90 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, Victoria. The memorial consists of a narrow grid of coloured tiles and runs 11.8 metres along the exterior of the Kyneton Town Hall. The tiles are inlaid with gum leaf mosaics; each created using ceramic and glass objects donated by a different person or group. The tiles closest to the front of the building are dark. Black tiles represent homes destroyed, and grey tiles represent other kinds of property damage. In most cases, the materials in the dark tiles were salvaged from damaged or destroyed properties; they offer tangible evidence of the heat and destructive force of the out-of-control fire. Above this dark section is an abstracted aerial view of the fire, created using molten coloured glass. About a third of the way along, the tiles get lighter, so that a memorial participant moving along the wall passes from the difficult experience of the fire to the lightness and brightness of a community offering support.

The leaf mosaics within the lighter tiles were made using objects donated by people living in the surrounding district, with some coming from further afield or even overseas. One line of tiles alternates black (moving to grey) and white, with the black and grey tiles of this line representing the other parts of Victoria that were affected by the Black Saturday fires. In this way, the memorial draws the local Macedon Ranges experience of the fire into the wider story. A printed dedication tile at the start of this row tells the story of the local fire; a tile at the end contains text by the Victorian bushfire commissioner, Christine Nixon, chairperson of the VBRRA, telling the state-wide story of the fires. So the memorial both commemorates the local experience of the fires, in which no human lives were lost, and acknowledges the wider Black Saturday event, including the 173 people who died in other parts of the state on that day.

The idea for AFTER came directly from Kathryn Portelli, an experienced mosaic artist, and at that time the Victorian state representative for the Mosaic Association of Australia and New Zealand (MAANZ). She is also a local resident whose husband was part of the local volunteer fire crew. The day of the fires, she was at home, working and listening to the news on the radio. While one part of her focused on the presentation she needed to prepare for the next day, another

part was mentally deciding what to pack, should they need to evacuate. At some point she received a call from her husband, telling her they had ‘lost’ the local church and that he had almost died. The next day, she attended the Victorian branch meeting of MAANZ, where a minute’s silence was held to remember all those affected by the fires. Kathryn described how important it seemed to have this wider group of artists, most of whom lived in the city and safely away from bushfire risk, take the time to express understanding and care. The comments of another artist started her wondering about how she, as an artist, could use her skills to support those most affected by the fires.

Kathryn said she woke on the Monday morning with the idea for the memorial fully formed in her head. The design of the finished memorial does not differ significantly from her original sketch. The silhouette of the gum leaf was already waiting in her studio, the result of some experimentation she had been doing, making use of the logo for the nearby Kyneton Bushland Resort. Kathryn emphasised that she didn’t feel as if she designed the memorial, since the idea came in a dream. She described the memorial in spiritual terms, as something that was ‘given’ to her to do; she found herself unable to move on with other artwork until it was completed. The mosaic design reflects Kathryn’s experience and skill as an artist as well as her emotional connection to the fire experience.

The gum leaf is key to the design. It is a symbol of rural life, as well as reminder of the understory ‘fuel’ that feeds a forest fire. Kathryn has written in her description of the memorial, ‘the leaves travel, and then you’re involved ...’ (Portelli 2015). The undulating pattern created by the organic shape of the leaf counterbalances the geometric pattern created by the square tiles. Similarly the texture of the materials within the leaves contrasts with the flat colour of the tile background. The leaf acts as a frame for the diversity within, just as the broad frame of rural life and the experience of fire contain a wide variety of different fire experiences.

As in other memorials, the choice of location is significant. The Kyneton Town Hall was used

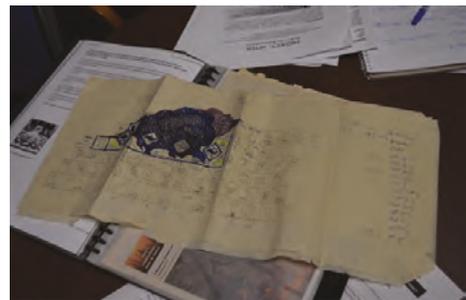


Figure 110: Original sketch by Kathryn Portelli for the Macedon Ranges commemoration of Black Saturday.



Figure 111: Kathryn Portelli with her final drawing for the Macedon Ranges commemoration of Black Saturday.



Figure 112: 'AFTER (art from the extended region)' view from across the street, Kyneton Town Hall, Victoria.

as a refuge on the day of the fires, and later as a relief centre, so it has a strong connection to the event for those who were involved. The decision to place the memorial on the outside of a building is unusual, and risks having the memorial taken for granted as decoration, rather than sacred space. If the building was in a busy urban street, the memorial would not 'work' as a mourning space; however, in the small town of Kyneton, Hutton Street is quiet enough that it feels ok to spend time, to walk up and down the footpath, to look closely and to touch. The memorial is at head height, and naturally leads memorial participants on the journey from the darkness and loss of the fire to the lightness and comfort of community support.

The materiality of the dark tiles speaks of the destruction caused by the fire. Everyday objects are transformed — left damaged and scarred but also somehow made precious. At the dedication Kathryn wrote:

I understood the power that the distorted remains from those fire-affected sites would have to be able to tell their very own story — the molten glass, the twisted metal and the blistered ceramics all had their own unique voices.

Those whose homes burned donated material salvaged from what was left, whereas other people had more opportunity to choose. The leaves in the lighter tiles are quirky compositions, made from a favourite piece of china perhaps, and sometimes chosen to tell a story. Living locally has given Kathryn the opportunity to observe how people have interacted with the artwork over time. She said she had worried particularly about how the people whose experience is represented by the dark tiles would respond when they saw the other tiles, but had been reassured that the lighter tiles offered them a sense of hope.

The memorial plays on the idea of rural communities. The design reflects a central assumption that those closest to the fire were those most affected, and that 'community' is both located (the tiles are ordered depending on how close to the fire the person lived) and interconnected. Kathryn used the word 'sentimental'

to describe the connection people felt to the materials they donated. The sense of emotional connection translates into the finished work, but sentimentality also implies the stripping away of politics. The memorial does that too. There was a lot of controversy about the cause of the fires, and the response, which led to a Royal Commission, yet the memorial closes itself off to those debates. The use of intimate objects domesticates it, drawing the focus back to the personal and collective experience of loss, and the celebration of survival.

Once she had tidied up the design, Kathryn met with members of the Macedon Ranges Shire's Arts and Culture department. The meeting took place in the immediate aftermath of the fire, and Andrea MacDonald, the shire's special projects officer, described it as very emotional. Kathryn was passionate and had a clear vision for the artwork, which she managed to communicate with the council. The shire team were also convinced that Kathryn had the skills to carry out the projects, and that it would benefit local residents. Andrea described the council's approach from that point as taking a back seat to ensure the administrative and logistical supports were in place to allow the process to proceed. She described the council's role as trying to 'do the boring stuff, and leave the artist to get on with the rest of it'. The council provided in-kind support and assistance, but there was no cash budget. Kathryn's strong belief in the project meant she was keen to get to work immediately. She applied for various small grants, including from the Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) arts recovery quick response fund, but ultimately was more interested in getting the work done and estimated that she was only paid for about a quarter of the time she put into the project (NSF Consulting 2011).

About six weeks after Black Saturday, Kathryn and her husband made a difficult visit to the burned Sidonia church. They collected materials from the site, and were given more salvaged objects by another couple whose nearby property had suffered fire damage. A local artist whose studio had burned also donated fire-damaged materials, and from these Kathryn was able to produce a series of sample tiles that would give people a sense of what she was aiming for. The sample tiles were presented at community meetings to demonstrate the idea, and were displayed in the Shire office windows, as a visual reminder and suggestion. However, Kathryn reflected that her enthusiasm and 'art language' were too much for many people. The grief counsellors and council workers acted as intermediaries, and quietly introduced the idea of the memorial as a positive action people could take. Some people took a few weeks or even months before they were ready to contribute.

Materials could be given directly to the workers, or deposited at the Shire reception. They were placed in a plastic bag with a short form for identification purposes.

The process of creating the memorial follows the same journey as the memorial itself, from dark to light. For the first three months of the memorial project, the focus was on those people directly affected by the fires. This time was set aside especially for those tiles, as a mark of respect. These are the dark tiles, and for each public tile, a twin was made for the person or family to keep themselves. As an experienced artist, Kathryn was aware of the issues involved in putting together a work that would need to be outside in the weather. Fragile materials such as jewellery, or even nails trapped in glass, would warp over time. Such materials were put into the duplicates.

A team of 45 volunteers assisted in making the leaf mosaics, with some dedicating many hours of work to the project. The work had a big impact on the volunteers. Kathryn recalled:



Figure 113: 'AFTER', detail, Kyneton.

we would get a bag and there'd still be ash in it, and we would spill it out and you'd smell it and we would have the dust all over us, and we would just go back — we'd have to um, gather ourselves up.

The impact of memorial creation on artists and volunteers is often not taken into account. In this case, Kathryn claimed that the project created important connections between the volunteers and the fire-affected community. At the opening, a 'map' of the mosaic was available, showing the person, family or community connected to each tile, and the person who made it.



Figure 114: 'AFTER', community tiles.

Once the team started working on the 'community' tiles, the atmosphere lightened along with the colours. This is reflected in the playfulness of the way the materials are put together. Those tiles that are particularly fun and tactile are placed low down on the wall, within reach of small children. The contributions for these tiles often came through word of mouth, again reflecting the ideas of the memorial itself — of the leaf blowing from one place to the next. The final tile is named 'mum'. In her speech at the memorial opening,

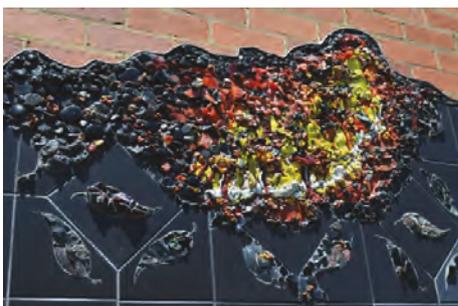


Figure 115: 'AFTER (art from the extended region)', detail showing aerial view fire mosaic, Kyneton, Victoria.

Kathryn said that it was in memory of her mother, but her comments go on to suggest that it is really dedicated to the idea of a mother as a kind of guardian. The tile is made from glow-in-the-dark materials, and the intention was that it would glow for a few hours each evening, 'emanating the kind of guiding light we all sometimes need to take us away from the black situation we might have been placed in'. Although the memorial is primarily about the Black Saturday experience, then, it has also taken on a variety of different meanings that are mixed together, much like the process used to create the leaves.

Not everyone was supportive of the memorial. One person who was involved with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) objected, on the grounds that the memorial was on a street leading to the local fire station, and would exacerbate the blame that some people put on the disaster response teams. Following the Royal Commission, when the CFA were found not to be at fault, the disagreement ended. Robert Kenny, a historian who lost his home in the Redesdale fire, published a memoir in which he was critical of the urge to commemorate, describing it as 'at once an attempt to reach out but also to appropriate the experience'. Memorials do wrestle with the question of the line between acknowledgment and appropriation. There is also the reality that what is traumatic for one person may not be so for another. The loss of his home and property had a deep impact on Kenny but would have been experienced differently by someone less attached to their possessions. Alternatively, for some people whose property did not burn, the knowledge of how close the fire came deeply unsettled their sense of safety.

Another bushfire recovery process that Robert Kenny was critical of was the winter solstice bonfire, held in July. It was this fire that was used to 'seed' the molten glass used in the fire scene at the top left of the memorial. Kathryn saw it as symbolic that the glass came from a 'healing fire'. However, she acknowledged that for some people, the bonfire was difficult. Grief counsellors were available on-site, but her own husband chose to leave, as he found the physicality of the fire too confronting.

The memorial was created in the immediate aftermath of the fire, and the tiles wintered on Kathryn Portelli's property as she made sure the materials would withstand the weather. Although only a small group was directly involved in creating the tiles, those affected by the fire were able to make their own choices about the objects they contributed. For some, this seems to have been a way to create something positive or even precious out of disaster.

The memorial was dedicated on the first anniversary of the fire. Since then, it has become a local tourist attraction, with bus tours often stopping by. A colour

brochure is available from the Town Hall, telling the story of the memorial's development and meaning. There is also a postcard. The internal audience, for whom it was originally intended, do come as well. People who live locally often pass it incidentally, and in the lead up to the anniversary of Black Saturday people make a conscious visit. Kathryn said she had heard of people coming from other areas such as Marysville, because they felt that, despite its public location, it provided them with a private space.

Bendigo bushfire memorial



Figure 116: Albert Richardson Reserve, Bendigo, Victoria.

Bendigo is a regional city; about half an hour's drive north-west of Kyneton. The Bendigo fire was a small but intense fire on the north-west edge of the city. It was deliberately lit in vacant land by two intellectually disabled teenage boys. The Bendigo fire-affected people who saw themselves living in a suburb, rather than in 'the bush'. Because of this, they were unprepared, and evidence given at the Royal Commission suggested they might not have been adequately warned (Kane 2010). Nonetheless, just as at Kyneton, the memorial avoids any questions of politics or blame, instead focusing on creating a space for contemplation and sharing.

In the days following Black Saturday, the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund was established by the Victorian and Australian governments. The financial response was enormous, and along with providing assistance to individuals and businesses affected by the fire, some of the money was allocated to a Community Recovery Fund, including A\$2.5 million in funding for memorials 'to help with the healing process' (Disaster Assist 2016). In contrast to the Kyneton project, which was created on a shoestring budget in the immediate aftermath of the fire, the Bendigo memorial was created partially in response to the provision of this funding. It

did not begin until about a year after the fire, and was completed soon after the second anniversary.

The process used to develop the memorial was based on recommendations of the VBBRA. In the aftermath of the fires, a community of ‘fire-affected persons’ was identified by the City of Bendigo council. The definition of ‘fire-affected’ was based on whether people’s property had been damaged or destroyed in the fire. There was also one person whose husband had died in the fire, and their extended family was included in the ‘fire-affected’ group. From these people, the Bendigo Bushfire Memorial Committee was formed. The word ‘committee’ can be misleading, since the group was very small. Some of those who started the process were unable to attend many of the meetings, so the final group involved just two people who had lost their homes, Gail Allen and Karen Plant, working with council staff. The council’s Engineering and Public Space business unit managed the project, and the City of Bendigo’s landscape architect, Karoline Klein, was appointed to work to develop the design.

During the consultation phase, the wider ‘fire-affected’ group were surveyed about what they would like to see in a memorial. The decision about the location came from that group. Albert Richardson Reserve, on the corner of Happy Valley Road and the Calder Highway, marks the point where the fire ended. The reserve backs onto the Victoria Hill colonial gold mine site, and from this high vantage point it is possible to see where the fire went through by the new houses along Happy Valley Road. The area around Long Gully is, as my taxi driver commented, the ‘dodgy’ part of town. It is the most socioeconomically disadvantaged in the city, with 40 per cent of residents in the bottom quartile of household income (profile.id 2016). The decision to locate the memorial there, rather than in a more prominent part of town, demonstrated that the people affected by the fire saw the memorial as belonging to them. It was not something for the rest of the town or for tourists.

The form of the memorial, as a wall, also came from the community consultations. During the initial phase, the memorial committee gathered ideas from many sources. Those they liked were incorporated into the design. While the memory



Figure 117: ‘Bushfire memorial’ (2011), detail of mural created from community workshops by Kerry Punton, Bendigo.



Figure 118: ‘Bushfire memorial’ (2011), view of central wall section.

space as a whole was designed by Karoline Klein, it incorporates a number of distinct sections. The wall niche, mosaic and 'Fire Tree' all provide intimate spaces where the memorial participant must physically lean in to take in the detail. The metaphor of recovery is created by the landscaping and the memorial wall, which leads memorial participants through the space. Two artists chosen to contribute to the design offer very different models of memorial art practice.

Kerry Punton is a ceramic artist and painter. Often she paints directly onto ceramics or, as for the Bendigo mosaics, uses a technique that allows her to print onto ceramic surfaces. She also has experience working with non-professional artists in community settings or with schools. For the Bendigo memorial, she ran a series of workshop that allowed those directly affected by the fire to create an individual tile to be incorporated in the mosaic. A separate workshop was held for the family and friends of the Mike Kane, the resident who died. There are two mosaics created as a result of the workshops. One of these is a tree design, which uses tiles in the shape of leaves and hands. The second, embedded on the 'back' of the memorial, facing Victoria Hill, includes a number of tiles with photos of animals who died. The overall image is of blossoming flowers. Gail Allen and Karen Ponti from the bushfire committee both participated in the workshops, and were photographed with the finished mosaic as part of the publicity for the memorial launch (Sweeney 2011). Gail's name is on one of the tiles, and others are printed with photos, one of her and her two sons and another of a watch salvaged from their home. Community arts processes like this are not helpful for everyone, but for many people it provides a creative opportunity to respond to their loss, and perhaps to feel like they are part of making something new and positive out of that experience. Community art projects can also allow people to feel a sense of personal connection to the memorial space. They also offer an opportunity to

connect with other people who have been through the same experience.



Figure 119: 'Fire tree' by Anton Hassell, view of branches, Bendigo, Victoria.

Anton Hassell's 'Fire Tree', by contrast, is a standalone artwork. Hassell is a well-respected sculptor, printmaker and bell maker, who lectures in visual art and design at LaTrobe University in Bendigo. In an online interview he wrote,

My work in public-space design concentrates on achieving the highest qualities of interactivity and participation that an artwork can offer the community in which it is sited. (Wilson 2012)

Like the lighter, quirky tiles at the end of the Kyneton mosaic, the 'Fire tree' brings an element of playfulness to the space. Although the black of the trunk is reminiscent of a burned tree trunk, there are signs of renewal in the brightly coloured leaves. The bells are not a warning, but a celebration of survival. The tree plays another role too: the sounds of the tree mingle with the bird noises that are fairly constant on the reserve, taking attention away from the traffic noise of the Calder Highway.

The third 'intimate' space of the memorial is the wall niche. Inside a small cavity within the memorial wall, on three shelves, are placed the fire-damaged relics of people's homes. A bent golf club circles the middle shelf. Like the fragments incorporated into the black tiles of the Kyneton memorial, these objects bear witness to the ferocity of the fire. The objects in the wall niche connect the memorial to another, temporary, commemorative project. Many of the fire-damaged objects in the wall niche came from the home of Gail Allen. Gail is an art teacher and her former husband, Neil Fetting, is an artist whose work often involves found objects. When the home she shared with their son, Alex Fetting, burned, Neil Fetting travelled to Bendigo to offer support. Out of the conversations over the next few days developed the idea for an exhibition titled 'Clandestine' that took objects salvaged from the fire and displayed them in a gallery setting. The title suggests a kind of transgression; these are intimate objects that should not be placed on public display. Their intimacy is domestic; they are the ordinary objects of home life, transformed by fire into things that are strange and surprising. Whereas the objects eventually included in the Bendigo memorial had to be placed behind glass, protected from weather but also slightly distanced from memorial participants as a kind of curiosity cabinet, in the gallery they were able to be placed on shelves around the walls. Whereas the fire-damaged materials in the Kyneton memorial are transformed through creative intervention, these materials are simply presented in all their fire-affected strangeness.



Figure 120: Gail Allen looks at her fire-damaged possessions encased in the 'Bushfire memorial' (2011), Bendigo.



Figure 121: 'Clandestine' exhibition by Alex and Neil Fetting, Mildura, Victoria. Image courtesy Alex Fetting.



Figure 122: 'Clandestine' exhibition, detail, Mildura, Victoria. Image courtesy Alex Fetting.

The conventions and the white space of the gallery itself created a kind of sacralised space. Images from the exhibition show the objects surrounded by piles of ash. What the images cannot show, but what Kathryn Portelli's description of the Macedon Ranges memorial project suggests, is that the ash was not just a physical reminder of the fire, but also carried with it smells, adding to the affective power of the display. An exhibition review by Helen Vivian discusses the political and cultural explorations of Neil Fetting's art practice, but for those who had experienced the fire, the installation had a more immediate impact. A group of 20 people from Marysville travelled to see the exhibition in Mildura, and many began crying as soon as they walked in the room (*The art of destruction* 2010). Because it was presented within a gallery setting, the 'Clandestine' exhibition was critically reviewed in a way the memorial itself has never been.

The 'Bendigo bushfire memorial' is primarily a wall, made of polished black granite. This is a material common to many contemporary memorials. It cuts across the reserve in three sections, with the 'Fire tree' by Anton Hassell standing at one end and a gathering space just beyond that. The memorial space is designated by gravel landscaping, separating it from the grassed area of the reserve and connecting it with the barbecue area. The memorial leads the visitor on a journey from the experience of the fire through to recovery and renewal.

Karoline Klein said that, while working on the design, she studied photographs showing the impact of the fire and spent time walking around the fire zone. The first section of wall, closest to Happy Valley Road, is covered by aluminium sheeting. On the right side, the edge of the metal is bent over as if melting. A series of 'blobs' on the ground continue this imagery, which was taken from actual photographs of melted cars. Between sections one and two, a path leads through to the Victoria Hill mine site.



Figure 123: 'Bendigo bushfire memorial' at Albert Richardson Reserve, Bendigo, Victoria.

The central section of wall is composed of a number of panels. On the first panel, a white tile is printed with a description of the circumstances of the fire, including temperatures on the day, and a list of losses. It also suggests that the fire threatened the city's CBD, 'and changed the lives of so many residents forever'. Next to this is the alcove, with the fire-damaged objects, and then comes the first of three graphic panels. Each of the three has a bright green background, which reflects some of the lighter colours of the reserve. On this first pane, the shapes in cold greens suggest bare tree trunks.

Another larger white tile in the centre of the wall contains more text. This panel names the Bendigo resident who died, Mick Kane. It gives a highly edited version of the events of his death, stating that he died 'fighting, like so many others, to save his home and family'. Like descriptions of war death that emphasise sacrifice rather than violence, Kane's death is sanitised and given meaning by this statement. The text continues with more language reflective of war memorials: 'Bendigo remembers all those whose lives were so devastated on Black Saturday, and who fought back with immense courage and optimism in the face of adversity.' Strength of community spirit was a common theme in public discourse following the fire. A white space creates a break between the lament of the upper section of text, and the bottom section of text where the human actions in response to the fire are emphasised. The 'bravery and ingenuity' of emergency services workers is celebrated, alongside the local residents who 'banded together in horrific circumstance'. Next to the panel is the first mosaic. The second mosaic is on the back of this section of wall.

