Between “Philanthropy” and “Corporate Strategy”:
A Critical Analysis of Power, Resistance, Motivation and Process
within Community-Corporate Engagement

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2012
This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents

Mary Magdalene Roffey
1931 – 2011

&

Keith Roffey
1929 - 2011
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Christopher D. Roffey         August 2012
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACOSS</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>Corporate Community Involvement (also Community Corporate Involvement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDSE</td>
<td>Community Development and Support Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DocS</td>
<td>Department of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFC</td>
<td>Global Financial Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>Ideologically-Discursive Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC OSS</td>
<td>New South Wales Council of Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>Not-For-Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMCBP</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Prescribed Private Fund</td>
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<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
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ABSTRACT

The emergence and increasing significance of corporate philanthropy, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community-corporate engagement in the Australian welfare context, has presented new opportunities and challenges to community-based organisations. Such trends have occurred within a wider political, economic and social context, typified by a devolving Welfare State, and the expansion of neo-liberalism as a “cure-all” to enduring issues concerning third sector legitimacy and sustainability. However, underlying relations of power have continued to pervade seemingly benign concepts such as “philanthropy”, “engagement” and “partnerships”. These factors prove to be often omitted from discussions about the future of the third sector, and relationships between corporations and community sector organisations.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the nature and extent of power as a relational force within the field of community-corporate engagement. This research undertook a collaborative, multi-phased method, utilising a combination of surveys, semi-structured interviews, and a day-long “search conference” to explore the experiences, tensions and opportunities experienced by participants from both the community and corporate sectors. Both pragmatic and critical objectives underpinned this research. The practical objectives were:

1. The development of a comprehensive understanding of cross-sector collaborations, with a specific focus upon the opportunities and inequities located within existing practice. This exploratory research will result in;
2. The creation of a final tool kit designed to assist local community sector organisations to more effectively engage with the corporate sector. This tool kit (in the form of a resource handbook) would be developed in consultation with community and corporate sector practitioners.
While these pragmatic objectives are assessed within this thesis, this research was particularly concerned with the role of participatory action research (PAR) in fostering greater democratic dialogue between participants from both sectors. More specifically, this thesis provides an assessment of the attempts made to shift power within community-corporate relationships, while considering the ongoing implications of this process inclusively.

This research employed the combined framework of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2003, 2010) and researcher reflexivity to assess power dynamics within the research texts and wider PAR process. A key finding of this study was that a “strategic” corporate discourse has increasingly underpinned the motivations, processes and activities within community-corporate engagement, resulting in new forms of inequities and tensions, particularly for small community organisations. Similar tensions were also located within the university-industry research partnership, leading to further critical insight. An analysis of interactions during the search conference, and developments subsequent to the research process, have raised the spectre of an emerging resistance to instrumental positioning – opening up new possibilities for alternative discourses, motivations and agendas to emerge. These findings are assessed with reference to their implications on future research, as well as applied practice.
Chapter One

Introduction
1.1 Introduction – Outlining the Research Problem

This study critically analyses tensions and contradictions played out through community-corporate engagement within the Australian welfare context. In departure from the traditional reliance upon the state, many community organisations are now compelled to align with the corporate and philanthropic sectors for support. The pressures on non-government organisations (NGOs) to continually search for new forms of funding relationships which ensure their financial security are experienced universally in wealthy and poor countries alike (Viravaidya & Hayssen, 2001). However, recent social, political and economic shifts in Australia have changed the way community organisations operate at the local level. These changes have impacted upon the quality and extent of state-community relationships, causing many within the third sector to search for alternative ways in which to survive and flourish.

Although community-corporate partnerships have been on the policy radar for some time (Cronin & Zappalà, 2002), research remains largely embryonic, focusing primarily on the motivations and processes of the corporate sector (Sargeant & Crissman, 2006; The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2007). Very little qualitative analysis exists of the motivations, experiences, possibilities and tensions of both sides, and even less so on attempts to integrate them into a single research agenda. This thesis is positioned to provide a significant contribution to this knowledge gap, by focusing primarily upon power struggles that unavoidably occur when community and corporate objectives, interests and cultures intersect. As will be outlined in this introduction and expanded upon in later chapters, different political and social factors have compelled both sectors to see value in working together. It is because of these divergent interests, culture processes and discourses that greater scrutiny is required in exploring whether one side “wins-out” in forming relationships or whether “happy” (equal) relationships are indeed possible.
1.2 Community-Corporate Engagement within the Neo-liberal Political Context

The rise of the neo-Liberal ideology both socially and politically has been characterised by the significant withdrawal of the state in the provision of welfare for its citizens. Organisations within the third sector are having to adapt to a political discourse which strongly advocates a “user pays” or “competitive market-based” philosophy (Irvine, 2000; Spall & Zetlin, 2004). Although governments remain the primary funder of public services, the majority of state sponsored activities are now being “put out to tender” within a competitive market-oriented environment (Darcy, Waterford, & McIvor, 2009; Nowland-Foreman, 1998a; Rawsthorne, 2005). The impacts of these changes at the organisational level have been dramatic. Prior to the 1990s, local welfare-based organisations held considerable control in defining the activities and services which they felt their communities required, and after developing their own objectives, funding from the state was requested. Within this framework, community-based organisations supplemented government provision of welfare by locating and addressing local needs in ways that empowered community members (Everingham, 1998). Under the current competitive tendering model, the state holds the authority to decide which services should be “purchased”, thus shifting power from the recipient of funding to the funder (NCOSS, 1997; O'Shea, 2007). The impact has been particularly pronounced on small-to mid-sized organisations who often receive the bulk of their funding from government sources (Lyons, 2001). Research has shown that organisations operating within this “quasi-market” model who provide programs to “fill-the-gap” for many requiring assistance, advocacy and social support, are now experiencing greater vulnerability due to the non-recurrent nature and increased scarcity of contracts (Darcy, et al., 2009).

In efforts to sustain government support, many have responded by adopting institutionalised, top-down management structures that enable organisations to better exhibit administrative effectiveness and efficient program delivery (O'Shea, 2007). A rise of “new public management” discourse has seen many previously benevolent organisations in the field of welfare and advocacy
increasingly resembling businesses in their own right, as evidenced by the injection of corporate language and practices into the community sector (Treleaven & Sykes, 2005). Beyond repositioning community members into “service users” and “consumers” (Keevers, Treleaven, & Sykes, 2008), the notion of community itself is “repackaged” into a marketable product designed specifically to secure public funding (Brown, Kenny, Turner, & Prince, 2000). Under the corporatist welfare state model, bureaucratic discourse permeates notions of community by ‘categorising people in terms of their common relative disadvantage’ (Darcy, 2002, p. 36). Rather than opposing ideological bureaucratic discourse, both discourses are now enmeshed by refocusing attention to the separate needs of target individuals, groups and localities. Accordingly, addressing these targeted areas of disadvantage requires efficient service delivery aimed at the attainment of pre-defined performance measures and outcomes (Darcy, 2002). While providing opportunities to some organisations, O’Shea (2007) argues that the permeation of market (neo-liberal) discourse has impacted on the sector negatively by hampering overall flexibility and responsiveness.

Governments and other bodies advancing a neo-liberal policy agenda have also actively attacked advocacy groups, depicting them as ‘unelected and unrepresentative’ bodies working towards their own self interest (Mendes, 2005, p. 40). While debatable, such criticism exists within a broader push for greater accountability and transparency in the non-profit sector. Despite such political pressure, peak organisations like ACOSS (1997) and prominent Australian writers in the field such as Ife and Tesoriero (2010) and Kenny (1999, 2002), maintain that the neo-liberal policy agenda remains highly contradictory to the community development values of participation, activism and social justice. It is from within this context that many local community-based organisations have begun to look to the business sector for support.

According to its proponents, aligning with business is an essential precursor for renewal within the community sector (Lyons, 2006), and assert that corporations are well placed to fulfil their social responsibility aspirations while
nurturing projects that the state is either unwilling or unable to support (Austin, 2000; Lyons & Zappalà, 2008; Zappalà & Caitlin, 2003). This position has been further strengthened by public policy and tax measures advanced during the years of the Howard Coalition government which offered considerable incentives to both sectors in forming funding partnerships (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008; McGregor-Lowndes, Newton, & Marsden, 2006). However, focus in Australia has often been given to the impact of corporate funding on larger, well resourced charities (Loza, 2004; Zappalà, 2007), and it remains unclear whether community-corporate partnerships provide positive benefit to the more vulnerable locally-based organisations. Even so, positive examples exist as exemplified by a research study in New Zealand, giving a glimpse into the higher levels of trust fostered between a community organisation and its funder without the need for excessive institutionalisation and audit technologies (Shaw & Allen, 2006).

Overall, community-corporate (cross-sector) partnerships remain largely uncharted territory in the Australian setting with only a handful of studies exploring these relationships with sufficient depth and breadth (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008; McQueen, 2002). On a welfare policy level, some remain sceptical of the purported benefits arising through continued marketisation of welfare and institutionalisation of third sector organisations, particularly concerning the impact this will have on advocacy, community development and civil society more generally (Brown, et al., 2000; Ife & Tesoriero, 2010; Irvine, 2000). Whereas according to others, monolithic entities designed with principles of profit maximisation in mind are limited in their ability to embody social responsibility and truly advocate for the common good (Banerjee, 2008; Shamir, 2004; Silver, 2009). These debates are likely to continue for some time to come. Of particular interest to this analysis is in the subjective experience of community-corporate (cross-sector) relationships as defined by key actors within the field (managers and CEOs across the two sectors). More specifically, the research seeks to examine underlying motivations, needs and agendas of both sides and theorise how such factors may determine relations of power within partnerships.
1.3 “Strange Bedfellows”: Motivations, Needs and World Views within Cross-Sector Relationships

The partnering of non-profit organisations with private corporations whose primary goal is to maximise shareholder value certainly seems a case of “strange bedfellows” at face value. A glimpse into the underlying motivations of each sector appears to support this assertion. As illustrated by Kilby (2006), the values of NGOs can be categorised into four groups: 1. Weltanschauung – a world view or philosophy; 2. Temporal – immediate concerns (e.g. humanitarian relief); 3. Terminal – an end point to be reached (e.g. an end to poverty); 4. Organisational – representing the operations (e.g. honesty and integrity). These values are somewhat nebulous and intangible, unlike the clear measure of profit-over-costs as is the minimalist economic measure for corporations (Friedman, 1970). Emerging interpretations of corporate social responsibility (CSR) endeavour to exhibit a wider degree of organisational self-awareness by incorporating the social, environmental and economic impacts of corporate activities; although Carroll and Shabana (2010) maintain that a “business case” is commonly emphasised even within these alternative CSR programs. When translated into the more specific field of community corporate relationships, the language of investment has been found to replace involvement, raising questions about how changes such as these will play out at the community level (Muthuri, 2008).

Research coming out of Australia certainly reflects international trends, with philanthropic partnerships being increasingly superseded by transactional or mutually beneficial forms (Lyons, 1998). Interestingly, the term “philanthropy”, while employed in the above context to depict altruistic giving, has undergone considerable evolution since its origin in Ancient Greece. Schultz (2009) explains that while altruism is “hardwired” into most individuals, philanthropic actions have tended to reflect the dominant goals, values, infrastructures and power-relations of any given epoch and political space. Indeed, the recent iteration of transactional CSR may represent the growing prominence of corporate interests and the profit motive. The recent corporate focus upon supporting NGOs who “align” with their interests and values is also worthy of
greater attention. Edwards and Onyx (2003, p. 117) had previously noted the tendency for “sexy non-profits” to be courted by corporations due to the marketing and branding benefits associated with supporting popular causes. Many non-profits who are deemed “non-sexy” in the specific issues they address, or organisations operating within the field of advocacy and community development pursuing aims counter to that of business, experience much greater difficulty in attracting corporate support (Edwards & Onyx, 2003).

It is worth noting that corporations remain highly complex social institutions, and often influencing the direction of their activities are individuals with diffuse interests, agendas and worldviews. As Kitzmueller (2008) found, strategic CSR can be driven by consumer, investor or employee preferences, swayed by the actions of governments and activists, or positioned to adhere to the values and cultures of local communities. Insight such as this reveals the fluidity of how “socially responsible” behaviour may be defined, which can equally impact upon how individuals interact within and outside of corporations, thus forming popularised institutional culture.

Notwithstanding this point, corporations in Australia are still limited both through legislation and their own fiduciary structures in how they pursue their CSR agendas. The current Australian legislative environment dictates that business managers conduct all activities in the interest of their shareholders, meaning that some form of “take-out” is required when forming philanthropic or other relationships (Horrigan, 2005; Standen, 2005). Corporate trusts must also meet stringent legal requirements, even though they are often more likely to be driven by “public good” objectives (Ward, 2008). As such, for local organisations –even those exhibiting characteristics highly valued by the corporate sector – inequity may still be apparent within the structures of relationships. For example, an earlier study on one such local organisation found that members of community management structures faced considerable barriers in meeting reporting and monitoring requirements placed upon them in return for funding (Roffey, 2006). In this case, converting the process-oriented thinking and value-laden language common within the community
sector, to a corporate-oriented system measuring “social impact” and “net present value” of the social investment, was well beyond the comprehension of community workers.

Impediments to effective relationships may not always be caused by mutually exclusive processes. As Lyons (2001, p. 173) reflected, ‘relationships between the for-profit and third sectors are bedevilled in stereotypes’. Many within the community sector are driven by a dislike of the self-interest, competition and profit motive which they perceive as guiding the actions of individuals within the business sector. Such assumptions contrast with cooperation, altruism and idealism which embody the traditional ethos of many non-profit organisations (Bush, 1992). Likewise, corporate executives often regard disparagingly perceived inefficiencies and lax management structures within non-profit organisations (Lyons, 2001). Behind such ‘common sense’ assumptions are a complex array of ideas, moral assertions, and various rhetorical devices that, on close inspection, reveal the speaker’s particular ‘world view’ (Lakoff, 2002b). Understandably, the ‘positioning’ of community workers may often result in a different set of values, assumptions and emphases on how their work is given meaning, to that of external corporate funders. In order to extrapolate these subliminal assumptions, ideologies and institutional narratives, a theorised understanding of discourse is required.

1.4 Examining Power, Knowledge and Discourse in Relationships

The aforementioned “background” factors can often appear insignificant in the applied setting. However, assumptions and world views can have a dramatic impact on how individuals think and interact, further influencing the issues that are categorised as important and how the social world is comprehended (Lakoff, 2002b). According to Gubrium and Holstein (2000b, p. 493), the concept of discourse is useful in this context as it ‘considers how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds’. Advanced considerably by the work of Michel Foucault (1972, 1979),
the concept of discourse reveals how language use embodies relations of power, which can influence, constrain or galvanise groups into action. The concept of power employed herein draws specifically from a relational standpoint, whereby control, subjugation and resistance are played out through dialectical relationships between different language systems, assumptions, objects, genres, structures and processes (Clegg, 2011; Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1972). While decidedly more fluid when compared to traditional conceptions, an interest in power relations within the research is specifically concerned with the capacity for one side to win out in cross-sector relationships through controlling language use and thus “naturalising” hegemonic discourses (Fairclough, 2010). In basic terms, discourse within this context provides a way of imagining (or representing) how the world has been in the past, how the world is today and how the world will be in the future (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2003, 2010) takes Foucault’s theoretical discussion of discourse further by applying it to the practical setting, outlining in his analysis how discourse can be influenced, manipulated and resisted in various ways.

Others have adopted this understanding of discourse within the field of third sector research. For example, Parkinson and Howorth (2007) examined the discourses prevalent within social entrepreneurialism in the United Kingdom. They found that social entrepreneurs commonly drew legitimacy from collectivist and community development discourses instead of purely entrepreneurial discourse. It was argued that their capacity to reframe discourse in this way rested on the social entrepreneur’s societal position “in between” the community and the wider bureaucratic system (Parkinson & Howorth, 2007, p. 35). This insight is useful as Fairclough (2003) notes that new discourses can emerge when combinations of existing ones are rearticulated outside of their usual social contexts. As will be explained later in this thesis, the meshing of discourses holds clear relevance to this study.

Community-corporate partnerships exist in an environment where various organisations and individuals – each comprising a wide diversity of needs, cultures, processes, institutional discourses and, notably, assumptions about the
other – intersect. An analysis of power will examine how individuals across both sectors understand and place value on community-based activities; who is in a position to define those activities that are deemed most “worthwhile”; and how best to measure the success of such activities. For instance, a member of an organisation that perceives “best practice” through a prism of social returns or value for money may easily come in conflict with another who regards best practice through less tangible outcomes of participation, representation, openness, care and flexibility.

1.5 Uncloaking Relationships

In expanding upon the relationship metaphor raised earlier, this thesis will question whether community-corporate partnerships are indeed “budding romances”; in which different ideologies and values between the two sectors position them as “strange bedfellows”. Moreover, evidence may also point to an alternative scenario whereby one side is expected to adopt the values, languages and processes of the other (as alluded to in Lyons & Zappalà, 2008). Given the existing power differentials between the two sectors, it may be assumed that expectations would rest upon the community organisation to more closely resemble their corporate “partner”. Situations like this one would suggest that both partners within a community-corporate relationship are, in the end, not so different after all (resembling “kissing cousins”), leaving behind those NGOs unable or unwilling to adapt to such radical changes in their organisational structure and approach. Nonetheless, one also cannot rule-out the possibility that organisations pressured to adopt certain changes within a relationship may actually be “faking it” in order to accrue benefits from the other. The potential relevance of these themes will form key areas of analysis within this thesis.

This research presents an opportunity to provide a more detailed explanation of community-corporate relationships, and examine whether accord may be reached between the two sides in a way that does not compromise the inherent values that make community-based activities effective in the pursuit of social justice, or impact negatively on a corporate donor. As such, beyond examining
these relationships, this research has specifically adopted an engaged methodology of action research to enhance understanding of the objectives, needs and preferences between the two sectors. The aims and scope of this approach are summarised further below.

1.6 Aim and Scope
In light of the issues raised above, of note are three broad problem areas that relate to the social and political environment where community-corporate relationships take place. The following points will be outlined in much greater detail throughout this thesis:

1. *That the political and social environment affords considerable power to corporations, which enables them to place demands upon community organisations.*

2. *These demands run counter to the culture, operations and history of the community sector*

3. *Cross-sector relationships are impeded by a conflict of objectives and interests, thus limiting the capacity of true “partnership” development*

Beyond researching how community organisations and corporations experience these problems, this research explores the issue of power imbalance more directly and creatively. Through a multistage engaged research design, an intentional effort is made to address some areas of tension and inequity which have been outlined by respondents from both sectors in the study. As the exploratory analysis will reveal, existing relations between community organisations and corporations have been found to disproportionately emphasise the needs, wants and agendas of the corporate sector. Consequently, the aim of this study is to assess attempts made in shifting power within community-corporate relationships to gain an even playing field.

The focus of this research is on the broad issue of community-corporate partnerships. However, a number of factors naturally limit the scope of this
study. Corporate philanthropy, social investment and other CSR activities have made their way to a plethora of areas within the third sector, including sporting, the arts, health, education, international aid, and community and welfare (ACOSS, 2005). Researching the full breadth of these activities is neither feasible nor relevant to the social problem currently identified. Rather, this thesis examines the social issue of philanthropy, CSR and community/corporate involvement (CCI) with relation to the non-profit welfare and advocacy context. More specifically, this research is distinctively interested in the experiences of small, locally-based community welfare organisations in seeking, developing, or maintaining relationships with large businesses or corporate trusts.

For the purpose of this thesis the terms “community organisations” and “locally-based organisations” are employed interchangeably to refer to ‘communities of interest, of identity, of location, dedicated to welfare service provision, or advocacy and representation’ (Cass and Brennan, 2002, cited in Keevers, et al., 2008, p. 460). Often what unites these various roles are a reliance on volunteers, flat decision-making structures (either in the form of a management committee or board of directors), and a focus on maintaining and strengthening local community ties (Gevers & Goddard-Jones, 2007). A smaller number of large-sized charities (i.e. with annual turnovers well into the AU$ millions) were also involved to serve as comparisons to the experiences of these smaller organisations (i.e. with annual turnovers of AU$1 million and under). Community groups interviewed were located predominantly in the Western Sydney area, although a small number were also interviewed in Newcastle and Sydney Central Business District (CBD). Corporate sector representatives who participated were in management positions either in a direct business or a major charitable trust aligned with a business. All participants from the corporate sector were situated in Sydney, Newcastle or Melbourne.
1.7 Significance of this Study: Integrating Academic and Practical Agendas

As indicated earlier, very little research is available to date which offers insight into the qualitative dynamics and trends of partnerships, and the extent and development of this form of engagement in the Australian context. Aside from providing a detailed and theorised understanding of the mutual impact of community-corporate relationships, this study is unique in that it brought both sides together through an action research design with the intention of resolving key areas of tension and inequity. However, this study did not merely function as an academic exercise.

Participants had the opportunity to draw benefit by contributing to applied outcomes, primarily in the form of a practical guidebook specifically tailored to the increasing number of Australian community projects supported by business. In keeping with the social justice orientation of this analysis, the outcomes of this work were designed to be of primary assistance to local community organisations by disseminating greater knowledge of corporate motivations, expectations and agendas. It is argued that equipping those groups intent on seeking corporate support to greater manage this power imbalance will contribute, at least in part, towards the formation of equal partnerships. A conscious emphasises will thus be paid to the unique experiences of the community side within cross-sector relationships; a stance which is positioned as a significant point of departure from many earlier studies. This reorientation in focus is not merely infused within the research design and analytical framework but is also reflected in certain semantic gestures within this thesis. For example, instead of the traditional linguistic ordering of the term corporate-community engagement, this research utilises the alternative community-corporate engagement to commence a process whereby traditional academic assumptions are denaturalised and reframed.
1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is concerned with the relations of power within community-corporate relationships and the degree to which these imbalances are entrenched or open to resistance. As Figure 1 illustrates, this thesis will be structured into seven interlinking chapters.
Figure 1 - Thesis Structure

- **Chapter 2 (Research Context):**
  Wants, Needs and Hidden Agendas

- **Chapter 3 (Literature Review):**
  Philanthropy and Strategy: Power Relations between NGOs and Corporations

- **Chapter 4 (Methodology):**
  Rebalancing Power Relationships through Participatory Action Research

- **Chapter 5 (Method):**
  A Multi-Phase Research Process

- **Chapter 6 (Analytical Framework):**
  Rationale for Analysing Power Critically through Research Texts and Research Practice

- **Chapter 7 (Results):**
  Exploring Opportunities, Tensions and Inequities between the Corporate and Community Sectors

- **Chapter 8 (Discussion):**
  Unequal Partnerships: Parallels in Power Relations between Community-Corporate Relationships and in the Applied Research Process

- **Chapter 9 (Reflections and Conclusions):**
  Neo-liberalism, Corporate Strategy and Alternative Futures
Chapter Two canvasses the social, political and economic context as experienced by organisations within the community and corporate sectors. By outlining the expansion and subsequent “crisis” within the welfare state, the greater role played by the third sector within the Australian economy is discussed along with the implications this will have on service provision and social policy in the future. More specifically, this discussion builds upon themes raised in the introductory chapter, centreing on the advent of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism, and how the ideal of “community” has been positioned as a space sitting in contrast to the perceived inefficiencies of the welfare state. Due to these shifts, many local community organisations have changed their focus to the delivery of government funded services, throwing into question their level of autonomy and ability to advocate for communities they represent.