The final panel of the central wall section is another green graphic, this time with the tree trunk imagery layered by leaf patterns. The colours of the new trees planted as part of the landscaping complement the greens of the graphic panels. The final section of wall is the shortest. The third green panel covers two thirds of the front of it. On this panel the leaf shapes dominate, suggesting regeneration and regrowth.

The gathering space is a circular area in the shade of a large tree. Other trees have been planted but are yet to offer any shade. The area is defined by mosaic rock paving, and edged with aluminium seating and some red rocks. Here the formal memorial plaque reads:

Bendigo Bushfire Memorial. A special place of reflection, this memorial was installed to commemorate the devastating Black Saturday fires in Bendigo on 7 February 2009. The memorial is a lasting reminder of our community's incredible courage and spirit. Bendigo will remember.



Figure 124: 'Bushfire memorial', view from back, Bendigo, Victoria.



Figure 125: 'Bushfire memorial', view of shaded gathering space, Bendigo, Victoria.

The text of the plaque, like the memorial itself, strikes a balance between solemnity and celebration of community spirit. Katherine Klein said she had tried to develop the design so different people would find parts or areas of the memorial that they could connect with. She also suggested that, although the idea of a wall had come out of the community consultation, the shape of the memorial was not as important as providing a space where people could gather and where their experience was acknowledged.

Before the fire, the reserve on which this memorial is built was run down and not well used. In the early years after the fire, the focus was on the internal audience who had lost homes or suffered property damage, and on creating an intimate space where those people could commemorate the event. As time has passed, the focus shifted to rejuvenating the reserve itself. The second stage of the project allocated funding to redeveloping the toilet block and barbeque area and allowed for more landscaping. The reserve is now a well-maintained community space, well used by locals and by dog walkers on their way to Victoria Hill.

Anecdotal evidence suggests it is still used by survivors to remember the events of Black Saturday, but is a useful space for the wider community as well.

Conclusion

These two memorials demonstrate two very different approaches to memorialisation. The Kyneton memorial was driven by an individual artist's vision, and run on a shoestring budget that relied on volunteers donating many hours of time. This allowed for an immediate response to the experience of the fires. Those affected by the fires were not directly involved in its creation, but they were able to have a direct connection to it through the donation of materials that were used to create 'their' tile. The finished work has been generally well received by the community. An unforeseen benefit is that the memorial artwork is now a tourist attraction, which is a practical benefit to the small town. In contrast to this relatively vernacular expression, the Bendigo memorial was driven by government and fully funded through the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. It incorporates a wide range of different artistic responses. While not as aesthetically coherent as the Kyneton artwork the Bendigo memorial aims encourage the broadest possible constituencies to respond. The renewal of the civic space of the reserve through the memorial project funding has taken a rundown space and made it into a useful space for a socioeconomically marginalised community.

Despite their very different approaches, then, these memorials have much in common. They both avoid addressing the politics associated with the cause of the disaster, and both create a simple narrative of destruction and renewal. Both have brought community benefits outside of the short timeframe of the memorial's creation. These particular memorials, developed in a localised community and commemorating the experience of a specific group of people, offer an opportunity for further research into the way memorials are understood by those whose experiences they commemorate. The visits of tourists by bus to the Kyneton memorial also offers an opportunity to understand what might draw outsiders to engage with such intimate memory spaces.

*Chapter 6***Witness citizenship**

In Chapter 5, I explored the ‘inside’ function of mourning memorials for people who have lived through experiences of loss and trauma. Mourning is a public practice, and memorials create places where experiences of loss and trauma can be shared and acknowledged, creating communities of memory. However, as I discussed, the boundaries of such communities are blurred, and those who have not directly experienced the loss or trauma can still be an important part of the process of mourning. In order to explore the ways mourning memorials create spaces for grief it was necessary, for a while, to put to one side their political function. In this chapter, I consider memorials that bring mourning and politics together through witness citizenship, expanding the community of memory by making interventions into the public sphere. While some memorials place the memories they acknowledge firmly in the past, memorials as witness citizenship make clear the ongoing impacts of past experiences. These are memorials that seek to tell stories not only to mourn, but also to move people to a new understanding, in solidarity with marginalised counterpublics. Memorials act as, develop out of, and create space for witness citizenship. Some of these memorials are public artworks created as individual creative interventions into the public sphere. Others emerge out of long-term memory activism that seeks to bear witness to loss and trauma and to draw attention to its causes. For some, the truth-telling work of the memorial is key to any ‘healing’ that might come as the end product of mourning. Returning to Jill Bennett’s encountered sign, this chapter asks, in what ways do these memorials move us, and where do we end up?

Sharing the burden of memory

The concept of witness citizenship was developed by Macarena Gómez-Barris from her research into the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park in Santiago, Chile. The site was used during the Pinochet dictatorship as a place where political prisoners were held and tortured. It is the last known place where some of the regime’s ‘disappeared’ were seen. The memory work that led to the creation of the site, and its ongoing use, has been the focus of much recent memory scholarship (see, for example, Klep 2012; Hamber, Sevcenko & Naido 2010; Violi 2012). Gómez-Barris found that:

Witness citizenship, in the form of political engagement and transmission, rather than as mere preservation of historical memory, was perhaps the most important social outcome facilitated by the place (2010, p. 37).

She argues that the work of witness citizenship links local experiences to the nation state, so that memory becomes about political engagement rather than individual contemplation. This type of political engagement is different from the kinds of memory work discussed in Chapter 5, which involve claiming a space within the national story, often by adopting already constructed, conservative narrative frames. Instead, witness citizenship challenges national memory with 'the ongoing social, physical, and psychological wounds from the past' (2010, p. 31).

Memorials often treat the past as something that is over and done with. Witness citizenship, in contrast, is a pedagogic task of sharing the difficult knowledge that the past continues to influence the present. In the previous chapter I discussed the importance of spaces within mourning memorials where people can talk as a part of the work of mourning. Witness citizenship extends that work, but it requires the external community to engage with the story as an act of solidarity rather than empathy. The memorials discussed in this chapter, therefore, address the difficult questions I put aside in the previous chapter, of the ways anger and politics connect with grief. As Joy Damousi has demonstrated in the Australian context, the experience of trauma-related grief has often been the catalyst for the politicisation of disenfranchised people (Damousi 2002). This link between mourning and politics has been an important area for discussion in the work of queer theorists and activists since the 1980s, notably Douglas Crimp's 'Mourning and Militance' (1989) and Ann Cvetkovich's search for a 'depathologising perspective' on trauma (2003). It has also been an ongoing conversation within literary post-colonial and trauma studies for at least a decade (Visser 2015), generating fruitful conversation about ways of rethinking Freud's concepts of healthy and unhealthy mourning.

What all this work has in common is a suspicion of the decontextualised and depoliticised concept of trauma theory as it was originally developed by Cathy Caruth. The Caruthian model, with its deep roots in Freudian psychoanalysis, assumes that speaking about trauma is inherently restorative. Later, Stef Craps, drawing on the work of Rosanne Kennedy and Tikka Jan Wilson, argues that the psychoanalytic model sets up a dynamic between speaker and listener which denies the agency of the trauma survivor (2013, pp. 41–43). Kennedy and Wilson's model, which uses a narrative therapy approach, offers an alternative in which the survivor has control over how they choose to frame their story, and in which the relationship between speaker and listener is collaborative (Kennedy & Wilson 2003).

As I have discussed in Chapter 3, there is a strong link between what Wieviorka calls the 'era of the witness' and practices of transitional justice. Wieviorka argued that the Eichmann Trial, which took place in Israel in the 1960s, was a pivotal

moment in which witness testimony became privileged over archival documents in the public sphere. That trial used a single case to put on show the story of the Holocaust by having survivors speak about their personal experiences, only some of which were directly relevant to the particular defendant (Wieviorka 2006). The influence of this event can be seen in the practices of truth commissions, which form a core part of the 'transitional justice toolkit' (Bickford & Sodaro 2010 quoted in Buckley-Zistel & Schafer 2014, p. 7).

One of the most widely adopted practices of transitional justice is the truth commission. Roche argues that the justice model used by truth commissions falls under the umbrella of restorative justice, distinguished by 'a preference for deliberation over adjudication, and a search for remedies that repair harm and strengthen ties of interdependence' (Roche 2006, p. 234). Yet, as Craps points out, trauma itself has a history and a cultural context, and when the 'political, social, or economic' roots of trauma are ignored, 'this can lead to psychological recovery being privileged over the transformation of a wounding political, social, or economic system' (2013, p. 28). Those who engage in witness citizenship are often as committed to the idea of 'reconciliation' as proponents of the various manifestations of truth commissions, but they do so within a model of open-ended, ongoing dialogue. Witness citizenship, therefore, can be seen as a practice of transitional justice that demands answers to the question of cause, and which moves trauma out of the realm of individual suffering and into a shared space where all citizens are asked to take responsibility or to stand in solidarity with those who suffered.

Transitional justice has become an internationally accepted framework for societies attempting to move from civil conflict or dictatorship to peaceful democracy. Although Australia's (post)settler-colonial context does not fit this description, parts of the transitional justice 'toolkit' have been adopted as a means of coming to terms with the nation's settler-colonial past. By adopting Macarena Gómez-Barris's term of witness citizenship to describe the cultural work Australian memorials aim for, I do not assume that the context is the same as for memory activists working in Chile, but aim to point to similarities between the work of memory activists who resist the call to 'move on' from their own pain to save others from discomfort. Maria Tumarkin claim that,

When sites of death and loss are forgotten and all traces of the tragic events are erased ... The burden of memory is shifted onto the shoulders of survivors and victims' families. They, and not the society as a whole, are the ones who have to carry the full weight of knowledge and grief, while the rest are free to forget, free to absolve themselves of any link to the tragedies (Tumarkin 2005).

In this sense, 'sharing' the story means also passing the burden of knowledge onto the wider community. Memorials act as witness citizenship, then, when they are aimed at sharing the burden of difficult knowledge.

Telling the story



Figure 126: 'Stolen Generations memorial' plaque quoting 'stolen child'.

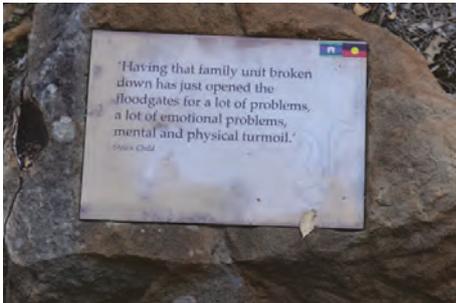


Figure 127: 'Stolen Generations memorial' plaque quoting 'stolen child'.

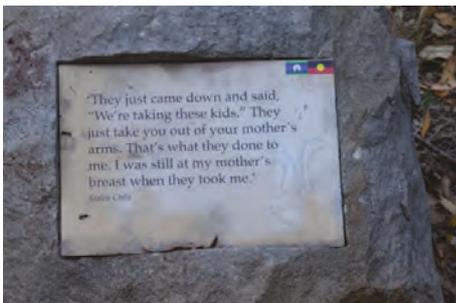


Figure 128: 'Stolen Generations memorial' plaque quoting 'stolen child', the Australian Botanical Gardens, Mt Annan, New South Wales.

I want to return, now, to the Mount Annan Stolen Generations Memorial. This memorial can, as I argued previously, be understood as a mourning space for an internal community of memory. I have already described how the memorial takes the form of a circular journey along a wheelchair accessible boardwalk through a bush area in the Australian Botanical Gardens. In the centre of this walkway is a clearing with a sculpture, water feature and bench. The path then leads back out to the main road, not far from a picnic area. What I did not discuss in the previous chapter is that the journey along the boardwalk is punctuated by plaques containing first-person micro-testimonies. These are embedded in small rocks placed on the ground at the edge of the path between the picnic area and the central space. Where you start the memorial journey will influence where and how you come across the plaques. The text is taken from testimonies collected by Link Up (NSW), an organisation that supports Aboriginal people separated from their families. Some of these testimonies were quoted in *Bringing them home* (HREOC 1997). The story fragments offer a sense of the multilayered experiences of separation and assimilation that can be masked by the Stolen Generations label. For example, this one describes the ongoing impact:

There are still a lot of unresolved issues within me. One of the biggest ones is I can't really love anyone no more. I'm sick of being hurt. Every time I used to get close to anyone they were just taken from me.

The micro-testimonies are each labelled as coming from a 'stolen child' and marked with both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, emphasising the collective

nature of the Stolen Generations experience. As Kennedy and Wilson point out, Link Up (NSW), and other groups like it, 'provided a discursive community' in which Aboriginal people were able to speak as a 'valued and authentic Aboriginal subject', sometimes for the first time (Kennedy & Wilson p. 137). In the case of this particular memorial site, they then lobbied and negotiated to provide a physical and symbolic space in which the story of the Stolen Generations could be acknowledged.

One of the barriers for people from the Stolen Generations who wish to reclaim their Aboriginal identity is that there are conflicting understandings of what this might mean. The name 'Aboriginal' is a product of colonisation, and masks the complexity of the vast network of language and kinship systems that cover the continent and associated islands of Australia, as well as the very different experiences of settler-colonisation various peoples have had. Stolen Generations people have experienced dislocation from their family and country, and for many of them return is not possible. Whereas Aboriginality is often characterised as being defined by a particular spiritual connection to country, Stolen Generations people have often had to reclaim a sense of Aboriginal identity but without any specific place of belonging.

The site of the memorial at the Australian Botanical Gardens reflects this history. The place now known as Mount Annan is known as Yandelora in the local language, and was a traditional meeting place for the Tharawal/Dharawal people before being taken over as farmlands by Europeans who pushed the local people out. In the mid 1980s, using funding allocated as a project of Australia's bicentenary celebrations, the land was reclaimed as botanical gardens and began to be revegetated. The memorial is constructed in a section of land that retained some of the original bushland and has been extensively replanted. However, this attempted return to a pre-colonial landscape has not included a return of ownership of the land to the traditional owners, now represented by the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Whereas the circular journey of the memorial offers a mourning ritual for the internal community of memory (Stolen Generations and their families), the interpretive signage and the plaques are directed at a non-stolen public. These 'outside' memorial participants are asked to take part in the ritual of mourning by pouring bowls of water over the statue. They (we) are invited to 'try to imagine the experience of the Stolen Generations'. The central sculpture was carved by an Aboriginal artist who is deeply connected to his traditional culture and story. Badger Bates's carving includes a representation of the Rainbow Serpent, which

is a near-universal figure in creation stories around Australia. By describing the carving as a 'gift' to the Stolen Generations, the plaque suggests that the Stolen Generations are being reclaimed as Aboriginal people by an Elder who has not had their connection to culture disrupted. Nonetheless, the memorial plaques are a reminder that the impacts of child removal are ongoing. The memorial does not ask for a simple 'empathic' response; sentimentality is not possible in the face of these brutally honest accounts. As an act of witness citizenship, the memorial claims the right of the Stolen Generations to speak as Aboriginal people, and challenges the wider public to bridge the gap between that history and their own.

Art as witness citizenship

In Chapter 2 I described the 'Koori Mural' (1985) as Australia's first memorial to acknowledge lived experiences of loss and trauma, in Aboriginal people's ongoing experience of and resistance to colonisation. A number of other examples of witness citizenship are aesthetic interventions in public space. Gómez-Barris's definition of witness citizenship includes 'cultural engagement', and while her work focuses on the conversations and civic engagement that happens around memorials, I consider here how the artworks themselves do political work as 'encountered signs'. Paula Hamilton (2003) suggests that trauma discourse creates limited subject positions of victims and survivors, shutting down more nuanced understandings of difficult history. The ways memorials sacralise and solemnise space can also make it difficult to tell more complex stories; however, for memorials to act as witness citizenship they often need to do just that. Site-specific public art projects sometimes allow artists the flexibility to engage with difficult knowledge in ways that challenge traditional memorial forms. This kind of public art project also allows for interventions in public space that can explore marginalised histories without the need for the same level of consensus building required by formal memorial projects. The following examples demonstrate the positives and negatives of site-specific public art as witness citizenship. They are less burdened by the kinds of expectations Jill Bennett argues constrain memorials (2003). However, public artworks are constrained by their own politics, and risk being co-opted as mere decoration for urban developers.

Sydenham Green is a large park located within the Marrickville local government area of inner Sydney. Near a children's play area in the centre of the park is the 'Sydenham Lounge', a group of sculptures of oversized everyday objects displaced from a suburban home: a giant teapot at the entry to the playground; a big red couch covered with a mosaic throw; a metal lamp on a mosaic rug; and a giant garage door which, on closer inspection, is more like a giant fireplace surrounded



Figure 129: 'Sydenham lounge' (Smith, Hurst & Schenkel 1999), view of painted entry marker, Sydenham Green, New South Wales.



Figure 130: 'Sydenham lounge', view of garage door tiled with newspaper prints.



Figure 131: 'Sydenham lounge', detail of giant sofa.

with ceramic tiles printed with enlarged newspaper cuttings, which give clues to the history of the place. These newspaper cuttings are full of rage and futile protest. A close reading of them tells a story of dispossession and loss of home and community that occurred when Sydney airport's noise pollution led to the demolition of the residential buildings on this large tract of land.

The story reads much like the plot of the 1997 Australia movie *The Castle*, but without the happy ending. Sydney Airport's third runway, built in the mid 1990s, created high levels of urban noise pollution over the suburb. Local residents protested, but eventually lost their fight and were forced to leave. The public artworks of the 'Sydenham Lounge' were commissioned from local artists Ron Smith, Joe Hurst and Janine Schenkel. The mosaic tiles of the throw lying across the sofa reflect the cultural diversity of the area, with fragments of text in various languages, as well as a pattern of small aircraft, houses, faces and domestic items. The sculptures and the mosaics could be described as wistful or nostalgic, but the anger of the newspaper clippings adds another layer to the encounter of the site. The name 'Sydenham Lounge' plays ironically on the idea of an airport lounge, as well as the comfortable room inside a house. Parts of walls and building structures hint of the destruction, and the headlines and images are a reminder that this place was not given up easily.

If you enter Sydenham Green from the corner of Unwins Bridge Road and George Street, you will come across a map and plaque, showing the layout of the suburban streets that were demolished to form the Green in 1999. At the time of the park's development, the Marrickville Aboriginal Consultative Committee (MACC) made a connection between the local residents' loss of their homes, and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples (R. Carroll 2016, pers. comm., 29 March). They asked the City of Marrickville that the park be given an Aboriginal name or be named after an Aboriginal person, which did not happen. Another request, that signage tell the Aboriginal history of the area, was briefly responded to in the plaque, which explains:

... Originally the hunting grounds of the Cadagal people of the Eora nation, the area became farmland after colonisation before residential subdivision in the nineteenth century ...

A third request, that a section of the park be dedicated to remembering the Stolen Generations, led to the creation of New South Wales's first memorial to the Stolen Generations. Joe Hurst, the printmaker involved with the 'Sydenham Lounge' art project, is a Murrawarri man from north-west New South Wales and was asked to design the memorial. It takes the form of a low sandstone and concrete wall running along the footpath near the entry plaque and grid mosaic. The wall is decorated with a pattern of boomerangs, an easily recognised Aboriginal motif that in this context could read as a metaphor for return. Two gaps in the wall contain



Figure 132: 'Stolen Generations memorial' created by Joe Hurst (1999) at Sydenham Green, New South Wales.



Figure 133: Entry plaque and map showing the streets of the former suburb, Sydenham Green, New South Wales.

water bowls. A metal plaque is inscribed with these words of testimony from Link Up (NSW):

We may go home, but we cannot relive our childhoods. We may reunite with our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunties, uncles, communities, but we cannot relive the 20, 30, 40 years that we spent without their love and care, and they cannot undo the grief and mourning they felt when we were separated from them. We can go home to ourselves as Aboriginals, but this does not erase the attacks inflicted on our hearts, minds, bodies and souls, by care-takers who thought their mission was to eliminate us as Aboriginals.

The water bowls are a traditional memorial device, representing pools of tears shed. However, the text on the plaques makes it clear that this mourning is not for an event in the past, but something that continues into the future. Yet, despite the

confronting nature of the text, the memorial has been all but ignored. Its image is used on the cover of the 2013 Sydenham Green Draft Plan of Management, and the document lists it as a maintenance priority; however, the artist is not acknowledged in the document, and council officers were not initially aware of the memorial.

In Melbourne, 'SCAR: a stolen vision' ('SCAR') had its genesis as an art project for the Melbourne Festival in 2003. The project brought together Aboriginal artists from many different backgrounds and art practices to create works using posts made from the original wharf poles of the Queens Bridge. Its aim is to recognise the existence of over 32 different clans or language groups that have survived throughout Victoria since colonisation. The 30 final totems are installed in Enterprise Park, a site named after a boat that sailed from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1835 with the first permanent white settlers that started what has become the city of Melbourne. Each artist interpreted the theme in different ways, using different styles and techniques. Artists worked on individual poles, but there is no documentation of which pole comes from which artist, and the mix of styles reflects the diversity of different experiences of settler-colonisation. For example, one pole includes a metal plate printed with text from the Aboriginal Projection Board era; others are decorated with traditional patterns and make use of rediscovered techniques. The idea of the 'scar' is a symbolic element in itself, having a double meaning of the scar left by a wound and the scar trees created by Aboriginal people, which marked the landscape as 'owned'. In an area dominated by decorative public artworks, 'SCAR' refuses a tidy reading.

My final example of site-specific artwork as witness citizenship is 'Illa Kuri', by Aboriginal artist Toogarr Morrison. This work was commissioned through the 'per cent for art' scheme of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority in the mid 1990s. It forms part of a broader narrative of artworks, which together tell a story of prior use, degradation and renewal, celebrating the now-existing suburb, which is a postmodern pastiche of European-inspired architecture and cafe lifestyle. Like



Figure 134: 'Scar: a stolen vision' (Thompson et al, 2001) totem poles at Enterprise Park, Melbourne, Victoria.



Figure 135: 'Scar: a stolen vision', detail, Enterprise Park, Melbourne, Victoria.

the other examples, 'Illa Kuri' needs to be understood within its broader context and a history of public art being used to 'add value' to urban development schemes (Atkinson-Phillips 2001).

'Illa Kuri' is not always experienced as art. To an extent, it has become part of the landscape of the redeveloped and reclaimed suburb on the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan/Swan River. The entry plaque reads:

The sacred path representing the Illa Kuri journey is where initiates walked through the Claisebrook valley on the way to their homes. The path leads from one freshwater lake to another. These are represented by the 12 granite rocks that stand as silent sentries. The names of the tribes and totems are there to guide you through the sacred Illa Kuri dreaming and the sacred totem emblems that gave the indigenous people their identity. The sacred dreaming path is never ending.

I quote the plaque in full to show the emphasis on the sacralisation of space in this text. The 'sacred dreaming path' is a beautiful/beautified space, but the inscription fails to mention that not all of those 12 wetlands exist now, and most of those that do are heavily polluted. What was once a place full of life in one of the world's biodiversity hotspots is represented by rock. At each stone is a metal plaque with a name. Four central stones, closest to the river, hold information about totemic groups, skin groups, and marriage conventions of the Nyungar people, or the Bibbulmun nation, which is Morrison's preferred term for his people. I read 'Illa Kuri' as a memorial to a lost landscape, and perhaps also to a lost way of living in that landscape.

Ashton, Hamilton and Searby (2012) argue that natural disaster narratives often pit humans against nature, making it difficult to acknowledge the loss of



Figure 136: 'Illa kuri' by Toogarr Morrison, remembers lost wetlands and acknowledges Bibbulmun Aboriginal culture, dreaming track, East Perth, Western Australia.

landscape, which may be felt in a variety of different ways. The bushfire memorials discussed in the previous chapter and case study tell the story of the fire within a temporal frame that places it firmly in the past, and suggest a story of 'recovery'. 'Illa Kuri' does not follow this pattern. Despite playing with traditional memorial materials and symbols, this is not a work that mourns a history that is finished. While it is possible to argue that any subversive meaning has been co-opted by the state in the interests of tourism and investment, I see a more subtle interaction at play. As Ashton, Hamilton and Searby suggest is inevitable, this public memorial engages with 'mainstream historical narratives' (2012, p. 13), including one that links Aboriginality to nature and the past. But in doing so it also stakes a claim for Nyungar prior ownership of the land, and tells a story that unsettles the comfortable and contained nature of the beautified landscape.

Obvious activism

Memorials as witness citizenship are highly contextual. Many of them are created by grassroots groups, and questions of finance, as well as access to and control over land, can constrain the ways memorial projects develop. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, the 'Koori Mural' in Thornbury, Victoria, was originally created on a temporary wall because the Aboriginal Advancement League and artist Megan Evans could not find a local property owner who would make their wall available. However, because it was painted on standalone fencing, the mural could be moved to its current position at the busy St Georges Road intersection. It is now a landmark that has given the local Aborigines Advancement League a level of visibility it would not otherwise have had.

Sometimes, the ongoing work of memory activists leads to an association between an event or issue and a particular location. For example, the Bringing Them Home Committee (WA) holds a Sorry Day event each year at Wellington Square, a large green space in East Perth. Over time, the group have been able to claim a certain level of ownership of that area of land. Sorry Day, 26 May, marks the day *Bringing them home* (HREOC 1997) was tabled in the Australian Parliament, and developed in response to Recommendation 7a of the report, that a national day be held, 'to commemorate the history of forcible removals and its effects'. The Bringing Them Home Committee use the event for the dual purpose of bringing together and acknowledging Stolen Generations peoples in Perth, and educating a wider public. After the Australian prime minister made a formal apology to the Stolen Generation in 2008, some people questioned whether there was value in continuing with the tradition. However, the event has grown, and in

recent years the emphasis has been particularly on engaging with young people and schools.

Bringing Them Home WA work hard to leave space for multiple meanings to circulate around the event. For example, in 2013, the Rev. Sealin Garlett gave the formal Welcome to Country in Nyungar language (which he translated into English) saying that, ‘when the white fella came, they never took our land, because our land is in here’ (pointing to his heart). Uncle Sealin is a Nyungar Elder and member of the Stolen Generations. He was removed from his family at a young age but has retained his language. He is also a minister of religion and leader of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) who often emphasises the role of Nyungar people to welcome the ‘second peoples’ to the land. Other Stolen Generations speakers at the event placed more emphasis on justice, calling the government to account for its lack of action on the recommendations of *Bringing them home* (HREOC 1997). Two days earlier, controversy had erupted in the Australian Football League’s ‘Indigenous Round’, when a 13-year-old girl was removed from the grounds for racially taunting footballer Adam Goodes. Jim Morrison, Aboriginal co-chairperson of the Bringing Them Home Committee, suggested that this girl was being scapegoated for the failure of the state to educate her. He repeated the controversial term ‘concentration camp’ in reference to Aboriginal missions, and spoke of the continuing need for truth-telling.



Figure 137: Perth school children walk around the ‘Sorry pole’ in Wellington Square, Perth, on Sorry Day 2015. Photo courtesy Geoff Bice.

The Bringing Them Home Committee have used their association with this place to advocate for the development of a formal memorial by the City of Perth as part of the council’s Reconciliation Actions Plan³⁶. In 2006, a ‘Sorry Pole’ was installed in a grassy mound near the corner of the Square (WA, Legislative Assembly 2006). The pole is a simple metal post painted in the colours of the Aboriginal flag; red, yellow and black. The ‘Sorry Pole’ has become part of the Sorry Day ritual at Wellington Square, with the local Nyungar people hosting a smoking

³⁶ Reconciliation Action Plans are an initiative of Reconciliation Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that was founded in 2001 to carry on the work of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. See www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/.

ceremony where participants walk through the cleansing smoke and around the pole, often touching it as a mark of respect. In 2014, six native hibiscuses, the purple flower that has become the symbol of Sorry Day, were planted around the ‘Sorry Pole’, adding to the development of the memory space. Although there has not yet been an announcement of funding for an official memorial, the work of witness citizenship is ongoing, and the right of Perth’s Stolen Generations to claim this particular space seems well established.

An international example of witness citizenship is the ‘Pyeonghwa-bi’ or Peace Monument in Seoul, Korea, developed out of a similar ongoing relationship with a particular location. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan held weekly demonstrations every Wednesday since 1992 to demand redress from Japan over the issue of ‘comfort women’ — a euphemism for women who were forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers during WWII. By 2011, the group had gathered 1000 times, and to mark this anniversary they were able to install a permanent memorial (‘Pyeonghwa-bi’ 2011). This bronze sculpture is a young woman, sitting on a chair. Another chair next to her is left empty, for visitors to sit and to symbolically put themselves ‘in her place’. The fact that the sculpture is of a young girl (rather than an old woman the age of the survivors) encourages memorial participants to return in imagination to the experience of the original crime. However, this becomes less about an empathic identification with a ‘victim’ than a confrontation with the perpetrators, since the memorial faces the Japanese Embassy. The physical memorial builds, literally and figuratively, on the actions of survivors and their supporters to bring the issue into the public sphere (see Gluck 2007 for a discussion of the Japanese ‘chronopolitics’ of this particular issue). Rather than treating the women’s experience as a private trauma to be dealt with through therapy, for example, the experience is collectivised and becomes political. While the term ‘comfort women’ is often used, the memorial plaque uses the more direct naming of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery.

There has been enough social consensus on this issue in Korea to allow the memorial to stand. However, attempts to create similar



Figure 138: ‘Pyeonghwa-bi’ (peace monument) in Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy Emily Evans.

memorials elsewhere have become very divisive. In 2013, a replica installed in the US resulted in some 300 Japanese politicians signing a call for it to be removed. Its location in a public park in Glendale, California, is a very different context to the overtly political setting of the original, yet the memorial was seen as a political move by Korean Americans to get the US involved in claims for reparations (Shu 2014). In Sydney, Australia, a discussion about the idea of a memorial was enough to create conflict. The United Austral Korean-Chinese Alliance Against Japanese War Crimes asked the Strathfield Council in March 2014 for permission to install a bronze sculpture named 'Three Sisters' by Jian Hua Qian in the town square as a memorial to Japanese sex slaves. Strathfield is a local government area of inner-western Sydney, and has a relatively high population of people born overseas in either Korea (7.5 per cent) or China (9.3 per cent) where many of the wartime sex slaves were from. Supporters of the memorial argued that its meaning was broader than the sculpture in Seoul, and that it would acknowledge all women raped in war. However, Japanese Australians argued that it would create prejudice against them. There were also some claims of protestors denying the legitimacy of the women's claims to have been forced into prostitution, whereas others simply argued that the issue had nothing to do with the local area. After delaying its decision for over a year, the Strathfield Council decided in August 2015 not to proceed with the memorial (O'Brien 2015).

Sites of conscience

The recently edited volume, *Memorials in times of transition* (Buckley-Zistel & Schafer 2014) brings together a collection of international case studies that explore how internal conflicts and human rights abuses have been commemorated. The majority of these examples are memory sites that might be characterised as memorial-museums rather than the object-based memorials that are the subject of this thesis. At these sites, memory workers participate in ongoing dialogue and educational work. In contrast, most of the memorials considered in this dissertation are standalone objects which rely on spatial, aesthetic and textual elements to support the memorial participant's engagement with the site and its story. Other types of interactions are limited to special events, such as anniversary days. Some Australian sites, like the Stolen Generations garden at Bomaderry, create a space for an internal public to engage with and 'work through' their history.

There are two Australian places where the site is important as a place of ongoing dialogue and political engagement. The first is the Colebrook Reconciliation Park, which I will discuss in depth in Case Study 6. The second is the site of the Parramatta Girls Home, and the focus of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct



Figure 139: Mural at Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, painted by women of the Norma Parker Detention Centre, Parramatta, New South Wales.



Figure 140: 'ILWA' (I love worship adore/always) graffiti painted as part of the Parramatta Female Factory Memory Project, Parramatta, NSW.



Figure 141: 'Les oubliettes' (forgotten ones) by Bonney Djuric, installed at Parramatta Female Factory Precinct.

(PFFP) Memory Project. This is an arts-based memory project in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta. The PFFP is on the outskirts of Sydney, and some of its buildings date back to the early days of settler-colonisation. It has been used since early colonial days to house women and children in institutional settings including the original Parramatta Female Factory 1821–1847; Parramatta Invalid & Lunatic Asylum from 1847 (now Cumberland Hospital); the Roman Catholic Orphan School 1844–1886, Parramatta Girls Industrial School/Home 1887–1974; Kamballa and Taldree (female and male) children's shelters 1975–1983; and finally the Norma Parker Detention Centre, 1980–2010. This continuing use makes the site valuable for those who argue that there is a link between settler-colonial and 20th century practices of controlling poor and marginalised women and children.³⁷

The Parragirls group formed in the years following the Australian Senate inquiry that resulted in the *Forgotten Australians* report in 2004. However, not all of the women identify as Forgotten Australians, as Parramatta was a place of detention, rather than a 'home'. Teenage girls were sent there charged with 'crimes' such as their own neglect or having been 'exposed to moral danger,' which often in effect meant they were charged with their own sexual abuse. The PFFP Memory Project is driven by two artists and memory activists, Bonney Djuric (a former inmate at

³⁷ For a history of the Parramatta Female Factory see Bonney Djuric's *Place of no hope* (2011).

Parramatta Girls Home and founder of the Parragirls group), and Lily Hibberd. This is not a traditional memorial, nor (yet) a memorial-museum. Hibberd writes that, 'The mission of the PFFP Memory Project is to support the Parragirls to generate new forms of memory' (2014). They do this primarily through art. One building on the site has been adopted as an art space, and a number of art interventions are visible around the grounds.

The PFFP Memory Project works out of a single room in the precinct grounds. It has a precarious existence, relying on project funding and sharing the building with a local Men's Shed group. Although the site is listed on the state heritage register, there is ongoing uncertainty about its future. Hibberd and Djuric argue that the site is a 'crucible, where ideas of female immorality, criminality and insanity melded' (2013). This view has led to the site being registered as Australia's first official 'Site of Conscience'. The international sites of conscience movement uses places where past human rights abuses have occurred to educate people for a better future. The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience understands memorials in a much broader way than the definition I have been working with, and is more interested in the interactions between the site, guides and visitors. They use the mantra of 'never again' but with awareness of the political implications of highlighting past conflict (Ashton & Wilson 2014).

Since gaining full access to the site just days before the project launch in 2013, the PFFP Memory Project group has managed to turn the two-storey building of what was Australia's first children's hospital into a gallery space, hosting exhibitions and allowing artists to interpret the now-empty spaces on the second floor. There is an existing mural on the site, painted by Aboriginal women in the 1980s, as well as graffiti scratched into surfaces around the site. Some of the work of the memory project has been to draw attention to these marks. As well as this, the site has been used for gatherings of ex-inmates (known as Parragirls), a conference and various community days. In 2014, a children's garden was planted, as part of a process of reclaiming a site that has been a place of pain. Lily Hibberd's work is funded through an Australian Research Council grant for a project titled, *Sentient Testimony: trauma aesthetics, digital media and memories of Parramatta Girls Home*. However, the future use of the site is still uncertain. The Female Factory Precinct is still being assessed for national heritage status. As an outcome

of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, a consultation process has started to develop a government-funded memorial.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the ways memorials are put to work as witness citizenship in order to engage with a wider public beyond the internal community of trauma survivors. I have argued that witness citizenship should be considered an extension of the work of mourning that draws attention to the causes of loss and trauma. Site-specific public artworks, while not always officially recognised as memorials, play with memorial forms to make interventions into the public sphere. These can be seen as forms of cultural engagement that act as ‘encountered signs’ to activate public understanding of loss or trauma. Some grassroots memorial projects are self-consciously political, and move beyond the creation of spaces for a grieving internal public. However, as the examples discussed in this chapter show, access to and control over land makes a big difference in how memorials develop. Witness citizenship draws attention to the ongoing impacts of loss and trauma, and refuses a neat closing off of the story. This open-endedness makes it difficult to draw any definitive conclusions about its ‘success’. The fact that much of this type of activist memory work attracts opposition suggests it has not yet succeeded in activating a general sense of solidarity with the minority stories the memorials represent.

*Case Study 6***Confronting history:
telling the story of the Stolen Generations**

The Colebrook Reconciliation Park in the Adelaide suburb of Eden Hills was the first memorial space dedicated to the Stolen Generations. It stands on the site of the Colebrook Home, an institution for Aboriginal children. Through the prism of that specific, located experience, the wider story of the forced separation of Aboriginal children from their families is told. The idea for the memorial grew out of a civil society dialogue about the meaning of ‘Reconciliation’ in the Australian (post)settler-colonial context. The continued development of the site over two decades has sought to continue and extend that conversation. This case study begins with a brief background of the Colebrook Home for Aboriginal Children, before taking a tour around the Reconciliation Park as it currently exists. The Colebrook site has been written about previously by historian Peter Read, who describes it as a, ‘spacious walk-through memorial garden’ (Read 2008, p. 39). Read’s account gives the impression of a well-planned memorial space. In contrast, I discuss the development of the memory space over time as a physical expression of an evolving relationship. In this case study, I aim to give a sense of how different parts of the site ‘bear witness’ in different ways to different publics. I end with some reflections about how witness citizenship changes over time.

This case study is based on on-site research conducted over three days in April 2015. During that time, I made multiple, extended visits to the Colebrook Reconciliation Park and surrounding areas. These visits involved observation and critical photography. I also conducted on-site interviews using object-elicitation methods. Some interviews were in other locations, and I was privileged to be invited into the homes of a number of participants, who shared their personal photographic archives with me. These cannot be reproduced here but have been important for my understanding of Colebrook as a place of memory. The interview subjects were chosen using snowball sampling, and included two members of the Tji Tji Tjuta (the group of Stolen Generations people associated with Colebrook Home); four non-Aboriginal members and ex-members of the Blackwood Reconciliation Group (BRG); and the artist Silvio Apponyi. I have also used archival materials including published memoir, reportage from key events at the site, and oral history interviews.

The Colebrook Home was first established in 1924 in Oodnadatta, a small town in central South Australia. It was run by the United Aborigines Mission, a non-denominational, Protestant Christian organisation. The home moved 350 kilometres



Figure 142: 'Grieving mother' by Silvio Apponyi and Shereen Rankine. View from Shepherds Hill Road, Eden Hills, South Australia.

south to Quorn in the Flinders Ranges in 1927, and then a further 400 kilometres to Eden Hills on the outskirts of Adelaide in 1942. These huge distances, at a time when few Aboriginal people had access to a car, meant family connections were severed, often irreparably. Indeed, the purpose of physically distancing Colebrook from Oodnadatta was to separate children from the influence of their families.³⁶ The children were also expected to speak only English. Aunty Mona Olsson has described how this led to her being unable to communicate at all; caught in limbo because she had not yet learnt English but was not allowed to use her own language ('Mona Olsson's Story' 2008).

Towards the end of the 1960s, the number of children at Colebrook diminished and the group moved to a smaller nearby residence before the 'Home' finally closed in 1972. In 1974, the house was demolished. There had been ongoing concerns about the state of the building for at least a decade (Hosking 2007), but some people suggest there were other motives for demolition, including a desire to remove a potential site of Aboriginal activism.

The Eden Hills site of the Colebrook Home is now the Colebrook Reconciliation Park. It is located on Shepherds Hill Road, a busy street that runs from the southern suburbs of Adelaide up into the hills, on a parcel of land running from the main road down to the railway line in a valley at the back of the property. The formal memorial space is a small grove of young trees at the front of the property, around the area where the old house stood. The garden is crossed by a number of paths leading between sculptures, large boulders that hold plaques, and simple wooden seating. A separate storytelling space includes a fire pit and barbeque area, three-sided shed and public toilet. Further back from the road, a large grass

³⁶ Even though they were within the same 'nation' in Western terms, by taking the children so far from their family the missionaries were effectively removing them to a completely different country, so that even if they had run away from the 'Home' they would have found themselves in a foreign land, and would not have spoken the local language.

'dance circle' is a remnant from the time when the Aboriginal Sobriety Group used the site. The far side of the block is bush and has some walking paths that lead down to the railway. Ex-residents tell stories about hopping onto the back of trains as they went past.

The most public, or at least visible, part of the Colebrook Reconciliation Park is a low wall that runs along the road, separating the slightly raised land from the pavement below. Along this wall runs a mural by Yankunytjatjara artist Kunyi McInerney. Driving along, you might only have time to notice the bright colours and 'Aboriginal' style of the dot circles on some of the panels, making an easy-to-spot landmark. For pedestrians who are able to take their time, the mural tells the story of Colebrook.

The story the mural tells begins in the centre and moves outwards. The central panels are painted on a section where the wall dips inward and a few steps lead up to the park. A boy and girl are playfully painted climbing the steps and, in the opposite corner, a group of three girls are painted playing 'knucklebones'. The three girls are each a slightly different shade of brown, showing that the children at Colebrook came from different Aboriginal backgrounds, and were of mixed descent. On either side of the entry, a scene shows where the children came from. On one side, the desert peoples of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands are shown camping on the red earth and climbing trees; on the other side, the Ngarrindjeri people from the area of the lower Murray River, south of Adelaide, are shown sitting on the sand and spearing fish. These scenes are titled, 'Before the time of family destruction' I and II. The panels are joined with ribbons of colour and dots, and the mural spreads out further with panels of circular dot patterns. Another figurative panel on either side shows faces of different colours and ethnicities, smiling and connected with ribbons of colour and white birds as symbols of peace. The far-right panel shows another scene of dark-skinned Aboriginal children, dressed in 1950s style clothes and playing



Figure 143: 'Reconciliation' mural by Kunyi McInerney and view of first Colebrook Home plaque, Eden Hills, SA.



Figure 144: 'Sun, moon and stars 1', panel representing children who came from coastal and riverlands areas to Colebrook, part of 'Reconciliation' by Kunyi McInerney.



Figure 145: 'Before the time of family destruction 2', panel showing outback families, part of 'Reconciliation' by Kunyi McInerney.

with a skipping rope and slide. To the left, white text on a black panel reads: 'We cannot forget the past, but we can come together and unite as one, in friendship and forgiveness and honouring each other's culture.'

The mural was unveiled 2 June 2007, as a means of drawing attention to the Reconciliation Park. It was painted over a number of years, because of the artist's ill health. Titled, 'Reconciliation,' this work does two important things that are representative of this memory space as a whole: it tells the story of the past, and it focuses on a future where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians are able to acknowledge that past, forgive and respect each other.

The Blackwood Reconciliation Group (BRG), the community organisation that is responsible for maintenance of the Reconciliation Park, had its genesis in the official Decade of Reconciliation, 1991–2001. This was a community education process set up by the Australian Labor Government in the years following the 1988 bicentenary (Moses 2011, p. 147). The BRG began in 1994 as an eight-week 'study circle', one of many such groups around the country at that time. This group was led by US-Australian Di Dent and Ngarrindjeri leader Matt Rigney. Although the membership of the group changed over time, at the core of its work — and the Colebrook Reconciliation Park — is a pedagogy of truth-telling as a means to repair the broken relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. By this I mean, the belief that the historical trauma of settler-colonisation can be in some way overcome when people are able to speak and listen to the truth of what happened in the past.

Truth-telling, in the context of Colebrook, meant confronting the myth that the home was a benevolent institution for children who were orphaned or unwanted. For some local people, the discovery that Colebrook was part of a process of removing children from their families was incredibly difficult, because it went against what they had been told and grown up with. A number of Colebrook ex-residents also claimed they had experienced abuse in the home. For the non-Aboriginal members of the group, realising they had never thought to ask questions meant confronting their own assumptions and received racism.

Lyn Leane, who joined the BRG just after the unveiling of the first plaque in 1997, described her involvement as a response to growing awareness of the Stolen Generations and the importance of the Reconciliation movement. She and her husband Michael had just come back from nine years living in Nepal. While they were away they had seen news reports about the HREOC inquiry:

We had become aware that there was a lot of history that we hadn't appreciated before. And we both had connections to Lowitja

O'Donoghue in our childhood for various reasons. So a lot of things had sort of twigged... There were a whole lot of threads that came together at that point. And Christian motivation too... for truth and justice and acknowledging the facts of our history.

For people like the Leanes, Colebrook offered a localised way to do something practical about 'Reconciliation'. Like many community projects, its beginning involved numerous overlapping conversations and serendipitous connections. Di Dent's connection with Matt Rigney came when she nursed him after a heart attack, and his involvement in the study circle gave it a depth it would not otherwise have had. Rigney was a very good cross-cultural communicator who later became an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) commissioner. Since the study circle felt worthwhile, the group wanted to continue once the official course materials were completed. They had already begun to explore options for moving from talking to action, when Mike and Jean Brown joined the group and suggested looking at Colebrook.