The second part of Chapter Two charts the rise of the corporation as a legal entity and its evolving social function. Legitimacy issues have also been forced upon the corporate sector whereby businesses are expected to acknowledge their accountability beyond that of being answerable to their shareholders. However, the concept of CSR has been presented through multiple interpretations, revealing divergent theoretical bases and practical applications. The opposing poles of economic or “shareholder” CSR and ethical or “stakeholder” CSR (Windsor, 2001) reveal how attempts to pin down the principles of “responsible” corporate behaviour remain illusory at best. Concluding this chapter is a reflection on how the differing histories, pressures and priorities within each sector result in competing aims, motivations and world views.

Chapter Three reviews existing literature on community-corporate relationships, paying close attention to the role of power structures in regulating expectation and practices. Beginning with an historic analysis of philanthropy, this section unpacks the notion of “altruism” examining how the differing forms of individual and corporate giving are fundamentally influenced by various political, cultural, religious and economic structures, power relations and moral systems. Community-corporate involvement in the Australian
context is framed as a continuation of this broad tradition. The power afforded to corporations and the various pressures placed on community organisations to follow suit raises serious questions about the potential for equal partnerships to be formed. This chapter concludes with an argument supporting more critical approaches to research within this field.

Based on the various contextual factors raised in chapter two and the issue of power discussed in Chapter Three, Chapter Four presents an explanation and rationale for the research methodology. A participatory action research (PAR) design was chosen over more traditional approaches in light of its ability to traverse between the practical and academic objectives. One point of contention is raised concerning the history of researchers in working within existing unequal power structures. In response, a critical research stance is proposed. After reviewing some paradigmatic foundations of PAR, Chapter Four continues by exploring various strategies employed by action researchers toward aims of building democratic dialogue into research approaches. The search conference method is highlighted as a possible research instrument through which to facilitate open debate and discussion between the community and corporate sectors in the current research project.

Chapter Five outlines how the multi-phase research design has been developed in response to the research objectives. After outlining the collaborative structure of the action research project, the three major phases of research are described. These phases include use of surveys, in-depth interviews, and a day-long Search Conference. Specific processes involved in the planning, recruitment of a purposive sample, and conduct of each phase are outlined.

Chapter Six discusses how power will be examined through the research process. After presenting various available frameworks of text analysis, Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (CDA) is presented as the most appropriate in exploring language and power across the organisational divide. In particular, the capacity to explore both the “macro” and “micro” components of discourse constitutes its principle strength. Later sections explain the specific
concepts, questions and tools used in operationalising the analysis of power within the research texts (which include transcripts of interviews and sections of the search conference).

Chapter Seven presents an analysis of survey, interview and Search Conference findings. By employing CDA, key areas of tension are located and discussed. The first part examines the needs, motivations and subjectivities across the two sectors. The second part of the chapter explores tensions found between corporate and community participants, centred on expectations within relations, and perceptions of key concepts such as accountability, success, organisational culture and sustainability. Far from providing an alternative to government support, corporate sector funders were found to draw from a strategic CSR discourse that limits the scope of funding and organisations considered worthy of corporate support. Through analysis of search conference breakout groups, significant power differentials were located within the field of community-corporate engagement. Also examined were the strategies, resources and discourses drawn upon by participants in the pursuit of instrumental or communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1987).

Chapter Eight forms a wider discussion of the results and contextualises this analysis within the collaborative action research process. Notably, this analysis reveals how interactions between the research group and external partners and research participants replicated many of the issues and tensions found within the field of community-corporate relationships. The final part of Chapter Eight reflects upon advancements and barriers to reframing existing practice within the search conference, with a “post script” commenting on further outcomes that have arisen through the dissemination of results.

Chapter Nine reflects upon the broad aims set out in chapter one. Although this reflection acknowledges the limitations of the action research process and the attempts made to shift power across the participant groups, it argues that considerable benefits are also evident. In particular, the role of this research in spurring further discussion, reflection and critical analysis of community-
corporate partnerships in the applied setting is positioned as a considerable achievement. Although significant power imbalances were located within the context of corporate philanthropy (played out through a superseding *strategic discourse*), the continuation of this critically reflective process in the applied setting indicates that greater equality between the corporate and community sectors is by no means a lost cause. This point is exemplified by the emerging support for community sector intermediaries and coalitions to advocate for and counsel local community organisations through the difficulties of community-corporate partnerships.
Chapter Two

Wants, Needs and Hidden Agendas
2.1 Introduction

When I talk with people in the not-for-profit sector and ask them what they most need, they usually talk about the needs of clients, the people they serve, their community. Making their organisations stronger is a second order issue, and the needs of the broader not-for-profit sector come a long way behind.

Bill Shorten, MP (2010)

Of course, in practice the doctrine of social responsibility is frequently a cloak for actions that are justified on other grounds rather than a reason for those actions... It would be inconsistent of me to call on corporate executives to refrain from this hypocritical window-dressing because it harms the foundations of a free society. That would be to call on them to exercise a 'social responsibility'! If our institutions and the attitudes of the public make it in their self-interest to cloak their actions in this way, I cannot summon much indignation to denounce them.

Milton Friedman (1970)

The recent drift towards community-corporate partnerships has been a relatively recent phenomenon in Australia. Since the colonial period, community services have developed in an environment where government held primary responsibility for welfare provision, and corporate philanthropy in this context has historically been negligible (Murphy, 2006). Over the past few decades community sector organisations have exhibited increased interest in drawing upon corporate resources in sustaining and expanding their operations, and progressively, Australian corporations have also shown an interest in aligning with the community.

The two quotes above depict the motivations of each side as falling at opposite poles. While the needs on the non-profit sector has been presented in a way that prioritises members, clients and their communities, corporate motivations were represented as instrumental in origin. Although Friedman was a principal advocate of the "shareholder" perspective of corporate social responsibility (CSR), many of the philanthropic actions of today's businesses would exhibit the
same “window dressing” that he begrudgingly accepted more than forty years ago. Increasingly, the hidden agenda of “mutual benefit” once located by Friedman has become a primary motivator for corporate giving in current CSR discussions. While the ethical bases of these activities are at times questioned, many would maintain that corporate giving is an admirable activity. Conversely, non-profit organisations draw from a much wider understanding of social responsibility based on ontological notions of “civil society”, “community” and various principles of social justice and empowerment. By providing an historical backdrop to the development of community-based activities from each side, the disparate needs, wants and agendas are revealed, enabling further exploration and analysis.

2.2 The Needs of the Community Sector: Values, Social Change and Tension

2.2.1 Background: Community Services in the Australian “Postwelfare” State

The Australian welfare landscape has undergone considerable transformation since Federation. This change often centred on the perceived role of the State in relation to welfare provision, which has by association impacted greatly on the governance of local community services. From the late nineteenth century, the focus of the state was primarily centred on maintaining a fair and just wage for the male-dominated workforce. While effective in protecting some rights held by working men, this model was based primarily around wage arbitration, import tariffs and subsidies (Castles, 2001). A basic welfare apparatus slowly emerged including limited unemployment, disability or retirement benefits, but notably, any needs experienced by women were determined solely by the situation of the male wage earner (Habibis & Walter, 2011). However, far from being a “working man's paradise”, Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart (1995, p. 42) point out that this framework was designed to create wide acceptance of an unequal system that assisted ’a small minority of the skilled workforce [...] at the cost of the exploitation of others'.

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A liberal welfare regime later arose particularly in the second half of the twentieth century through capped means tested payments – distributed according to an individual’s level of employment, income and family status (Habibis & Walter, 2011). Variations of this residual system were also found in many English speaking western countries, which contrasted considerably with universalist regimes found in Western Europe. This residual system was (and largely remains) based on the provision of limited support for the most “deserving” poor and in prioritising market solutions to social problems (Fawcett, Goodwin, Meagher, & Phillips, 2010). However, as Castles (2001) argues, the residual nature of Australian welfare provision that emerged in the 1960s was unique in that it was less designed to stigmatise the poor (as is often charged by proponents of universal welfare) than to exclude the wealthy from gaining access to government assistance. The increased development of the welfare state in many Western countries from the 1950s to the 1970s occurred during a period Hobsbawm (1995) described as “the Golden Age”. This period was exemplified by high employment, consistent economic growth and a level of affluence unseen in previous periods (Hobsbawm, 1995).

Economic and public policy shifts since the 1980s have resulted in the increased stigmatization of welfare, hastened recently by the rise of conservative moral discourse and the permeation of an economic rationalist policy agenda (Castles, 2001). In similarity to the United States of America, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the political landscape in Australia has constantly seen a movement away from a statist “government” led welfare system to a “governance” (or “governing at a distance”) approach to administration. Eikenberry (2007) describes this discursive and policy shift as moving away from direct state-centred service provision to one involving partnerships with a range of third parties from the business and not-for-profit sectors.

The rationale for this dramatic political and economic change was attributable to what Habermas (1975) referred to as the legitimation crisis of the welfare state. During the 1970s, social democratic states increasingly found themselves unable to adequately respond to and counteract the negative effects of the
capitalist economy on its citizens. Several contradictions were found within the welfare system, the primary concern being that in times of greater social need (i.e. through slowing economic growth, high unemployment and increased poverty), the state’s capacity to finance measures to counteract them has been severely weakened (Ife & Tesoriero, 2010). As Habermas (1975) put it, the perceived inability of the welfare state in fulfilling its central task severely impacted on its legitimacy, leading to a crisis in the political order.

One outcome of this legitimacy crisis was the adoption of the alternative ideological framework of neo-liberalism, drawing from the Chicago School of Economics as propounded by Friedrich Hayek (1899–1991) which argued for the privatisation of ‘inefficient’ services and public utilities and pushed for bureaucracies to better account for their activities (Ferguson, Lavalette, & Mooney, 2002). Notwithstanding this legitimation crisis, Jamrozik (2005) proposed that Australia now constitutes what he called a “post-welfare state”: as although the welfare state has lost its political appeal, a problem emerges in that no real alternative model exists as its replacement. Indeed, attempts to apply a neo-liberal policy agenda have often met with strong public resistance, which is particularly apparent in times when key welfare institutions such as Medicare are found to be under threat (Quiggin, 2010). Instead, the impact of neo-liberalism on welfare provision has been upon where government priorities lie. For instance, it has been noted that issues of social justice, access and equity that dominated public policy debates in the 1960s and 1970s (Everingham, 2001) have been replaced with a focus on ending the perceived inefficiencies of state-run services and a culture of dependency among specific welfare users (Hartman, 2005). Moreover, governments in Australia, as in many other countries, are now making greater use of contractual arrangements with non-profit and voluntary organisations in the provision of welfare (Nowland-Foreman, 1998b), through a competitive “quasi market” oriented approach (Darcy, et al., 2009; Lyons, 2001; Rawsthorne, 2005). It is from within this political and economic context that community-based organisations and associations operating outside of the state and market sectors have increasingly been thrust into the centre of the Australian welfare system.
2.2.2 The Growth in the Presence and Influence of “Third Sector” Organisations

The rise of local voluntary associations, which make up much of what is now referred to as the “third sector”, predate the development of the welfare state. The earliest forms of community associations were active in most peasant societies. Stoesz, Guzzetta and Lusk (1999a, p. 131) explain that these early activities were often centred on the ‘right to subsistence’ and the ‘principle of reciprocity’. With the advent of the modern state, community level support for individuals left behind by government policies (for instance, unmarried single mothers) was provided initially by religious groups, and in the 19th Century, alongside unions and philanthropists in a number of local settings (Stoesz et al, 1999). A more detailed analysis of philanthropic activity will be provided in the next chapter. However, it is worth noting the clear separation of private and Not-For Profit (NFP) based activities with provision of government services that defined the Australian liberal welfare state until fairly recently. The relative obscurity of the community and charitable sectors in Australian history provides a blatant contrast to the historic developments in the United Kingdom where community services underwent a process of institutionalisation becoming central to ‘the model of liberal governance developed in the postwar Keynesian state’ (McDonald & Marston, 2002b, p. 376).

Australian community-based activities began to expand during the 1960s. McClelland (2006, p. 6) noted the incorporation of ‘aged nursing homes and hostel care’ into the non-government sector during this period, and from ‘the 1970s and 1980s this was extended to areas such as home and community care, women’s refuges, and community based child-care’. Along with the permeation of empowerment and emancipatory philosophies popularised through various civil rights movements, arose the concept of community development, organised around what is generally known as the “activist framework”. This framework underpinned numerous alternative “grass-roots” approaches to multiple issues facing a range of individuals and communities (Campfens, 1997). Kenny (2002, p. 290) described the activist framework as one that centres on ‘discourses of mutuality, empathy, trust, solidarity and organisation
oriented social change and is usually “issue based”. By drawing upon wider concepts of community, social capital and civil society, this framework aims to extend politics beyond the formal processes of government, and provides clear contrast to market oriented processes and outcomes (Kenny, 2002).

Although originally autonomous, many local associations that evolved over the past forty years have since been partially incorporated into the wider welfare state apparatus, forming what Lyons (2001) described as “the community services industry”. While tensions have undoubtedly emerged through increased professionalisation and institutionalisation, many social services remain influenced by the central activist precepts of grass-roots community development, empowerment and care:

What they all have in common is that they provide support, care, encouragement and advice for people in a way that is determined by them, involves some enduring pattern of interaction and is designed to remove the need for support or to enable people to achieve maximum feasible independence and autonomy in their home and community, or a setting that as closely resembles this as possible (Lyons, 2001, p. 33)

Currently, community services – also known as community organisations – represent just one (albeit a significant) part of the Australian third sector. Broadly defined, the third sector derives its meaning from the neo-liberal conception of civil society1, which denotes the segment of a nation’s economy that exists beyond the market and state (Stoesz, Guzzetta, & Lusk, 1999b). Within this seemingly “murky and imprecise” field (Salamon & Anheier, 1997) sits a diverse array of activities, not all of which concern public welfare. Third sector activities range from sporting and leisure, arts and religion, poverty alleviation, and human rights advocacy (Lyons, 2001). Various terms have been used to define organisations residing within the third sector, with the most widely used of these including non-government organisations (NGOs), non-

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1 It is worth noting that many within the third sector would operate from a very different conception of civil society than is seen through the prism of neo-liberalism. For instance, progressive thinkers such as Habermas have defined it as an arena that advances collective democracy, resistance to unequal power structures and individual autonomy.
profit organisations (NPOs), and civil society and community organisations, all of which make up a large portion of social, political and economic life in Australia.

According to recent estimates from the Australian Government Productivity Commission (2010), the Australian third sector comprises of approximately 600,000 organisations, of which 58,779 are classed as ‘economically significant’. During 2006-2007 organisations within this class employed 889,900 staff (representing 8 percent of overall employment) and contributed nearly $43 billion to Australia’s GDP (Productivity Commission, 2010). The social reach of these organisations is also extremely large. For instance, of just 745 agencies who completed the Community Sector Survey in 2011, their services were accessed on 6,180,282 occasions in a single year period (ACOSS, 2011). This figure represented a twelve per cent (12%) increase in service provision compared to the previous year, and continues a trajectory of dramatic growth for community-based services over recent decades (ACOSS, 2011).

Third sector associations are generally classified within the following categories: autonomous and self governing; not-for-profit; consciousness awareness raising; and self campaigning, with a primary focus on social benefit (Gray, Bebbington, & Collison, 2006). However, such classifications are seen as overly restrictive in structure, and potentially disadvantageous to community organisations. These concerns may be due to more recent pushes for alternative organisational forms. The recasting of community organisations as social enterprises is one example of the move away from traditional non-profit or activist discourses, although it has been argued that further research is needed in the Australian setting in measuring the extent and impact of such changes (Barraket, 2010). Despite ongoing debate on terminology, Grey Bebbington and Collison (2006, p. 325) provide a useful differentiation to the various forms and functions in which third sector organisations engage:

1. New public management: civil society as sub-contractors to policy makers.
2. Corporatisation: civil society organisations partnering with companies.
3. Social capital or self-organisation: civil society building trust through networking.
4. Activism: civil society monitoring and challenging power-holders.

At this point it is worthwhile to further define the values that traditionally underpin activities within the community sector, prior to exploring some of the tensions that have emerged in recent years.

2.2.3 Values within Community Organisations

Values form a central place in the community services sector. In many cases shared values are key to an organisation’s ability to recruit new members despite offering inferior wages compared to other sectors (as is clearly the case with environmental and rights-based advocacy groups) and can also provide ‘the glue that holds the organisation together’ (Lyons, 2001, p. 22). A recent study undertaken by the Productivity Commission (2010) differentiate non-profit organisations from those in the for-profit sector primarily by the mission, social purpose and altruistic motivations that often drive community-based activities. Demonstrating these values is often essential to maintaining the support of a wider stakeholders base, which includes external funders, management, staff, volunteers, and communities through which they operate (Productivity Commission, 2010). More so than in other sectors, the success of activities carried out by community organisations is tied to high levels of stakeholder trust. However, the prioritisation of values can also form the basis of instability and divisiveness, particularly when internal disagreements emerge in organisations with a horizontal power structure (Lyons, 2001), and tensions may also become apparent when internal values contradict cultural changes asserted from above (Keevers, et al., 2008; O’Shea, 2007).

As will be discussed later, it is through these latter tensions often resulting from increasingly strained relationships with the state, that many community organisations are now seeking new avenues of support. However, in order to
contextualise, this section outlines some of the key values and processes underpinning social service provision within the third sector. The most obvious place to start is with “community” itself, which evokes as much a philosophical position as it does a geographical location. In first examining the development of community as a philosophical ideal, it becomes clear that the meaning behind the concept central to all community-based activities is murky at best.

2.2.3.1 Looking Back: Philosophical Development of Community as an Ideal

There are few words that evoke such strong and enduring emotions, namely confusion, as community. The rise of individualism, modernity and the corresponding “sense of loss” have reignited community as a descriptor for the site through which social change emanates, in addition to providing a powerful universalising discourse. As Putnam (2001) argued, recent economic and political changes, and the ensuing social disjuncture have produced ‘a sense of civic malaise’ among citizens of many Western countries. However, the “discourse of loss” and subsequent “rediscovery” of community as an idea, tends to contradict much of how these actions have been conceptualised and understood throughout history. For instance, Delanty’s (2010) historic analysis of community discourse points to a concept as anything but “natural”, often evoking a range of contradictory sentiments. The two most enduring and formative historic conceptions of community arose through Greek and Christian philosophy. In the former, Aristotle’s notion of polis – or the city-state – infers a contractual membership which is indistinguishable from a geographically centred political system and elite society (Delanty, 2010). Membership in a polis served as a point of unity during a time of fragmented loyalties, while embodying exclusion through admittance of only a small segment of the population – men of wealth and title (Keller, 2003). Alternatively, Christianity viewed community as being part of a universal order – one that superseded not just local, but wider earthly concerns (Delanty, 2010). Community, in these two examples, represents competing philosophies which gravitate between grassroots approaches and a universal collective ideal.
Corresponding with the rise of modernity in the 19th Century, sociological thinkers began to reposition community as forming the basis of group solidarity and social order (Day, 2006). For instance, Tönnies (1887) presented a dramatic shift from earlier philosophical analysis by arguing that community is made up of non-contractual expressions of oneness. In his seminal work, a dichotomy was cast between previously interchangeable notions of community (gemeinschaft) and society or association (gesellschaft). Infused with an overt sense of nostalgia for what was perceived to be lost in modernity, Day (2006, p. 6) explains that Tönnies’ postulated between two polarities of social interaction:

‘Community’ stands for real ties of interdependence and emotion between people who form part of an organic, bounded entity, often linked to a place or territory. ‘Association’ refers to exchanges among individuals who engage in essentially boundaryless, contractual relationships; the ties between them are merely convenient.

In similarity to Tönnies, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) saw, through the increased division of labour, modern society progressing to more complex forms of interaction and solidarity. However, organic solidarity, to Durkheim, was formed through mutually-beneficial associations, whereas mechanical solidarity alludes to group cohesiveness springing from a communal setting (Day, 2006; Keller, 2003). An evolution toward organic solidarity, while notably less cohesive, was not to be lamented as it enabled for a greater degree of individual freedom (Keller, 2003, p. 42). Max Weber, on the other hand, tied solidarity and cohesiveness to proximity; as closer geographical associations were more likely to be a source of mutually-dependent ties (Day, 2006).

From its re-emergence in late nineteenth and early twentieth century sociological thought, the notion that community constituted “something to be reclaimed” has formed compelling narratives behind many political ideologies. In analysing these various ideologies, Delanty (2003) outlines three broad discursive categories. The first of the three, which draws from the early romantics such as Rousseau (1712-1778) and sociologists like Tönnies,
positions community as irretrievable. Strongly nostalgic and decidedly anti-modern, this discourse provides the basis of some (albeit not all) conservative political ideologies. The second, community as recoverable, is perhaps the most evoked political discourse of the three. Encompassing numerous conservative, nationalistic and republican ideologies, this discourse represents ‘an attempt to reconcile community to the conditions of modernity’ (Delanty, 2010, p. 20). The third considers community as yet to be achieved. This latter category often places community as the teleological end-point of human aspiration, informing communist, socialist and anarchist ideologies (Delanty, 2010). While they all exhibit different meanings, what unites each of these discourses is that community is used as an expression of what should be, not necessarily what is (Kenny, 1999). In a sense, such ideas are what drive community development and community-based methods of redress.

2.2.3.2 Current Applications of Community Discourse

Popular Australian social commentators such as Hugh Mackay (2009) have reflected upon a mix of the above discourses to argue for greater grass-roots community involvement. In aspiring for greater belonging, Mackay (2009, pp. 41-42) argues that individuals are yearning to be fulfilled, not merely on a social level, but also on a moral one. By evaluating competing pragmatic and utopian conceptions of community, he outlines that community associations lead to a number of positive social outcomes:

...we cling hopefully, and sometimes desperately, to words like community and village, precisely because we know, deep in our guts, that any successful, civilised society would aspire to that utopian prospect... It is only through learning how to live in a community that we gradually acquire our sense of right and wrong, as well as more subtle values like tolerance, compassion and respect for others.

Involving oneself in society thus draws upon Lockean and Tocquevillean beliefs that voluntarism and local association which exists outside of the state forms the basis of effective democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), in Democracy in America (1994 [1840]), understood community-level associations as being the location through which individuals learn of their civic rights and
responsibilities, and build up their own social support networks. This socialisation process, as Keane (2009, p. 709) describes, links personal transformation with effective democracy; thus requiring people to become ‘democracies in themselves’. In reviewing the increased use of “community” discourse in the Australian political context, Adams and Hess (2001) found similar sentiments being elicited. For instance, it is argued that community:

- Forms a practical site for social change;
- Is a vehicle through which individuals find ‘a sense of place’ and ‘identity’;
- Embodies the structure through which the benefits of activities are distributed more equitably;
- Is a place of ‘trust’ and ‘mutuality’;
- Provides a more ‘natural’ form of social engagement, and;
- Enables better delivery of services and more accountable management structures.


Values which underpin community development often draw upon a number of progressive discourses including empowerment, social justice, human rights and equality (Ife and Tesoriero, 2010). Overall, research tends to view community, and collective action as sustaining ‘better outcomes in the economy, democracy and civil society’ (Winter, 2000, p. 1).

Many texts on the subject treat “community participation” as a panacea to a wide array of social problems. However, Adams and Hess (2001) pointed out that identical “common sense” propositions were once asserted as a rationale for the market superseding the role of government in regulating and distributing social services. Clearly, the slipperiness and sheer ambiguity of “community” as a descriptive term, provides justification for a much greater depth of analysis. Indeed, both Adam and Hess (2001) and Mackay (2009) express concern at the word resembling a “mantra” and increasingly devoid of any real sentiment. Likewise, Williams (2008) derides the blasé assumptions among the UK political establishment that community represents a “natural good”. Behind the frequent value-laden speeches is revealed a hollow, limited, and at times, highly patronising policy: ‘It seems that as long as they’re talking
about it – using the word – they are happy to believe that they are doing something positive’ (Williams, 2008, p. 5).