The Browns were Blackwood locals who at that time had recently returned to Australia from the US, where they had been involved in inter-racial dialogue. Mike worked (and continues to work) for an interfaith peace-building movement, Initiatives of Change (then named Moral Re-Armament). The organisation's philosophy is 'building trust across the world's divides', and this influenced the Browns' philosophical approach to Reconciliation. A conversation with their local Uniting Church minister, Rev. Geoff Bridge, challenged Mike to think locally, to ask questions about Colebrook and to question what had happened there. Mike Brown had gone to school with children from Colebrook, and had been taught by ex-resident Amitja (Amy) Levi. He was also motivated by his own history; some years before, he had discovered his ancestral involvement in colonial violence. He raised the idea of some kind of Reconciliation project at Colebrook at a special Mitcham Council meeting held on the Australia Day long weekend of 1995 and was given an indication of support from the then mayor Joy O'Hazy. However, the council would only commit to supporting a community initiative, rather than driving it themselves.

As part of his investigations into the Colebrook home's history, Brown contacted ATSIC commissioner, Yami Lester, who had lived there briefly as a teenager. Lester introduced him to George Tongeri, another former Colebrook resident who was then chairperson of the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT). Professor Lowitja (Lois) O'Donoghue was then chairperson of ATSIC, and is possibly the most well known 'Colebrook kid'. O'Donoghue is the sister of Amitja Levi, and both these women seem to have taken on a mentoring or mothering role within the

Colebrook network. It is likely that, from that point, a number of ex-Colebrook residents had begun to be aware that there was an interest in the site from people outside of their group.

The Browns convinced the BRG of the value of acknowledging Colebrook's history in some way. Initially, the aim was simply to put a marker on the site to acknowledge the history of the home. To raise money, they hosted a poetry night in October 1995, featuring Graham Jenkin and Heather Shearer, a Stolen Generations woman the Browns knew through a church connection, Muriel (Mona) Olsson. Muriel, now known as Auntie Mona Olsson, was another ex-Colebrook resident. Although she later became an important part of the memorial project, at that time she does not seem to have been closely connected to other ex-residents.

A key moment in the story of the memorial development was when Avis Gale decided to attend the poetry event after seeing a flyer. She was angry that the BRG were raising money for a plaque at the place she grew up, and brought along Auntie Amitja Levi and another ex-resident to confront them. Mike Brown recognised his old teacher; he also recognised the opportunity to develop a partnership with the 'Colebrook kids' themselves.

Avis Gale initially found it very hard to trust the non-Aboriginal members of the BRG. She recalled in a later oral history interview, 'I didn't want to talk to Jean [Brown], I said, "Oh, you remind me of a mission woman."' The two eventually became close friends, and Avis Gale went on to become chair of the Colebrook Tji Tji Tjuta (which means all the children). Nonetheless, it is important to emphasise the high level of mistrust and the cultural divide that needed to be overcome. From the poetry night in 1995, it took two years before the first plaque was placed on the Colebrook site. Lyn Leane described the relationships that developed:

It wasn't always plain sailing but I'd say it was genuine friendship and it's lasted quite well. And I think that's partly to do with the fact that [non-Aboriginal] people did genuinely try to listen and understand the stories and say this would be feasible or if you want to do a memorial in this way we could support you by these means. It's your ideas but we will support you by finding money from the organisations that we're aware of and let's combine them with the ones that you're aware of. It was fairly mutual. Fairly reciprocal. In as far as a relationship where there's a great disparity in terms of social capital can be.

This quote suggests that members of the BRG were aware of the power structures that influenced the way they related to each other.

The memorial project was also the catalyst for the loose-knit network of 'Colebrook kids' to develop into the more formal association now known as the

Tji Tji Tjuta. This created a mechanism by which the ex-residents could come together and make decisions in their own way, apart from the BRG. The BRG continued to include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, but seems to have always included more non-Aboriginal members. It provided a shared space and it was out of that shared space that the witnessing of the Colebrook Reconciliation Park emerged.

The Colebrook residents were not the only people who had a sense of claim to the site, and these claims needed to be resolved, at least partially, in order to move ahead with the commemoration of the site. There were other groups putting forward competing claims for the site's re-use, including the Aboriginal Sobriety Group, led by Ngarrindjeri Elder Major Sumner, and bushcare enthusiasts. The local council, which owns the adjacent oval, had also been having informal discussions about whether the site could be used as a bowling club. There was a certain amount of public resistance to the idea of commemorating Colebrook, and some of this was racist in tone. Apart from all these other claims, the local traditional owners were, and continue to be, the Kurna people. The children who lived at the Colebrook Home had been brought from other Indigenous countries, and because of this there were important protocols to be observed when the time came to formalise the commemoration of Colebrook. The Colebrook Reconciliation Park formally began with a simple plaque affixed to a black granite boulder. However, the text of the plaque gives a hint of the layers of negotiation that were needed to get to that point.

The plaque was installed during Reconciliation Week in 1997. Just a few days before, on 26 May, *Bringing them home: report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families* had been tabled in the Australian Parliament (HREOC 1997). This is part of the explanation for why a community barbeque and reunion event planned for 200 people attracted closer to 2000. The event had been planned as the first reunion of Colebrook ex-residents, and about 150 people came, some from far away. However, what surprised everyone was the strength of support shown by the local non-Aboriginal residents. A news helicopter landed in the neighbouring football oval. Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue had been asked to unveil the plaque. As an experienced public speaker, she made the most of the publicity by making the connection between Colebrook and *Bringing them home*, and demanded a formal Australian Government apology for the Stolen Generations. The Mayor, Yvonne Caddy, offered a formal apology on behalf of the council.³⁷ A number of long-term

³⁷ Caddy went on to be a member and later chairperson of the BRG.

members of the BRG joined from that event, and the Colebrook Memorial Fund was established.

Responding to Bringing them home

The Colebrook Reconciliation Park has two main entry points: the steps leading from the footpath and mural, and a small car park a little further up Shepherds Hill Road. Either of these entrances leads the memorial participant towards one of two major sculptural works, both conceived in the immediate aftermath of *Bringing them home*. Rather than directly commemorating the experience of the children who grew up at Colebrook, they address the experience of Aboriginal families left behind. To some extent, the site itself is offered as evidence, in direct opposition to those who denied or diminished the impact of family separation and the claims of cultural genocide contained in *Bringing them home*. Both were created by local sculptor Silvio Apponyi, working with Aboriginal sculptor Shereen Rankin, and with Kunyi (June Anne) McInerney and her sister Tjula (Jane) Pole³⁸ acting as advisors on behalf of the Tji Tji Tjuta.

The first to be created was the ‘Fountain of tears’, also known as the ‘Pool of tears’, a carved granite fountain that rises out of a small pond. Water bubbles out of the top of the fountain onto an empty coolamon, a traditional bowl-like tool used by some Aboriginal peoples to carry babies. The water runs down the edge of the coolamon, and over four faces carved into the granite base, before collecting in the pond. Three models for these faces were ex-residents of Colebrook Home, and one is Major Sumner from the Aboriginal Sobriety Group. As adults at the time the sculpture was carved, they represent the faces of the families left behind.

The artist, Silvio Apponyi, spoke about how important it was to build trust with those who modelled for him, so that he could try to translate something ‘honest’ into the granite sculpture. Doris Kartinyeri said it was a challenging experience. She emphasised that she did not want to be sad, she wanted to be angry, and appreciated being given the freedom to express that. In her memoir, *Kick the tin* she writes about reminiscing about her experiences with onlookers, sharing ‘sadness and laughter’ while Silvio worked. This rich mixture of emotional responses comes through in the finished sculpture. The imagery of the coolamon

³⁸ One of the common practices in Australian institutions in the mid-20th century was to change children’s names to suit the convenience of the carers. Adults who have been in ‘care’ are often known by multiple names, as a result. Many have decided to reclaim their birth name in adulthood.



Figure 146: Empty coolamon on top of 'Fountain of tears' by Silvio Apponyi and Shereen Rankine (1998), Eden Hills, South Australia.



Figure 147: 'Fountain of tears', Colebrook Reconciliation Park, Eden Hills, South Australia.

and running water could easily lead to a sentimental response, but the faces work at the level of affect to move us in a more complex way.

The plaque that accompanies the fountain is on a large boulder to the right of the path, facing the road. Along with information about the date of the unveiling (1998), it contains words by Aunty Mona Ollsen, one of the women whose face is depicted on the sculpture:

And every morning as the sun came up the whole family would wail. They did that for 32 years until they saw me again. Who can imagine what a mother went through?
But you have to learn to forgive.

Like the fountain, the plaque's text makes strategic use of affect to draw the memorial participant into the story. At the same time, it offers hope, in the form of forgiveness.

The fountain was dedicated during Reconciliation Week in 1998, one year after the first big event. Again, a large reunion was held. The Tji Tji Tjuta and BRG camped on the site overnight, and some 2500 people attended the dedication the

next morning. Linda Westphalen organised the event, and Lowitja O'Donoghue again unveiled the sculpture. There was a strong feeling within the BRG that the 'Fountain of tears' was an act of apology that needed to be seen as a gift from them to the Tji Tji Tjua. In this sense, the 'Fountain of tears' is both an act of witness citizenship and an act of symbolic reparation (as discussed in Chapter 7) on behalf of the non-Aboriginal members of the BRG. Since Linda Westphalen's father had led the engineering side of the project, he was the person to turn on the water. In an effort to connect everyone in some tangible way to the act of apology, each person was asked to physically link up with another, by holding hands or touching someone's shoulder. All the links led back to Westphalen at the centre, and as many people as possible had been given a card printed with the words of the dedication. Linda Westphalen described it as follows:

We wanted it to be really about healing, a healing ritual from the point of Aboriginal people but also for us. So we thought one of the ways to do that was to think about touch being pivotal to that spiritual healing moment... And there was grief everywhere... In some respects regret and guilt, and anger, a lot of emotional happening. Not a happy house anywhere. Just hugely emotional and difficult.

Linda's words echo another theme of the Colebrook story: that Reconciliation is not easy, and requires confronting anger, pain and grief.



Figure 148: 'Grieving mother' by Silvio Apponyi and Shereen Rankine (1999), Eden Hills, South Australia.

From the publicity generated by the second event, and more strategic fundraising, the group was now able to afford the sculpture they wanted all along, the 'Grieving mother'. This artwork takes the traditional bronze form associated with statues of victorious men, and uses it to depict an Aboriginal woman who has had everything precious taken from her. Sculptor Silvio Apponyi says he had 17 different women model for 'Grieving mother', so that she would not be a portrait of any one person. Instead, she has become a symbol of all the mothers of the Stolen Generations. Her arms are rarely empty, as people bring flowers and other tokens of affection or understanding.

Near the sculpture, a plaque is engraved with a poem by Avis Edwards (now Avis Gale):

'My baby, my baby, please give back my baby.'
A mother's words fall upon the deaf ears of authority.
Hearts break, tears fall, fear cries out from the wrenched hands and
arms of a mother

And child, separated.
 Feel the pain, touch the ache, caress the tears.
 Through ignorance and indifference came the disruption and destruction of family life.

The forlorn mother is a confronting and pathetic figure, designed to counter the prevalent idea that Aboriginal women did not mourn the loss of their children.

The children

It is almost as if the story of separation needed to be told before the experience of Colebrook itself could be acknowledged. There are two large boulders that hold plaques and composite images to tell this story. The first is on a path that circles around a cluster of trees away from the 'Grieving mother' and towards the back of the memory space. The plaque attached to the same rock contains a poem by Doris Kartinyeri:

We are the stolen children
 Who were taken away
 Torn from our mothers' breasts
 What can a child do?
 Where can a child turn?
 Where is the guiding hand
 A child is meant to have?

The photos, though slightly faded, show mostly smiling faces. For a stranger, there is an unsettling disjuncture between the lament of the poem, and these seemingly happy, carefree children and teenagers. However, the memoirs and testimony of the Colebrook children emphasise the contradictory memories and associations they have with this place. Doris Kartinyeri has written in her memoir about the importance of the photos, and she was generous enough to show me some of these prints in her private album. I could imagine that it would feel very different to visit this site and see in these images the faces of friends and family. As she showed me the photos, Doris pointed to the faces of the boys one after another saying, 'This one is gone.' Their smiling faces give no hint that so many of them would die young, and often as a result of alcohol and other drug abuse. Because of this, the memory work at the site has largely been driven by female survivors.

Another of these large boulders is between the 'Grieving mother' and the 'Fountain of tears'. This one is layered with three images. In the background is a line drawing of the old Colebrook Home. Taking up the centre is an image that could be an old school photograph; about 30 children are seated or standing in rows, with carers places on the ends of the rows. In the foreground of this

composite image is a close-up of two older women. The one on the right is holding a small boy, who has his arm around her and is smiling.

The plaque explains that these women are Sister Ruby Hyde and Sister Delia Rutter, who were carers at Colebrook from 1927 when the home was in Quorn until 1952 when they left to establish a hostel. A quote from former resident Faith Thomas is included on the plaque:

Colebrook started with Sister R Hyde and Sister D Rutter. They were Colebrook. What we had was constant love and attention from these two remarkable ladies. After they left those kids went through hell on earth. They had to rely on each other to survive.



Figure 149: Boulder with Doris Kartinyeri's poem, 'We are the stolen children', and photographic montage by Rick Martin, added to the site in 1999.



Figure 150: Photographic montage by Rick Martin, 1999.



Figure 151: Photographic montage and plaque acknowledging carers, Sister Rutter and Sister Hyde, at Colebrook Reconciliation Park, Eden Hills, South Australia.

Again, this plaque and image complicate the story of Colebrook. Unusually, it celebrates the lives of two women who were instrumental in creating the trauma of the Stolen Generations. Yet it also draws attention to the importance ex-residents placed on being treated with love and affection. These two women can be remembered fondly, even though they were undoubtedly complicit in the separation of Aboriginal families.

Irene Visser argues that a decolonized trauma theory would need to recognise 'that a respectful and nuanced conceptualization of religious and spiritual modes of addressing trauma is needed' (Visser 2015, p. 260) Part of this may be a recognition of the impact of spiritual abuse alongside other kinds of insidious (or non event-based) trauma. *Bringing them home* found that government policy led to the forced separation of Aboriginal children from their families, but that churches and Christian organisations were often zealous participants due to a belief in the spiritual and cultural inferiority of Aboriginal peoples. Colebrook was run by the United Aborigines Mission (UAM), a Protestant Christian organisation founded on such beliefs. For example, the UAM published a book of stories about Colebrook in the years when the home was located at Quorn, in the Flinders Ranges, which states that, 'The children who live

in Colebrook Home are half-caste aborigines, rescued from the degradation of camp life' (Turner 1936). Sisters Rutter and Hyde were loving and kind, but their paternalistic faith was part of what led them to devalue and dehumanise the children's families. Later authority figures brought rigid religious practice without any of the softening impact of the care given by the sisters. Each person has negotiated the legacy of that religious environment in different ways. Aunty Mona Olsson is a leader within the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) of the Uniting Church, which works to integrate Aboriginal spirituality with Christian teaching. Avis Gale, on the other hand, has expressed strong resistance to Christianity because of her early experience. In a number of published interviews, she has said she was working on 'healing the Aboriginal way'.

The BRG seems to have always had a number of key members who, like the Browns and the Leanes, were motivated by their Christian belief but who also had cross-cultural experience and were able to be respectful of other traditions. It almost goes without saying that members of the Tji Tji Tjuta were able to work cross-culturally, partly as a result of their Colebrook experience. There is a strong sense of a sacred space at Colebrook — but without the use of overtly Christian symbolism, which would have been damaging for some ex-residents.

One aspect of the Reconciliation Park that is easy to miss is the frog. A few small bronze frogs are crouched on top of boulders around the park. Read claims these represent the 'nature' the children were taken away from, but this seems incongruous in the context of the extensive bushland at the back of the block. Silvio Apponyi has said the frogs were a gift to the Tji Tji Tjuta, and they are representative of his ongoing sculptural practice. The first time I visited a site, someone had played a game of placing a small pebble next to each rock. The frogs add a sense of playfulness to a place which was, after all, a home for children.

Celebration and acknowledgement

From the 'Fountain of tears', the path circles back around toward the rock with the photo collage. On the left is another large plaque with a list of the names of known residents of the Colebrook Home from 1943–1972. Some 300 children lived at Colebrook over that time and, despite the difficult stories, they were not passive victims. Many of them went on to become community leaders in a variety of different fields, and this side of the Colebrook story is also important. A bench seat facing the 'Fountain of tears' was donated in 2002 by the Zonta Club³⁹ and

³⁹ Zonta is an international network of professional women; their motto is 'empowering women through service and advocacy'.

invites people to ‘Rest here and celebrate the spirit of the people who lived in the Colebrook Training Home’.

Just past the list of names, another path leads away from the main memorial space. One more, low, boulder holds another plaque:

‘Despite much personal hardship, Colebrook people have achieved distinction in many areas — nurses, teachers, social workers, ministers, actors, artists, stockmen, sportspersons, tradesmen, administrators and Justices of the Peace. Though exempt from the armed forces, seven boys and one girl from the original Quorn Colebrook family enlisted during World War II.

A true understanding of our history is being revealed, having been swept under the carpet for so long. It is a time to cherish those things which bring us together — those things which have helped us survive, that create a better future for us all ... The goal we must all work towards is one of new social relationships, economic fairness and cultural respect. We must speak to the humanity of all Australians.’

Dr Lowitja O’Donoghue, former resident of Colebrook Home, before unveiling the ‘Fountain of tears’ on 31 May 1998

‘Colebrook Home was a special place for this area ... On behalf of the residents of the City of Mitcham I wish to apologise for the pain, anguish and sorrow caused by the past practices of assimilation ... Reconciliation is more than expressing the word “sorry”. It is coming to grips with the past, the whole dreadful saga, feeling with the people, their anger and pain, and moving on together to form a tolerant, caring society.’

Yvonne Caddy, Mayor of the City of Mitcham, at the first Colebrook Community Day, 1 June 1997

‘Therefore, we want the Colebrook experience and other experiences of the Stolen Generations throughout Australia to rekindle the spirit of community by living the cultural values of caring and sharing, by making the family and kinship ties strong again through the act of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. This is our hope for all the children in the future.’

Raymond Finn, former resident of Colebrook Home

By including these statements in the voices of ex-residents and a representative of the local council (who went on to become chairperson of the BRG), this final plaque reinforces the shared nature of the Colebrook Reconciliation Park. Like many of the memorials discussed in Chapter 4, this plaque claims a place in the story of Australia. It reminds visitors that the children who grew up at Colebrook were not passive victims and that as adults they are community leaders whose voices deserve to be listened to. They adopt the contribution narrative, but with a sense of authority that takes such contribution for granted, rather than coming

across as a request to join in. These voices surround the statement in the voice of government, the local Mayor, whose message does not gloss over the past, but acknowledges ‘anger and pain’.

Colebrook as an ongoing story

The final, and possibly most important, part of the Colebrook memory space is on the furthest side of the property from the carpark. This is the storytelling space. A fire pit is edged with bricks salvaged from the old house. There are broken bricks scattered around the rest of the site, but having them gathered here at the ‘hearth’ has important symbolism for those residents who still feel attachment to Colebrook as their childhood home. For many years this storytelling circle has hosted gatherings of the BRG, including for formal lectures and discussion about issues affecting Stolen Generations people and for casual barbeques. It has also been used by visiting groups to listen to ex-residents and other members of the BRG tell the story of Colebrook — the stories of the home and of the memorial.

In the early years of the BRG, and in the years following the release of *Bringing them home*, Colebrook seems to have tapped into a moment of community action and interest in issues of Reconciliation and justice. Monthly meetings attracted up to 40 people. Because of the site-based practice of the group, most of the core members lived locally, and this can also be said of the more active members of the Tji Tji Tjuta. Relationships were formed by spending time working together. The BRG took on responsibility for maintaining the site, and held regular busy bees and other small events there. Indeed, the practices at Colebrook might be understood as a practical example of what Karen Till calls a ‘place-based ethics of care’ (Till 2012). As the original members of both the Tji Tji Tjuta and the BRG



Figure 152: Storytelling circle at Colebrook Reconciliation Park, Eden Hills, South Australia.

have aged, however, their ability to take care of the physical space has diminished, and the BRG are now handing the site back to the Aboriginal Land Council.

The storytelling circle is still used by the BRG for summer meetings, and by schools and other groups who visit the site. Linda Westphalen said she regularly brings students from Flinders University, and Doris Kartinyeri still occasionally meets school students to share her story. Their reasons vary. Whereas Linda emphasised the continued need for truth-telling and continuing the journey of Reconciliation, Doris was more circumspect. She dismissed the idea that the story needed to be told to stop it happening again, but said she enjoyed meeting the children and talking about her childhood.

The most recent part of the Reconciliation Park is a two-sided shelter lined with paintings by local high school students in response to workshops run by Aboriginal artist Roger Rigney in 2010. Funded by a grant targeted at improving community safety, the project was aimed at educating students about the site in the hope that they would feel a sense of ownership and discourage vandalism among their peers. Each small painting explores themes of identity, race and religious oppression. They are placed behind a glass screen on a background design of dot painting.

The meaning of the site continues to develop. Since the beginning, the meaning of the 'Grieving mother' has been especially fluid. Doris Kartinyeri was removed from her family after her mother died when she was only four weeks old. For her,



Figure 153: 'Grieving mother' original maquette, property of Silvio Apponyi.

there was no mother waiting with empty arms; although her extended family would have cared for her if they had been able to, and she had a father who visited her when he could. Nonetheless, this image of the waiting mother allowed her to imagine her own mother as waiting, and she was pictured weeping in news reports of the unveiling.

Lowitja O'Donoghue is reported as having taken a group of young men, Hazara asylum seekers from Afghanistan, to the memorial on Mother's Day 2002 to give them an opportunity to remember their mothers, with whom they were unable to communicate. One of the men, Ali Reza, told the *Sydney morning herald*, 'We can see in that place our own story. The same

[thing] happened to us, but in a different way,' ('The barefoot regent in her Afghan court' 2003). The Adoption Loss Adult Support (ALAS) group also claim the 'Grieving mother' as a memorial for forced adoptions (ALAS 2013).

Silvio Apponyi still has the original mould of the sculpture at his studio, and would like to see a copy of her incorporated in to Reconciliation Place in Canberra. For now, the Tji Tji Tjuta has resisted this idea, seeing her as connected primarily to the Colebrook story. Susan Hosking has suggested such a move would see the sculpture become a 'reconciliation commodity' (Hosking 2007). Nonetheless, to some extent 'Grieving mother' has become a universal symbol of disenfranchised motherhood. The direct appeal to empathy that was politically confronting in the immediate aftermath of *Bringing them home* does leave it open to being co-opted in ways that remove that political potency. On Mother's Day 2016, a photo of her circulated on Facebook, with the words, 'In memory of all those mother's (sic) left heart broken and with empty arms'. Susan Hosking, writing in 2007, asked how much the flowers left at the 'Grieving mother' represented 'recreational grieving'.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Doreen Massey writes that place is a process, and that it is the 'throwntogetherness' of place that makes it special:

the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and a geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation that must take place within and between both human and nonhuman (2005, p. 140).

At Colebrook Reconciliation Park, the contingent nature of this particular place is visible. The different dates on the plaques make it clear that it is not the result of a careful consultation process. One thing led to another. What is less visible is the direction, and what led where. The 'Grieving mother' was dedicated in 1999, but was actually the first sculpture planned for the site. The BRG did not have the money for such a substantial bronze, and the artist, Silvio Apponyi suggested that an artwork carved directly into stone would be cheaper. It was the publicity generated by the 'Fountain of tears' that allowed money to be found for the second sculpture. The trees that, together with the rocks, give the memorial garden its sense of tranquillity were not planted; they simply started to grow back once that part of the block wasn't mowed anymore. The story circle was originally on the other side of the block, but was moved because of fears about fire catching in the

⁴⁰ All those I interviewed were convinced many of the offerings were left by one particular ex-resident.

trees. These are little things, but suggest the many 'stories so far' (Massey 2005) that make up this place.

Colebrook is not an easy place, but such is the nature of witness citizenship. Susan Hosking worries that it allows non-Aboriginal visitors to engage in the 'performance of grief' rather than real mourning. Writing in 2007, as a member of the BRG, she questioned whether the site,

should have been left as it was, an obvious wound in the landscape, until such time as those of us who only knew the Home by its external appearance could face the enormity of what had happened to others who had no choice but to live there. (p. 153)

The practical answer may be that, if the memorial had not been created, the site would not have been left bare but claimed by other stakeholders. Nonetheless, this question is important. Like any memorial, different people will take different meanings from the site. The layers of art and text tell the story of Colebrook, in all its contradiction and complexity. A lot depends on the continued conversations that take place at the site, whether that happens through organised groups or people walking their dogs. As the ex-residents age and new generations take their place, the stories told will change.

Colebrook Reconciliation Park is not a finished project. Linda Westphalen suggested that Reconciliation is 'something you aspire to and you hope you get, but you don't ever really get there.' Doris Kartinyeri said Colebrook Reconciliation Park was 'a wonderful place', and she was grateful for the work of the BRG. But despite her ongoing commitment to sharing her story with groups and through her writing, she similarly rejected the idea of a clear end point. For her, Colebrook, along with the other memory work she does, was not about healing, but about 'learning to live with it'. This, it seems, is also what those involved in the memory space hope for: that the wider Australian community will take on the complexity of the Stolen Generations story and 'learn to live with it'.

Memorials as symbolic reparation

The previous three chapters of this dissertation have explored different ways memorials are put to ‘work’ by memory activists, which include people who have directly experienced loss and trauma and others who believe their stories should be acknowledged. Government has, for the most part, played a supporting role in this type of memory work. However, the past decade has seen the increasing adoption of standardised bureaucratic approaches to commemoration, and a corresponding shift in power from grassroots to government actors. Whereas many of the memorials created in the 1990s and 2000s were instigated by grassroots groups of memory activists, more recent memorials have been state-funded and state-managed. Governments have begun to understand memorial creation as a practice of ‘symbolic reparation’ within a transitional justice framework. This chapter looks at memorials that have been commissioned by national, state and local government as acts of symbolic reparation in response to past human rights abuses. Such projects are triggered by judicial inquiries that are in turn a response to grassroots memory activism. I outline a brief history of the adoption of transitional justice approaches within Australia in the late 20th and early 21st century. I discuss Australian public inquiries and the ways these have drawn on ideas of transitional and restorative justice; and how they have led to the creation of memorials. Whereas memorials as witness citizenship work to expand the community of memory and draw others into the story in solidarity with survivors, memorials as symbolic reparations are created by those external to the experience of loss or trauma. I end with a discussion of how they might be understood as acts of listening that attempt to assure survivors that they have been heard.

Memorials and transitional justice

As discussed in Chapter 3, human rights and trauma are interconnected discourses that have come to prominence in the latter half of the 20th century. The United Nations and its Declaration of Human Rights (1948) developed in the years after WWII at least in part as a reaction to the abuses that happened during the war. In the years before the war, when theories of eugenics and racial superiority held sway in many nations, the right to full ‘humanness’ was often limited. In the aftermath of the ‘final solution’ and during a period of intense decolonisation internationally, such practices became harder to justify (Goldberg 2015). A number of countries, including the US and Australia, practised racial segregation until at least the 1960s, and the movement to end apartheid in South Africa only gained

strong international support in the late 1980s. Despite these recalcitrant states, the concept of inalienable human rights was firmly embedded in international legal and bureaucratic practices by the 1970s. Civil society groups, most notably Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, developed practices of ‘naming and shaming’ states that violated the human rights of their citizens.

In Australia, the legacies of the settler-colonial logic created hierarchies of race and class that resulted in a number of minority groups being subjected to human rights abuse in the 20th century. While, as Strakosch rightly points out, there has been no clear end point of settler-colonisation, and no definitive shift in power relations, most egregious abuses of human rights are no longer tolerated.⁴¹ As the examples in Chapter 6 show, in the 1990s and 2000s, individual artists and civil society groups used memorial practices to draw attention to past human rights abuses. Sometimes this happened with the support of government bodies and individuals within government — usually those from the left side of the political spectrum.

From the mid 1990s to 2004, three interrelated public inquiries were held in Australia, which brought to public awareness the history of institutionalisation of certain groups of children in the 20th century. The first of these, which resulted in the published report, *Bringing them home* (1997), was an inquiry by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) into the separation of Aboriginal children from their families. The second and third were inquiries run by the Australian Senate which considered the history of child migration from the UK and Malta; and the institutional care of children. These later inquiries resulted in the reports *Lost innocents* (SCARC 2001) and *Forgotten Australians* (SCARC 2004) respectively. While Australia’s context is different from other societies engaging with practices of transitional justice, there are strong similarities between the approach used in each of these inquiries (and reports) and the truth commissions, which have been used in post-conflict societies around the world since the 1970s. Following on from these inquiries, Australian governments have also adopted the practice of creating public memorials as a form of symbolic reparations.

Transitional justice is a field in which memory is productively multidirectional. Although each country has its own chronopolitical context, experiences are

41 There are exceptions, most notably Australia’s treatment of asylum seekers and refugees and the ongoing ‘intervention’ in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities, both of which have drawn condemnation from the United Nations. See http://unsr.jamesanaya.org/docs/countries/2010_report_australia_en.pdf and http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_68_Add.1_AV.doc

constantly compared and practices borrowed. For example, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out of home care as children* (2004) discusses reparation within the global context of responses to human rights abuses, using particular examples from Canada's response to its history of residential schools and Ireland's responses to claims of institutional abuse of children. The report states that reparations schemes usually contain a number of components including the provision of apologies/acknowledgment of the harm done, counselling, education programs, access to records and assistance in reunifying families." (SCARC 2004, para. 8.73). The recommendations of *Bringing them home* (1997) refer to the 'Van Boven principles', the framework for response to human rights abuses developed by Theo Van Boven on behalf of the United Nations:

Reparations shall be proportionate to the gravity of the violations and the resulting damage and shall include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition (Van Boven 1993, quoted in HREOC 1997).

The term 'reparation' holds within it the idea of repair; in the context of human rights abuses, it suggests the idea of 'healing' or 'making whole' individuals and nations. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) states that the role of reparation or rehabilitation measures is to 'help victims overcome the damage that they suffered, to give them back their dignity and to make sure these abuses do not happen again'. As Ereshnee Naidu has pointed out, while 'reparations, in any form, can not and will not compensate for the human suffering, trauma and loss undergone by victims during conflict, memorials have become a means of reclaiming an oppressed history' (Naidu 2004). One of the risks, however, is that this association with the idea of 'repair' encourages memorial designers to aim for a sense of 'closure' that does not allow for acknowledgment of ongoing suffering.

Bringing them home

The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission's Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal Children from their Families was established in 1995, in the same year as the South African TRC. One thing the inquiry shared with the TRC is the clear aim of 'reconciliation' in a racially divided nation.⁴² It was co-chaired by the chairperson of HREOC, Sir Ron Wilson, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Dodson. In each

⁴² There is, nonetheless, a big difference in the context and outcomes of that division, especially since in Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only make up approximately three per cent of the total population.

state a co-commissioner was appointed who was an Aboriginal woman, to improve the gender balance. This joint leadership was designed to send a signal that the different 'sides' of the division could work together. Another similarity was the prominent role played by church leaders: in South Africa the Rev. Desmond Tutu, an Anglican bishop, and in Australia, Sir Ron Wilson, a past president of the Uniting Church in Australia. The influence of Christian theologies of forgiveness and reconciliation has played an under-recognised role in the development of transitional justice practices.⁴³

The inquiry heard testimony given individually and in written group submissions, collected by community organisations. Evidence was heard from a wide range of people: 'Indigenous people, government and church representatives, former mission staff, foster and adoptive parents, doctors and health professionals, academics, police and others' (Australian Human Rights Commission 2007). As Rosanne Kennedy has pointed out, the inquiry, 'shared with the Eichmann trial the aim of enabling victims ... to tell their stories and to bring into the public sphere the suffering and grief that resulted ...' (2013, p.59). In the final report, priority is given to the voices of the Stolen Generations themselves. However, despite careful explanation from the authors, who had excellent legal credentials, *Bringing them home* was heavily criticised by some people for the emphasis it placed on first-person testimony rather than written evidence.

Bringing them home's claim that the removal of Aboriginal children from their families should be understood as an act of genocide under the terms of the UN Convention on Genocide (1948) was extremely controversial. The close association of the word 'genocide' with the events of the Jewish Holocaust made it difficult for some people to accept the use of the term to describe acts that did not involve outright killing. However, *Bringing them home* used the term to refer to the intention of destroying Aboriginal culture by the removal of children and breaking tradition (Haebich 2001).⁴⁴

Despite, or because of, the shocking nature of its findings, *Bringing them home* made front-page news around the country. The printed report also sold well (Darian-Smith 2013 p. 164). The then prime minister John Howard moved a motion of 'regret' but refused to make a full apology, on the grounds that a current government should not be held responsible for the actions of the past. This response drew widespread condemnation from many people, and led to various

⁴³ See, for example, Daniel Philpott (2007), 'What religion brings to the politics of transitional justice'.

⁴⁴ The findings of *Bringing them home* generally and the genocide claim in particular contributed to what is now known as the Australian 'history wars', see Anna Clark (2002), 'History in black and white: a critical analysis of the history wars'.

grassroots responses and acts of individual apology. Sorry books were created, allowing individuals to say sorry and calling on the prime minister to do likewise.⁴⁵ As discussed in Case Study 6, the Colebrook reunion event a few days later on 1 June 1997 drew a crowd of around 2000 people. Over the following months, almost all Australian state and territory governments issued formal apologies, with the Northern Territory taking until 1999 and Queensland to 2001 (ref <http://www.nsd.org.au/stolen-generation-responses/>). Many churches also issued formal apologies at their state or national gatherings.

On the first Sorry Day, 26 May 1998, public marches were held around Australia. The prime minister steadfastly refused to engage with the idea of a government apology, and framed its responses as ‘practical Reconciliation’, rejecting ‘symbolic gestures, compensation or reparation’ (Calma 2007). This history has been told elsewhere (see, for example, Kate Darian-Smith 2013). I repeat it here to draw attention to the high profile of *Bringing them home* and the ways the story it told came to represent almost a foundation event of Australian history. It is also important because of the close connection between formal statements of apology and material memorials.

Bringing them home did not recommend the creation of physical memorials. However, almost from the beginning, there seemed to be a need to create physical and visible responses. Australia’s first memorial created as an act of symbolic reparation in response to *Bringing them home* is a dispersed memory project involving the installation of six



Figure 154: Reconciliation plaques installed by Brisbane City Council, 1998 and 2008, Everton Park, Brisbane, Queensland. Image courtesy Tim Williams.

⁴⁵ The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) currently holds over 460 Sorry Books in its collection. On August 10, 2004, the AIATSIS collection was inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of World Register.



Figure 155: Reconciliation plaques and seating, Everton Park, Brisbane, Queensland. One of six sites across the city. Image courtesy Tim Williams.

plaques across the Queensland state capital Brisbane. These were funded by the Brisbane City Council and involved a broad coalition of civil society groups. The plaques are identical circular designs and include a statement of lament. They briefly tell the story of the Stolen Generations:

In the years 1900–1971, as a matter of government policy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and cultures by representatives of the State with the support of the wider community including Christian churches. Some members of these Stolen Generations were placed in state or church institutions; others were fostered or adopted by white Australians.

They also record the fact that at the site, a ceremony was held in 1998 where council, community and church leaders acknowledged ‘the hurt and sorrow caused’ and ‘pledged themselves to the process of Reconciliation and cultural understanding’.

The placing of a plaque at King George Square in the city centre was an important symbolic act, because for many years Indigenous people were subject to a curfew, preventing them from accessing the city after sunset. On 7 February 1998, about 2000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gathered at Musgrave Park, on the outside of the historic boundary of the city, for an event named ‘Kulgún dar’lbol’pa — the journey home’ (RQI 2007, p. 11). The group then walked across the river to King George Square after sunset, where they were met by a large gathering of non-Indigenous people, including the lord mayor and other councillors, heads of churches and union leaders.

Each of the other five plaques was installed at individual ceremonies between 22 February and 22 March 1998 at key sites around the city, chosen in consultation with an Indigenous Steering Committee. Some of the plaques mark the site of institutional homes where children were sent; the plaque at Wynnum Esplanade has a view of Moreton and North Stradbroke Islands, two of the places where children were taken. Each plaque is managed by a different caretaker group, and Sorry Day events are held there each year on or around 26 May. In 2007, Reconciliation Queensland Inc. (RQI) produced a commemorative booklet that explains the findings of *Bringing them home* and gives information about each plaque, as well as offering resources and some suggested responses to the question of ‘What can we do to support?’ In 2008, following the official national apology to the Stolen Generations, a new plaque was installed at each site, engraved with the words of the apology. These commemorative spaces are very simple, but they have provided the focus for other kinds of memory work. They demonstrate the productive

relationship between commemorative spaces and events when local people are able to develop some ownership of the site.

Reconciliation Place

In spite of its rejection of many of the transitional justice mechanisms recommended by the report, and in spite of the prime minister's refusal to apologise or to join the historic 'Sorry Walk' across Sydney Harbour Bridge, in May 2000, the Australian Government announced the creation of a monument to Reconciliation in the national capital, Canberra. The announcement was made on 22 May, in the week before an event marking the end of the formal, government-funded Reconciliation program, 'Corroboree 2000'. The Government made it clear that it was not intended to be a memorial (Strakosch 2010, p. 273). Peter Read argues that Reconciliation Place demonstrates that the federal government's idea of Reconciliation was very different from that articulated in the 'Declaration towards Reconciliation' drafted by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, which states:

Our nation must have the courage to own the truth, to heal the wounds of the past so that we can move on together at peace with ourselves (quoted in Read 2008, p. 43).

The story of Aboriginal history told in Reconciliation Place is very different from that told by the 'Koori mural' or other memorials to colonisation. The memory space has much more in common with the memorials discussed in Chapter 5, which emphasise narratives of contribution and service to the nation. As Elizabeth Strakosch has argued, it is a punctuation mark in the landscape, indicating a new beginning of Australian history that puts the past well and truly behind it.

Reconciliation Place cuts through the symbolic line of sight that runs between the prime minister's office at Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial on the other side of Lake Burley Griffin. At its midpoint is a wide grassed area — so this memory space does not actually interrupt the line of sight. Also in this line (but not visible from the new parliament house) is the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, which has occupied a space in front of the old parliament house since 1972 as an act of witness citizenship. To the left and right of the central area, the path is punctuated by 'slivers' that tell the story of various aspects of Aboriginal



Figure 156: 'Reconciliation Place' central plaque, view towards Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT.



Figure 157: Aboriginal Tent Embassy, view towards Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT.

history post-colonisation — some celebrating achievements, others acknowledging injustice or struggle. There are also red rocks engraved with inspirational quotes and with images copied from ancient rock paintings.

Two of the artworks that make up Reconciliation Place can be understood as memorials for the Stolen Generations. They are both named ‘Separation’ in the official brochure, *Reconciliation Place: A lasting symbol of our shared journey* (National Capital Authority 2002). The first of these is made of stainless steel and slumped glass, and was part of the original design developed by the project team led by architect Simon Kringas, which won the National Capital Authority’s competition in 2001. One side of this sliver is printed with the image of a young boy, and has the word for ‘child’ written in some Aboriginal languages. The other side has a number of small reproductions of mid 20th century news clippings about Aboriginal children, and embedded in a recess (covered by Perspex) is an empty coolamon — the same imagery used by the ‘Fountain of tears’ at the Colebrook Reconciliation Park. Audio of a lullaby is activated when visitors walk near the sliver. However, members of the Stolen Generations, their families and supporters, did not feel the original design adequately explained or acknowledged the pain and sense of loss caused by the policies of removal.

Reconciliation Place originally opened in July 2002 without these two memorial ‘slivers’. The design of the second ‘Separation’ artwork was developed as a compromise, and the dedication eventually took place in May 2004. The second ‘Separation’ artwork is made of granite and cast iron, and is much more earthy in look and feel, referencing the role of Aboriginal peoples as traditional custodians of the land. On one side, holes are drilled in the shape of Australia. Engraved into the metal surface are quotes that tell the stories of the Stolen Generations in their own words, along with some quotes from some of their non-Aboriginal caregivers. On the other side, water runs down the concrete surface in small rivulets into a pool at the bottom. At one end, a metal plaque is embedded into the granite. It gives a history of the policy of child removal, including this paragraph:

This place honours the people who have suffered under the policies and practices. It also honours those people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, whose genuine care softened the impact of what are now recognised as cruel and misguided policies.

The holes drilled into this memorial are big enough for people to leave notes in if they wish. However, on multiple site visits I have not seen any sign that people engage with the site in this way. Strakosch has said that her research indicates that visitors to the site did not understand it as a memorial: ‘Instead they saw

one more lawn surrounded by apolitical artworks, in a city famous for lawns and public art' (2013 p. 272).

Child Migrants and Forgotten Australians

Two other inquiries followed on from *Bringing them home*, although these were conducted by SCARC rather than HREOC. Nonetheless, the authors of *Forgotten Australians*, published in 2004, state that it forms the third part of a 'trilogy' that includes *Bringing them home* and *Lost innocents* (2001). Each of the reports included large passages of first-person testimony, which were presented as a moral responsibility for the nation to not just understand, but to witness. For example, the introduction to *Forgotten Australians* states that submissions are quoted at length in order to give those who had experienced institutional care as children (known as 'care leavers') a 'direct voice'. It claims that, 'all those who provided submissions deserve the thanks of the Australian people for whom these submissions can open their eyes to a sad, painful, often tragic and not understood chapter in Australia's history'. The names of the reports are each purposefully emotive, and reference ideals of home and childhood as a time of safety and innocence. As Kim Torney has shown (discussed in Darian-Smith 2013), the image of the 'lost' child is important within the Australian cultural imagination. The idea of being 'forgotten' has more recent currency, and has been used in relation to other traumatic histories that are seen as having been sidelined. Much of the work of symbolic reparation is directed towards assurance that the stories are not 'forgotten' but have been acknowledged and will continue to be so.

All three inquiries looked at the impacts of government policies on children. Indeed, there is a growing body of scholarship that considers the acknowledgment of the abuse of children as a separate area within the field of transitional justice (Skold & Swain 2015). Kate Darian-Smith has discussed these Australian commemorations within the context of colonial ways of thinking about and remembering children (2013). *Bringing them home* focused on practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families, and *Lost innocents* looked at the practice of sending unaccompanied minors (children under the age of 18) to Australia from the UK and Malta. The subject matter of both inquiries related to Australia's colonial past. Aboriginal child removal was enacted through colonial powers that allowed the 'Protector of Aborigines' control over Aboriginal people's lives. The practice of sending poor children from Britain to Australia similarly dates from the early days of settlement-colonisation. Whereas in convict days this was as punishment for crimes, in the 20th century they made the journey with the promise of a 'better life'. There were, nonetheless, strong similarities

between the treatment of children in both cases (Darian-Smith 2013, p. 168). Both *Bringing them home* and *Lost innocents* uncovered stories of systematic abuse of children in Australian institutional settings. It was this that led to the *Forgotten Australians* inquiry, which looked specifically at the treatment of children once they were under the authority of government or religious care providers. (Again, the institutionalisation of children in Australia dates back to early days of settler-colonisation, as the case of the Parramatta Female Factory shows.) However, the legacy of racial division in Australia played out in the framing of *Forgotten Australians*. Although the report says it is concerned with the ‘many thousands of *mainly* non-indigenous Australian-born children’ (2004 p. 2, my emphasis), since its publication the term ‘Forgotten Australians’ has come to be associated with white Australians. This is despite the fact the many institutions housed both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Recommendation 32 of *Lost innocents* (2001) and recommendation 34 of *Forgotten Australians* (2004) both relate to memorials, requesting the Australian Government to provide funding for ‘suitable’ memorials, in consultation with survivors. *Forgotten Australians* is more detailed in its recommendation than *Lost innocents*, perhaps indicating the increased importance of commemoration during the first decade of the 21st Century. It suggests the forms memorial may take, including memorial gardens, plaques placed on the site of institutions, and heritage centres, again on the site of institutions. Again, this approach connects with the findings of the Places of the Heart survey of Australian memorials, which found an increasing focus on placing memorials at the site of a tragic event (Ashton, Hamilton & Searby 2012).

The federal government accepted the recommendations, stating that it saw memorials as ‘an appropriate way to acknowledge past injustices’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2005). In each case, its response was to make up to A\$100,000 available to be shared equally between the six states of Australia. This equates to A\$16,666 for each state (SCARC 2009, para. 4.50, para. 5.52); perhaps enough for a plaque or a very simple garden, but certainly not enough money to develop a heritage centre. In granting an identical amount to each state, the government did not take into account the different numbers of Child Migrants or children in care in each state. Given that the funding was in response to a recommendation that memorials be placed on institutional sites, there were other ways the funding could

have been divided. For example, according to the number of children in ‘care’ in each state, or the number of institutional sites that needed to be acknowledged.