Some go further by pointing to unintended negative consequences in appealing to community. For instance, Young (1990, p. 227), who agreed with the communitarian critique of liberalism, warned that by evoking shared values and experiences, the ideal of community ‘operates to exclude those with whom the group does not identify’. Parochial attempts to assert ‘a strong sense of mutual identification’ are more likely to replicate the very exclusions that the oppressed group or neighbourhood seek to overcome (Young, 1990, p. 236). After researching the use and misuse of “community” discourse in the United States, Joseph (2002) takes this critique even further. Rather than signifying the decline of state and market influence,

...capitalism and, more generally, modernity depend on and generate the discourse of community to legitimate social hierarchies...Fetishizing community only makes us blind to the ways we might intervene in the enactment of domination and exploitation. (Joseph, 2002, pp. viii-ix)

Although in favour of collective grass-roots associations, Joseph posits that despite the emancipatory rhetoric, many non-profit organisations are complementing the aims of capitalism rather than curtailing its excesses: ‘to put this in more Gramscian terms, non-profits function as a hegemonic apparatus, articulating the desire for community with the desire for capitalism’ (Joseph, 2002, p. 73).

It would be remiss to simply assume that non-profit organisations in Australia generate similar subjectivities for capitalism. The disparate histories of the two countries reveal stark differences in conception and focus. For example, the early agents for the rise of the non-profit sector in the United States were capitalists-turned-philanthropists actualising a social Darwinist ideology (Hall, 2006; Joseph, 2002), whereas the voluntary sector in Australia arose largely from religious and union-oriented grass-roots activities (Anheier, 2005; Kenny, 1999). The critiques stated previously warrant some level of consideration at
the local context. The reliance on intangible, value-laden and idealistic language in conceptualising community development may reveal it to be ripe for co-option and colonisation by other, more powerful discourses. However, others such as Little (2004) maintain that there is enough in the concept of community for it to be used in conjunction with the discourse of values, justice and rights. The resilience of this concept in Australian political and social debates would certainly support these arguments. As Ife and Tesoriero (2010, p. 102) point out, in cases where economic and political systems fail to provide adequate support, ‘people will more likely look to local community-based structures as an alternative’. This tendency is even stronger in the Australian context given, what MacDonald and Marston (2002b) refer to as the “localisation” of welfare. Coupled with the social and economic instability that exemplifies the current era, it must surely be the case that community will remain powerful, both as an idea and location of social change, for some time to come.

2.2.3.3 The Importance of Trust, Participation, Social Capital and Civil Society to Community Organisations

More recent analysis of community sector values has moved beyond broad conceptions of community to other more applicable and measurable values. Local community based organisations are unique, even in comparison to other third sector organisations, by the degree to which wider community input is often incorporated into decision-making processes (Gevers & Goddard-Jones, 2007). Community work commonly remains process-oriented where positive change can occur as much on an individual level (i.e. changing attitudes, political perspectives or world views) as it can on a social level (i.e. increased safety, employment, education levels)(Twelvetrees, 2008). Indeed, values of empowerment and participative democracy position the meaningful involvement of disenfranchised citizens as an end in itself (Ife & Tesoriero, 2010). Use of the word “meaningful” here is important as the field of community development participation can present as much of an impediment to empowerment as a key component to its success. For instance, Cooke and Kurathi (2001) found that those in positions of authority can often misuse participation in ways that further disenfranchise the powerless, thus
constituting what they refer to as “a new tyranny”. This view corresponds with Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation, which depicts a continuum of involvement from citizen control down to manipulation or cooption.

Many movements and community development projects since the 1970s have drawn from the emancipatory philosophy of Paolo Freire (1972). Under this philosophy, liberation from oppressive and inequitable structures requires greater understanding of them and active participation of the poor in redressing the problems they face. In acknowledging the ineffectiveness of bureaucratic approaches to welfare provision and empowerment, many locally-based social services have since sought to minimise the distance between the “provider” and the “user” (Pierson, 2008). According to its proponents, the achievement of positive outcomes is reliant upon the democratic involvement of those most negatively impacted by political processes and economic forces.

Participation is not only viewed in terms of achieving broad social outcomes, but also has implications for organisational sustainability and effectiveness. The ability of a local community organisation to maintain legitimacy and effectiveness is commonly measured by the level to which the mission serves to inspire wider popular approval or trust (Anheier, 2005). As such, for third sector organisations pursuing greater inclusion, social justice or democracy in wider society, internal legitimacy is best gained by emphasising the often value-laden principles within the organisational structure (Taylor & Warburton, 2003). As mentioned earlier, the combination of strong values and horizontal power structures can present challenges when interpersonal disagreements emerge (Lyons, 2001). However, research has found correlations between internal trust and overall effectiveness within many voluntary and other third sector organisations, and notably, the participation of stakeholders in decision-making not only presents an image of legitimacy but has shown to minimise internal conflict (Brainard & Siplon, 2004; Bryman, Gillingwater, & McGuiness, 1992; Taylor & Warburton, 2003).
Among grass-roots organisations, stakeholder participation and preeminence of values provide strong grounds for resisting more hierarchical leadership structures usually found within “efficient” for-profit institutions. Nonetheless, to consider participation as conducive to positive ends in all situations ignores numerous complexities, especially with regard to associations that encompass a wide spectrum and dispersion of membership (Elstub, 2010). In some cases, stakeholder participation may be further overshadowed by the likelihood of those from higher socio-economic statuses becoming members of non-profit organisations, rather than poorer, more marginalised individuals (Chaskin, 2003; Skocpol, 2003). Engaging with the most marginalised members of society remains an enduring challenge for many community sector organisations, but despite this complexity it retains a central place as both a process and desired outcome of community development.

Recent years have also seen increased interest in the role third sector organisations hold in strengthening both “civil society” and “social capital”. As summarised by Ife and Tesoriero (2010, p. 17), the term civil society refers to “the formal and informal structures that people establish voluntarily”. However, much like the concept of community, civil society can be drawn upon to discuss very different interests, agendas and world views, and is dependent “on how one frames the state, society, and the basic institutions of society” (Muukkonen, 2009, p. 685). For instance, Kaldor (2003) found that the concept exists within three distinct contexts; activism, neo-liberalism and post-modernity. In the activist context, movements are formed outside of the traditional state and market structures in order to challenge authoritarianism and redistribute power (O’Byrne, 2005). Proponents therefore draw upon Gramscian ideas alongside more recent interpretations that interweave individual autonomy with wider critical consciousness. For instance, Jürgen Habermas’ theories of ‘communicative action’ and ‘discursive democracy’ are commonly utilised as a means for inspiration by those who aspire to give voice to the powerless by constructing shared meanings within the sphere of an autonomous civil society (Edwards, 2009; Jobert, 2008). Social movements from the 1960s onwards operated from within such frameworks to campaign
on issues pertaining to women’s rights, peace, the environment, democracy, and human rights to name a few. Small advocacy organisations and those working under the principles of feminism and giving members “voice” would likely draw upon this understanding of civil society (Lyons, 2001).

The second context pertains to neo-liberal understandings (Kaldor, 2003). Civil society, as outlined by Ife and Tesoriero (2010), is a term used to describe the formal and semi-formal structures that people create voluntarily, beyond the confines of both the state and the market. Although enveloping the “non-profit sector” and “third sector”, Ife and Tesoriero (2010, p. 17) define civil society as much more; including a wide variety of voluntary associations ranging from religious and sporting clubs, youth groups, choirs and reading circles. Within this conception, NGOs, non-profit organisations (NPOs), charities and voluntary associations are considered to be more flexible and innovative than the state. For example, these associations can substitute for the state in terms of service provision, monitoring and challenging abuses caused by poor governmental practices, and call upon corporations for accountability (Kaldor, 2003: 9). In these terms, civil society is to act as a “cushion” by providing the necessary social support, especially during times of structural upheaval within both the state and market spheres.

The third interpretation is within the post-modern context. Decidedly fluid, this version is perhaps the least comprehensible as exemplified by the definition of Gray, Bebbington and Collison (2006, p. 332): ‘civil society is that which exists between other elements of our social world and hence, civil society is defined by what it is not’. Recent examples may be found in conservative arguments, whereby it is seen as ‘the most viable alternative to the authoritarian state and tyrannical market’, as well as through the works of “Third Way” theorists like Anthony Giddens (1938-), who envisaged civil society as the missing link in the advancement of modern social democracy (Edwards, 2009, pp. 2-3). The ambiguous nature of these examples provides no clarity, and as such could be accused of presenting civil society as anything, everything and nothing (Gray, Bebbington & Collison, 2006). It is for this very reason, Edwards (2009, p. 3)
argues, that the current popularity of the term ‘civil society’ deserves a wider degree of scepticism:

Such chameleon-like qualities are not unique to ‘civil society’, but when the same phrase is used to justify such radically different viewpoints it is certainly time to ask some deeper questions about what is going on.

Clearly, the first two perspectives on civil society have greatest relevance to the context of third sector values. Nonetheless, Lyons (2001) pointed out that the increased prominence of service delivery and institutionalised structures in the non-profit sector raises questions concerning the impact they now have on civil society. This issue raised here relates to the criteria used for “success”; for instance, whether services are delivered efficiently or judged according to less tangible aspect of their activities (Lyons, 2001). For instance, a research document designed by a peak community sector body in Sydney points out that grass-roots, social justice, democratic and non-profit values commonly underpin community work (Suhood, Marks, Waterford, & Voice for SONG members, 2006). Small community organisations ‘work with innovation, flexibility and responsiveness to addressing social capital and social justice issues, often with limited resources’, whereby they are able to ‘empower communities by facilitating flexible, responsive, independent projects and have the flexibility to nurture small ideas that may grow into large projects’ (Suhood, et al., 2006, p. 8). Cox (2000) also points to considerable benefits in community trust and goodwill which often develop out of the informal social networks and participatory structures of grass-roots endeavours. For many smaller community organisations, community work involves developing the strengths of individuals and communities in building trust and creating the foundations for collective action. In instances where democratic processes override efficient management structures, the contribution made to “social capital” through community-based activities thus presents an more suitable mode of measuring success (Lyons, 2001).
The authors most prominent in the development of the social capital discourse are Coleman, Putnam and Bourdieu (Winter, 2000). Though they each provide a different definition of the term, conceptually there is agreement “social capital” is concerned with relationships of power, in that ‘by treating social relationships as a form of capital, it proposes that they are a resource, which people can then draw on to achieve their goals’ (Field, 2005, p. 5). Many Western nations have experienced the negative health and social effects of eroding social ties and trust which has arisen out of economic pressures and growth of individualism, and attention needs to be directed back to rebuilding social networks (Winter, 2000). Woolcock and Naravan (2000, p. 226) explain that central to social capital is that ‘a person’s family, friends and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called on in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and leveraged for material gain’. The sources of social capital are the networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust, social norms and shared ownership that result in personal and collective efficacy (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). More broadly, such strong social relationships are claimed by both Putnam (2001) and Winter (2000) to sustain better outcomes for the economy, democracy and civil society as a whole because they enable people to act collectively. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) even suggest communities that display strong social capital are better positioned to confront social inequities such as poverty, resolve disputes, and take advantage of new opportunities.

Although there appears unanimity about the benefits of accruing social capital, the three predominant views present such accrual as occurring within different areas of civil society. The communitarian view emphasises solidarity in local organisations, associations and civic groups whereas the networks view focuses upon intra community ties whilst the institutional view presents community networks and civil society as reliant upon the wider political, legal and institutional environment (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Case examples of ground-up community development projects by Onyx (2001, p. 85) indicated that both ‘bonding social capital’ (the development of strong local ties and high levels of trust) and ‘bridging social capital’ (referring to loose ties between the local group and the wider community) are both essential to effective
community renewal. More recent research provides further support to these findings (Onyx & Edwards, 2010). Despite variations as to the instigation of and the mechanisms for the maintenance of social capital, the concept is commonly regarded as a "cure-all" for persistent social problems (Portes, 1998), and a reaction against the neo-liberal critique of "wasteful" social spending and assertions of resultant dependency (van Gramberg & Bassett, 2005). It is for this reason that efforts to build social capital have experienced considerable support from within the third sector as well as in government.

2.2.4 Emerging Tensions and Needs within the Community Sector

As outlined in Chapter One, the crisis of the welfare state and devolution of service provision in Australia has had dramatic implications for the community sector. The form of devolution discussed here refers to a process whereby the state retains control over funding and policy, but transfers responsibility for service delivery to the community sector (Keevers, et al., 2008). It is clear that third sector organisations now play a much greater role in service delivery and political debates than any time previously (McDonald & Marston, 2002b). However, there is mounting evidence that suggests tensions have emerged as a result of these changes. For instance, while Federal government funding of the community sector has grown since the 1970s (Productivity Commission, 2010), it had stagnated since the 1990s to the point where over 50 percent of organisations recently surveyed stated that the demand in the community for social services far exceeded their capacity to deliver (ACOSS, 2011). Furthermore, the competitive tendering and contracting model that began to filter into policy from the 1980s and was formally adopted by governments in the 1990s saw funding being diverted away from community needs toward measured outcomes and outputs (HRSCFCA, 1998). Through this process, power in defining funding priorities was transferred from the community level to government departments (NCOSS, 1997). Although designed to improve the delivery of welfare services, Lyons (2001, p. 224) found that these policy changes ‘have been made with little knowledge and less concern about the effects on the third sector’.
Organisations were increasingly expected to compete for non-recurring service contracts, each tied to specific performance measures, prioritising “efficient” service delivery over other values such as effectiveness and equity (McGuire & O’Neill, 2008). Within the field of non-profit advocacy, Maddison, Denniss and Hamilton (2004) argue that the use of service contracts as successful only in limiting organisational autonomy and overall capacity to respond to and campaign effectively for groups these organisations represent. Another study questions this conclusion, arguing that the impact of contractual arrangements and competition has had only a modest effect on organisations within the field of community development (Rawsthorne, 2005). However, qualitative research on perspectives within small community organisations by Darcy, Waterford and McIvor (2009) found a number of negative effects arising from competitive tendering processes. These effects include the breakdown of relationships between community sector organisations and their funders; the deterioration of job security for community workers; and lack of organisational sustainability caused by the inability to plan ahead and maintain existing networks (Darcy, et al., 2009). In response to the pressures associated with resource dependency, some particularly large organisations have embarked upon a process of institutionalisation, which is represented through replacing volunteers with a highly professionalised workforce, the infusion of corporate language and practices, and the adoption of top-down management structures (Irvine, 2000; O’Shea, 2007). Through the infusion of a new set of “virtuous” processes and behaviours, the discourse of “new public management”, has reengineered the third sector to the point where a number of community welfare services now closely resemble businesses in their own right (Keevers, et al., 2008; Maddison, et al., 2004). The implications for such a top-down ‘culture transfer’ in Australia has been increased demands for a business style of accounting; processes of internal review; benchmarking; the identification and meeting of organisation specific objectives; and requirements of open transparency (Conroy, 2005). New public management discourse corresponds with what Ife and Tesoriero (2010) point out as the “corporatist” welfare state model, whereby traditional barriers between state, non-profits and businesses are broken down. While public and third sector organisations are encouraged to
corporatise by emulating the management structures, entrepreneurial ethos and other marketing aspects of the for-profit sectors, so too are corporations expected to exercise a greater degree of social responsibility towards the wider community (Ife & Tesoriero, 2010).

Far from offering a viable alternative, a high degree of anxiety has been directed to the potential impacts these neo-liberal policy changes will have on particularly small community sector organisations (Keevers, et al., 2008; McDonald & Marston, 2005). Performance measures have been consistently described from within the third sector as “onerous” (ACOSS, 2005; Darcy, et al., 2009), and much better suited to larger more institutionalised charities over small organisations, and for-profit services over non-profit providers (Lyons, 2001). According to Keevers, Treleaven, Backhouse and Darcy (2010, p. 5), ‘locally-based community organisations have a distinctive and valuable impact on well-being by encouraging belonging and inclusion, conveying respect and recognition, enabling representation, advocacy and participation and contributing towards remedies for distributive injustices’. By prioritising quantitative measures in NGO accountability, these measures have been found to ignore the real impacts of work carried out at the community level and ‘renders practices, relationships, values and context marginal and often invisible’ (Keevers, et al., 2010, p. 85). Outcome measurement has been found to disadvantage community development, advocacy and lobbying organisations in particular (Darcy, et al., 2009), with the interest of funding bodies becoming increasingly limited to redressing specific units of disadvantage used to categorise individuals and communities (Darcy, 2002).

While it has been purported that the marketisation of community welfare provides an impetus for greater transparency, accountability and efficiency (Mulgan, 2001; Chisholm, 1995; Lyons, 1992; Anheier and Seibel, 1990; Kramer, 1981), other argue that it has been more effective in silencing particular third sector organisations, especially those involved in advocacy or who are critical of government policy (Maddison, et al., 2004; Mendes, 2005). It can be deduced from the above discussion that a legitimacy crisis still reverberates within the
community sector. Despite these claims, many local groups have maintained a strong focus in surviving recent changes, while maintaining the core values which sit in contradiction to the tenets of neo-liberalism and new managerialism (Darcy, et al., 2009). Neo-liberal advocates have consistently positioned NGOs as undemocratic and unrepresentative, and as such counter to democratic governance (Mulgan, 2001). However, subsequent research has found little validity to this claim (van Gramberg and Bassett, 2005; Phillips, 2006; Nevile, 2009), and recent policy measures and public statements by the Federal Labor Government have begun to acknowledge the accountability pressures and funding constraints currently facing the third sector (Shorten, 2011). Unlike the general distrust evident in the United States context, Australian NGOs enjoy significantly higher levels of trust than their equivalents in the for-profit and state sectors. This social licence is purported to be behind the rise of the third sector both politically and economically in this country (McDonald, 1999). For instance, Neville (2009) found that non-profit organisations, especially those who embody a grass-roots approach with ethical values, democratic structures and outcomes, were found to generate positive results; thus enabling them to claim legitimacy.

Despite political pressure from the right, third sector organisations still retain a central place in both welfare service provision and policy development (Phillips, 2004; 2006). Further, the close proximity and active engagement of NGOs within the community, along with their greater ability to mobilize and connect individuals, dispels many of the legitimacy concerns in the eyes of the Australian public (Phillips, 2004). However, due to the recent tensions and dilemmas resulting from changes to welfare service provision and deteriorating relationships between some third sector bodies and the state, many community groups increasingly see a need to look elsewhere to maintain their ability to meet the needs of communities. Part of this movement is also a desire for organisational autonomy and renewal which is only possible through new sources of funding and support (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008). Given the high public standing of many Australian NGOs, and particularly local organisations embedded within the community, many are increasingly considered highly
attractive partners in corporation’s efforts to exemplify their credentials as socially responsible corporate citizens.

2.3 The Needs of the Corporate Sector: From Social Responsibility to Instrumental Positioning

The first half of this chapter has presented the values and motivations, as well as wider tensions that compel community organisations to look for alternative sources of funds. However, as will be revealed, the values, motivations and tensions facing major corporations are entirely different in nature. Existing legal requirements on corporations are primarily fiduciary in nature – meaning that, so long as laws are not broken in the process, the primary role of a corporation is to maximise financial return for its shareholders. Far greater regulatory complexity is apparent when corporations separate their philanthropic division from core business by creating stand-alone foundations or trusts (Ward, 2008). However, further analysis reveals multiple pressures compelling the corporate sector to develop relationships with the community sector. As such, while the needs of community sector groups in forming partnerships with corporations are to achieve further financial support, independence and creativity, the rationale for corporations to be socially responsible on the other hand, is much less clear.

2.3.1 A Brief History of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

There has long been difficulty in reconciling business practice with social responsibility. An analysis of the history of the corporation reveals numerous attempts (by those within and outside the business world) to apply more than just economic logic towards business operations. Cataloguing such a history is impossible to do in this thesis: for a detailed history of CSR, various works by Archie Carroll (1999, 2008; with Buchholtz, 2009) provide a useful starting point. However, a few historic examples reveal the uneasy relationship that continues to exist between corporations and the social world.

The earliest attempts by corporations to exercise responsibility, beyond the explicit stipulations of the law, form as a prelude to debates that would persist
throughout the 20th century. Wren (2005) outlines two cases of early corporate philanthropy. The first instance occurred in 1883 with the attempt by West Cork Railway Company to compensate its workers for loss of employment. In a legal case that followed this decision, the presiding judge Lord Justice Bowen, ruled that the directors could only invest capital on the maintenance of the business; “charity” as he saw it, had no place in the company’s affairs. Although the terms of reference of this case centred on existing company law, this decision served as a forerunner for the “economic” CSR doctrine that would arise over eighty years later. Another example provided by Wren (2005) concerns the attempt by piano manufacturer, Steinway, to purchase adjoining land in order to provide various services (including a church, library and school) for its employees. The court allowed the use of company funds for this purpose, as the benefits in the company’s relationship with its workers would lead to positive economic gains (Wren, 2005).

This latter example, which bears many similarities to a wider phenomenon of company towns2, would in this context be acting in accordance with “enlightened self-interest” among current-day CSR advocates. Nonetheless, Carroll (2009) argues that company towns should not be misconstrued as social responsibility, but rather serve as examples of the growing trend of paternalism among early corporations. The earliest known example is provided in George M. Pullman’s showpiece community town of Pullman (erected in the 1880s). Touted as ‘enlightened business policy’ by his contemporaries, such paternalism was admired due to his ‘genuine interest in improving the living conditions of his workers and their families, as well as creating an improved capacity for attracting and retaining employees’ (Carroll, 2008, p. 22). However, Price (2010) points out that company towns were often constructed as yet another means of maintaining control over a workforce, either through evicting workers associated with unions, increasing profits or in charging monopoly prices at company-owned grocery stores.

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2 Company towns were constructed by late 19th century and early 20th century businesses to house a workforce while offering utilities such as markets, libraries, schools, hospitals and parks (Price, 2010).
Earlier research has attempted to differentiate between various states of corporate history. Hay and Gray (1974) referred to the above period as the “profit maximising management” phase, whereas from the 1930s onwards emerged the “trusteeship management” stage. In this latter period, managers began to expand the scope of their operations to act in the interests of shareholders, staff and customers. In a similar vein, Eberstadt (1973) argued that from the 1930s onwards began the “corporate period”. Businesses had begun to be seen socially in a similar light to governments, with obligations that were social in nature as well as economic. On one level these changes occurred due to the New York Stock Market Crash of 1929, through which public anger motivated corporations to appear more responsible (Price, 2010). Beyond the crash, however, Carroll (2008) points to wider factors at play, including the development of corporate philanthropy legislation, increased diffusion of stocks, and the pluralisation of American society. The modern CSR movement has its roots particularly in the Cold War period. From the 1950s, CSR advocates such as Donald K. David (Dean of Harvard Business School) had urged corporations to adhere to an expanded set of principles in order to quell “internal discontent” and thus ward off the very real threat of Soviet Communism (Spector, 2008).

It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that CSR began to resemble its current shape. Businesses in this period were expected voluntarily to ‘do something tangible’ (Frederick, 2008, p. 526) in response to changing social sensitivities regarding wider issues such as institutional racism, pollution and concerns over ‘urban decay’ (Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 87). This “awareness” and “issues” era of CSR (Murphy, 1978) resulted in increased corporate interest in various causes, with philanthropic support being directed towards the arts, community groups, charities, and education, as well as greater respect for environmental issues and attempts at improved worker safety and equal opportunity hiring (Carroll, 2008).