By 2009, a follow-up report found that memorials for child migrants had been completed in each state (SCARC 2009, para 4.50) and were ‘progressing at variable rates’ in response to *Forgotten Australians* (SCARC 2009, para 5.55). In every state but Queensland, *Forgotten Australians* memorials were created using federal funding alongside money from the state government to create a single memorial in the capital city. Western Australia contributed the most money to its memorial, as part of the Redress WA scheme (discussed in Case Study 7), whereas NSW contributed only A\$3334. The report tells us that all state memorials were ‘launched with an accompanying statement of regret, if not a full apology’ (SCARC 2009, para. 5.54 quoting Submission 23, p. 2).

Ereshnee Naidu has found that, in post-conflict societies, the ‘success’ of memorial projects in making a positive social impact ‘depends on how it relates to other forms of reparations as well as the processes around which the memorial project is initiated’ (Naidu 2014, p. 35). The example of Reconciliation Place demonstrates the importance of genuine engagement, which allows those with a personal or political stake in the project to feel that their voice has been heard. The government’s response to the senate inquiries suggests that, if some lessons were learnt in that process, others were not. When, in 2009, SCARC conducted a further inquiry into the response to the recommendations of the previous reports, the submission by Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) illustrates the important role money plays in symbolic reparations. Frank Golding, vice-president of CLAN, stated that the funding offered for commemoration was ‘derisory in the overall context of the Senate Committee [findings] ...’ (SCARC 2009, para. 5.53 quoting Submission 16, p.4).

One significant outcome of the way funding was dispersed is that there is no national memorial for either Child Migrants or *Forgotten Australians*. Despite



Figure 158: *Coming and Going* by Sasha Reid, Australian Maritime Museum, Sydney.

the general dissatisfaction with the Reconciliation Place commemoration of the Stolen Generations, it is still seen as a national memorial. A certain amount of competitive remembrance is at play, as some non-Indigenous care leavers see the lack of a national Forgotten Australians memorial as ‘a slight that needs to be addressed’ (Darian-Smith 2013, p. 169) while other memory activists connected with the Stolen Generations ask why there are no state memorials for them.

Place, aesthetics and money

Once a memorial is no longer placed at the site of the event, the decision of where to place it becomes more complicated. In contrast to the memorials discussed in chapter 6, memorials as symbolic reparation are not primarily aimed at the internal community of memory. On the other hand, as I have discussed previously, all memorials are mourning memorials to some extent, and all try in some ways to create a sacralised space for remembrance. Memorials as symbolic reparation are a means of acknowledging that the events commemorated did indeed take place, and that they are taken seriously by the state. Their location is therefore very important.

Memorials as symbolic reparation tend to be located in what I have called ‘symbolic space’. That is, spaces set aside from the everyday and used primarily for leisure or ceremony. This helps them to create a sense of sacred space, but it can also lead to comparisons between other more prominent or more sacralised memorials and monuments. For example, the placement of Reconciliation Place



Figure 159: ‘Tree of Hope’ and seating area, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hobart, Tasmania.



Figure 160: ‘Tree of Hope’ by Kristina Nichols.

leads to comparison with the prominence — and funding — given the Australian War Memorial.

Most of the state memorials for Child Migrants and Forgotten Australians are placed within symbolic parkland, such as botanical gardens, or near state museums or heritage centres. Those built next to museums can potentially draw a sense of authority from them, but again, location is important. The NSW memorial for Child Migrants is placed on a grassed area near the entrance to the Maritime Museum, directly opposite the bus stop. This location seems to have been chosen because school groups often use the area as a gathering point. However, the artwork, ‘Coming and going’ (Reid 2006), is an aluminium ‘paper doll’ silhouette of two girls and two boys carrying rectangular suitcases. It is not immediately recognisable as a memorial unless you read the small plaque that juts out of the grass a few metres away. Responses to the artwork posted on a variety of blogs suggest that it fails as a memorial; for example, on the *Sydney – city and suburbs* blog visitors describe the artwork as a ‘cute’ and ‘cool’ artwork. In Tasmania, the memorial for victims of forced adoptions is located within the Royal Hobart Botanical Gardens. That memorial is an artwork called ‘Tree of hope’ (Nichols 2013); however, its placement next to living, fully grown trees invites questions about the amount of ‘hope’ the memorial offers. The NSW memorial for Forgotten Australians is a simple plaque, which was placed at the existing Twin Ponds site within the Royal Botanical Gardens in 2009. As a mourning memorial, it potentially offers a secluded space for care leavers to spend some time in quiet reflection. However, the small plinth, is swamped by the



Figure 159: *Forgotten Australians memorial plaque, Botanical Gardens, Sydney.*



Figure 161: ‘Love Seat 38:52’, *Immigration Museum, Melbourne, Victoria.*



Figure 162: *South Australian memorial to the Forgotten Australians, Adelaide.*

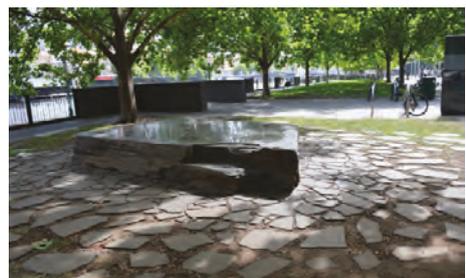


Figure 163: ‘World within, world without’, *Forgotten Australians memorial, Melbourne.*

surrounding foliage and risks being seen as yet another example of the state sweeping the history 'under the carpet'.

The government-funded memorials that are created as acts of symbolic reparation are usually commissioned using the bureaucratic processes developed for commissioning public artworks. The finished artworks may seem to have a lot in common with the site-specific public artworks discussed in the previous chapter. Yet, whereas those artworks introduce difficult knowledge into the public sphere almost by stealth, these artworks must be self-consciously commemorative. The process, which usually involves multiple stakeholders and reference groups, means that, as Jill Bennett has warned, they risk being 'over determined' (2005, p.98). Another issue with Australian memorial practices is the opacity of the process. Karen Till has noted that in Germany, public competitions have become an important part of the democratic process of memorialisation (2003). In Australia, a public expression of interest process is usually followed, but the decisions are made in private.

In relation to location, funding again becomes important. The amount of money that can be spent on a memorial makes a big difference to the quality of the finished artwork and the visual impact it is able to make. Large budgets may also attract more experienced artists who have the confidence to take on a large project. They also make a difference to the amount of time an artist can spend developing a concept. The budget for a piece of public artwork, however, usually goes more towards the cost of fabricating the work and making it vandal-proof (which can be a large proportion of a small budget), rather than paying the artist themselves. As discussed in Chapter 2, 'An Gorta Mor' ('the Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine 1845 –1852') at a cost of A\$350,000, is one of the most expensive memorials in Australia. Its ability to make a visual impact was influenced by its location, since it was incorporated into an existing heritage site. The fact that the lead artists, Hussein and Angela Valamanesh, were both internationally recognised artists and experienced in creating public artworks was part of what made such investment possible. The artists' experience and skill allowed them to negotiate the demands of their stakeholders to create a coherent and affective work.

The ability to negotiate the demands of many stakeholders is a particular skill, and one not all artists have. This may be why certain artists or art consultants get involved with multiple commemorative projects. For example, Gavan Fenelon has created most of the Queensland memorials that commemorate the institutionalisation of children, including a sculpted memory book that commemorates the inmates of Karrala House in Ipswich (2000); the Historic Abuse Network memorial in the

Brisbane city centre (2004); and 'Cell', a public artwork dedicated in 2011 to young people who were placed in Queensland correctional facilities. Most of the artists I interviewed said the experience of creating the memorial was richly rewarding but so demanding they would not want to repeat it.

Ignoring the two major projects of 'An Gorta Mor' and Reconciliation Place, it is possible to see a trend over time of more investment in memorials, and an increasing adoption of non-traditional, non-figurative aesthetics. The first round of government-funded memorials were those that commemorate the Child Migrants and the majority of these are figurative sculptures. In contrast, the majority of the later memorials for Forgotten Australians are public artworks that avoid figurative sculptural forms. This may be a reflection of changes in memorial aesthetics. Another possibility is that, since these memorials are placed within central urban locations, government actors involved in their planning started to think about their potential value as public art objects, as well as objects of symbolic reparation. This is an area for further research; however, it is possible to say that there is a general trend away from figurative sculpture in the government-funded memorials, and that the budget for these artworks has been substantially higher than the A\$16,666 provided by the federal government.

The need to negotiate the needs of many stakeholders may have an impact on the finished memorial form, but it is not necessarily a negative. The challenge is the way such negotiation takes place. Ereshnee Naidu, drawing on the work of Hamber and Wilson (1999), argues that, 'Reparation as a form of healing and reconciliation cannot occur with the mere delivery of a memorial but through the process that takes place around the memorial (object)' (2004). Naidu argues that it is most often these processes that get in the way of, rather than add to, reconciliation. Part of the reason for this may be the lack of structural change or shifts in power to accompany acts of symbolic reparation. Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that state apologies are 'abortive rituals' because 'the emphasis on shared feelings of remorse obscures the reproduction of worldwide structures of inequality' (2000, p. 184). In the context of post-dictatorship Chile, Lessie Jo Frazier points to returned exile Roberto Rojas's shock at the entrenchment of neoliberal thinking, even after the change of government. Frazier argues that transitional justice has adopted a neoliberal language that 'relies on words like compromise, opportunity, advantage and reconciliation' and 'shuns words like fight, right, liberty, and most definitely, vengeance and damnation'. This neoliberal framework means that the expression

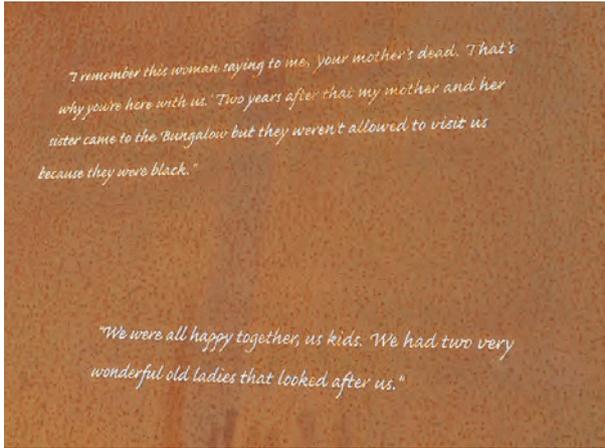


Figure 164: 'Separation' memorial to the Stolen Generations (2004), detail, Reconciliation Place, Canberra.

of anger, which is an important aspect of memorials that are acts of witness citizenship, is mostly missing in memorials as symbolic reparation.

It is worth noting, then, the sense of outrage that is present in the second 'Separation' artwork at Reconciliation Place. Elizabeth Strakosch criticises Reconciliation Place for its adoption of countermonumental aesthetics, leading to a space which she describes as both 'interactive' and 'passive'

(2013), and indeed, much of the memory space is incongruously upbeat about Aboriginal Australia's settler-colonial story. Nonetheless, by embracing an oppositional stance, Stolen Generations memory activists gained access to this space, and gained the right to have their story told in a way that incorporates multiple perspectives, but does not compromise in the sense of trying to meld all these perspectives into one. Like the Stolen Generations memorial at Mount Annan, it incorporates micro-testimonies, and not all of them are angry. For example, one reads, 'We were all happy together, us kids'. However, this is contrasted with the testimony above, which reads, 'I remember this woman saying to me, 'your mother's dead ... Two years after that my mother and her sister came ... they weren't allowed to visit us because they were black'. I read this not as a compromise, but as acknowledging the contradictions inherent in the difficult knowledge of Stolen Generations history.

Individuals, witness citizenship and symbolic reparations

The influence of a few key individuals demonstrates the important connection between witness citizenship and symbolic reparations. The recommendations of the senate inquiries relating to the creation of memorials reference the advocacy of CLAN, and specifically its co-founder Joanna Penglase, a care leaver and author of the book, *Orphans of the living* (2007). Appearing before the senate inquiry in February 2004, Penglase, then president of CLAN, made it clear she saw the public inquiry and the idea of a memorial as connected, and as both being about making 'history visible'. She suggested that the desired outcome was for there to be widespread acknowledgment of the suffering 20th century child welfare practices had caused. Another key figure is former Australian Democrats Senator Andrew Murray, who is currently a commissioner of the Australian Royal Commission into



Figure 165: 'Sorry space' by Glen Romanis, partial view, South Morang, Victoria.



Figure 166: Reconciliation plaque donated by Connecting Home to the City of Whittlesea and view of 'Sorry space' by Glen Romanis, South Morang, Victoria

Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and patron of the CLAN. Both the SCARC inquiries were launched in response to motions he brought to the senate. Murray has attended and spoken at a number of memorial dedications, and his speeches reflect an understanding of them part of an ongoing and transnational process. For example, at the dedication of the Western Australian memorial to Forgotten Australians, he stated that, 'This moment is part of the great campaign for justice and recognition for those harmed in care, in Australia, in Great Britain, in Ireland and in other parts of the English speaking world.'

Two recent memorials to the Stolen Generations constructed by the City of Whittlesea (2014) and the City of Darebin (2015) may signal a new trend of symbolic reparations at a local government level. In these projects, the line between government and community is even more fluid than at the state or federal level. Both memorials are acknowledgments of the Stolen Generations in the north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Led by two adjoining councils, they share in common the leadership of Uncle Reg Blow, and serve as an example of

the important difference individual memory activists can make, when there are appropriate mechanisms and lines of communication available.

Uncle Reg Blow, who died in 2012, had been the chairperson of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group. He had a lifetime's experience of leadership roles in community and government organisations, including heading the Aboriginal Affairs Unit of the Victorian Government and being the first Aboriginal person to serve as leader of an interfaith group in Australia. Donna Wright, the City of Whittlesea's Aboriginal liaison coordinator, described him as 'the most amazing diplomat' who not only had ideas but also was able to bring others into his vision (Wright 2014, interview). As well as the City of Whittlesea's 'Sorry space', he also encouraged the neighbouring council of Darebin to create a Stolen Generations memorial, dedicated in 2015, and was the person behind the Darebin healing path discussed in Chapter 5.

In South Morang, Uncle Reg Blow began leading Sorry Day marches around the City of Whittlesea offices after the apology in 2008, on behalf of the council's Reconciliation group. The Council supported the Reconciliation group's work as part of its Reconciliation Action Plan,⁴⁶ and this commitment to the work of Reconciliation was recognised by Connecting Home, a support service for Stolen Generations and their families, which presented the Council with a special Sorry Day plaque. Rather than simply installing the plaque, the council initiated a process to develop a special space for it. Sandy Caldwell from the City of Whittlesea's Community Cultural Development team explained that the council approached the project using the processes they would use for a public art project. The Aboriginal community was included as the 'key stakeholder' (Caldow 2014, interview). In contrast to other public art commissions, they argued against putting out a call of expressions of interest, since they needed a very specific skill set. They were able to commission Aboriginal sculptor Glenn Romanis, who participated in public community consultations, as well as some private conversations with the Reconciliation group, local elders and young people. Romanis brought his own art practice of mapping country to the particular idea of what has come to be known as the 'Sorry Space'. Two wooden benches in the shape of gum leaves edge a tear-shaped stone mosaic, set off to the side of the main entry point of the City of Whittlesea's offices. The tear represents, 'Tears of joy when the families were reunited and tears for families that were never reunited' (Wright 2014, interview). The whole space is overlaid with a stylised mapping of country,

⁴⁶ Reconciliation Action Plans are an initiative of Reconciliation Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that was founded in 2001 to carry on the work of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. See <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/>.

and in the centre of the teardrop is a rough stone plinth on which a wooden bowl can be placed for use during special ceremonies. The space now marks the end of the annual Sorry Day walk, and is a space of Reconciliation, not just between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but between the local traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people, and the Stolen Generations. Crucially, Donna Wright said the Sorry Space project (along with the ongoing work of the Council and their Reconciliation Action Plan) built bridges with Stolen Generations people whose history had previously led them to view any level of government authority with suspicion.

Memorials as a sign of listening

For memorials to ‘work’ as an act of symbolic reparations, they need in some way to repair the relationship between the state and those it has wronged. At a basic level, memorials can be seen as a ‘civil ritual of recognition’ (Feuchtang quoted in Buckley-Zistel and Schafer 2014, p. 10) that acknowledges that wrong has occurred. One care leaver I interviewed said he had attended the federal government’s apology to the Forgotten Australians in Canberra, and the most important moment for him was when the then opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull said, ‘we believe you’ (anonymous 2014, interview). For some survivors, the most important thing about a memorial is that it is a public way the state says, ‘we believe you’.

Such acknowledgments, however, must be received as authentic by survivors themselves. Holocaust survivor and psychoanalyst Dori Laub has argued that, in relation to trauma testimony, it is not only the telling of the story that is important, but also the way it is listened to (Laub 1995). Trauma survivors sometimes have a compulsion to tell their story over and over, suggesting that it isn’t necessarily the act of telling that is important, but the connection between speaker and listener. Returning to the narrative therapy model developed by Kennedy and Wilson (2003), through memorials as symbolic reparation, the state takes on the role of listener, reflecting the trauma survivor’s story back to them, and collaborating in the meaning-making process. However, such ‘reflecting back’ is always mediated through available discursive and institutional structures. In local government memorials such as the Whittlesea ‘Sorry Space’, there are fewer barriers between the artist and the community of memory. When memorials fail as symbolic

reparations, it is because the act of listening does not appropriately reflect back the experience of the community of memory.

Conclusion

This final chapter has considered memorials that are funded by the state as an act of symbolic reparation. Such memorials are created in response to human rights abuses and trauma for which governments accept some level of responsibility. As I have shown, since the mid 1990s, Australia's governments, at various levels, have adopted parts of the transitional justice 'toolkit' to respond to traumatic histories in which the state is implicated. In contrast with mourning memorials, which work to create a sense of space that is separated from the world, memorials as symbolic reparation rely on their publicness to be effective. However, to function as memorials, they must balance this with the creation of a sacralised space that is seen to take the past seriously. As I have shown, memorials have often been created in response to recommendations of government inquiries, but these are not the only influence on their creation. Acts of witness citizenship and the ongoing work of some individual actors have an influence on which memorials are created and where. Such ongoing memory work also builds relationships, which in turn have an impact on how memorial projects develop and their perceived 'success'.

Case Study 7

‘Unfolding lives’: the ins and outs of memory

In a busy pedestrian thoroughfare in the centre of Perth, the state capital of Western Australia (WA), stands a human-scale sculpture of a ‘chatterbox’ or ‘fortune teller’ — a child’s toy usually made of paper that is folded and unfolded to reveal stories and secrets. This chatterbox, made of fibreglass, is just the right height for an adult to lean over to read inside. It is also a good height for children to climb. The outside of the chatterbox offers fragments of text, clues about the secrets within. One side reads, ‘The story that could not be told.’ But the very existence of this sculpture bears witness to the fact its story is no longer a secret, no longer unspeakable. This is a government-funded memorial that remembers the experiences of children who were in Australian out-of-home care during the 20th century — children who suffered the effects of institutionalisation and were often neglected and abused. This sculpture, named ‘Unfolding lives’, takes the story that could not be told story and places it upon the land, in one of the most public places of the city. In this case study, I offer an analysis of one of the Australian memorials created as an act of symbolic reparations for the group of people known as the Forgotten Australians. This public artwork, called ‘Unfolding lives’ was commissioned through a public art process. I discuss both the finished artwork



Figure 168: *Unfolding lives’ in Perth Cultural Centre, Western Australia, during Fringe Festival 2013.*



Figure 169: *Children use ‘Unfolding lives’ as a climbing frame.*

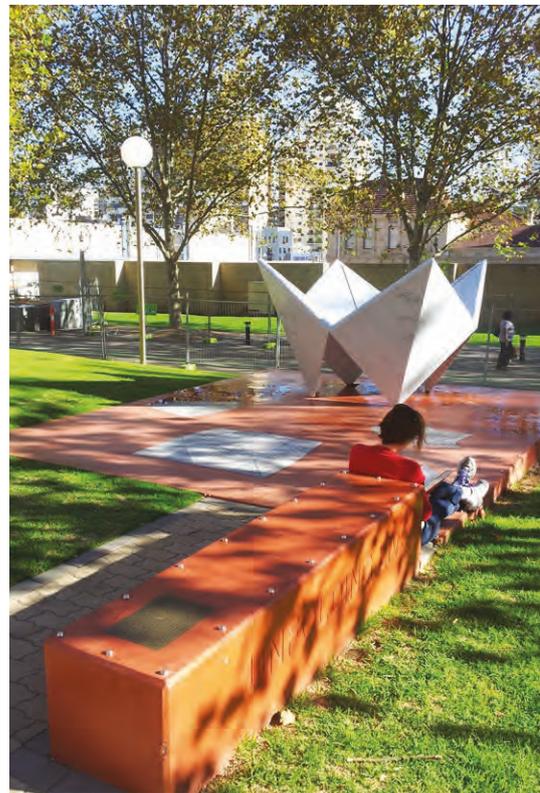


Figure 170: *Low concrete wall of ‘Unfolding lives’ used as a back rest during lunch hour.*

and the process leading to its creation. When memorials are an act of symbolic reparation, both are important. I argue that the involvement of people who are able to listen and engage with survivors and their own witnessing is crucial for a memorial to be accepted as a restorative gesture.

This memorial is located in my home city. Because of its close proximity, I have been able to approach this case study using a practice of what Melissa Mean and Chairlie Tims call ‘deep hanging out’ (2005). I conducted interviews with three people involved in planning the memorial, art consultant Andra Kins, writer Terri-ann White, and artist Judith Forrest, who each shared materials from their personal archive. I also had informal conversations with care leavers attending Tuart Place, a community organisation in Fremantle, and interviewed three care leavers about their responses to the ‘Unfolding lives’ memorial project. Those interviews took place in 2014, while the exhibition ‘Inside’ was installed at the WA Maritime Museum in Fremantle, and care leavers reflected on the meaning of the memorial alongside other memory work.

‘Unfolding lives’ is an experiential artwork that covers a small area near the entrance to the WA Museum. The memorial is located near one of the city’s main bus stops, and is on the edge of the Perth Cultural Centre, a space it shares with the state museum, library, art gallery and theatre centre. A small grassy knoll has been flattened at the top with a red concrete slab, and at one edge a low wall, also made of red concrete, is embossed with the artwork’s title. A bronze plaque claims that the memorial ‘brings the “Forgotten Australians” out of the shadows and into the light’. In the tradition of ‘never again’, the memorial plaque claims that the legacy of the Forgotten Australians will be that their stories will provide

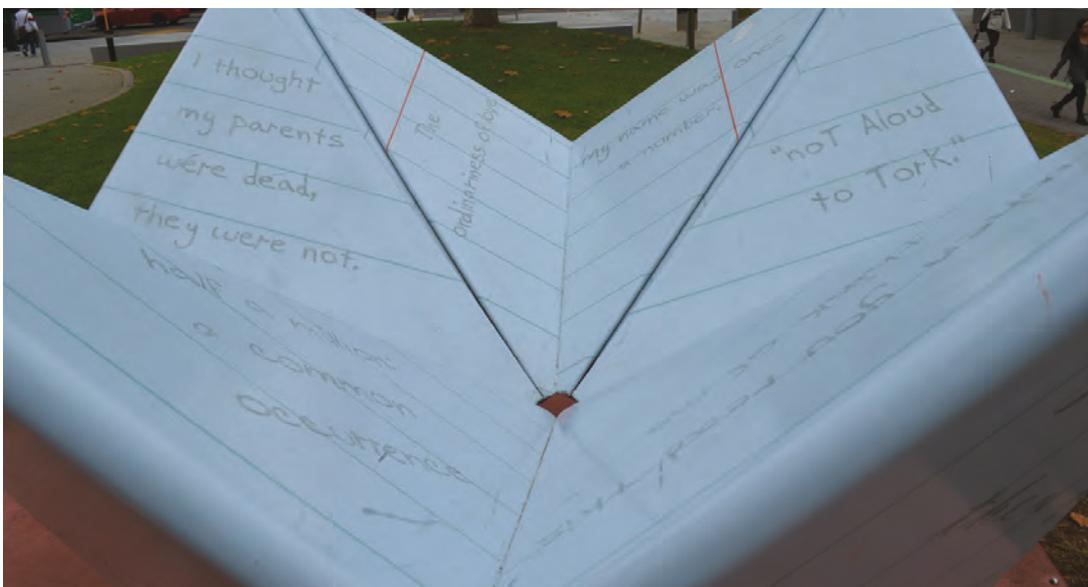


Figure 171: ‘Unfolding lives’ by Judith Forrest, text by Terri-ann White, inside view.

a 'platform for better care' for policy makers into the future.

The main visual aspect of the memorial is the human-sized fibreglass replica of a simple chatterbox children's game. The sculpture has been painted with faint lines as if made from a giant exercise book, with text in handwritten font. The words on the four outside 'folds' are in a cursive script. The statements on the outside are general statements designed to draw the reader in: 'The Story that could not be told'; 'The stories of our lives'; 'Forgotten then Found'; 'Home is where we live now'. For many of the hundreds of people who pass it by each day, these outside statements will be all they see.

To really participate in the memorial, you must move closer, almost like the action of moving closer to hear a child whisper the secrets of the game. More statements and phrases are written on the inside folds of the sculpture, and embossed onto three diagrams embedded into the concrete slab. But these secrets are not fun — they do indeed contain difficult knowledge. 'They told me my parents were dead. They were not'; 'My name was once a number'. These statements are taken from the testimony of people who spent time in state care as children ('care leavers'), whose identity was either purposefully removed or simply not valued by the adults responsible for them. Similarly confronting phrases are on two diagrams embedded into the red concrete surface. Alongside these are more redemptive snippets: 'someone is listening to my story'; 'regaining our identity'. A third tile names the institutions where children lived through the experience of institutionalisation.

Alongside this experiential aspect of moving from the fairly bland statements on the outside to the difficult knowledge contained within, the choice of the chatterbox hints at the broader historical context of the systems and policies which allowed child abuse to occur. The artist has said she sees the chatterbox as a universal game all children play, but its Anglo heritage speaks of the British and Maltese Child Migrants who are included among the Forgotten Australians. It also speaks to the assimilationist policies in which many Aboriginal children were caught, since the memorial acknowledges all care leavers, including Aboriginal children who were removed from their families as part of the Stolen Generations.



Figure 172: 'Unfolding lives' view of floor detail.



Figure 173: 'Unfolding lives' view of large square tile.

The light lines on the chatterbox, like ruled paper from an exercise book, make this not a toy that has been specifically made for a child, but a toy created out of what was at hand. This paper was not meant for play. Perhaps this paper was meant for education or instruction; and yet another damaging legacy of many care leavers' experience is educational disadvantage. One of the central panels contains the words, 'Not Aloud to Tork'. The misspelt words in the text point to the ongoing effects of educational disadvantage in adulthood.

I first discovered this memorial walking through the city with my daughter, and her friend, on my daughter's eighth birthday. The girls ran ahead and started climbing the structure, and I wandered over to take a look. While children often climb on the sculpture, not all adults take the time to look closely. When I read, and slowly absorbed, the meaning of the text as the children played, the sharp contrast with the freedom of their small lives was incredibly powerful. In the memorial design as a whole, the playfulness of the form pushes up against the painful words it holds.

The Western Australian memorial in the context of Redress WA

The memorial project was developed as part of a program known as Redress WA, a state government scheme initiated in 2008 and designed to provide acknowledgment and symbolic reparations to people who, 'in the past have suffered when the State did not provide a proper level of care' (Government of WA 2008). The expressions of interest (EOI) document prepared for designers and artists quoted from recommendation 34 of the Forgotten Australians report (2004), 'That the Commonwealth and state governments, in conjunction with the churches and agencies, provide funding for the erection of suitable memorials commemorating care leavers.' In 2009, the WA Department of Child Protection advised the Australian Senate it had allocated A\$50,000 to a memorial project, through Redress WA (SCARC 2009, para. 5.66). At some point, this amount doubled to A\$100,000; the majority (A\$97,000) was allocated to the creation of a memorial artwork, with A\$3000 allocated to a writer assigned to the project. This does not include the costs of consulting with the Forgotten Australians Committee, fees for art consultant Andra Kins, or the cost of the launch, as well as the ongoing cost of lighting. Andra Kins indicated that the federal government contribution of A\$16,666 covered landscaping at the site.

A formal apology and a 'prominent and permanent memorial' were key parts of the Redress WA scheme (Government of WA 2009). Care leavers were also offered the opportunity to record their own story on their official files. To participate, care leavers needed to make a formal statement about their experiences while

in care. This could include institutional settings managed by churches or other non-government organisations. Financial reparations were offered in the form of ex gratia payments to survivors of abuse or neglect. When the scheme was originally announced by the WA Labor Government in December 2007, the maximum payment was expected to be A\$80,000. Such financial reparations are not compensation for suffering, but are another means of acknowledgment. However, the number of claimants was much higher than expected, and in 2009, the then Liberal Government announced that the maximum payment had been reduced to A\$45,000. The minimum payment was also reduced, from A\$10,000 to A\$5000. News reports and letters to the editor are collated on the Find and Connect web page and document the level of outrage expressed by care leavers and their supporters.

In a document prepared for the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reflecting on the Redress WA experience, Gail Green and Janice MacKenzie (2013) argue that many participants saw the changes as a further betrayal of trust. One prominent care leaver, who had previously been a Liberal Party candidate, was reported to have torn up her letter of apology when she discovered that it only covered the first three months of her experience of state care. She wrote an open letter to all Liberal MPs, which stated:

For me the process of going through the Redress WA scheme made me feel belittled, threatened, humiliated, blamed, ignored, isolated, scapegoated, rejected and tormented. Which, ironically, is exactly how the Redress WA Guidelines interpret emotional or psychological abuse (Trenwith 2011).

In the context of the Redress WA controversy, other government-led acts of symbolic reparation were met with some suspicion. However, for the most part, the memorial seems to have been welcomed. The memorial was commissioned through a bureaucratic process that involved a number of different 'stakeholder' groups, and the involvement of key people who were respectful of the care leavers' experience seems to have been an important mitigating factor in a project with a fundamental power imbalance.

The process

The memorial project that led to the creation of 'Unfolding lives' was managed by the Department for Child Protection (DCP). In 2008, they commissioned a consultation about the location of the memorial. The EOI document states that, 'there were no objections to the memorial being located in the Perth Cultural Precinct', which is hardly a ringing endorsement. Those who wanted the memorial to be placed somewhere public and prominent saw this choice positively; however,

it meant a wide range of government stakeholders needed to be involved. The selection committee for the memorial designer comprised representatives of the WA Museum, Art Gallery of WA, the DCP, Redress WA, Department of Culture and the Arts, Heritage Council of WA and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. The project writer, Terri-ann White, was a non-voting member of the design selection panel. Some of these stakeholders placed a strong emphasis on creating a sophisticated piece of public art that could hold its own in a prominent city location.

As I have argued in Chapter 7, memorials as symbolic reparation can be understood as an act of symbolic listening and ‘reflecting back’ to survivors. They allow the state to show survivors that their stories have been heard. In this sense, the people whose experiences are acknowledged in the memorial do not necessarily have a role in the memorial process, yet their support is vital. In the case of ‘Unfolding lives’, care leavers did not have a formal say in the choice of artist, but were involved through a Forgotten Australians Committee, which included eight care leavers and acted as a kind of reference group. A representative of the DCP, Marie Waldeck, played an important role in liaison between the selection panel and this committee. She was described by Terri-ann White as ‘the very centre of the whole project’, someone who was able to offer empathy and support to the care leavers as the project progressed.

The Forgotten Australians Committee met with Marie Waldeck prior to the development of the EOI document, and their ideas were passed on (by her) to art consultant Andra Kins. The EOI document that Kins developed begins with a background on the story of care leavers, stating that the memorial ‘honours the very special place they occupy among us’ and ‘acknowledges that it was not the fault of the children that they were placed in care’. The EOI includes the following text, which is now engraved on the memorial plaque:

There is a strong thread that links the way a child is raised with the person they become in adulthood. This memorial stands as a reminder of that thread to all who create policies that affect children.

The EOI also states that ‘All Western Australians who see this memorial will know that children among us have experienced emotional, physical and sexual abuse, neglect, humiliation and deprivation of food, education and healthcare.’ The memorial was also to acknowledge care leavers who have suicided. Kins was guided by her conversations with Waldeck, but she also brought her own perspectives to the brief. The document calls for designs that are not a ‘static representation of the past’ and says care leavers visiting the memorial should ‘experience transcendence and the possibility of moving on to a positive future’. Artists were guided away

from a traditional bronze sculpture, and instead asked to create a 'contemporary symbolic artwork with a creative interpretation of a human story'. The memorial also needed to 'create a memorable impression'. Artist Judith Forrest said the memorial project was the most difficult she had ever attempted, and that the brief demanded so much she doubted anyone could have fulfilled it.

EOI processes do not require the artist to develop a full design. Instead, they are asked to make a submission about their ideas and the direction they might take the project. Judith Forrest said her initial written proposal suggested the sculpture would make use of 'the sort of soft rounded forms and tactile surfaces that evoke comfort and security' (Forrest, pers. comm.). However, she soon realised that forms which might suggest 'comfort' to one person may have more sinister resonance when associated with the stories of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, often heard in relation to children in institutional care. The chatterbox form of the final memorial developed out of Forrest's research, which involved reading about children in institutional care as well as Child Migrants. After playing with the idea of a shelf holding a trio of toys, she settled on the chatterbox in part because her research suggested it was a toy that had been played with by children around the world in different ways, and because it was a toy that could be made 'even when kids had nothing else'. Its use as a 'fortune teller' suggested the variability of children's fortunes, and the element of luck. The diagrams that are embedded into the concrete base emerged from her fascination with diagrams, and provided more space for the textual elements of the work developed by Terri-ann White.

The writer involved in the project, Terri-ann White, is director of the University of Western Australia (UWA) Press and has a well-developed theoretical background in memory and history. She also has experience serving on boards and committees. She was appointed to the project by Andra Kins for this combination of writing and other skills, and brought her own understanding of the role of the memorial and the work it had to do in the public sphere. White was keen to avoid a didactic approach, and the chatterbox form allowed her to avoid a simplistic, closed narrative approach. White said her aim was to encourage visitors to 'ask the questions and put them into an empathic space'. However, her understanding of empathy is not based on a passive victim. For example, even one of the most confronting statements, 'Not aloud to Tork', which is deliberately misspelt as a direct quote, contains within it a sense of the agency of the speaker, in the very fact that they are speaking now.

Similarly, Judith Forrest brought an expansive understanding of the nature of public art to the process. She was drawn to the project initially because it offered

an opportunity to create an artwork that was more than decorative. In her final submission to the selection panel, Judith Forrest wrote about the challenge of creating a memorial space in such a high profile and busy location. Traditional memorials are easily recognisable as a memorial, she explained, making it easy for those who pass by to ‘understand and move on’. ‘Unfolding lives’, in contrast, would be created as a public artwork that would be aesthetically attractive, drawing people in.

Later recognition will dawn and closer inspection will reward the visitor ... The broader theme of the changing fortunes and differing outcomes possible from a single starting point may develop slowly or be immediately understood. Many commuters pass by this site every day. These fragments of text — drawn from the experience of the Forgotten Australians will be noted in passing — food for contemplation while waiting for the bus home?

Both the artist and the writer drew on previous memory work, including the senate inquiries and published memoir, to inform their approach. This is important to recognise because, although the care leavers’ involvement in this particular process clearly did not put them in a position of power, their agency as individuals and as a community of memory was important, both in bringing the project to fruition and in informing the non-care leavers involved in the project.

The Forgotten Australians Committee participated in three meetings during the memorial development process. A first, informal, meeting was held with Terri-ann White and Andra Kins before the selection of the artist. This was followed by two more structured ‘workshops’ in which Judith Forrest and Terri-ann White introduced the design concept and requested feedback. These meetings involved a wider group of about 50, and were planned to ensure care leavers understood the process of where the words had come from and were able to ‘digest’ them. Despite this level of care, such a process clearly restricted the involvement of the survivors of the state care system in the project. Only those who were able to



Figure 174: At the launch of ‘Unfolding lives’, a care leaver stands with her foot covering the name of St Joseph’s Orphanage. Photo courtesy Judith Forrest

participate in the particularly structured 'consultation' process could have a say, and only then in a very limited way.

The consultation process did lead to some important, though simple, changes to the memorial. One of these was the removal of the word 'Redress' from the large square diagram, replaced with the word 'Fostering' (although one of the smaller diagrams still contains the phrase 'redress for the once vulnerable child'). Most importantly, the responses of care leavers allowed both White and Forrest to understand that having all the institutions publicly named was important for their ex-residents. Judith Forrest described this as a slow dawning of understanding, as she struggled with the practicalities of renegotiating production deadlines to allow for more names to be added. On the day of the opening, she watched as a number of care leavers went to find the name of their institution. Some of them were photographed standing on or pointing to the name, suggesting they valued the acknowledgment of the fact that they had been there.

Not consigning the past to history

Not all care leavers were happy with the idea of a memorial. Some felt the money should have been directed towards more practical measures, particularly in light of the Redress WA controversy. In this context, the funding decision was a delicate balance: A\$100,000 was enough money to show that the project was being taken seriously, but on the other hand it was not an extravagant amount. It could be argued that redirecting the money back towards financial reparations would only provide funding for two more people, whereas the memorial was for everyone. Other care leavers objected to the memorial out of a sense of suspicion. As Judith Forrest described it:

The sense I got was that other people had the feeling that, well, they give us a memorial, they've wrapped it up and now they want us to go away.

This is not an unreasonable interpretation of the project. The plaque talks about the 'legacy' of the Forgotten Australians, and the memorial's location outside the museum emphasises the fact that this is history. The Perth Cultural Centre website describes 'Unfolding lives' as a piece of public art that acknowledges those who overcame adversity. So the memorial's location, its plaque and its description on the Perth Cultural Centre website, all frame this memorial as a commemoration of an event that is over and done with. Yet this official framing cannot contain

the meaning entirely, and this is because of the understanding of the past that the artist and writer brought to the project.

At the launch event, the difficult balance between the idea of the memorial as 'history' and the need to acknowledge the ongoing experience of care leavers shifted between speakers. The WA Minister for Child Protection focused on speaking about acknowledgment of care leavers, and tended to place the issue more in the past. She unveiled the memorial along with the WA Governor, Ken Michael. Senator Andrew Murray sounded a triumphant note, claiming:

Those miserable cold beings that wanted the stories never told have been defeated. The Stolen Generations, the Forgotten Australians and the Child Migrants are now a recognised and important part of our national consciousness.

Murray, who was himself a child migrant sent from the UK to Zimbabwe, also emphasised the transnational nature of the experience of care leavers, and said there was a need for lessons to be learned. Other speakers included the Rev. Sealin Garlett, a member of the Stolen Generations, who gave the welcome to country as Nyungar Elder; Laurie Humphreys, chairperson of Forgotten Australians Coming Together (FACT); Elaine Smith, an ex-resident of Parkerville Children's Home; Dr Sue Gordon, an ex-resident of Sister Kate's Children's Home; and Paul Thomas Irving, an ex-resident of Clontarf. The June 2011 edition of the Catholic Brothers Ex-Residents and Student Services Network (CBERS) newsletter, one of the main care leavers' networks in WA at the time, dedicated its first two pages to news of the launch and was very positive in tone. The artist also received emails congratulating her on the creation of the memorial from a variety of sources, including care leavers themselves.

My research was conducted a number of years after the memorial's completion. Some care leavers expressed some dissatisfaction with the location of the memorial. To an extent, this may be a generational issue for people who are not inclined to go into the city centre — one care leaver said he 'never goes there' and would prefer the location to be in Fremantle, where he often visits. Another care leaver did not have a problem with the location, but when she had tried to take her grandchildren to the memorial she couldn't find it, because 'they are always changing things'. Another worried that the memorial is off the path and can only be fully experienced by those who 'go out of their way'. Whereas Terri-ann White spoke about giving some level of 'protection' from the knowledge contained within the

chatterbox, a care-leaver advocate expressed concern that ‘the people who need to see it just walk past’.

Conclusion

This case study offers an insight into the complex challenges of memorials as symbolic reparation. Such memorials are usually, like this one, driven by bureaucratic processes in which survivors of loss and trauma have limited involvement. If they are understood as an act of symbolic listening, reflecting back to care leavers what has been heard about their stories, this process may be appropriate. However, in order for survivors to accept this act of listening, the process needs to be respectful, and the right people need to be involved. ‘Unfolding lives’ offers an example of the difference it makes when artists and other cultural workers become aware of the historical baggage they carry, and try to find ways to play with and cut through expectations. Rather than telling a story, ‘Unfolding lives’ offers an entry point. In a society that constantly struggles with the fractures that come from the adversarial approach of so-called ‘rational debate’, this may be an important gift. The location of ‘Unfolding lives’ within a precinct containing the state’s main cultural institutions — the Art Gallery of WA, as well as the state library and theatre centre — is significant as an act of acknowledgment. It suggests that the history of the care leavers is being incorporated into the history of the people of WA, as ‘our’ history.

‘Unfolding lives’, like any memorial, is a stationary object within a moving landscape. While it may be emotionally affecting the first or second or third time, there comes a point where it just becomes part of the landscape, a spot to sit near to eat your lunch, something to look at while waiting for the bus. But perhaps it is in this way that we are moved. From being something unspoken, shameful and unacknowledged, the story of the Forgotten Australians becomes part of the landscape, part of the patchwork of what makes up Australia. Being taken for granted in this way is no small thing.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have traced the development of a new genre of commemoration, exploring the emergence, since the mid 1980s, of public memorials that focus specifically on the lived experience of loss and trauma. I have argued that the kinds of experiences commemorated in public memorial form are collective and have come into the public sphere as a result of the rise of trauma and human rights discourses. This research project was a scoping study. Having identified this new type of commemoration, and outlined a history of its emergence, I sought to answer the question of why these memorials were created. In answer to the question, the second half of this thesis outlined four different kinds of cultural 'work' these memorials are expected to do. While my research has focused on Australia as a broad case study, I have shown that these memorial practices exist within a transnational field of memory work that engages with traumatic memory and the mechanisms of transitional justice.

This research project has identified at least 76 memorials around Australia that focus on acknowledgment of lived experiences of loss and trauma, rather than death. After mapping these memorials, I coded the information about them, looking for trends including form and materials used, location, funding, and who was involved in their creation. Some 20 memorials to lived experience were created in the 1990s, although the majority of these were not initially conceived of as a memorial. In the 21st century, the rate of memorialisation seems to be increasing. This project concluded halfway through this current decade, with 20 memorials created so far, compared with 28 for the 10 years 2000–2009.

Memorials to lived experience have become a mainstream memory practice. At the end of the 20th century, these memorials were more likely to be community art projects, or site-specific public artworks that addressed a shared memory. In the 21st century, they are confidently commemorative. They are also increasingly bureaucratised. Over three short decades, governments have moved from playing a supportive role to initiating and funding officially recognised memorial projects. The three most common triggering events for the creation of a memorial are natural disaster, the anniversary of a historical event, or the completion of a large-scale government inquiry into human rights abuses. Government-initiated memorials have so far been created only in response to natural disasters and official inquiries.

These findings demonstrate that, in the course of the last 30 years, the way we think about what is worth remembering has changed. Memorials no longer exist to mark a loss of life. Instead, they acknowledge the experience of that loss.

The focus has moved from the dead to the living. Alongside this, is a general widening of the understanding of 'loss'. Nonetheless, the kinds of experiences that are considered appropriate to commemorate are still limited. Memorials commemorate collective experiences. Individual experiences are remembered only when they connect with a wider story.

Erika Doss's 2010 study of US memorials claims that, 'much of today's memorial making is excessive, frenzied, and extreme' (2010, p. 13). That is not the finding of this research. There has been an increase in the creation of memorials to lived experience over the past 30 years within Australia, but this does not amount to a 'frenzy'. Memorials are an inherently conservative memory practice. There have been four main processes through which the memorials identified in this research have come into being. First, community art projects, under the auspices of local government or a formal community organisation; second, site-specific public artworks by individual artists, usually commissioned by local government, or by a commercial body; third, grassroots memorial projects on a site owned or controlled by the group; and finally, projects commissioned and funded by government. Each of these requires a level of social consensus, as well as access to land and finance. Some projects are able to succeed with two of those three things, but ideally they require all three. For example, the failed attempt to create a memorial for comfort women in the Sydney suburb of Strathfield, discussed in Chapter 6, shows what happens when social support is not available and the memory activists do not control the land. Even when there is no active opposition, the process of memorial creation is neither easy nor fast.