In the 1980s, various discursive shifts in favour of corporate social performance (CSP) indicators, stakeholder rights and corporate citizenship, along with a
wider interest in sustainability, resulted in a movement promoting ethical cultures within corporations (Carroll, 2008; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Additionally, increased attention to outcomes measurement led to the “business case” for CSR. Partially as a response to criticisms of CSR from the political right, Carroll and Shabana (2010, p. 101) point out that the business case concerns arguments that ‘provide rational justification for CSR initiatives from a primarily corporate economic/financial perspective’. The focus on win-win initiatives has led, in some cases, to a narrowing conception of CSR, whereby reputation management and anticipated pecuniary benefits to the corporation in the short-term increasingly guide “philanthropic” behaviour (Kurucz, Colbert, & Wheeler, 2008). While the popularity of this approach clearly persists (and currently remains at the centre of academic attention), others argue that the business case must cover a convergence between social and economic factors, while including wider stakeholders in philanthropic decision-making (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2006).

From the 1990s to the present, the concepts of global corporate citizenship and “strategic philanthropy” emerged (Price, 2010). As the following sections explain, the pre-eminence of reputational and economic benefits over wider ethical factors continues to be of great concern. Both the “Enron era scandals”, and more recently, the excesses laid bare through the 2008 Wall Street Financial Crisis, reveal many examples where social responsibility resides at the very periphery of a corporation’s operations (Banerjee, 2008; Canals, 2010). Even among the top ten publically listed corporations favoured by ethical investment trusts (those that are ranked as most “socially responsible” on a relative scale), ‘short-termism’ dominates philanthropic decision-making (Markowitz, 2008). Thus, despite most major corporations exhibiting positive traits (including philanthropic donations to numerous causes and groups, as well as instances of high environmental standards and policies resulting in improved employee welfare and workforce diversity in developed countries), the same corporations also exhibit questionable and in some cases, criminal behaviours. The most common of which include the outsourcing of employment to countries exhibiting lower workplace standards, anti-trust violations, illegal
use of human subjects in product testing, predatory lending and excessive pay
to executive positions within the corporation (Markowitz, 2008).
In light of the clear economic and legal impediments placed on corporations to
act philanthropically throughout history, various outside factors motivating the
CSR movement clearly deserve attention. An exploration of the various social
forces and philosophical arguments provides useful insight into why
corporations currently feel compelled to present the appearance of social
responsibility.

2.3.2 Social and Theoretical Debates behind the CSR Movement
According to Canals (2010), interest in CSR has historically corresponded with
the growth and influence of the market globally, as well as in response to
successive corporate and financial scandals. Studies, such as one carried out by
Anderson and Cavanagh (2000), found that of the top one hundred economies
in the world, fifty-one were corporations. From the 1990s, various activists and
media sources conducted successive exposés on the inhumane and exploitative
working conditions in factories funded by well known multi-national
corporations (MNCs) (Barenberg, 2007). More recently, the extent of the
damage caused by companies deemed ‘too big to fail’ during the 2008 Global
Financial Crisis (GFC), and the questionable (and often dishonest) behaviour of
numerous executives during the preceding years, reaffirms the need to rethink
the lack of corporate governance (Canals, 2010). Consequently, CSR and
corporate citizenship are increasingly being considered as essential public
relations devices to improve and protect the increasing precariousness of
business reputations (Barenberg, 2007; Canals, 2010; Genest, 2005).

Due to the above factors, most major corporations currently state as part of
their business plan the principle of wider social responsibility (Banerjee, 2008).
Generally however, businesses are less forthright about the social, economic or
political motivations behind this generic principle. Such sentiments were
displayed in research conducted by St James Ethics Centre and Ernst & Young,
which found that while almost all major corporations in Australia advertised
some form of CSR program, very few managers understood what corporate
social responsibility meant and its relevance to their core business (cited in Gettler, 2004). As a concept, “CSR” can have numerous applications in a range of areas of business activity and as such, a high level of confusion remains as to the details behind CSR statements. Therefore, a more detailed theoretical understanding is warranted.

While the term CSR is widely utilised, its meaning is embryonic and contestable (Windsor, 2006). *Philanthropy Australia* similarly acknowledges that CSR is a constantly evolving descriptive term, drawing attention to a lack of enforceability, as it is not a set of legal regulations in its current form, but rather entirely voluntary (Philanthropy Australia, 2009). Though there is confusion about the definition and even application of the term CSR, there is one certainty - that from the outset, “CSR” could never be, and still cannot be assumed to translate into support for charitable and philanthropic giving in the name of public interest. However, these different perspectives are reflected in the two main conceptualisations and rationalised implementations of CSR as espoused by corporations. Windsor (2006) provides an analysis of three broad theoretical approaches:

1. **Economic CSR** – Adherents to this approach claim the only responsibility of companies is fiduciary, and any limited philanthropic activity must be strategic in conception and of direct benefit to the company in the near-term. This approach advocates for minimal public policy and regulation, as social benefit is considered best served by increased economic growth.

2. **Ethical CSR** – This approach holds general social welfare at its core, and promotes active corporate altruism and self-restraint. It draws on various moral frameworks (for example, ideas promoted by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and John Rawls (1921-2002)) and argues that a company has a duty to look beyond its shareholders and incorporate the welfare of stakeholders in its business conduct.

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3 Philanthropy Australia is the national peak body for philanthropy.
3. Corporate Citizenship – Windsor (2006) outlines two forms of corporate citizenship: ideal citizenship with an emphasis on the expansion of moral duties in the sense of Aristotle; and instrumental citizenship which is seen as a strategic tool by which corporations develop reputation and as a result, gain market opportunities to obtain corporate benefits and avoid corporate costs.

Likewise, Garriga and Melé (2004) distinguish between four major categories encompassing CSR. These categories include instrumental theories (focusing on wealth generation), political theories (viewing the company as a social institution, drawing from social contract theory), stakeholder theories (concerned with social integration), and ethical theories (centring on various international human rights and other relevant charters, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Global Compact of 2004).

Most notable of the ‘economic’ or ‘wealth centred’ CSR advocates is Milton Friedman (1912-2006). In his widely cited article titled, *The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits* (1970), he claims corporate managers have no right to spend a firm’s money on philanthropic activity as it is a misuse of funds that rightly belong to a company’s owners – its shareholders. The subsequent rationale being that corporations should work for the public interest through doing what they do best – maximising profit. This economic rationalist approach claims wealth is most fairly distributed by allowing market forces to work unimpeded (directed as if by an “invisible hand”) which, through increased economic growth, naturally “trickles down” to those less well-off.

In addition, Canals (2010) points out that economic CSR advocates, while seemingly unsympathetic to the cause of CSR, were more influential in furthering the cause of business ethics than was originally intended. Framing CSR as contradictory to shareholder interests spurred further ‘reflection on argument that was used to justify companies’ actions in society’ (Canals, 2010, p. 146). Emerging out of this discussion was the “business case” for corporate philanthropic and other responsible initiatives. Since the 1970s, the discussion
on this theme has brought forward assertions that socially responsible corporate actions enjoy benefits such as; a competitive market “edge”, improved reputations, stronger consumer goodwill, and more positive employee attitudes and behaviours (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). Arguments such as these fall within the banner of ‘enlightened self-interest’ that, according to Verhezen (2009, p. 197), comprises a ‘screen to hide less benevolent motivations’, and ultimately benefits the business. In drawing back to its etymological roots, Verhezen (2009) places such motivations as heading towards the Agon conception of philanthropy (literal meaning: contest).

In contrast, the term Agapé (literally translating to unconditional or thoughtful love) is drawn upon to refer to the ethical philanthropic tradition (Verhezen, 2009). Within this perspective, corporations endeavour to regain public trust, as the best way to appear trustworthy is to be trustworthy (Frank, 1988; Verhezen, 2009). Advocates of ethical CSR often draw from Aristotle’s ontological postulation that people naturally hold the capacity for empathy. Social responsibility need not be legislated, as it is inherent to human nature – a view strongly reminiscent of the original Greek meaning of philanthrôpía. When applied through the stakeholder theory, responsibility is directed towards a wider diffusion of actors relevant to the corporation, including customers, employees, suppliers, owners, local communities and the firm itself (Evan & Freeman, 1988; Melé, 2008). A major strength of this approach (at least according to its original conception) is in the establishment of principles that not only incorporate a wider diversity of viewpoints, but respect for the rights and dignity of those often excluded in corporate decision-making processes (Melé, 2008).

Critics of stakeholder theory have contended that managers are able to justify self-serving behaviours by appealing to stakeholders who are aligned with the interests of the corporation. As Sternberg (2000) posited, the opposite of social responsibility is the ultimate result, being ‘a business that is accountable to all is accountable to none’ (cited in Melé, 2008, p. 67). A further area of contention rests in instances where addressing stakeholder concerns results in a breach of
contract or trust with shareholders. In such cases, Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004) maintain that shareholders retain much greater legal protections and organisational power (for instance, the ability to fire “rogue” directors) than wider stakeholders do. Both of the above principles are particularly relevant in the current global business context where CSR remains largely unregulated.

In differentiation to the economic and ethical CSR theories, corporate citizenship removes the focus on appeasing those forces traditionally viewed as external to the corporation, and places the businesses’ actions and activities firmly in the context of wider society (Canals, 2010; Melé, 2008). As Whitehouse (2005, p. 111) explains, ‘corporate citizenship chooses to view the corporation as a citizen, engendered with rights and responsibilities in much the same way as the citizen’, which does not take the view of corporations as a source of ‘unbridled power’ (Stokes, 1986, cited in Whitehouse, 2005, p. 111). From an economic standpoint, advocates argue that positioning the corporation as a social entity enables improved management of risk, enhancements to reputation and overall long-term financial sustainability (Vidal, 1999). Nonetheless, according to Windsor (2001), these supposed ‘positive attributes’ are a problem in themselves. Corporate citizenship has been pursued by the very proponents who argue for limited government, and this “philanthropic ideology”, coupled with the discretionary nature of corporate management, provides sufficient grounds for concern (Windsor, 2001).

2.3.3 Corporate Giving in Australia: Existing Research on Motivations

A study conducted by Mark Lyons in the mid-1990s provided some insight into earlier direction adopted by Australian businesses in the philanthropic field. In the study, he points to a move from a philanthropic model of business-NGO (Non-Government Organisation) support to a transactional model, all under the pretext of ‘corporate citizenship’ (Lyons, 1998). While admittedly ‘speculative’, Lyons’ (1998, p. 6) assertions replicate other theoretical studies undertaken at the time regarding the nature of cross-sector relationships (these studies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three). What such a finding does
reflect is a move towards neo-liberal approaches to corporate CSR activities and giving (Lyons, 1998), and this impact of neo-liberalism on multi-national corporate philanthropy will be touched upon further below. In contrast to Lyons’ research, a quantitative study conducted by Sargeant and Crissman (2006) on the motivations behind corporate giving in Australia found “altruism” as a leading factor above economic reasons. It is worth noting that this finding contradicts the bulk of business and management literature which clearly prioritises research that examines potential rewards or “returns” to business as compensation for the “social investment” (Banerjee, 2008; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007).

The move in the direction of transactional forms of support helps to explain the rise in further modes of corporate philanthropy that are emerging worldwide. For instance, Tracy (2003, pp. 4-5) points to three new forms of philanthropic support taking root in Australia – which include ‘strategic philanthropy’, ‘social investment’ and ‘venture philanthropy’. The first of the three takes a cue from early American foundations (established by Carnegie and Rockefeller) by focussing on unique approaches in order to achieve agreed upon social ends. Social investments, on the other hand, focus not only upon social ends, but advance further into more overtly mutually-beneficial terrain (it is in this form where the “business case” for philanthropy takes greatest precedence). The third, venture philanthropy, sees the relationship between the donor and recipient becoming increasingly obscured, where the entrepreneur ‘invests’ either capital, time or energy with the intention of improving an organisation’s likelihood of success (Tracey, 2003).

Venture philanthropy has become especially prevalent in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada and deserves further examination. In the context of corporate philanthropy, venture philanthropy consists of various initiatives such as providing tools and up-skilling members of “entrepreneurial” NGOs to assess, support and implement their ability to self-finance their own community activities (Pepin, 2005). Some of the motivations of venture philanthropists include:
• being motivated by one’s peer group;
• Feeling the joy of giving and intellectual stimulation [while] applying one’s knowledge and values especially as it relates to entrepreneurial-ism (having an idea and making it happen);
• Overcoming ‘an image of stinginess’; [and]
• Enjoying tax advantages whilst controlling how one’s money is being spent.

(Pepin, 2005, p. 170)

What is of particular interest within the above list – which also positions venture philanthropy in stark contrast to strategic philanthropy and, to a lesser extent, social investment – is a clear prioritisation of benefits accrued by the “philanthropist” within the inter-organisational relationship. Schervish (2006), for one, finds little problem with such thinking. Emphasising the potential moral and spiritual benefits afforded to donors through involvement in philanthropic activities, simply provides further avenues for NGOs to attract and maintain financial and other forms of assistance. Peer-group pressure is also particularly relevant in the United States as philanthropy in the context of “patronage” provides entry into elite cultural circles (Ostrower, 1995). Individual factors like these often result in a preference for involvement in higher stature arts organisations that do not threaten the class structure of the capitalist system (Ostrower, 1998) and a near absence of interest in radical and more politically motivated NGOs (Jenkins, 1998; Roelofs, 2003; Silver, 2009). Brown et al (2000) further note that in the Australian setting, corporations often give to the community in ways that maintain existing power imbalances.

The structure of a corporation enables one to presuppose that philanthropy is guided less by personal motivations than it is by organisational factors. However, as noted in the introduction, the internal drivers of CSR activities may often include preferences of specific consumer, investor or employee groups (Kitzmueller, 2008). Businesses are also swayed by the imposition of costs
arising through the actions of governments and activists, or pressures to adopt the values and cultures found in communities within which they operate. (Kitzmueller, 2008). Undoubtedly, good relationships with these various stakeholders make doing business easier, potentially resulting in competitive advantage over other, less ethical, corporations. Insight such as this reveals the fluidity of how “socially responsible” behaviour may be defined, which can as equally be dependent on individuals interacting within and outside of corporations, as it is on institutional culture itself. As such, a wider exploration of corporate motivations is warranted.

International research on the motivations driving corporate philanthropy tends to divide into two distinct schools of thought. These two categories put philanthropy as pursued with either altruistic motivations or instrumental motivations (Dennis, Buchholtz, & Butts, 2009). The corporate attitude in Australia appears similar to the U.S., where philanthropy is increasingly seen as an opportunity for instrumental positioning (Zappalà, 2004; Zappalà & Adams, 2010; Zappalà & Cronin, 2003). The language of social investments is often drawn upon by Australian advocates, which, as Zappalà and Cronin (2003) state, comprises a strategy for maintaining trust, support and legitimacy with community members, governments and employees. Most notably, commentary stating that companies in Australia ‘are beginning to act as though they believe the benefits claimed for [corporate-community involvement]’ (Zappalà, 2004, p. 7), reveals the instrumental logic behind purported altruistic motivations.

In their analysis of existing research on why companies engage in philanthropic collaborations, Galaskiewicz and Colman (2006) outline three primary motivational categories. The first of the three motives involves increased profits and improved financial performance (Galaskiewicz & Coleman, 2006, p. 185). Within this ‘business case’ category are reputational enhancements (improvements in the firm’s or wider industry’s image) and possible positive correlations between CSR and labour, consumer and profits outcomes. As Porter and Kramer (2002, p. 9) argued, ‘philanthropy can be the most cost-effective way for a company to improve its competitive context, enabling
companies to leverage the efforts and infrastructure of non-profits and other institutions’. The second motivational category, as listed by Galaskiewicz and Colman (2006, p. 186), falls under *advancement of managerial utility*. Here CSR programs serve as an inducement in recruiting and compensating an executive who holds specific interests and beliefs (often involving religious, political or personal beliefs, or personal contacts with a specific NGO). Also under this category is the impact of peer-pressure (as Pepin, 2005 also found), or aspirations towards attaining ‘elite’ status (see Ostrower, 1995, 1998). The third motivational factor refers to a commitment to *advance social welfare*. While seemingly altruistic refers to a commitment to *advance social welfare*. While seemingly altruistic in sentiment, traces of self-interest may still be evident within this category. For instance, the duty to address a firm’s social or environmental footprint before negative publicity eventuates could also fall within the ‘business case’ category. Likewise, an interest in assisting community welfare organisations to compete with other NGOs, by up-skilling management in the interest of pursuing a ‘business model’ (Galaskiewicz & Coleman, 2006, p. 188), raises a number of issues that will be explored more widely in Chapter Three.

From the above motivations, it is safe to argue that although CSR purports to consider the social impacts of corporate behaviour, there is a notable absence of self-critique within management literature. As astutely stated by Banerjee:

> ...despite its emancipatory rhetoric, discourses of corporate citizenship, social responsibility and sustainability are defined by narrow business interests and serve to curtail interests of external stakeholders (Banerjee, 2008, p. 52)

The lack of self-critique may be attributable to a number of factors. At an international level, Giolhot (2007) points to the history of elite education funding in both validating and reinforcing existing philanthropic endeavours. As a result, academics from philanthropy funded ‘Ivy League’ universities are accused of intellectual bias through the pre-eminence of ‘pro-science’ research (to the detriment of philosophical critique), pursued within an ontological framework of ‘pro-realism’ (by taking existing structures and dominant
ideological positions for granted) (Windsor, 2008, p. 511). The particular influence of the “Harvard style” MBA course in educating future researchers and global business leaders poses further areas of concern (The Economist, 2005), with some commentators accusing the same MBA model of encouraging recent business scandals, including the “Enron debacle” (Ghoshal, 2003, 2005; Thompson & Brown, 2006). Within this educational context, it becomes clear that CSR has been informed considerably by an economic rationalist discourse.

More recent philanthropy designated to ‘alternative’ organisations in the United States holds its own complexities. As Silver (2009) discovered, attempts to steer away from the tendency for philanthropists to associate with causes that benefit their own social strata and support “safe” NGOs, proved to be counter intuitive. Involvement in ‘alternative’ organisations led to the creation of a new rank of ‘alternative donor’ who were able to obtain further elite status; thus resulting in an expansion rather than minimisation of class divisions (Silver, 2009).

Given the instrumental motivations behind this activity, it is perhaps not surprising that the voluntary and discretionary aspects of corporate philanthropy have undergone considerable critique (Banerjee, 2008). Many CSR proponents, nevertheless, maintain that despite the absence of mandatory enforcements, other social forces are now pressuring irresponsible corporations to act to a higher ethical standard. Three major practical avenues include consumer demand for ethical trading (Smith, 2008), shareholder activism, and socially responsible investing (Kurtz, 2008). As regards the latter, corporate insiders like Dixon (2003) envisage the real possibilities that ethical investing may have on wider systematic change. However, both Markowitz (2008) and Kurtz (2008) note that a combination of “short-termism” in decision-making and the relative nature of CSR ranking scales, limit the likelihood of socially conscious shareholders instilling real organisational or systematic change. Moreover, those corporations ranked highest in CSR tables exhibit clear indications of social irresponsibility (which at times even constitutes corporate criminality) in both their direct business activities and
use of “corporate leveraging” in order to reduce competition and limit the rights of marginal stakeholders (Markovitz, 2008).

In summation, although Friedman (1970, p. 4) had warned of CSR as a ‘fundamentally subversive doctrine in a free society’, recent research has found little evidence to support this viewpoint. Rather than challenging the pillars of corporate power, the above analysis indicates that CSR has grown to accommodate and advance neo-liberal corporate interests. Shamir (2004) points to a process of de-radicalisation, whereby the increased bureaucratisation and standardisation of CSR and corporate philanthropy has shifted the debate away from political and ideological questions, to the capacity to meet a measurable (and tradable) set of “benchmark” indicators. This finding is perhaps not surprising, given that the proponents of the CSR movement in the 1990s were the very corporations and businessmen who benefited from the neo-liberal economic deregulation of the 1970s and 1980s (Muukkonen, 2009).

Consequently, ‘social responsibility’ and philanthropic behaviour predominantly remains on the periphery of a corporation’s activities as ‘a strategic choice influenced by market and competitive factors’ (Banerjee, 2008, p. 56) and as such, CSR remains entirely ‘voluntary and discretionary’ (Banerjee, 2008, p. 60). Lack of legal and ethical enforcement enables corporations to define their CSR strategies in ways that compliment and do not threaten their social, economic and political position (Shamir, 2004). While Shamir (2004) acknowledges the opportunities in these newfound and self-regulated responsibilities, Whitehouse (2005, p. 10) describes CSR as “incapable of practical implementation in any meaningful sense” in its current ambiguous form.

2.4 Conclusion: Balancing Differing Values, Wants and Needs in Partnerships
As discussed earlier, complexity arising out of competing expectations concerning legitimacy, trust and accountability in the third sector context, have
resulted in a high degree of confusion and anxiety at the local level. The marketisation of third sector activities and pressures upon community organisations to corporatise poses clear challenges (and potential volatility) to real community interest. Indeed, some Australian writers such as Ife and Tesoriero (2006) and Kenny (1999, 2002) contend that new managerial and economic rationalist discourse are highly contradictory to community development values such as participation, activism and social justice. Brown et al (2000) went further by warning that an audit culture ran the risk of creating a form of ‘McWelfare’ within the Australian context. Under this alternate reality, ‘passivity combined with consumer citizenship leads to the mass consumption of standardized welfare from large monopolistic providers driven by efficiencies of scale and market domination’ (Brown, et al., 2000, p. 210). An outcome the authors envisaged was a split within the third sector where some organisations thrive by aligning themselves to corporate funders (or being created by corporations), while others adhering to less marketable values are further marginalised and left behind. It would be presumptuous in the very least if it were assumed that such an outcome will naturally eventuate. However, the vulnerability facing many community organisations in the Australian third sector requires the adoption of a critical approach in examining the roles and motivations of corporations when forming partnerships.

Likewise, to assume that the self interest evident in corporate giving presents a fundamental problem ignores a critical issue. In many cases, corporate CSR activities make up for a shortfall in government expenditure, with the potential to address real social needs in times of disaster relief, crises and deficiencies in welfare provision. Moreover, as Kitzmeuller (2008) noted, isomorphic pressures for corporations to adopt the values and perspectives of the wider community opens the possibility of positive cultural change eventuating without the need for overt regulation of corporate activities. Expectations that corporations should prove themselves to be socially responsible is clearly widespread, coming from within and outside of the Australian corporate sector (Allen, 2007). These trends will continue despite lingering concerns from the
“economic” CSR movement that such expectations constitute “blackmail” (Quadrant, 2003).

The task from here will be to critically examine cross-sector relationships that contain, in many cases, dialectically opposed values, needs and agendas. As such, aside from describing and documenting the presence of corporate-community involvement in Australia and elsewhere, the subsequent section will also highlight some key areas of concern, conflict and inequity located in the literature.
Chapter Three

Philanthropy and Strategy:
Power Relations between NGOs and Corporations
3.1 Introduction

Traditional relationships between corporations and non-profit organizations have tended to be based on philanthropy and characterized by the overwhelming dominance of the corporation. (Di Domenico, Tracey, & Haugh, 2011)

Interactions between the corporate and community sectors have undergone considerable change in recent years. As the above quote reveals, the concept of “corporate philanthropy” has been used to describe a form of arms-length engagement. Within this conception, corporate sector “suppliers” generally fund non-profit recipients who are considered the “experts” in their respective fields (Husted, 2003). While a level of detachment defines these cross-sector relationships, Di Domenico et al. (2011) highlighted the role of corporate power and authority over the purpose and distribution of philanthropy. This chapter explores the literature on philanthropy, showing its evolution throughout history which has culminated in its most recent iteration – community-corporate engagement. As will be revealed, an historic analysis opens up possibilities for wider understanding of how philanthropy has been consistently used as a term to describe various forms of good works. However, as trends in history have consistently shown, these works have been conducted in ways that reflect the political, social and economic contexts in which the concept is employed. As such, the positioning of philanthropy – particularly in relation to its deployment alongside the rise of the corporation – has often been to complement power positions rather than challenge or redress them. A discussion of recent shifts away from corporate philanthropy to other strategic corporate endeavours presents such movements as a continuation of this historic evolution. Like wealthy philanthropists in earlier years, corporate relations with wider society are informed by the hegemonic discourses and institutional structures embedded within the corporate sector. These changes pose new problems for local community organisations seeking to engage with the corporate sector. Resulting from this analysis is an argument for new forms of research to critically explore these emerging trends in Australia.
This chapter begins by examining philanthropy as both an idea and activity throughout the history of Western civilisation. Notable themes include the original employment with regard to Greek mythology and philosophy, through to its application in religious dictum, and leading into its modern “scientific” reincarnation pioneered by early American ‘robber barons’. This analysis will reveal that philanthropic compulsions to do “good works” are often underpinned by continuously evolving religious, social, cultural and political values; each informing the nature of giving, the “deserving” beneficiary and the understanding of how social issues are best addressed. A permeation of scientific language in foundation philanthropy throughout the twentieth century exemplifies how wider discourses have influenced philanthropic practice.

A more recent realisation of philanthropy is discussed in the second half of the chapter. As a review of existing literature will reveal, corporate involvement in the community – whether implemented through partnerships or other forms of involvement – differs considerably to both individual and foundation philanthropy. By examining partnerships in the Australian context, it becomes clear that multiple pressures to obtain a “pay off” in return for supporting the community, limits how far CSR can be employed. Moreover, the differences in organisational size, motivations and world views can often result in an imbalance of power within cross-sector relationships. Inequality within these practices will be examined further by applying various theoretical models and typologies from the fields of management and organisational dynamics. Beyond overt sources of authority, an analysis of the relational view of power is applied specifically to community-corporate relationships. The value of this perspective is in locating areas where power and influence may be “hidden” and located within language and discourse.

### 3.2 The Natural and Social Compulsion towards Philanthropy

Corporate giving and partnerships with the community sector represents a relatively recent phase within the much older tradition of philanthropy. The
nature of philanthropy has ebbed and flowed throughout the history of Western civilisation, propelled by unique sets of moral and political assumptions resulting in a wide diversity of forms and outcomes. At its most fundamental level, Schultz (2009) notes that feelings of reciprocity and social responsibility have, by-and-large, been found to be “natural” or innate to the primate family. Scientific hypotheses that philanthropy is hardwired into human beings are further supported within theoretical ideas. Schultz (2009) further argued that individual endeavours to advance wider social benefit were critical in drawing social respect and moral fulfilment. Underpinning this framework is the reality that altruistic acts can hold tangible benefits as equally to the “giver”, as they can to the recipient of good works. This rather vague idea of mutual benefit will form a major focus of this work, but as previously discussed, it is rather the social and economic forces behind philanthropic interactions, rather than the biological or psychological impulses, that are of importance to this thesis. A primary reason for this specific focus is that cross-sector “relationships” analysed herein are largely of an inter-organisational dynamic, rather than an interpersonal one, especially as corporate giving in Australia has become more developed or “strategic”. Nonetheless, in order to make sense of community-corporate relationships it is useful to first locate similar activities historically within the field of philanthropy.

3.3 Philanthropic Giving in early Western History: Between Altruism, Religion and Moral Politics

From its first documented use in mid 5th Century BCE in Greece, the meaning of philanthropy has evolved according to both the ideological and other social factors of a given context, as well as the distributive technologies available to the “giver” (Schultz, 2009). Philanthrôpía, the concept’s Greek derivative, is a composite of two root words – phileô signifying ‘love, affection or desire’ and anthrôpos meaning ‘humankind’ (Sulek, 2010a, p. 386). The earliest use of philanthrôpía was found in the epic verse Prometheus Bound, in which the term was employed to refer to a renegade God (Prometheus) who in providing
support to human beings, defied the despotic rule of the father of all Gods – Zeus (Martin, 1961, p. 167):

It was your treasure that he stole, the flowery splendour
Of all-fashioning fire, and gave to men – an offence
Intolerable to the Gods, for which he must now suffer,
Till he be taught to accept the Sovereignty of Zeus
And cease acting as champion of the human race [stérgein, philanthrôpou dé paúesthai trópou]. (Aeschylus, 1961, lines 7-11, cited in Martin, 1961)

Later within Greek mythology, the term expanded to include benevolent City-Gods who were responsible for the wellbeing of inhabitants within their designated cities or “households” by providing basic nourishment and protection to the impoverished sections of the population (Muukkonen, 2009; van der Toorn, 1996). Notably, human beings were initially framed as passive subjects within this metaphor. However, philosophers such as Xenophon, presented philanthropic acts of kindness towards humanity as based upon a universal and ‘natural moral sentiment’ (Sulek, 2010a, p. 394). By applying philanthrôpía to humanist philosophy, altruism and social responsibility were not framed as obligations between human subjects, but as inherent to the natural order. As the term became increasingly employed to describe everyday acts of benevolence and “good deeds”, focus was redirected toward the specific character of the philanthropic individual (De Ruiter & Tromp, 2004; Sulek, 2010a). Moreover, Cicero (106 BCE – 43 BCE), the famous Roman orator and philosopher, provided practical advice in pursuing effective philanthropy:

...we should see that acts of kindness are not prejudicial to those we would wish to benefit or others; second, we should not allow our generosity to exceed our means; and third, it should be proportionate to the merits of the recipient (cited in Higginbotham, 1967, p. 54).

Payton and Moody (2006) suggest the tradition of philanthropy that emerged in Rome could be referred to as “enlightened self-interest” – and as later discussion will reveal, this meaning remains relevant to the present context of corporate giving.
Early Jewish philanthropy recognised that poverty was not pre-ordained and that those fortunate enough to prosper under difficult conditions had a responsibility to assist the less well-off (Loewenberg, 1994, 2001). Thus, philanthropy was not only extended to the Jewish poor, but also to impoverished outsiders travelling through Jewish communities. These early communal principles had also directly influenced the development of early Christian charities (Loewenberg, 2001). With religious faith becoming a primary motivator for public benevolence, charity and fiduciary forms of philanthropy were no longer a signifier of individual virtue, but a moral imperative (or duty) as dictated through divine command (Robbins, 2006). Jewish and later Christian and Islamic texts are replete with quotes tying faith with generosity toward those in need (i.e. “you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him” Deuteronomy 15:7-8). Moreover, beyond the voluntary forms of philanthropy, as espoused through the previous quote, institutionalised and legal requirements also emerged. For example, a Hebrew’s duty towards benevolence was clearly spelled out through an obligatory “tithe” system, whereby one tenth of a person’s harvest was to be divided between sacrificial purposes and aid to the poor (Payton & Moody, 2008). In the Judeo-Christian tradition, worship of a generous God meant that believers were also required to share in “worldly gifts”.

This context provides insight into how moral and political assumptions/values systems have been employed as justification for philanthropic acts in ancient times. Although many examples of earlier Greek philanthropy evoked altruism as being part of natural human sentiments, the majority of philanthropic acts related specifically to elite culture, authority figures and individual character. It is noteworthy that philanthropic actions in the Jewish context speak of a clear social responsibility ethic, not only to themselves, but to others as well. However, if empathy or social responsibility proved insufficient reasoning, fear of a vengeful God and the threat of eternal damnation were to provide further encouragement in pursuing philanthropic acts of “compassion” (Robbins,
In other words, in early religious applications of philanthropy, individuals were to at least ‘show compassion’ even if they were not inclined to ‘feel compassion’ (Lakoff, 2002, p. 118-119).

Along with the spread of Christianity across Europe, compassion for the poor soon became the dominant motivator for philanthropic giving. During the Medieval period, church-based philanthropy was becoming institutionalised across Europe through the establishment of monasteries where relief to the local poor was principally administered (Robbins, 2006).

### 3.4 Evangelical Philanthropy, Moral Essence and the Deserving Poor

The Industrial Revolution and the spread of Protestantism across various European states brought with it different conceptions of philanthropy. As Catholic charitable institutions in countries such as England were destroyed with the support of Protestant governments, considerable pressure was placed on local authorities to provide assistance to the burgeoning poor (Robbins, 2006). It is from this point that the state began to recognise a greater role in addressing the concerns of the less well-off. Most notably, the Statute of Charitable Uses, otherwise known as the “Poor Laws”, was enacted by English Parliament in 1601 as a response to the pressures of elevated unemployment and even higher levels of destitution (Prochaska, 2006).

It was only a few years following the Poor Laws that *philanthropia* first emerged in the English lexicon through the works of Francis Bacon in 1612. Under Bacon’s use, *philanthropia* retained its original Greek meaning, which was maintained for nearly a century and a half, as also found in Samuel Johnson’s original English dictionary⁴ (Sulek, 2010b). However, a clear distinction must be made between the emerging definition of *philanthropia* in the English language, and the realities of charitable giving. Under the Poor Laws, both the landed gentry and the urban elite were encouraged not only to form charitable trusts,

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⁴The definition simply reads: 'Love of mankind; good nature' (Johnson, 1755 cited in Sulek, 2010b, p. 196).
but to differentiate and determine between the supposed “deserving” and “undeserving” poor (Payton and Moody, 2005). Thus, while Christian conceptions of charity were maintained, a moral categorisation of the poor also began to take place. Within the field of moral politics, concern with the “moral essence” or “character” of individuals is of central concern in authoritative notions of morality.

With the spread of Evangelical Christian movements in England, individual virtue and salvation replaced Christian compassion as a driving factor in doing “good works” (Prochaska, 2006). Such values also moderated the expansion of state intervention during this time. Prochaska (2006, pp. 10-11) exhibited this mood by quoting from Samuel Smiles’ *Self Help* (1859):

> The highest patriotism and philanthropy consists not so much in altering laws and modifying institutions, as in helping and stimulating men to alleviate and improve themselves by their own free and independent individual action... No laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober. Such reforms can only be effected by individual actions, economy, and self-denial, by better habits, rather than greater rights.

Of course, not all were in favour of such moralistic interpretations of poverty, and one of the most scathing critiques was provided by Engels (1987 [1845]) in his analysis of working class poverty in England. To Engels, Christian “alms-giving” simply extended and exacerbated the suffering of the working poor who remained susceptible to exploitation and degradation inherent to the industrial capitalist system.

### 3.5 Philanthropy in the Early Australian and Colonial Context

Despite such criticism, voluntary philanthropy continued to be the dominant form of welfare-based giving in England and throughout the British Empire until the 20th century. For instance, in Australia’s early colonial development, support for the poor was administered through the formation of voluntary (mostly Evangelical) philanthropic associations run predominantly by women.
(Swain, 1996). As in England, ‘seeking and saving the lost’ proved to be a main motivation for colonial Australians who would engage in philanthropic acts (Swain, 2005), and the framing of charitable acts as a religious endeavour enabled women to extend ‘the boundaries of their accepted sphere’ within a patriarchal society (Swain, 1996, p. 433). Luddy (1995) found similar experiences of Catholic women’s involvement in philanthropic organisations in 19th century Ireland. In a further differentiation from Ireland, the Poor Laws had no legal effect under Australian jurisdiction, though colonial governments often provided funding to charities and philanthropic organisations as they arose, so as to encourage ‘charitable habits among the general population’ (Swain, 1996, p. 430). As such, the welfare sector in Australia arose primarily in an independent ad hoc fashion, with each colony only holding responsibility for prisons, mental hospitals and child welfare (Dickey, 1987; Swain, 1996).

It is worth observing that child care, which eventually fell under government control in the late 19th century, was originally established by ‘bourgeois philanthropists’ who intended to inculcate children ‘with middle class values such as cleanliness, courtesy, industriousness and thrift’ (Brennan, 1998, p. 16). Colonial governments in Australia wishing to emulate the British character were quick to support such a venture. Nonetheless, Harris (Harris, 2007, p. 46) maintained that despite the moral undertones in its development, the active engagement of women (particularly first wave feminists) in the child care policy process and in politicising the issue of child poverty was ‘fundamental to achieving social justice’.

Colonialism also brought with it altogether new forms of philanthropic endeavours. British philanthropists in the various colonies believed the benefits of empire could enrich the lives of the colonised, and often worked towards legislative and political change. As Lambert and Lester (2004, p. 323) pointed out, the various causes ranged considerably, but were often infused with deep religious conviction:
Not only could British intervention into the lives of Indigenous peoples across the globe make their moral existence more fulfilling, but it could also secure them the ultimate prize – redemption in the afterlife.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the bulk of colonial philanthropy consisted of missionary work which pursued a distinct conservative colonial agenda, although progressive philanthropic movements were also beginning to appear during this period. Most notable is the anti-slavery movement, through which global networks of philanthropists were organised to draw attention to the “un-British” behaviour of slave-holding colonialists (Lambert & Lester, 2004, p. 329). However, the Christianisation of colonial subjects through missionary zeal also served to strengthen abolitionist arguments.

Of particular note when examining the Australian context is the clear absence of both a culture and economy of institutionalised philanthropy that had arisen in the United Kingdom, and which would later be taken to an industrial scale in the United States of America (Murphy, 2006). Although levels of philanthropy in Australia remain underdeveloped (Lyons, 2001) which for the most part had been relegated to the women’s sphere (Swain, 1996), some of the practices and institutional structures that developed in the United States have begun to emerge in recent years. Therefore, it is useful to chart the paralleled emergence of capitalism and modern philanthropy, and the specific aspects of the voluntary and nonprofit sector that this structure of giving seeks to support.

3.6 Philanthropy and Capitalism in the United States

The emergence of alternative strains of philanthropy in 19th century America marked a dramatic shift from earlier British forms, and it was during the “Gilded Age” of the 1870’s, in particular, that the modern industrial philanthropist gained ascendancy. Prominent examples include railroad entrepreneur and industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), who bestowed US$350 million to various causes (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2011), later inspiring oil magnate John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) to donate about US$550 million (Chernow, 1998). These endowments were quite remarkable,
especially considering the US gross domestic product was valued at US$34 billion at the time (Appleby, 2009). A number of institutions to arise from such philanthropic support are still in existence, a list including concert halls, parks, museums, churches, libraries and universities (Hall, 2006). Carnegie alone is purported to have funded more than 2,000 libraries across the English speaking world (Appleby, 2009), and Rockefeller would provide considerable funds to the establishment of the University of Chicago (Chernow, 1998). Given such largess, it is perhaps not surprising that such names continue to inspire new generations of philanthropists.

Notwithstanding the prestige afforded to early philanthropists, the methods by which these people gained their wealth have also come under examination. As businesspeople, a majority were engaged in practices that by current standards would be considered ethically dubious. However, Hobsbawm (2006, p. 176) showed that such activities were very much in keeping with the age and times:

None had noticeable scruples or could afford to have in an economy and an age where fraud, bribery, slander and if necessary guns were normal aspects of competition... Not for nothing did ‘Social Darwinism’, the dogma that those who climbed to the top of the heap were the best, because [they were] the fittest to survive in the human jungle, become something like a national theology in the late-nineteenth century United States.

During the Gilded Age, a curious dichotomy emerged between the eventual good generated through the philanthropic side of an individual’s wealth, and the labour violence that also exemplified social relations during the period (Hall, 2006). Indeed, in his widely cited essay The Gospel of Wealth (1889, p. 664), Carnegie went so far as to state that ‘the man who dies rich, dies disgraced’. Although such remarks appear contrary to the basis of capitalist accumulation, it is worth noting that pure altruism was rarely the motivating factor behind philanthropic acts. For instance, Rockefeller’s philanthropic activities were influenced by a combination of religious and economic factors:
God gave me my money. I believe the power to make money is a gift from God... to be developed and used to the best of our ability for the good of mankind. Having been endowed with the gift I possess, I believe it is my duty to make money and still more money and to use the money I make for the good of my fellow man according to the dictates of my conscience (cited in Collier & Horowitz, 1976, p. 48)

Examining early motivations behind capitalist philanthropy and the preferred recipients of philanthropic “gifts”, reveals the extent to which emerging strains of conservative political discourse pervaded the industrial class in nineteenth century America. Analysis provided by Lakoff (2002a) also found similar values to be in existence within current conservative Christian morality, which also resembles growing conservatism in Australian politics (Boucher & Sharpe, 2008). It is not so much the religious texts themselves, Lakoff (2002a) argued, but their interpretation within a framework that values a religious system of moral accounting, free market economics and an authoritative understanding of reward and punishment.

The individual character of the recipient was also given considerable attention. Carnegie (1889) for instance, wrote at length on the dangers of poorly distributed philanthropic funds falling into “wrong hands”:

In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to use the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. Neither the individual nor the race is improved by alms-giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance. The really valuable men of the race never do, except in cases of accident or sudden change... He is the only true reformer who is as careful and as anxious not to aid the unworthy as he is to aid the worthy, and, perhaps, even more so, for in alms-giving more injury is probably done by rewarding vice than by relieving virtue (Carnegie, 1889, p. 663).

While statements like the above hold clear parallels to current attitudes towards philanthropy and welfare more generally (Boucher & Sharpe, 2008), it is worth noting the more narrowed definition of philanthropy from its earliest
origins in ancient Greece. Concomitant to this narrowing of concept, major institutional developments began to take place. The first development involved the creation of the “philanthropic foundation” by Margaret Olivia Sage in 1907 in dedication to her late husband Russell Sage (1816-1906) (Hall, 2006). Other philanthropists were quick to follow suit, with the tenet of ’private solutions to public problems’ underpinning the roles of foundations and trusts (Silver, 2006). Interestingly, as the extent of foundation philanthropy grew in the United States throughout the twentieth century, critique began to emerge from both the left and right sides of politics. According to liberal (left-wing) commentators, philanthropic institutions were successful in entrenching capitalist accumulation (and thus widening social inequality), while others feared the internal influence of “liberals” in diverting a foundation from its original mission (Prewitt, 2006). As the previous chapter found, the debate concerning the appropriate use of accumulated wealth has resulted in philanthropy being charged as both a bulwark and threat to the capitalist system (Quadrant, 2003; Silver, 2009).

Alongside the growth in secular foundations, new processes began to emerge fusing scientific methods with 20th Century bureaucratic structures. Terms including “new scientific philanthropy” (Payton and Moody, 2008), “science giving” and “whole-sale giving” (Hewa and Stapleton, 2005) were employed to describe the philanthropic model championed by both Rockefeller and Carnegie. Money was no longer to be spent on individuals from an “emotional” charity mindset, but root causes of social problems were to be ascertained scientifically and addressed practically (Hewa and Stapleton, 2005; Hall, 2006). Philanthropy would build “capacity” for the poor to help themselves through use of “hard evidence”, analysis and strategy (Payton and Moody, 2008), embodying a discourse that is still highly influential in elite business and management schools worldwide (Windsor, 2008).

In his analysis of the American foundation throughout its history, Smith (1999) charted the evolution of scientific language across five eras of philanthropy. As displayed in the table below, the use of specific metaphors reveals a number of
factors. Changes in the linguistic framing of philanthropic activity reflects in many respects the social, political and economic forces influencing foundations, including how social problems are understood and the approach required to redress such social “ills”. These knowledge assumptions reveal more than just the political standpoint of the benefactor, but point to the influence of “hegemonic discourses” (Fairclough, 2001) on philanthropic endeavors. Such ideas will be touched upon further in Chapter Six.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
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<tr>
<td>1890-1910</td>
<td>Increasing number of millionaires in the United States. Development of the modern philanthropic foundation. A new focus on supporting educational and some ameliorative non-profits. Interest in developing a systematic and rational approach to giving.</td>
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<td>“The protofoundation era”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910-1930</td>
<td>Expansion of large-scale general purpose foundations. Emergence of the community foundation. Interest in supporting educational and scientific non-profits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930-mid 1940s</td>
<td>Eventual erosion of foundation assets in the 1930s Philanthropy viewed through the germ metaphor (scientific reasoning used to address the “root cause” of social ills) Scaling down of wider educational programs. Redirection of attention to national economic need and mobilising resources to assist government in financing World War II.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940-1970</td>
<td>Philanthropy viewed through the language of physics and psychology through the metaphors of “adjustment” and “balance”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-present</td>
<td>Period of renewed confidence within foundations. Emergence of US foundations operating on both the national and international level. Philanthropy pursued through the language of engineering with an interest in “knowledge application” and “systems analysis”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Period began alongside the passage of a new regulatory regime in the Tax Reform Act of 1969. Foundations were often limited/impeded by instability in the financial sector. A growing interest in measurable outcomes. Philanthropy framed through the “virus” metaphor (a need to address multiple causes of social problems)</td>
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3.7 Current Trends and Potential Futures in Philanthropy

The growth of individual to institutional forms of philanthropy accelerated dramatically during the twentieth century (Hall, 2006). For instance, Prewitt (2006) described the growth in foundation philanthropy in the United States of America as “phenomenal”, with the number of foundations now approaching seventy thousand. Similar structures also became commonplace in Europe and Australia. From the point of view of foundations and trusts, philanthropy is united by an interest in public benefit, or at minimum, a level of social/cultural improvement – thus reflecting its roots as a vehicle of the enlightenment project. To this day, wealthy individuals including Warren Buffett (1930-), Bill Gates (1955-) and Mark Zuckerberg (1984-), are praised for taking their cue from the early “robber baron” philanthropists because of investing considerable portions of their own fortune into issues of global concern (Dietlin, 2010; Guth & Fowler, 2010; The Economist, 2011).

Although investments in education, international development, and malaria and AIDS research are each laudable endeavours, it is useful to investigate the ways that modern philanthropy remains heavily influenced by social, cultural and ideological factors. Lew and Wojcik (2009) exemplify this point in their analysis of the top twenty philanthropic institutions in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Japan. Instead of financial capacity being the central motivator of philanthropic giving, ‘perceptions about wealth inequality, civic voluntarism, deference to the state, and the attitude towards religion were revealed to be more relevant’ (Lew & Wojcik, 2009, p. 15) . Chapter Two examined how the formation of a “third sector” in Australia and other English speaking countries was conditional upon the state’s political and economical views regarding wider public welfare. Further, the impact of Judeo-Christian religion on the history of philanthropy has also been canvassed earlier in this chapter. However, the expected rise of China and India politically, culturally and economically this century will hold considerable sway over the future of global philanthropy. Schultz (2009, p. 6), for one, noted some considerable differences between Hindu, Islamic and neo-Confucian belief systems in relation to the
expected levels of giving, the manner in which assistance is provided and, specifically, 'who constitutes a worthy recipient'.

Religious belief systems aside, another defining outcome of the expansion of philanthropy worldwide has been the blurring of lines between 'individual philanthropy' and 'business philanthropy' (Carroll, 2008: 21). Notwithstanding this overlap, there remains considerable evidence that individual or foundation philanthropies represent very different concerns to corporate philanthropy. Lew and Wojcik (2009) made some reference to this divergence, by pointing out that individual motivations to give were often separate to the corporate culture that may inform philanthropic practice. While these authors were referring to the influence of business governance upon foundation philanthropy, a more fundamental question may be posed relating to the difference between foundation philanthropy and direct business philanthropy. As the former chapter detailed, motivations of corporations to appear socially responsible are often far removed from individual “philanthropic” impulses that have guided philanthropy throughout the ages. As a result, it will be useful to examine the unique forms and processes underpinning corporate relationships with the non-profit sector, and finally, the specific relevance of power to these interactions.