The cultural 'work' of memorials to lived experience

There are four different types of cultural 'work' that public memorials to lived experience are expected to do. These were discussed in detail in the second half of the dissertation, and are summarised here in order to clarify the differences and connections between them.

Chapter 4 considered memorials that have been used by marginalised groups to claim space in the national story. There are three important narrative frames that are used. The first is the narrative of trauma, connected to sacrifice. Themes of sacrifice can be seen in early 20th century war memorials, and the quarter of Australian memorials that acknowledge those who served (Inglis 2008) are precursors to contemporary memorials that commemorate lived experience. Indeed, the acknowledgment of service has become an important theme in Australia's memorials, which in the latter part of the 20th century began to incorporate ideas of suffering and trauma. The second commonly used frame

is the narrative of contribution, which memorials dedicated to experiences of migration are more likely to adopt. Indeed, this narrative comes from the way postwar, non-British migration was promoted to the Australian public. Third, and closely connected to the idea of contribution, is the narrative of gratitude. This allows marginalised groups — particularly migrants — to tell the story of their traumatic experience within the context of gratitude to Australia for the safety and welcome it has provided.

The memorials discussed in Chapter 4 raise questions about the limits of the multi-directionality of memory. They point to the uneven flows of power that impact on the ways different memories are mobilised. For example, the ‘Australian ex-prisoners of war memorial’ in Ballarat was initially marginalised because it did not fit with the dominant narrative of war sacrifice through death. When the idea of sacrifice was able to incorporate trauma, the drive to commemorate the POW experience found widespread and eventually official support. In contrast, migrant groups have a more tenuous hold on their ‘Australianness’, and because of this their memorials tend to downplay the focus on loss and to emphasise the ‘contribution’ and ‘gratitude’ narratives. Nonetheless, and despite clear power imbalances, the multi-directional nature of memory does create openings for marginalised groups to tell their stories. This is demonstrated by commemorations of the Australian South Sea Islander community in Queensland.

In Chapter 5 I explored the ways memorials to lived experience operate as a public mourning practice. These memorials adopt similar forms and materials to memorials that mourn death, suggesting a general broadening of the cultural understanding of loss. An alternative reading is that memorial creators make use of these traditional forms in order to make a claim for legitimacy of the loss they commemorate. Mourning memorials focus on the ‘inside’ community of memory; those directly affected by the experience of loss and trauma. They create a sense of sacred space, separated from the everyday, in which people are able to undertake the work of grieving. Within this sacralised space, areas can be set aside for quietly telling the story and sharing the experience of loss. Mourning memorials are often co-located with social gathering spaces, such as barbeques or picnic tables. These spaces are designed for building up the community of memory and allow freedom for a wider variety of conversations. I have compared the difference between these two spaces with the difference between mourning work undertaken at a funeral and a wake. Both are important to the work of mourning.

The concept of witness citizenship, and the way memorials engage in this work, was discussed in Chapter 6. The term is taken from the work of Macarena

Gómez-Barris (2010) and I have used it here to explore how memorials share the 'burden of memory' (Tumarkin 2005). Whereas the mourning function of memorials is focused on creating spaces where the internal community of memory can grieve, witness citizenship aims to expand that community. Where mourning memorials sometimes suggest the experience they commemorate is over and done with, the work of witness citizenship acknowledges the ongoing effects of experiences of loss and trauma. The work of witness citizenship also shifts the focus to the cause of loss and trauma, in order to draw those who did not experience it directly into the community of memory. Memorials as witness citizenship are created by groups of survivors and supporters working together in solidarity or, sometimes, by individual (or collectives of) artists telling marginalised stories through site-specific artworks. Rather than seeking to claim a space in an existing narrative of the nation, witness citizenship demands the right to have these experiences acknowledged and accepted on their own terms. While a few of these memorials are about localised experiences, they can be seen as part of the broad theme of truth-telling in international politics since the 1990s. Those who become involved in these memorial projects do so from a belief that the 'truth' they have to tell will make their community, the nation, or even the world, a better place.

Finally, Chapter 7 considered memorials that are created by the state as acts of symbolic reparations. These memorials can be understood as the response of the 'outside' community to the difficult knowledge of human rights abuse. Like memorials that are acts of witness citizenship, these memorials are influenced by discourses of truth-telling. They adopt the language and practices of transitional justice, a transnational field that has developed as a way for societies to respond to a conflicted past. Memorials as symbolic reparations are created through bureaucratised processes in which trauma survivors are 'consulted with' but in which the power firmly rests with state actors. In these processes, having the right people involved is crucial. Memorials as symbolic reparations are initiated after human rights violations are made public through formal mechanisms such as government inquiries. Their aim is to 'repair' the relationship with survivors of loss and trauma. At their best they can be seen as an act of public listening and acknowledgment, but like government-initiated mourning memorials, they tend to frame the experience as in the past and as something which has been survived or can be recovered from. They can be a way of drawing marginalised

groups of people back into full citizenship, but are rarely, if ever, accompanied by a fundamental shift in power relations.

The case studies that punctuate the chapters of this dissertation have allowed me to analyse particular memorials in more depth. In response to the gap in memorial literature identified by Buckley-Zistel and Schafer (2014), these case studies have combined an analysis of the material object with discussion of the processes and relationships involved in their creation. I have argued that more work needs to be done to discuss the importance of quality and the role of the artist in memorial creation. One of my starting assumptions was that memorials need to be understood within a wider repertoire of cultural memory work and commemorative practice. These case studies have explored how individual memorial projects are connected with other types of memory work.

The future of memorialisation

As I discussed in the introduction, there is widespread suspicion about the creation of material objects for remembering. The increasing numbers of memorials have some people wondering where it will end. The answer to that question, I suspect, lies in the very processes that are used to create these memorials. Public memorials have been adopted by government as part of the way they respond to two types of events: natural disasters and human rights abuse. As large-scale natural disasters increase in frequency and scale due to climate change, it remains to be seen whether this will result in more memorials or whether there will come a point where disaster itself becomes normalised. With regards human rights abuses, those commemorated have so far been primarily connected to events of the 20th century. Knowledge about those abuses became public in the latter part of that century, and has been acknowledged by governments in response to official inquiries. Unless new events or experiences come to light through future inquiries, the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse may mark the end point of the emergence of this difficult knowledge, and potentially the end of government-led commemoration. Ideally, governments will stop perpetrating human rights abuse, although the 2015 *Forgotten children* report by the Australian HRC suggests this is a long way off. A number of people I interviewed expressed the view that at some point in the future we will need a memorial to acknowledge those asylum seekers Australia has detained through its punitive refugee deterrence policies.

A probable 'growth' area for public memorials is at the local level. As Cvetkovich argues, traumatic events can sometimes be used to draw attention to more generalised experiences of oppression (2003, p. 17). The story of the Stolen Generations

has come to stand in for the broader experience of settler-colonial oppression of Aboriginal peoples in Australia. The 'sorry' memorials created in the Melbourne local government areas of Whittlesea and Darebin have provided a focus for Reconciliation work that builds a shared understanding of Australia's history. Such memory work can have a genuine impact on building relationships of trust at a local level.

This research has found that one memorial cannot do everything, and memorials fail when they are asked to do too much. Sometimes, that means one event or experience needs to be commemorated in a number of different ways. Although national or state memorials are often appreciated by survivors as a way of acknowledging their experience, they rarely provide an appropriate mourning function. That kind of work seems to be best done at the site of the loss or trauma, and often involves a process of reclamation. Memory work creates and strengthens communities of memory, leading to productive conversations about what will best serve their needs. A group of ex-residents from the Clontarf orphanage in Perth recently created a heritage walk at the site, now Clontarf Aboriginal College. This kind of memory work that responds directly to the site may increase for groups that have already been acknowledged publicly through state memorials.

Contribution of this research to current debates in memorial research and symbolic reparations literature

This thesis posed the question of how and why non-death memorials have emerged as a genre. Another question might be: why not? What is it about death that has privileged it for so long? These kinds of questions are important because they force us to think about the ways certain kinds of suffering are privileged over others. This dissertation has begun to explore the reasons why trauma has emerged as a privileged category of loss. I have discussed two different kinds of trauma: those understood to come from 'natural' causes and those created through human action. Such distinctions are important for the ways memorials are created, and have broader implications as trauma studies continue to evolve.

When memorials acknowledge experiences where people have suffered a loss — whether the loss of physical assets in a natural disaster or emotional, health or educational loss through human rights abuse — the funds allocated to a memorial must be weighed against practical financial needs. This is a delicate balancing act. Where a large amount is allocated to a memorial, there will always be some who feel it could be better spent meeting material needs. These concerns are likely to be overcome if other needs are also seen to be addressed. As Sabine Marschall's work in the South African context shows, if material needs are not addressed, the

memorial's value to the community is diminished (Marschall 2004, 2012). On the other hand, the allocation of a very small amount to memorial funds can be seen as an indication that the project — and therefore the experience — is not taken seriously. Outdoor memorial objects are costly to create and to maintain. Even the simplest artwork must be vandal-proofed. As the process of commemoration is increasingly bureaucratised, further work would be valuable to offer some guidance in this area.

I have argued that text plays an important and under-researched role in public memorials. Memorial plaques are part of the 'encountered sign' of the memorial, and need to be understood alongside any landscaping or artwork that also forms the memory space. The words used on a plaque are important in understanding the narrative frame in which the memorial is presented. They are also a key part of creating the sacralised space of commemorations. Words are increasingly incorporated into the memorial itself, apart from the plaque. These words have a role in the work of truth-telling, which has become a core part of the work of memorials.

This thesis adds to the body of literature that engages with the 'public' side of public memory. I argue that memorials are an intervention into the public sphere, and can be understood as a technology of mediated visibility. While much recent scholarship has blurred the lines between memorials and memorial-museums, my work has focused on memorials as objects. I argue that these objects deserve to be understood in their finished form, as affective spaces that 'move' us. This research found that more attention needs to be paid to the quality of memorial artwork and the way it functions as an encountered sign (Bennett 2005). Nonetheless, I have argued that these memorials do not only exist in physical form, but also exist in images and digital records that circulate within the national and transnational public sphere. Any work that seeks to answer the question of the 'outcomes' of a memorial project needs to take this seriously.

This research has been influenced by cultural geography, and the case studies explored in this project pay close attention to local context. In the Australian democratic system, the lines between government and 'community' can sometimes blur. For example, in a number of cases, a single individual has supported a memorial project as mayor and also been involved as a private citizen after their term of office. Similarly, Senator Andrew Murray was instrumental in supporting the memory work of Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants while in office, and has continued to play a role through his appointment to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This suggests that international

memorial scholarship may need to pay more attention to the different governance arrangements in each country.

Policy implications and suggestions

If memorials are understood as affective spaces, the role of the artist is vital. The artist (or group of artists) is the key person who translates the experience of loss and trauma into a physical form. Each memorial will be one part of an artist's ongoing practice, and understanding that practice is important in understanding what they bring to the artwork. Art administrators understand this, which is why artists are shortlisted on the basis of their past history and conceptual work, rather than on a particular design. The other side of this relationship is the impact memorial work has on an artist. Of the eight artists who participated in interviews for this project, almost all had put in more work than they were paid for, while also considering the project one of the most important they had worked on. However, the majority also said they would not like to repeat the experience. Some had been affected by physical illness as a result of the demands of the work. More research into this important relationship would be valuable to support artists who are considering taking on a memorial artwork.

As this research project draws to a close, the NSW Department of Family and Community Services is undertaking a consultation process to develop a memorial for girls abused at the Parramatta Girls Home. Despite active and continuous memory work undertaken by the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct (PFFP) Memory Project since 2013, neither that group nor the Parragirls support network, which dates back to 2005, is mentioned in the consultation report (Elton Consulting 2015). The memorial project, therefore, is not driven by the work of that group of survivors and long-term supporters, but comes in response to the ongoing Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The news supports the findings of this research project, that government-initiated memorial projects are triggered by judicial inquiries.

I have argued that the work of witness citizenship plays an important role in influencing the development of symbolic reparations. However, the two processes do not always 'talk' to each other. The findings of the initial Parramatta Girls Home consultation (Elton Consulting 2015) echo much of the content of the PFFP Memory Project's and the Parragirls' websites. This suggests there is no disconnect between the groups of survivors involved in the grassroots and the government-led memory work. Yet it raises the question of why the existing work at the site has not been formally taken into account. One reason may be that the PFFP Memory Project and Parragirls draw connections between the various uses

of the site over time. This networked memory (Byrne 2014) does not fit with the now normalised framework for commemoration. More work is needed to develop best practice in this area.

This research project started with the assumption that memorials must serve a purpose if people are willing to invest time, effort and financial resources into creating them. Not one of the people involved in advocating for and creating the memorials identified in this research said they regretted their involvement. Most were not only proud of the work they had done, but thankful that the story of the memorial was being told. Some had reservations, which were often about the process and what could have been done differently. Further research and the development of some practical guidelines would be worthwhile.

Concepts of 'counter' and 'anti' memorials have been useful to explore the limits of memorialisation, but this dissertation has shown that the concept of a memorial is more flexible than the literature suggests. There is a need to move away from categorising memorials, and to ask instead what social needs memorials serve. Memorial practice and research has struggled with the idea of audience. Memorials are created to do various kinds of 'work' and there is almost always tension between the 'inside' and 'outside' functions of a memorial. Further work is needed to develop research methods that address the audience of memorials, bearing in mind that this public is not limited to those who are in its physical vicinity.

Final remarks

Memorials do many things. They enable marginalised people to have their stories publicly acknowledged and they create spaces where disenfranchised mourners can have their grief legitimised. They create spaces where communities of memory can gather and they help to reclaim spaces of pain. Nonetheless, memorials cannot mend the brokenness of the past. Sometimes, they are able to help a little to rebuild damage done in the past, and sometimes they allow people to turn a painful memory into something positive. Sometimes, however, they are used to 'fix' the past in time and place, and this is rarely helpful. Memorials do many things, but they cannot do everything.

I end this thesis with a call for generosity. It is easy to forget, some 20 or even 30 years after the first memorials to lived experience were created, how radical a departure they were. I have argued that memorials are a conservative memory practice, but bringing these stories of trauma and pain into the public sphere was, at that time, deeply countercultural. There are now a number of writers who are critical of the emergence of public displays of feeling, and read the mainstream use of affect and feeling in museums and memorials as a hegemonic practice.

This may be true. But hegemony cuts both ways. Yes, it is the incorporation of a previously radical idea or practice into the mainstream in a way that strips it of its radical power. But in that process of incorporation, the mainstream is always moved too. Memorials create spaces for conversation, and the very process of their creation gathers a community of memory together, often creating transformative relationships. Sometimes, just by being there, they make a difference for survivors, for whom having their experience spoken aloud is still a radical act.

Memorial Artworks and Plaques that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma

These are divided by Australian state and territory and listed in chronological order.

Australian Capital Territory

- Payne, S. Kringas, S. Bree, M. Tunks, B. & Vogt, A. 2004, 'Separation (artwork 3)', *Commemoration of the Stolen Generations*, memorial artwork, Reconciliation Place, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- Bohanna, G.S., Smith, A., Casey, K., Riley, C., Cowie, D. 2004, 'Separation (artwork 4)', *Commemoration of the Stolen Generations*, memorial artwork and fountain, Reconciliation Place, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- Carrick, B. & Mount Taylor Estate Community 2005, 'Firestorm Tree', restored 2013, *Commemoration of the 18 January 2003 firestorm*, carved tree trunk and mosaic seating, Kambah, ACT.
- Horwitz, T., Steel, T. & Jolly, M. 2006, 'ACT bushfire memorial', *Commemoration of the 2003 Canberra bushfires*, memory space, Weston, ACT.

New South Wales

- Foley, F & Laurence, J. commissioned by Emmett, P. 1995, 'Edge of the trees', *Acknowledgment of the lost opportunities of the settler-colonial beginning*, public art, Sydney, New South Wales.
- Becker, J., Brunner, S., Camacho, J.C. & Warner, L., 1998, 'Mary's Place', *Commemoration of a violent homophobic attack on a woman named Mary*, pavement mural, Surry Hills, New South Wales (removed).
- Dwyer M. & Taussig M. 2010, 'Lamp for Mary', *Commemoration of a violent homophobic attack on a woman named Mary*, public artwork, Surry Hills, New South Wales.
- Smith, R., Hurst J. & Schenkel, J. 1999, 'Sydenham lounge', *Commemoration of a neighbourhood demolished because of airport noise pollution*, public artworks, Sydenham, New South Wales.
- Hurst, J. 1999, 'Stolen Generations memorial', *Commemoration of the Stolen Generations*, monument, Sydenham, New South Wales.

- Valamamesh, H., Valamamesh, A. & Carter, P. 1999, 'The Australian monument to the Great Irish Famine (1845-1852)', *Commemoration of the Irish Famine and female survivors who emigrated to Australia*, memory space, Sydney, New South Wales.
- Kinloch, C. 2001, 'Kaia', *Commemoration of the Uranquinty Migrant Centre*, sculpture, Uranquinty, New South Wales.
- Cloustan Associates Landscape Architects 2001, 'Cadi Jam Ora', *Commemoration of settler-colonisation in Sydney and differences in approach to the natural environment between the Cadigal and the British First Fleet*, heritage garden and interpretive signage, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales.
- Robb, W. 2004, *Commemoration of teenage girls at the Hay Girls Institution 1961-1974*, rose garden and plaque, Hay, New South Wales.
- Reid, S. 2006, 'Coming and Going', *Commemoration of children sent to Australia from UK and Malta on government programs during 20th Century*, public art, Sydney, New South Wales.
- 'Wishing Well' 2006, *Commemoration of the Cootamundara Aboriginal Girls' Training Home*, memorial sculpture and plaque, Cootamundra, New South Wales.
- Bates, W.B. & Link-Up NSW 2007, 'Stolen Generations Memorial', *Commemoration of the Stolen Generations*, memory space, The Australian Botanical Gardens, Mt Annan, New South Wales.
- Simms S. 2001, 'Stolen Generations Memorial', extended by J. Groves 2008, *Commemoration of the Stolen Generations*, memorial garden and plaque, Bomaderry, New South Wales.
- Government of NSW, 2009, *Commemoration of people who spent time in 'care' as children in the 20th century*, plaque, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales.
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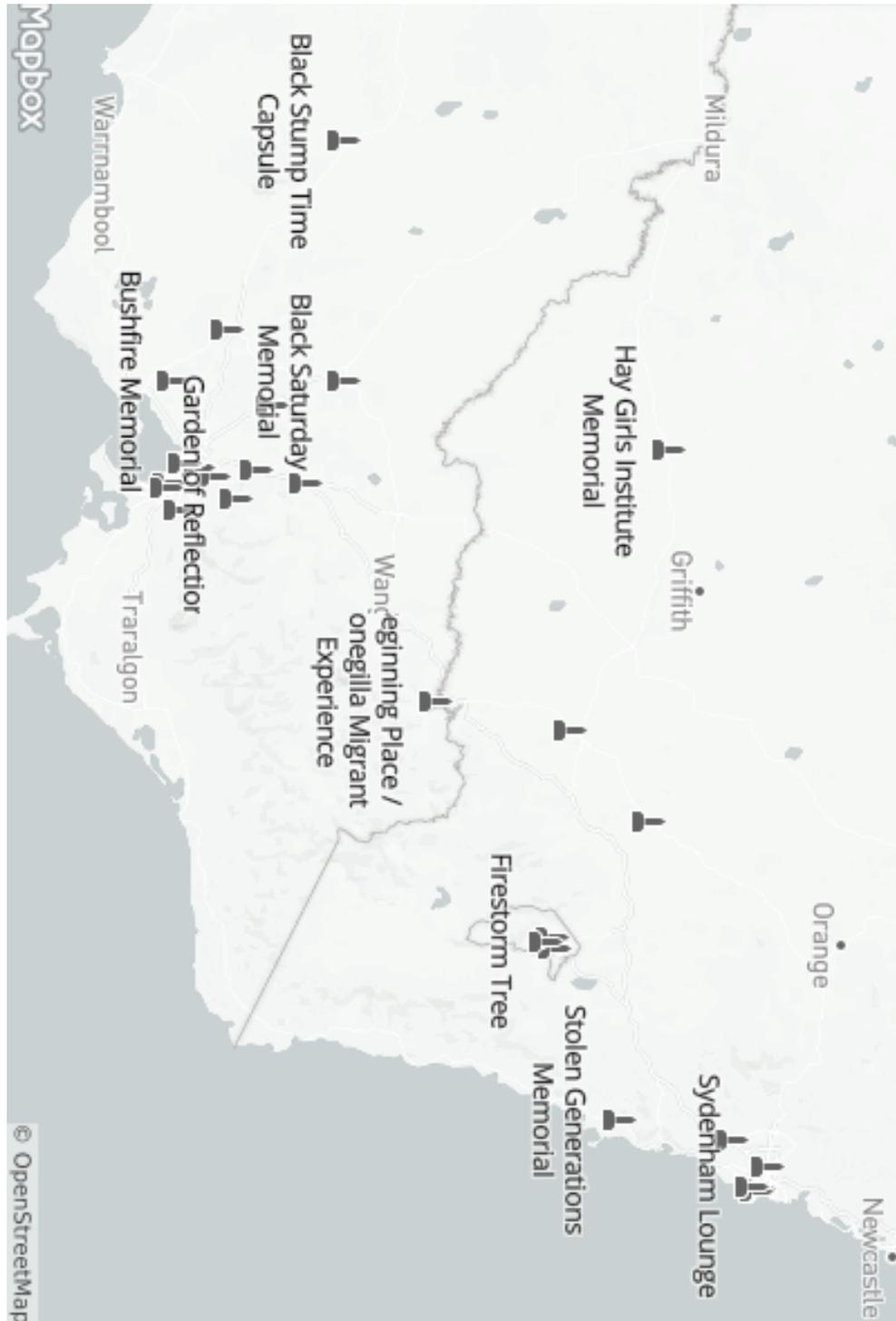
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Maps

The maps on the following pages are to give an indication of where the memorials are located and clustered around Australia. In capital city areas, there are more memorials, and not all of them will be individually visible.

South Eastern Australia (including Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria).





Queensland (south eastern part)

South Australia (southern, central area)



Tasmania (southern area around Hobart)





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