3.8 Community-Corporate Partnerships in Australia – Towards a Critical Understanding

3.8.1 The Emergence of Community-Corporate Involvement

While many agree that the interaction between the business and the community sectors has increased gradually over the last two hundred years (Austin, 2000; Hall, 2006; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007), the role of corporations within the wider community has remained considerably complex. In reflecting on the rise of the corporation as a social, legal and economic entity, Banerjee (2008) points out that since the creation and subsequent withdrawal of the corporate charter system in the US, the inclusion of community interests in the affairs of business has moved from being a mandatory requirement to more discretionary or
strategic in nature. Concurrent to increased liberalisation of corporate practices has been the passing of income tax deduction laws in the US from the mid 1930s onwards (Galaskiewicz & Coleman, 2006). Recent decades have seen a rise in the level and extent of business support for community-based organisations in Australia (Cronin & Zappalà, 2002). This change has come in the face of ideological misgivings about corporate motives traditionally found within the community sector (Edwards & Onyx, 2002). In placing a greater focus upon a “governance” or “corporatist” model of welfare provision, NGOs are increasingly expected to draw upon both voluntary associations at the community level, alongside individual and corporate philanthropy in order to achieve their objectives (Eikenberry, 2007). Various other factors discussed at some length in the previous chapter – including pressures relating to government-nonprofit funding relationships and increasing public demands on corporations to exhibit a higher level of social responsibility – also combine to increase both the desirability and need to form cross-sector partnerships.

The push for greater corporate involvement in the community has also been spearheaded by recent Australian Federal Government incentives. In 1999, administrative support for corporate partnerships was prioritised through the Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership program, and approximately $230 million was spent on greater tax incentives, which included the allowance of new tax-deductable corporate foundations: Prescribed Private Funds (PPFs) (McGregor-Lowndes, et al., 2006). Although these measures provide considerable financial incentives to corporate funders (Keogh, 2006), McGregor et al (2006) found general awareness in obtaining such benefits among corporate executives to be lacking. As such, levels of corporate philanthropy in Australia remains very modest when compared to those of international standards. Nevertheless, the Australian corporate sector has been described as ‘experiencing a transition’ in both public expectations on the social role of businesses, and the internal culture – which is often directed by employees seeking greater fulfilment through involvement in the wider community (CCPA, 2000, p. 17).
Drawing from data collected by McNair Ingenuity Research, Sargeant and Crissman (2006) put the total value of corporate giving in 2003-04 at $3.3 billion, with 67% of Australian businesses engaged in some form of philanthropic activity. While this contribution appears impressive, Sargeant and Crissman (2006) acknowledge that it is inflated due to increased media and social pressure on corporations to adopt a more charitable approach following the Pacific Ocean tsunami. Of the above value, $540 million – or 17% - was directed to community-corporate projects, and only 58% of this contribution formed direct cash donations ($315 million) (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008, pp. 21-22). In other words, less than 10% of overall corporate philanthropic activity constituted a cash injection to the community sector. The rather limited nature of corporate donations was also reflected in the breakdown of revenue sources for non-profits. While 41% of NGOs derived the majority of their income from government sources, only 4% sourced revenue from business, and even less from private charitable trusts (3%) (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008, p. 23). It is perhaps due to the low reliance on corporate donations in Australia that community-corporate involvement has been a neglected field in academic literature.

Lyons (1999) found that corporate support for non-profits takes on a range of forms, from money, goods and services to the “loaning” of staff. More recently, Lyons and Zappalà (2008) pointed to corporate volunteering as another major mode of philanthropic support. The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2007) listed the forms of corporate philanthropic activities as including:

- Sponsorship
- Cause related marketing
- Collaborations
- Community relationships
- Volunteering / pro bono
- Engagement as “influencers”
- Research partnerships
3.8.2 Theoretical Models of Cross-Sector Partnerships and their Limitations

Various attempts have been made to describe and theorise typologies of existing and “ideal” relationships between corporate funders and third sector organisations. Research on the growing trend of community-corporate partnerships internationally represents a relatively new area of study. However, a number of templates are emerging, particularly from the areas of business and management.

Some theoretical approaches have centred their analysis on the instigation of relationships between the two sectors. For example, Sadoun (2006) uses value-laden descriptors such as “top-down” and “bottom-up” in reference to the instigation of the relationship: “Bottom-up” refers to NGOs as approaching corporations for support/sponsorship; “top-down” signifies corporations approaching NGOs for the completion of projects or tenders. The attitude of donors towards their financial contribution also varies from that of a ‘gift’ to ‘a commercial exchange’, also typifying the divergence between altruistic motives and “business case” approaches (Sadoun, 2006, p. 47). Lister (2000, p. 228) enumerated conditions for successful partnerships as mutual trust; clearly articulated goals; shared perceptions; mutual support; and transparency with regards to financial matters.

A study of particular interest by McIntosh and Thomas (2002) focused on the types of relationships – whether they are adversarial or participatory. They suggest that though conflict is commonplace, there is the potential to build on an inherent imperative for participatory outcomes, with corporate-NGO relationships being classified as hostile, facilitatory or participatory. In this typology McIntosh and Thomas (2002) categorised the relationships according to the stance and activity of the organisational participants. This early typology described the extent of involvement between corporations and NGOs as a spectrum ranging from:

- support provided through sponsorship of projects;
• product endorsement – such as fair trade eco labelling;
• company endorsement, which include codes, standards and certifications;
• sight or project dialogue – for example, mediation, facilitation and impact assessments;
• strategy dialogue – with regards to business issues;
• participatory involvement such as joint ventures – with formal ‘time limited’ partnerships; and,
• strategic joint ventures – such as formal partnerships or alliances.

(McIntosh & Thomas, 2002, p. 40)

Although the McIntosh and Thomas (2002) spectrum provides a useful starting point in describing existing community-corporate partnerships, others have adopted more *evolutionary* partnership models that require examination.

Perhaps the most widely disseminated theoretical framework has been provided by John Austin. In his *collaboration continuum*, Austin (2000) categorises cross-sector partnerships in three stages from philanthropic through transactional onto integrative. The philanthropic stage represents basic financial donations or in-kind support, while transactional and integrative stages point to greater and more complex levels of cross-sector collaboration. Austin’s (2000) Collaboration Continuum is often cited in international and Australian literature as a useful tool in assessing the extent of cross-sector partnerships. Interestingly, the above model is near identical to that outlined by Mark Lyons in 1998 while postulating on the infusion of neo-liberal discourse in community-corporate partnerships:

- *Philanthropy* – “arms length” financial assistance
- *Business transaction* – some alignment of values and objectives
- *Corporate citizenship* – joint ventures with community partners
The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2008) depicts more developed partnerships as those in which the missions and cultures of community organisations come into “alignment” with the strategy and business interests of the corporate supporter. Mutual goals, values and governance structures form key criteria for alignment from the perspective of corporations. Whereas, community sector organisations were often focused on the “ethics” of a potential partner, and in some cases, aligning too closely with a business was considered a risk to their reputation (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008).

Research has also shown that strategic approaches to social responsibility (legitimised through the discourse of enlightened self-interest) are becoming more prevalent amongst the corporate sector in Australia (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008), and this also reflects a move towards ‘integrative’ relationships. Despite holding a clear preference for integrative partnerships, Austin (2000, p. 72) concedes that stark choices are involved in this “evolution”:

> Although our research suggests that there are significant collaboration gains to be had by moving to a high level of engagement, both in specific benefits accruing to the respective partners and in the social value added by the alliance, the effort and investment (i.e., the costs) to obtain those are greater.

It must be noted that all of the above typologies are theoretical and as such may reflect a particular ideology which is likely to be different to the ideology that predominates in practice. As with any model, the above typologies may be “idealised” and as such, do not adequately capture the complexities and dynamics of the relationships between corporations and NGOs (Edwards & Onyx, 2003). An evolutionary or developmental framework for understanding corporate community partnerships carries the danger of suggesting that ‘integrative’ partnerships are the most highly desirable forms, and certain “business friendly” NGO qualities are most beneficial. More importantly, these theoretical assumptions might exclude many realities faced by practitioners. Typologies and continua, including those described above, may capture just one dimension of extremely diverse and multidimensional relationships, and often
appear to give little consideration to their qualitative aspects (Edwards & Onyx, 2003; Peters, 2001). Damlamian (2006, p. 3) suggested that ‘corporate-NGO partnerships can be formed and implemented in different ways’, and further argued that ‘it is difficult to evaluate the number of partnerships currently in existence, because many are formed between small local businesses and community groups and are not publicized’. Indeed, the Australian setting presents even greater complexity given the lack of publicly accessible information stipulating corporate/NGO type, form and the specific nature of cross-sector engagement.

3.8.3 Issues in Application: Obstacles to the Formation of Equitable Partnerships

According to its proponents, community-corporate partnerships offer unique and creative avenues in addressing entrenched social problems. In researching NGO attitudes to corporate partnerships, Phillips (2005) found many benefits including an ability to maintain their existing programs; an increased fundraising potential (which eases the demand on an organisation’s resources); long-term financial and organisational sustainability; and the ability to expand the geographical scope of services. Others like Lyons (2006), point to the capacity for corporate partnering to act as positive change agents for the third sector by enabling NGOs to undergo a much needed process of renewal and realignment. Corporate volunteering programs have also drawn considerable attention (Zappalà, 2001). Although scant evidence exists as to its benefits in the Australian context, research carried out by Lee (2010) found corporate volunteering to be useful in providing varying degrees of assistance to third sector organisations, with the potential to build upon existing capacities in generating meaningful social change. As such, community-corporate partnerships are touted as increasingly important for third sector organisations in expanding the scope of their social impact (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008).

A report by The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2007) titled Corporate Community Investment in Australia found that businesses view partnerships in a more strategic, discerning and rigorous manner, especially in regards to the
partner selection process. Theoretical claims made by Austin (2000) and Lyons (1998) had anticipated a progression to more transactional and integrative forms of partnerships. However, the above findings alternatively indicate that businesses are pursuing transactional forms strategically, and mutual benefit is being increasingly understood and framed through an instrumental “business case” approach (The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2007). This progression runs counter to traditional philanthropic relationships as, in the process of instrumental positioning, community priorities appear to only be considered if they align with prospective funders’ business interests. Research suggests that organisations wishing to engage with corporations are increasingly being pressured by their funders to accommodate for and “nurture” cross-sector partnerships by amending aspects of their activities (Lee, 2010). Moreover, evidence is beginning to surface that NGOs are now “tailoring” their activities to suit the needs of potential business partners, with the sole focus being to secure additional funding streams (Phillips, 2005).

These findings offer a unique glimpse into the power dynamics that commonly define and limit the nature of cross-sector engagement. Furthermore, corporate benevolence is visibly constrained on a conceptual level, when compared to earlier historic notions of philanthropy. While foundation philanthropy is constrained through social, cultural and political perceptions about deserving recipients and how to “scientifically” address social ills, corporate giving adds various economic and structural limitations. For instance, the literature suggests that management within corporations increasingly feel the need to rationalise community engagement to the shareholders through the prism of anticipated financial benefits (i.e. a “pay off” in a company’s reputation, staff retention and/or marketing), over the social and cultural benefits of supporting the community. Still, the move towards asymmetrical partnerships is not due solely to the discretionary self-interest of individual corporations. Current legislative measures that give business executives the power to donate company capital to community causes, also greatly restricts the scope through which cross-sector partnerships are defined. The Corporations Act 2001 (Part
2D.1) enables corporations to make donations, but only under the following conditions:

(1) A director or other officer of a corporation must exercise their powers and discharge their duties:
   (a) in good faith in the best interests of the corporation; and
   (b) for a proper purpose.

This act effectively positions Australian corporate philanthropy directly within an economic “shareholder” mode of CSR, in applying the principle of “mutual benefit”. As Klein and du Plessis (2005, p. 97) state,

> Corporate donations must be made as part of a business strategy, the primary motivation being to advance the interests of the corporation. This may be unfashionable but it is a legal requirement.

The requirement to take an ‘informed and sensible approach’ (Dingby & Watterson, 2005, p. 8) to community-corporate involvement programs signifies the notable preference of corporate donors for specific NGO types.

Lyons and Zappalà’s (2008) review of existing literature and research has provided the most thorough documentation to date of Australian community-corporate partnerships. They explained that the most successful NGOs in forming partnerships are those that are situated in capital cities, have the ability (resources) to “market” their cause; and allocate organisational resources to paid full-time staff in order to nurture existing partnerships (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008). Notably, the most successful partnerships are with large “issue-based” charities, with corporations being far less likely to form collaborations with grass-roots oriented third sector organisations. Although this finding is attributed, in part, to smaller community organisations’ ideological suspicions of corporate motives, other major contributing factors include low resources and poor knowledge of business funding sources (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008). Edwards and Onyx (2003) pointed to the success of “sexy” social causes in gaining multiple corporate partners.
In order to spread the benefits of corporate partnerships to a wider subsection of the third sector, Lyons and Zappalà (2008: 41) argued that, in evoking the true meaning of partnership, all nonprofits should be more open to a culture transfer so that corporations can ‘provide the technical and human resources that will enable the not-for-profit to improve the way it operates’. Although the possibilities of increased philanthropic assistance are attractive to many NGOs, the pressures placed on NGOs to subscribe to corporate expectations and preferences can potentially result in “partnered” third sector and community organisations becoming detached from their grass-roots origins. As Shamir (2004, p. 684) warned, the most successful NGOs are those increasingly ‘embedded within a culture of professional expertise that is not unlike the one around which corporations are organised’.

In order to highlight the nature and extent of the growing selectivity for corporate-aligned NGOs, an increasingly common form of partnership is briefly outlined and discussed below.

3.8.3.1 Cause Related Marketing: Epitomising the “Business Case”

The growth of cause related marketing shows the extent to which strategic instrumental discourse has come to dominate the field of community-corporate involvement. Daw (2006) explains that this form of philanthropy marks a dramatic shift from earlier not-for-profit relationships. In keeping with the “business case” approach to CSR, ‘it isn’t enough for companies to do good; they want to be seen doing good and to obtain business and marketing benefits beyond just a halo effect’ (Daw, 2006, p. 7). According to Kurucz, Colbert and Wheeler (2008), cause related marketing falls under the predominant concern for (re)building brand reputation and legitimacy. Furthermore, it is argued that evoking a sense of responsibility requires an alignment of values between all affected parties. Social-cause marketing

...highlights the alignment of stakeholder and firm interests by linking corporate philanthropy and marketing, showcasing socially and environmentally responsible behaviour of the
firm in order to generate reputational gains (Kurucz, et al., 2008, p. 90).

Cause related marketing was an innovation developed by American Express for their 1983 funding drive in support of the Statue of Liberty Restoration project. Daw (2006, p. 4) outlined the extent to which this early form of instrumental philanthropy was able to demonstrate benefits to both sides:

American Express supported the promotion with a $4 million advertising campaign to reach existing customers and encourage new ones. The results were impressive. In just three months, the Restoration Fund raised over 1.7 million, and American Express card use rose 27%, while new card applications increased by 45% compared to the previous year.

Corporate executives were beginning to see philanthropy through the now “mantra-like” belief that a company can only “do well by doing good” (Daw, 2006; Kurucz, et al., 2008; Zappalà & Cronin, 2003). A more recent derivative of cause-marketing – “umbrella social-cause branding” – was found in corporations who adopted (RED®) branded products. Launched at the World Economic Forum in 2006, this form of corporate-social engagement saw many global corporations expand their marketing benefits (with the assistance of popular celebrities) by supporting the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (Smith, 2008).

The Pink Ribbon campaign is another highly successful example of the “umbrella” form of cause related marketing. On the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) website (2011) there are numerous methods available to contribute money and time to support research, as well as raising awareness in combating breast cancer. The website openly stated that NBCF is a ‘respected leader in cause marketing partnership[s]’, boasting a list of forty corporate sponsors. In seeking to understand the nature and extent of such cause-related marketing approaches, Samantha King’s book, Pink Ribbons, Inc (2006),

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5 Product (RED) is, ‘a simple idea that transforms our collective power as consumers into a financial force to help others in need’. By purchasing from brands involved in the campaign, including American Express, Apple, Nike and Gap, consumers are taking part in a wider movement to help fight diseases in Africa that ‘saves lives’ (JoinRed online, 2011).
provides a useful and thorough insight. However, while the increased awareness generated through this particular campaign, and the foundation’s success in breaking down social stigma concerning breast cancer was commended, King found that the philanthropic marketing campaigns and organised “giving” structures were also successful in fundamentally constraining the focus of public concern.

Central to the “Pink Ribbon” movement, King (2006, p. 23) explains, is a neo-liberal ideology that defines those ‘legitimately suffering’ within ‘white, middle class, nationally sanctioned womanhood’ who work or stay at home to look after a family. By narrowing public focus to the “deserving” victim, and further presenting this in an uncomplicated narrative, the movement obscures the underlying structures of inequality and existing barriers to treatment and prevention (King, 2006). The real outcome of this process may in fact further hamper the legitimacy of alternative approaches to fighting the disease:

Questions related to the effects of social and economic structure – particularly the lack of socialised medicine and the impact of the environment – on disease incidence, treatment, and mortality have been pushed to the margins in favour of a focus on educating and inspiring individuals to take responsibility for their health.

It should be stipulated that King’s (2006) analysis centres its criticism of philanthropy on the US setting. Although, what is provided is an insight into how cause related marketing can both advance and constrain an issue of social importance. Such philanthropic programs are clearly beneficial in promoting and raising awareness of “useful” causes. However, the nature of “sound bite” marketing also constrains the extent to which the social issue is understood, and in particular, who in society is considered “in need” and thus deserving of aid. The business case approach to philanthropy often results in corporations aligning themselves with a select few, highly visible, issue-based NGOs, where public approval can be most easily obtained, and marketing benefits maximised (Silver, 2006). Moreover, the practice of tying corporate philanthropy to the act
of consumption (i.e. in purchasing “pink ribbon” merchandise or a t-shirt with a RED® label) raises wider ethical issues:

Through the practice of consumption philanthropy, ordinary people who buy products that also support a cause are easily tied to a false sense of doing good through consumption as a means to ameliorate the very impact that is produced when consuming the product of (often) exploited labor (Nickel & Eikenberry, 2009, p. 979).

Ultimately, cause related marketing results in the administering of philanthropy from within a capitalist structure that is likely to impede real systematic change, and in doing so, preserve the donor’s social and economic position within society.

3.9 Conceptualising Power in the Field of Community-Corporate Engagement

Corporate citizenship has been described as undergoing a new “renaissance” as evidenced by increased awareness of the social and environmental footprint of the corporate sector (Zadek, 2001). In light of the business community’s advocacy for the contraction of government welfare and other social spending (Robinson & Sidoti, 2000), there are strong arguments for corporations to take on a greater role in funding community activities. However, discussion has been rarely directed to decision-making processes with regard to the distribution of funding and the governing structures of cross-sector relationships that are formed. Many issues raised thus far have clearly exhibited how a concentration of social power at one side of a cross-sector relationship has influenced the process and outcome of philanthropic activities. Therefore, the following section integrates existing literature on power that may assist in further understanding relations of power within cross-sector interactions.

At this point, a problem emerges. Examining power in the applied setting is replete with complexity, with the concept itself forming a key point of contention. Indeed, as Galbraith (1984, p. 1) once pointed out, ‘few words are
used so frequently with so little seeming need to reflect on their meaning as power’. In response, multiple theoretical frameworks have been proposed in analysing power across a range of disciplines.

### 3.9.1 Lukes’ Three Dimensions of Power

Within the field of organisational dynamics, Lukes’ (1974) analysis had attempted to unpack and categorise different applications of power. Three broad dimensions were proposed:

1. **The behavioural view** – conflict is overt and domination occurs through concrete decision-making.
2. **The political view** – conflict is covert and decisions are prevented from being made on potential issues by obscuring a problem.
3. **The radical structural view** – power is infused with the ability to socialise another to accept a specific reality.

The first form of power may itself hold further sub-categorisations. For instance, the behavioural view may describe either *unitary forms* (represented through force, coercion and threats) or *pluralist forms* (concerning influence in social relations) (Fulop, Linstead, & Frith, 1999). With reference to community-corporate relationships, the literature highlighted in previous sections clearly locates power through *influence*, and specifically through the ability of corporate funders to exert pressure through discretionary resource allocation. As part of this pluralist or structural view of power, such influence is derived from ‘control over resources, from the ties one has to powerful others, and the formal authority one obtains because of one’s position in the hierarchy’ (Pfeffer, 1992, p. 75). Lukes’ method of analysis had generally been used to locate power relationships within organisations. However, similar principles may also apply across organisations involved in “collaborations”, particularly where one side provides essential resources to the other.

Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978b) theory of resource dependency had often been cited when examining the unique experience of “autonomous” organisations in
relation to external funders. According to this theory, resource dependency is particularly pronounced in ‘environmental conditions of scarcity and uncertainty’ (limited access to funding and resources), and where dependence is concentrated in a small number of funders; both conditions limiting the autonomy of third sector organisations where they become ‘beholden’ to their donors (Froelich, 1999, pp. 247-248). In response, diversification of funding streams had, and continues to be positioned as a way to minimise the risk of the funder’s culture and values being transferred to the recipient. However, intensive focus on obtaining funding from a wide range of sources (and in seeking financial sustainability) can run the equal risk of realigning the attention of management away from an organisation’s original mission and philosophy (Froelich, 1999). Philanthropic particularism – the tendency of philanthropic funders to focus on particular “deserving” subgroups (Anheier, 2005) – can also divert the focus of non-profits from peripheral or non-marketable community activities to areas where funding is readily available.

The second dimension of power within Lukes’ typology may be interpreted as “choice suppression” (Fulop, Linstead, & Clarke, 1999). This form may apply to cases where external attention is shifted away from the aims and objectives of community development activities, to inadequacies of accountability structures. In some instances, only those organisations with developed monitoring and reporting systems, or those that can exhibit long-term financial sustainability are considered in funding requests (Boris, 2006). For example, Salamon (2010) found that partnerships in the Latin American context were often formed with ‘safe and respectable’ organisations, which excluded many non-traditional social causes.

The third or “radical” dimension proposed by Lukes (1974) considered power in relation to ideologies and belief systems, which served to define both the nature of social problems and their solutions. This view of power holds relevance to the applied organisational setting, specifically with the infusion of “business management” practices within third sector organisations. Within this view, cultural assumptions and practices from the corporate sector (i.e.
managing “risks”, emphasising financial sustainability, as well as branding and marketing practices) are applied to the community level. This form of power concerns the ‘management of meaning’, which obscures the nature of control held by one group over another (Anthony 1994, cited in Fulop, Linstead, & Frith, 1999, p. 127). As such, the possibility remains that key concepts within the field of study are open to manipulation and distortion. One key area where meaning can easily fall victim to distortion is in the application of central concepts such as “partnership”. Indeed, it has been found that some community-corporate interactions are not partnerships in any traditional sense, despite the rhetoric of equality and mutual-benefit.

3.9.2 Power within Partnerships

In the community development context, the term “partnerships” has been considered most effective where values are shared and both sides work towards common goals (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). Waddock (1988, p. 18) provided a definition of partnership that is more specific to cross-sector collaborations:

A partnership is a commitment by a corporation or group of corporations to work with an organization from a different economic sector (public or nonprofit). It involves a commitment of resources – time and effort – by individuals from all partner organizations. These individuals work cooperatively to solve a problem that affects them all... Social partnership addresses issues that extend beyond organizational boundaries and traditional goals and lie within the traditional realm of public policy – that is, the social arena. It requires active, rather than passive involvement from all parties.

In examining community-corporate partnerships in the Latin American context, Salamon (2010) found that integrative or “joint venture” partnerships, which might be modelled on the above definition, were few and far between. The majority instead fell under the philanthropic “at-arms-length” or transactional approaches (Salamon, 2010). Although an enthusiastic supporter of partnerships, Zadek (2001, p. 93) acknowledged the tendency of some corporations to use this mechanism as a way of building reputation and
avoiding external regulation while they continue to ‘perform poorly away from the limelight’ with regard to business ethics. Furthermore, Gainer (2010) disagreed with the theoretical assumptions that integrative cross-sector partnerships position both sides on equal footing. Instead:

> Power differentials with respect to resources and organisational capacity, coupled with differences in interests and values, suggest that what appear to be “joint ventures” between equally independent partners may really be more akin to vertical integration of a supply chain in which the most powerful player “governs” the other members of a channel (Gainer, 2010, p. 196)

The increasing demand for corporate support by non-profits, coupled with resource constraints within the corporate sector (Shergold, 2009), has meant that community organisations and charities have felt an increasing need to understand and work around corporate decision-making processes (Jones & Tilt, 2005). As corporations take on a greater role in supporting community and welfare services, it has been argued that they constitute a continuation of a wider deregulated form of welfare governance. In other words, ‘as corporations assume more and more of the traditional roles and responsibilities of governments, third sector organizations are no longer being governed by government alone, but also by corporations’ (Gainer, 2010, p. 195).

Beyond the problems associated with overt cases of influence within community-corporate relationships, this research is also interested in other “hidden” forms of power. Clegg (1997, p. 286) argued that individuals may ‘exercise power without knowing they are doing so’ in the form of patterned practices and sites of every day resistance. One dimension relevant to cross-sector relationships is that of reciprocation, which infers each participant having some form of power over the other (Fulop, Linstead, & Frith, 1999). For instance, a corporation may have power in financing non-profit activities, but they also rely upon their community partners in building/regaining public trust, or drawing marketing and other reputational benefits. In this way, community-
based organisations hold power through their ability to offer this tradable, albeit largely intangible, resource.

3.9.3 Relational Power and Institutionalisation Theory

So far, the conceptualisation of power has centred on the practical application of Lukes' (1974) typology within the field of community-corporate engagement, and the complexities arising through the formation of unequal partnerships. However, no study of power would be complete without consideration of the remarkably influential analytical work proposed by Michel Foucault (1926-1984). Foucault's (2001) analysis of power explored ways whereby present and possible future actions can be shaped subversively through various hidden processes. In contrast to approaches outlined previously, power is not viewed as a zero-sum game within this conceptualisation, but as widely dispersed and omnipresent in all social encounters through language and discourse (1972, 1979, 1981).

According to this analytical perspective, 'power works through culture and customs, institutions and individuals', and 'its effects are also multiple, not simply negative or positive, but as [Foucault] puts it, “productive” ' (Feder, 2011, p. 56). Positioned by Fulop, Linstead and Frith (1999) as the likely fourth dimension to Lukes' (1974) framework, this relational view considered how power is infused within all social relations, which encompasses both domination and resistance. More specifically, language holds a central place within power as 'the way we speak embodies particular ways of viewing the world' (Fulop, Linstead, & Clarke, 1999: 324). They explain:

We think in terms of language so we think in terms of power, and when we act we act in terms of language and thus the terms of power, so power informs even our bodily movements. Foucault calls the complex nest of ideas, linguistic expressions, assumptions, justifications, defenses, social institutions and practical actions that constitute a cohesive way of approaching the world a discourse. (Fulop, Linstead, & Clarke, 1999, p. 324)
In its broadest sense, the definition of discourse relevant to this thesis ‘considers how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000a, p. 493).

Areas of tension are likely to exist within cross-sector partnerships, when considering the instrumental nature behind the discourse of corporate citizenship compared to the humanistic discourses found in the community sector. These factors are not easily integrated into managerial discourse (Darcy, 2002). Studies in this field have explored underlying meaning behind “common sense” statements, where there often resides a complex array of ideas, moral assertions, and various rhetorical devises that, on close inspection, reveal the speaker’s particular “world view” (Fairclough, 2001, 2003; Lakoff, 2002a).

When applied to community-corporate interactions, value-laden ideas of civil society, participation, social justice and social capital inform how the world is understood, how social problems are best confronted, and the desired processes in achieving such goals.

In the institutional context, this analytical perspective requires a greater understanding of how knowledge systems shape the social and governmental ‘technologies’ which constitute power in the modern world (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). More recently, institutionalisation theory has adopted components of Foucault’s analysis to show how organisational practices ‘are often the result of social pressures to conform to convention’ (Robbins & Barnwell, 2002, p. 54). As Powell and DiMaggio (1991a, p. 28) outlined, underlying this broad area of study has been ‘the notion that actors and their interests are institutionally constructed’. According to this perspective, power is not exercised by individuals and groups, but through overarching ideological and discursive shifts that bear upon notions of “best practice” within organisations and sectors. The concept of isomorphism is particularly relevant to the applied setting, as it describes ‘a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions’ (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b, p. 66).
DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) highlighted three dominant isomorphic processes that may be of assistance to this study:

1. **Coercive isomorphism** – arising from informal and formal political pressures upon organisations to adopt different processes, forms and structures.

2. **Mimetic isomorphism** – arising from internal uncertainty, whereby organisations model themselves on others that are perceived to be more legitimate or successful within their field.

3. **Normative isomorphism** – whereby legitimacy is linked to a level of professionalisation, thus impacting upon the “filtering” of personnel, internal structures and the adoption of new ways of measuring organisational success (i.e. through “efficiency” and “value for money”)

DiMaggio and Powell’s (1991) analytical framework has since been influential in Australian third sector research. For instance, O’Shea (2007, 2009) provided a thorough analysis of community-state sector relationships, which found clear value in examining the growing permeation and impact of institutionalisation discourse in the New South Wales (NSW) third sector context. Another example of applying wider discursive analysis has been through a critical examination of neo-liberal ideology with reference to welfare policy in Australia more broadly. These studies particularly noted how wider discourses have informed knowledge assumptions concerning organisational “accountability”, and how these information systems are employed to regulate institutional processes (Brown, et al., 2000; Dean, 1999). It is argued in this thesis that such analysis is also of direct pertinence to the applied study of community-corporate engagement, specifically through the influence of corporate discourses upon community sector processes and practices.

### 3.9.4 Ideology and Power: “Strategy” and Market Discourse

Corporate philanthropy in Australia has been framed as a strategic activity, and as Genest (2005) claims, forms an extension of public relations or the corporate communications function. As indicated previously, notions of civil society and
*community* contain multiple meanings which are often antithetical to the aims, processes and knowledge assumptions of the for-profit sector. Marketing such ideas to the public require in-depth understandings of humanistic, feminist and other progressive philosophies, and knowledge of the structures and constraints that pervade the third sector. However, in light of the instrumental nature of their community engagement strategies, corporations are more likely to interpret these concepts differently. The temptation to view community activities from within the more singular economic rationalist profit-motive mindset may often occur subconsciously, but in doing so it obscures the true complexity and intangible nature of civil society outcomes (Banerjee, 2008). Rather, Keane (2003, p. 76) argued that market discourses ‘invite the victims of competition to blame themselves – and to survive by adapting to new standards of efficiency’. Fairclough (2001, p. 70) would position such assertions as ‘common sense in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power’. However, this power relation may equally occur without the explicit knowledge of both parties. Furthermore, ideological influence is maintained only when its true meaning is implicit:

Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible. If one becomes aware that a particular aspect of common sense is sustaining power inequalities at one’s own expense, it ceases to be common sense, and may cease to have the capacity to sustain power inequalities, i.e. to function ideologically (Fairclough, 2001, p. 71).

Tensions have been found where the market-oriented ideologies of the business sector begin to permeate the third sector. Civil society groups often prioritise social benefit, and embark on socially transformative actions even when “times are tough” – an approach found to be different to that of the corporate sector (Edwards, 2010). Alternatively, Edwards (2010, p. 70) argued that ‘market norms are impersonal, characterized by the freedom to disconnect, to switch to a different supplier whenever and wherever I want’. It is apparent that the notion of “trust” can hold different meaning across the two discursive frameworks. Sandfort (2008, p. 550) also acknowledged the tension between the two world views:
For-profit models of strategic philanthropy ignore what is known about the analysis of social problems, government-nonprofit relationships, or nonprofit management. They overlook the complex networks that involve multifaceted relationships with the public sector.

However, disagreement persists. While some have argued that licence to operate entails ‘walking with integrity’ (Genest, 2005, p. 316), according to others the prospect of corporate partnerships extending beyond the confines of “strategic” self-interest has remained minimal (Banerjee, 2008). Nonetheless, despite the need for a sound “business case” in developing cross-sector partnerships, the likelihood that communities can draw benefit out of such relationships remains strong. After examining one example in the Australian context, Loza (2004) found that business partnerships can be highly effective in building community capacity and social capital in ways that would be impossible without outside support.

Despite the possible benefits in cross-sector collaborations, others have highlighted more fundamental concerns. For instance, research has begun to document this emerging culture-language gap between the corporate and community sectors. As Shamir (2004) outlined, business strategies to align with community groups had resulted in a de-politicisation of the conception of “community” where it became commodified within the global market. Focussing on “safe” social issues such as education also explains how corporate culture interprets and applies a-political meaning to change-based movements. Instead of supporting political empowerment (as is commonly interpreted in civil society discourse), corporate funding programs have preferred to focus upon socioeconomic empowerment which equips individuals with skills to cope with the extremities of capitalism (Shamir, 2004). Thus, in remodelling human rights to a question of skills, civil society and community philosophies are repackaged to adhere to the donor’s culture and worldview.

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This viewpoint has some support in light of the legal impediments in the Australian context.
After cataloguing the extent to which neo-liberal instrumental logic pervades CSR activities, Banerjee (2008) proposed new methods of academic analysis that encapsulate power and discourse dynamics within stakeholder theory and practice. He argued:

We need to open up new spaces and provide new frameworks for organisational-stakeholder dialogues as well as critically examine the dynamics of the relationships between corporations, NGOs, governments, community groups and funding agencies (Banerjee, 2008, p. 73).

The emergence of community-corporate relationships in Australia poses unique challenges for both sectors in striking a balance between market-oriented and socially-oriented motivations, goals, and methods of redress. However, in acknowledging the dangers of uncritically applying market discourse to non-market activities, it remains evident that the interests of community “civil society” organisations risk being lost behind the “fuzzy” exterior of partnership discourse (Smith, 2007).

3.10 Conclusion: An Engaged Approach to Power Analysis

It has been argued that the discourse of economic rationalism requires much greater critical attention given its power to dictate the terms of cross-sector partnerships and those social causes deemed “important” and “worthy” (Banerjee, 2008). Thus, any endeavour to rebalance community-corporate involvement requires the “denaturalisation” (Fairclough, 2010) of neo-liberal or economic rationalist discourses within the context of corporate philanthropy and CSR. However, this thesis posits that the analysis of power should not merely be directed towards the practitioners and social context under study. The way in which social scientific research is pursued can often reflect the very power imbalances in the wider social sphere. As such, the subsequent three chapters provide a rationale for an entirely unique research strategy to be employed in this study. This method aims to achieve two significant research objectives. These objectives include:
1. The pursuit of a detailed exploration of Australian community-corporate relationships, with specific interest in the languages, discourses and power relations evident between the two sectors.

2. Pursuing methods that create the foundations for inter-sector dialogue, thus enabling research participants to collaboratively explore these relationships further and challenge highlighted areas of inequity.
Chapter Four

Methodology:
Revealing Power Relationships through Participatory Action Research
4.1 Introduction: Mapping the Pragmatics and Politics of Applied Research

A major characteristic of twentieth-century manipulation has been that it blinds the victim to the fact of manipulation. Because so many industrial sociologists have been willing to serve power instead of mind, they have been themselves a case study in manipulation by consent.  

(Baritz, 1960, p. 210)

Conformity with the basic principle of established politics – that is, accepting the image of social reality held by the hegemonic elite or at least one compatible with it – is, however, nothing less than a betrayal of the most fundamental objectives of sociology. The price paid is the dulling of the sociologist’s awareness; it is surrender in the struggle to know those social worlds that are and those that might be.  

(Gouldner, 1970, p. 498)

The quotes provided above point to the potential dangers social scientists can face when conducting externally funded research within the applied setting. These dangers are especially present when research is conducted on, with and for institutions that possess considerable economic, political and social influence. The history of applied research in the field of management has been considerably problematic, as Baritz (1960) emphasised in his work The Servants of Power more than fifty years ago. While much has changed within management research since Baritz’s time, strong reservations persist about the capacity and willingness for social researchers – particularly in the field of business administration – to question, rather than serve interests of power. For instance, Brief (2000, p. 349) argued that beyond engaging more within the applied sphere, ‘we ought to pause and ponder who we are serving through our research and how we are meeting the realistic needs of those identified groups’. Similarly, Gouldner (1970) turned his critical attention to the responsibilities held by social scientists by outlining how specific decisions made through the process of conducting applied research can either challenge or further reinforce existing power structures. Rather than retreating behind the lines of traditional “value-free” research, it was argued that social scientists should reflect upon
their own positions within this process. For Gouldner (1970), there was a rejection of both the possibility and worth of “value-freedom” within sociology. Instead, he argued that values are embedded within any form of research, whether the researcher chooses to admit to its presence or not. A “Reflective Sociology” acknowledges the centrality of values (Gouldner, 1970), while also actively inquiring into who benefits from research, whose interests are researchers aligned with in the pursuit of knowledge, and the role of ideology in guiding and distorting this process.

This chapter will canvass the methodological framework of the study by initially reflecting upon this need for greater reflexivity. Up to this point, discussion has provided a critical backdrop to the complex and often opposing array of motivations, processes, agendas and worldviews which combine to inform relationships between the corporate and community sectors. Of particular emphasis has been the importance of power as a central conceptual lens within which to analyse and interpret these interactions. However, some pause is warranted before prematurely “launching” into research without preliminary reflection into some possible implications. The presence of local community organisations, who are often positioned on the periphery of the philanthropic or CSR hierarchy (and thus draw from entirely different agendas than their more influential corporate sector partners), spurs the need for philosophical and pragmatic reflection before key methodological choices are made. Moreover, the presence of external funders within this research also holds significant implications, with clear potential to influence the philosophical foundations, overall balance and intellectual autonomy of the study. While open dialogue is elevated to a central position in collaborative research, Brydon-Miller (2008, p. 205) also asserts that ‘a clear understanding of the hierarchies that exist everywhere within and outside our research settings can prevent us from naively assuming that simply bringing people together allows us to transcend pre-existing relationships of power and privilege’. As such, it is worth acknowledging that change-oriented applied research – as pursued in this current study – holds as much possibility of co-opting the aims and objectives of marginalised groups, as succumbing to the “established” research approaches
and interests of others within different social, political and economic positions (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). Appreciating the importance of these points is critical in both developing an appropriate methodological framework and in reflecting upon its effectiveness.

In light of the power disparities and inequities that can exist when organisations and sectors come together to form “partnerships”, the absence of consideration concerning the researcher's role in redressing or further reinforcing these power relationships might be considered a clear oversight within the field. This applied study, which takes its influence from recent work in critical theory (Habermas, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1990), has attempted to address this problem directly within a broad methodology of action research (Gustavsen, 2006; Heron & Reason, 2001; Johansson & Lindhult, 2008; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Through utilising a combination of standard and creative social scientific methods, it is argued that a wider picture of these collaborative processes may be rendered possible. More specifically, the decision to move beyond traditional “controlled” approaches and procedures in understanding community-corporate engagement was deemed necessary in order to explore the lived experience of partnerships, unpack the power dynamics that arise, and to question whether the “reality” facing participants was set-in-stone or malleable to positive change from within.

Within the social sciences, recent efforts towards a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between theories concerning the nature of reality (or ontology) and the nature of knowledge (or epistemology) has helped inform how research is best undertaken and results analysed and interpreted (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012; Sarantakos, 1998). In drawing from such developments, the next three chapters will canvass the research framework by approaching the issue of methodology comprehensively (Hesse-Biber, 2010). More specifically, the current chapter will outline where the alternative methodology of action research that was deployed in this research is positioned as part of long-running “paradigm wars” within the social sciences, and how this methodology further emphasises the role of ethics,
philosophy and social validity within research designs. After outlining this methodological perspective, options will be canvassed regarding some specific tools available to action researchers in promoting democratic dialogue among disparate groups.

After discussion of the methodology, the thesis will continue with a description of the multi-phased mixed-methods design (Chapter Five), which has sought to balance the pragmatic aims of the research with the engaged principles of action research. The analytical framework is presented in Chapter Six, and provides the basis of the critically reflective analysis that is applied to both research texts and the research process. As Figure 1 depicts, the layering of components to the research emphasises interconnectivity between key aspects, with critically reflective analysis being positioned at its core.

**Figure 2 - The Comprehensive Research Framework**
4.1.1 University-Community Collaboration
A notable component to the “engaged” research methodology concerns the collaborative structure of the project. This research drew upon advice and guidance from two industry partners/funders – one a major corporate trust, and the other a peak community sector organisation – in drafting research questions, fine-tuning specific methods of data collection, recruiting appropriate participants, planning the search conference and ensuring that the results were reported in a way that would maximise community benefit. Advice provided by external partners was complemented by discussions within a separate academic steering group structure which was designed to ensure that quality and a certain degree of intellectual autonomy was maintained throughout the entire process.

4.2 Competing Approaches, Paradigms and Agendas: Striking a Balance

4.2.1 Methodological Significance and Implications of the Research
In contrast to previous studies within the field, this research is positioned as unique in that it sought to critically explore the disparate experiences, motivations and assumptions of individuals holding key decision-making positions from both corporate and community sectors. Concurrently, conscious attempts towards resolving some of these differences were made through an engaged participatory action research (PAR) format – a model that employs both emancipatory and pragmatic principles toward the achievement of wider social goals (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). In light of the combined pragmatic and critical objectives of the research (set out in Chapter One) it is argued that the methodology of PAR is the most appropriate approach for this study. This approach also marks as the main point of deference from other research.

As already discussed, studies in Australia have tended to examine the issue of cross-sector relationships exclusively from either the corporate perspective (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2000; Cronin & Zappalà, 2002; Madden, Scaife, & Crissman, 2006; Sargeant & Crissman, 2006; Zappalà, 2004; Zappalà &
Cronin, 2003) or community sector perspective (ACOSS, 2011; Zappalà & Lyons, 2005). These studies were largely descriptive, conducted primarily through the use of structured interviews and surveys. Recent attempts to integrate analysis of both perspectives have focused primarily on the frequency and extent of cross-sector engagement (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008; Lyons & Zappalà, 2008), or have alternatively examined single case studies involving a relationship between a large non-profit organisation and its corporate funders (Loza, 2004). In some cases, existing typologies located overseas have provided a theoretical framework to examine multiple applied case examples, again primarily in relation to corporate relationships with large charities (Zappalà, 2007). Others have found greater complexity in applying such frameworks to the applied Australian setting, while also pointing to some areas of inequity (Edwards & Onyx, 2002; Edwards & Onyx, 2003). Notably, the question of power within cross-sector relationships is generally absent from Australian research. However, one study went some way towards directly examining the presence of power through a phenomenological analysis of a small number of case studies (McQueen, 2002).

The current study has sought to expand upon this critical understanding of cross-sector relationships. In doing so, a specific focus is paid to the subjective experience of representatives in small community organisations. As later sections will explain, community organisations were selected as part of a purposive sample, either due to their interest in forming relationships with corporate funders or because they had previous involvement in cross-sector relationships. Comparable insight was derived from decision-makers within major corporations or separate corporate trusts, specifically those institutions who professed an interest in forming relationships with the Australian community welfare sector. However, this research also sought to move beyond solely providing a critical analysis of subjectivities across the two sectors, or in conducting a range of phenomenological case studies of power relationships – the latter of which has already been thoroughly undertaken by McQueen (2002). The principal contribution this research makes is centred on its final “action research” stage, whereby through a search conference, participants
were invited to re-examine their own experiences, reflect on key issues that had been located through the research, and attempt to resolve areas where power imbalance and inequity were found to exist. Therefore, two key contributions are made through the adoption of this engaged research approach. Firstly, the research framework holds implications in the applied setting through having established a process that encourages key stakeholders ‘to create an alternative political, social and economic model’ of community-corporate engagement. On an analytical level, the findings presented in subsequent sections test the ability of this consensus-building field experiment in resolving some of the key tensions that have been discovered to impede the foundation of equitable cross-sector collaborations. The implications of this research thus hold clear value to the practice of community-corporate engagement as well as to the viability of conducting this form of applied, change-oriented participatory research.

4.2.2 Relevance of Hermeneutic and Critical Approaches in the Applied Setting

A number of research instruments were employed in order to:

1. Locate and recruit research participants that met the requirements of the purposive sample;
2. Collect and generate sufficient and appropriate data that enabled the research questions to be answered;
3. Examine meaning behind key themes; and
4. Provide an open, communicative space for participants to reflect upon, re-examine and develop creative solutions to the key issues raised.

Selecting suitable methods for this research required a high degree of consideration, as success of the research was also reliant upon striking a balance between pursuing the “critical” foundations of the research, while staying relevant to the “pragmatic” (and somewhat messy) realities of an engaged research landscape. In response, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods was employed within a multi-phased design (Hesse-Biber, 2010). These methods will be canvassed in Section 4.5. However, in order
to satisfactorily explore the nature and extent of power within relationships the 
bulk of data collected was of a qualitative nature and analysed from within the 
*interpretive* (hermeneutic) and *critical* research “paradigms”. Given that these 
approaches constitute a clear departure from the bulk of research practice 
within this field, further explanation of their uses and limitations is required.

Hermeneutic approaches to research are increasingly considered useful as they 
discard previously held ontological and epistemological assumptions that 
reality is “out there” to be discovered and that truth can be ascertained through 
detached, rigorous scientific method. Rather than operate from these 
“positivist” assumptions, this study has been influenced by earlier arguments 
pose by Guba and Lincoln (1989), who saw that the social world should be 
examined as a culmination of individual constructions. From this perspective, 
traditional approaches to research are considered insufficient in generating a 
detailed understanding of a given social phenomenon. More specifically, this 
*paradigm* rests on multiple assumptions; that individuals draw upon their own 
values in making sense of the social world, that a plurality of values exist in any 
given society, that individuals are profoundly influenced by their physical, 
psychological, political and cultural contexts, and that (despite claims to the 
contrary) research is a political process that can be shaped to either include or 
marginalise stakeholder groups in various ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This 
latter point in particular, draws considerably from Goulder’ s (1970) arguments 
as well as other early constructionist and reflexive theorists (Habermas, 1965). 
In response, it has been argued that research should be designed to explore and 
interpret how meanings and contradictions in the life world are constructed 
through the researcher’s immersion in the specific area of study (Denzin, 1983).

The methodology of participatory action research (PAR) employed in this 
research replicates a number of these assumptions, while the analysis of power

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7 Bryman (2008, p. 605) define the concept of paradigm as a ‘cluster of beliefs’ that shape the 
topics that are worthy of a research’s attention, the way in which research is to be conducted 
and the manner through which one may interpret the results of social research.

8 According to Habermas (1987), truth claims are mediated through this concept of “lifeworld”, 
which consists of interactions between culture, society and personality.
described later has been influenced by the post-structuralist and post-modern school of thought. The latter requires moving beyond a “grounded” form of analysis, to one that unpacks and examines how common linguistic threads – or discourses⁹ – are drawn upon, interpreted, reframed and challenged by research participants (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003). Moreover, post-modernism challenges even the most basic research methods used in generating data. For instance, Gubrium and Holstein (2003, p. 47) note that in a world where the interview has become commonplace, researchers must understand its role as yet another form of cultural production; a site where respondents construct ‘individualized experience’ and one’s place in relation to others in the social sphere. Rather than constituting a simple form of information gathering, researchers should also acknowledge the presence of relational power within the research process (apparent in both “closed” and “open” methods), which can both empower and marginalize the voice and input of participants (Golbrium & Holstein, 2003). This point is of clear relevance to research exploring subjective experiences in spaces where meaning is openly contested, and is afforded further complexity when some participants hold considerably more power than the researcher (i.e. in the case of interviewing corporate executives) (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). However, the degrees to which these demarcations of power resemble an objective description of the research process or otherwise signify my own deep-seated (ontological) assumptions as a researcher are debatable. The role of the researcher in defining the categories of power within a research process will form a significant point of reflection in subsequent chapters.

Both interpretivist and critical paradigms, while opening up new opportunities and lines of inquiry, have resulted in serious questions being raised about the quality and implication of social scientific research. For instance, if multiple and conflicting viewpoints are equally “valid”, and if there exists numerous ways of interpreting research data, then the researcher’s ability to make reliable and

⁹ As discussed previously, some common discourses that currently pervade the third sector include community new managerialism and social entrepreneurialism. Their uses within an theorised analytical framework will be detailed later, drawing from the linguistic toolkit provided by Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2003).
generalisable conclusions would appear questionable at best. In response, qualitative researchers such as Denzin (1983), went so far as to argue that generalisation should be considered an artefact from an earlier paradigm and thus hold minimal sway over the thinking of qualitative researchers. However, this radical viewpoint obscures alternative ways of understanding concepts such as generalisation, validity and ethics within qualitative research than has been provided by the two epistemological extremes (Payne & Williams, 2005; Silverman, 2008; Williams, 2000). Kvale (1996) reconceptualised questions of generalisability, validity and reliability to suit the purposes of qualitative research. In sidestepping the discordant viewpoints between strong positivist perspectives (which seek to discover generalisable social laws) and strong post modern perspectives (which emphasise the heterogeneity and contextuality of knowledge), it has been argued that various forms of generalisation exist. These forms include naturalistic generalisation, statistical generalisation and analytical generalisation (Kvale, 1996). Williams (2000) went further by explaining how generalising statements are endemic within qualitative research, albeit they are made in different ways to traditional approaches found in the physical or other empirical sciences. What he described was a unique form of "moderatum generalisation", which may be crudely defined as the generalisation of everyday life. This form is often used blithely in narrative, ethnographic and other forms of qualitative analysis (Williams, 2000). After reviewing a series of qualitative studies, Payne and Williams (2005) found these forms of generalisations to be common in all cases. However, these 'sweeping claims' were often employed uncritically and without adequate understanding of their limitations (Payne & Williams, 2005, p. 310).

Other interpretivists such as Agar (1986, p. 12) argued that hypothesis driven research should be replaced altogether with an applied process of 'intensive personal involvement' - conducted through an 'improvisational style'. According to this approach, the researcher learns primarily through an ad-hoc, trial-and-error basis; in his case, ethnography (Agar, 1986). Other qualitative researchers such as Silverman (2008) have come to critique this viewpoint, arguing that such an alternative approach would rely considerably upon an open-ended
“trust” in the researcher. Likely consequences of ‘this kind of anarchy’ (Silverman, 2008, p. 273) would purportedly be: the loss of credibility and reliability in qualitative research; giving greater credence to its quantitative critics; and the denigration of social scientific research more generally within the wider public sphere.

The clash between “incompatible” epistemological perspectives has been a component of social research since Gouldner’s (1970) work was first published, eventuating in the social scientific research community being segregated into two broad camps (Wadsworth, 2005). Notwithstanding these differences, Northcutt and McCoy (2004, p. 2) reflected upon what they found to be a “paradox” between the seemingly opposing paradigms of post-modernism and post-positivism:

Because of the different beliefs and values (a synonym for which is ideology and, depending on how far one pushes the concept, even religion), Postmoderns view The Others (to use Foucault’s concept) as representing the forces of oppression and injustice, at worst, or simply quaint and out of touch, at best. Postpositivists regard The Others as nihilistic, albeit clever, scientific Luddites whose writings never rise above the level of investigative journalism. [Emphasis in original text]

It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide further commentary on what has come to be known as the “paradigm wars” between conventional and non-traditional social scientific approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Cannella, 2004). Although the proposed methodology is drawn primarily from qualitative knowledge in exploring the nature and relations of power in community-corporate relationships, it adopts an approach that bases its assumptions on a combination of constructionist and critical realist ontologies. In other words, this thesis acknowledges that what may be perceived as “reality” (and social research for that matter) is a human construction, but that individual perceptions are heavily influenced by context-specific ideologies and discourses (Fairclough, 2010).
The methodological framework of PAR is thus positioned as most appropriate in its capacity to explore and address the complexity of social life. Far from claiming any form of paradigmatic purity, this method operates according to a social justice agenda and draws upon a mixed-methods design. In doing so PAR assumes that the most effective way of researching and redressing inequities found within specific contexts is to enable participants themselves to become active and critically reflective conduits of social change.

4.3 Action Research: Background and Philosophy

The broad purpose of action research is ‘to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 2). Beyond this basic tenet are multiple approaches, covering a considerable array of disciplines, philosophies and methods, found within diverse social and institutional settings. For instance, a recent survey of action research literature from 2008 to 2010 charted a plethora of articles and books covering various research fields such as education, community engagement, rural and regional development, organisational studies, action learning, appreciative enquiry, among many others (Dick, 2011). What unites most of these approaches, as Dick (2011) asserts, are principles and practices of participation and social justice, the rejection of moves to assert a single framework across disciplines, and increasingly, an understanding of the sheer complexity of social life. In light of such themes, it is noteworthy that action research historically emerged through the former positivist school of thought. Alongside authors such as John Dewey (1859-1952) and John Collier (1884-1968), many trace the origins of action research to Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) (Pasmore, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Lewin envisioned a mode of enquiry that involved applying theories to social life, and particularly in the organisational setting. Originally utilised in the specific field of group dynamics and racial discrimination (Lewin, 1946), the central tenet in his approach was inherently pragmatic: in Lewins’ (1951, p. 169) own words ‘there is nothing more practical than a good theory’. However, rather than constituting a departure from ideologies of social engineering and empiricism, Lewin (1946,
pp. 35-36) saw action research as a way of better improving and fine-tuning the positivist method, as the quote below reveals:

Institutions interested in engineering, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have turned more and more to what is called basic research. In regard to social engineering, too, progress will depend largely on the rate with which basic research in social sciences can develop deeper insight into the laws which govern social life. This "basic social research" will have to include mathematical and conceptual problems of theoretical analysis. It will have to include the whole range of descriptive fact-finding in regard to small and large social bodies. Above all, it will have to include laboratory and field experiments in social change.

It is through the applied purpose of Lewin’s positivist approach that marks its most radical departure from other methods of the time. Lewin saw utility in reducing the distance between the researcher and practitioner in order to promote organisational learning through his learning cycle. This cycle encompasses a process of “unfreezing”, “floating” and “freezing” matter to test social action and behavioural change through ‘discrete episodes’ (cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 11). Although the episodic nature of this approach has been open to critique (Argyris & Schön, 1978), McNiff and Whitehead (2006) defended the continued relevance of these ideas through action-reflection cycles. These cycles embody a process of critical reflection and applied learning conducted in collaboration with research participants, as illustrated in Figure 2. The process of collaboration with external funders in the current research drew considerably upon these iterative processes. As will be explained in the outline of the specific research design, feedback from industry partners as sought during numerous stages of the research process – from methodological design, conducting of fieldwork to the later analysis and dissemination stages. The action learning cycle presents a useful guide in both structuring collaboration, as well as in providing a tool to ensure a reflexive approach to research. Instilling continuous analysis and reflection throughout the research process provides a foundation through which to explore the effectiveness of the specific
PAR design in a way that maintains a higher level of rigour and reliability to the research findings.

**Figure 3 - The action-learning cycle** (adapted from McNiff and Whitehead 2006)

Action research underwent something of a decline during the 1950s. However, social and political changes during the latter half of the twentieth century led to its remodelling within progressive education programs (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006), further strengthened through the work of social theorist and educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997). It was particularly through the release of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1972) that greater interest was spurred in alternative research programs aimed at developing critical consciousness among individuals and groups who were often dictated to, ignored or dispassionately examined by those in relative positions of power. Essential to Freire's (1972) argument was the need to replace traditional educational approaches (that taught students the culture of their colonizers), with one that fostered reflective and critical thinking, thus linking education to an emancipatory political agenda.

Aside from its influence upon social movements and awareness campaigns (particularly in Latin America), the role of critical reflection in challenging...
power relationships in Western social scientific research also emerged during the 1970s (Fals Borda, 2001; Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). For example, the emergence of dialogue conferences in Norway and Sweden (Gustavsen, 2006; Gustavsen, Hansson, & Qvale, 2008) and search conferences in the UK, USA and Australia (Emery, 1995; Emery & Purser, 1996) in the latter half of the twentieth century have provided clear examples into how action research methods may be employed to spark wider processes of democratisation within organisational and inter-organisational settings. These methods, which have been utilised as a tool for advancing democratic dialogue and strategic action within and across organisational settings, will be examined in more detail within the ensuing section.

Out of a new liberationist paradigm came the rise of PAR. The emphasis on participation within the research process refocused attention upon helping individuals traditionally cast as research “subjects” to achieve greater empowerment through a reflective, iterative process. By instilling emancipatory philosophies within applied research, PAR emphasises the importance of giving voice to marginalised groups and individuals; for instance, through providing the foundations for them to engage in public debates and enact social change on their own terms (Heron & Reason, 2001). However, the process of reflection was not solely reserved for research participants.

In combining the work of Freire (1972) with Gouldner (1970), Gaventa and Cornwall (2006, p. 76) argued that all participants in the research process (including the researcher) should be involved in a ‘self critical investigation and analysis of their own reality’, in building better knowledge and more appropriate modes of action with regard to others. The authors go on to synthesise their point by maintaining that in striving for more democratic forms of knowledge ‘we need to understand both the ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’... and the pedagogy of the oppressor, and the relation between the two’ (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006, p. 76). As a consequence, action researchers during the 1970s were challenged to rethink many previously held assumptions concerning scientific knowledge, as Fals Borda (2001, p. 28) recollects:
To deal with this challenge we began by questioning the fetish-like idea of science as truth which had been transmitted to us as a cumulative, linear complex of ground rules and absolute laws. We started to appreciate in fact that science is socially constructed, therefore that it is subject to reinterpretation, revision and enrichment. Although this may sound obvious, we postulated that its main criterion should be to obtain knowledge useful for what we judged to be worthy causes.

Recent proponents have argued that PAR take on a dualistic approach to research, whereby it is both informative about, and transformative of, the social setting (Heron & Reason, 2001). Often attention is drawn to its role in building community capacity through active involvement of the research participant in key aspects of the inquiry process (Greenwood & Levin, 2005). Therefore, rebalancing and sharing power thus forms a central place in action research – both with reference to a repositioning of traditional roles between the “researcher” and the “researched”, and in developing engaged participative strategies to address social inequities. The benefits and complexities of approaching research in this way will be reflected upon and analysed in later chapters.

Behind such emancipatory rhetoric is an increased responsibility on the researcher to ensure that participation, power sharing and social change are pursued both ethically and effectively (Grant, Nelson, & Mitchell, 2008). Grant et al (2008) noted that there is a tendency in PAR literature to simplify the challenges faced by action researchers. In light of the fundamental differences in process between action research and traditional research methodologies, they argue that new skills are needed in order to navigate through various ethical, political and pragmatic complexities of engaged research. For instance, some of the unique PAR skills they identify include flexibility, capacity building, effective facilitation and communication, reflexivity, knowledge of a variety of research paradigms, an ‘awareness of the mechanisms of power and oppression’ and a ‘willingness to cede power’ to others within the research process (Grant, et al., 2008, p. 594).
Minimising power differentials within PAR projects can sometimes mean resisting the urge to prioritise the researcher’s accounts over local knowledge or the interpretations of other participants (Roberts & Dick, 2003). These insights hint to some of the dangers in action research where community input may be, whether intentionally or unintentionally, co-opted by the “emancipatory” researcher. In the current research, industry partners held considerable power to influence the development of research questions and process, while participants were invited to present their own preferences on what the research outcome would look like. Not surprisingly, considerable skill was required to reflect upon and incorporate this participation, while, at times, navigating between the wide variation of preferences, objectives and interests. As a result, the question of ownership over the research process forms a point of contention as a result of this methodological choice (these points are explored and reflected upon further in Chapter Eight).

Supporters of action research assert that wide knowledge of competing paradigms is important, as a comprehensive assessment of evidence often requires moving ‘beyond sole reliance on a positivistic paradigm’ of scientific control and objective evidence that pervades a large portion of social science and health research (Boothroyd, Fawcett, & Foster-Fishman, 2004, p. 39). This point by Boothroyd et al (2004) is useful, as they maintain that participatory action research is not so much the rejection of positivist or quantitative methods, but a process that is more open to alternative methods, bringing in different forms of knowledge generation within and beyond the academic setting. Others maintain, on the other hand, that action research is inherently “counter-positivistic”, with participatory approaches constituting a major departure from traditional value-free, individualist and objectivist methods (Gergen & Gergen, 2008; Swantz, Ndedya, & Masaiganah, 2006).

In summary, some of the unifying characteristics of action research, as put forth by Heron and Reason (2001, pp. 179-180), include:
1. The active and meaningful involvement of the participant in decision making on the content and method of the enquiry;
2. Special attention being placed on agreed procedures through the use of inquiry circles, moving several times between reflection and action;
3. A radical epistemology for a comprehensive inquiry method;
4. Incorporating and utilising a wide range of skills necessary for the success of the inquiry process;
5. The tendency for the enquiry to be both informative about, and transformative of, the research setting.

As the third point above indicates, action research draws upon whole new theoretical assumptions about knowledge generation. In the case of the research examined in this thesis, social constructivism forms the ontological foundation (Lincoln, 2001). However, this study has drawn more specifically from what Guba and Lincoln (2005) described as an emerging participatory/cooperative paradigm, itself an elaboration of constructivism. For the sake of the current research methodology being described, the radical knowledge assumptions outlined by Heron and Reason (2001) hold significant implications for the research. In endeavouring to explore power relationships and examine the extent to which participants can reframe and rebalance various cross-sector inequities some key areas of divergence in the current methodology when compared to traditional research include:

- An adjustment in research dynamics between the researcher and participant, built upon principles of collaboration rather than detachment;
- Where necessary, the researcher becomes immersed within the research setting, even to the extent of becoming a “co-participant”;
- Instead of merely seeking a greater understanding of a phenomenon, the researcher, alongside other research participants, actively works towards evincing change.
Therefore, knowledge is not only held by the ‘expert researcher’ from above in the inquiry, but also through drawing from local knowledge and resources held by participants. This current research being described, in similarity to many other PAR projects, was undertaken to address a perceived need in the community, from which an external research “collaborator” was requested to take part (Heron & Reason, 2001; Nydon, 2006). Both Levin and Greenwood (2001) and Johansson and Lindhult (2008) would locate this form of capacity building, mixed methods approach as falling into a subcategory of action research defined as pragmatism.

4.3.1 Role of the Action Researcher

An action researchers’ role within pragmatic action research, broadly speaking, is to provide some form of assistance or facilitation in developing a methodology, but the process as a whole is guided by a ‘participative democratic ideal’ (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 104). In some cases the researcher enters an environment where oppression, racism or sexism needs to be overcome. However, some projects may simply be between a small number of professionals or practitioners in need of some form of academic assistance. The role in both settings is to resolve “real world problems” through a participatory or collaborative approach alongside the participants (Heron & Reason, 2001). As such, action research, out of necessity requires a methodology that bridges the gap between the “expert” researcher and passive participant. Moreover, due to this closer relationship formed with industry partners and research participants through the current research outlined in this thesis, a greater level of reflexivity is also required. Field notes and personal reflections made throughout the research process are drawn upon in later sections to critically analyse this repositioning from “external researcher” to “co-researcher”.

From the outset of the current research project, collaboration with “industry partners” was positioned as key to ensuring that the research design remained relevant to practitioners from both the business and not-for-profit sectors. The methodology of participatory action research was deemed especially
appropriate given its scope to deploy further methods that are designed to maintain external relevance, test the validity of research findings, and enable participants to engage and re-examine the discursive and relational constructs that arose between corporate and community participants. The ability to achieve the aims set out in Chapter One required the involvement of the participants in various levels of the research, which included playing a central role in decision-making, project design, selection of methods to be used and implementation of the research (Greenwood & Levin, 2005; Heron & Reason, 2001).

4.3.2 Rebalancing Power in the Applied Setting: “De-facing” Power and the Advancement of Democratic Dialogue

The discussion thus far on action research has centered primarily on its practical and capacity-building applications. Also of interest to the current study is the importance of both pragmatic and critical PAR approaches in researching the applied setting. Pragmatic action research aims to address socially defined problems through democratic structures, and validity of findings are best measured ‘according to whether actions that arise from it solve problems (workability) and increase participants’ control over their own situation’ (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 105). However, greater contention emerges in attempts to understand and rebalance power relationships that are often obscured from the direct view of participants. In order to better understand and redress the impact of discursive power structures within the applied setting, others have argued for an alternative model of critical action research.

The research being described in this thesis is perhaps unique in that both forms of PAR were employed correspondingly. As an engaged research process, practical objectives were defined and pursued in collaboration with industry partners, with key results of the research ultimately forming the basis of an applied resource. This focus on practical agreed upon ends would place the research as within the pragmatic side of PAR. In contrast, the focus on uncovering and analysing the presence of power within the field of cross-sector
engagement, observed interactions between participants, and in the development of relationships between researchers and participants (or co-researchers), also places this research firmly within the critical PAR camp. As such, the role and significance of these critical components require further clarification.

As noted earlier, this research has sought to understand power within cross-sector collaborations by conceptualizing beyond the three dimensions of repression as outlined by Lukes (1974). Integration of a broader definition, encompassing ways in which power constitutes a *productive* social force through defining the boundaries of knowledge and actions (or “regimes of truth”) as much as a *constraining* force (Foucault, 1981), is often absent from action research designs. Nonetheless, some have placed the theoretical perspectives of Freire and Foucault as central to critical action research given the historical and embedded nature of many modern day social inequities (Johansson & Lindhult, 2008). To such authors, social change requires the unveiling of “invisible” power structures, resistance, strengthening the capacity of one set of actors to another through reflective practice. Accordingly, the focus on collaborative engagement and practical agreement places Habermas’ ideas more within the *pragmatic* action research camp (Johansson & Lindhult, 2008). In contrast, Kemmis (2001) has maintained that Habermas provides a solid foundation for critical action research approaches, especially in their ability to *create* a shared space for open communication. Interestingly, more action researchers appear to take note of this latter view, rather than through the analytical framework influenced by Foucault (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Gustavsen, 2006; Kemmis, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; Waring, 2009).

The consensus-oriented principles espoused by philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas have often been utilized in the field of PAR. According to Habermas (1990), efforts to build consensus across disagreeing parties is possible so long as it fulfills basic criteria for what he termed *discourse ethics*, centering on the need for participants to be on equal footing within a communicative structure
that neutralises power imbalances. Notably, the concept ‘discourse’ took on a considerably different meaning to its use by other post structural philosophers (notably Foucault and Derrida) in that it referred to the process, which Finlayson (1999, p. 32) explained as interactive attempts to ‘reach a reasoned consensus over disputed validity claims, on the basis of mutually acceptable reasons’\textsuperscript{10}. As such, discourse ethics has endeavored to transcend the social and historic contexts through which language is used, so that it is possible to reach pragmatic universalised ends (Habermas, 1987). In order to reach understanding and thus validity across subjectivities, Habermas (1990: 308-9) argued that certain conditions must be met:

Although speech acts oriented to reaching understanding are always involved in this way in a complex net of world-relations, the illocutionary role – under standard conditions, the meaning of the illocutionary component – determines the aspect of validity under which the speaker wants his utterance to be understood first and foremost. When he makes a statement, asserts, narrates, explains, represents, predicts, discusses something, or the like, he is looking for an agreement with the hearer based on the recognition of a truth claim. When the speaker utters a first person experiential sentence, discloses, reveals, confesses, manifests something, or the like, agreement can come about only on the basis of the recognition of a claim to truthfulness or sincerity. When the speaker gives an order or makes a promise, appoints or warns somebody, baptizes or weds someone, buys something, or the like, agreement depends on whether those involved admit the action as right. These basic modes appear in all the more purity, the more clearly reaching understanding is oriented to only one dominant validity claim.

Authors within the field of action research have made considerable reference to the ideas of Habermas as a useful theoretical foundation for inclusive methodologies, especially in cases where alternative and competing viewpoints are evident (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). The relevance of these ideas are centered in their capacity to instill greater validity and moral authority in social scientific findings (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) and by providing a critical

\textsuperscript{10}To avoid confusion it is worth noting that this thesis instead utilises a conception of discourse that is more in line with the work of Foucault rather than Habermas. See Chapter Six for a detailed explanation of this analytical framework.
foundation for approaches designed to redress inequities in the existing order (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Although Habermas (1988) expressed considerable skepticism towards the very idea of action research (it was argued that theory creation and practice were mutually exclusive activities), his theory of communicative action signified an apparent break from this position. Use of focus groups by action researchers has presented one option through which to pursue critical awareness and build greater consensus within small group settings (Barbour, 2008; Padilla, 1993; Wilkinson, 1999). Others have sought to apply the principles of democratic dialogue through methods that embrace larger social contexts, sometimes spanning institutions and sectors. Indeed, the structure and objectives of both dialogue conferences and search conferences which work on these larger contexts, have presented a striking parallel to Habermas’ theory in their attempts to provide the basic conditions for applied communicative action (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006).

4.3.3 Applying Democratic Dialogue through Action Research

Some action researchers have taken their cue from the work of Paulo Friere (1972) by employing focus groups in ways that give voice to out-groups, develop critical awareness and pursue social change. This ‘dialogical method’ combines group interaction aimed at generating exploratory data with wider emancipatory ends. For instance, Padilla (1993, p. 154) had utilised this method so as to enable Hispanic students in a community college to ‘identify alternatives to the social arrangements and to take appropriate actions to change and improve their own lives’. Others have noted the capacity of focus groups in the field of health research to give voice to previously unheard groups such as HIV-positive mothers (Marcenko & Samost, 1999), or within cross-cultural contexts (Liamputtong, 2011). Beyond these fields, Barbour (2008, p. 7) also notes the relevance of focus groups comprised of experts in areas where ‘consensus guidelines and protocols’ are required to overcome ‘professional uncertainty’. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999, p. 4) acknowledged that these “consensus panels” were employed to facilitate specific outcomes, rather than used as a tool ‘to observe the process of prioritization and decision-making’.
While the focus group method have presented clear use to action researchers, other interactive methods that seek to rebalance power relationships within participant groups in the pursuit for wider strategic aims need also be explored.

Field experiments conducted by action researchers in Sweden and Norway from the 1960s onwards led to the development of mutual agreements between competing labour market groups (Gustavsen, 2006). The Norwegian and Swedish Agreements, as they came to be known, were unique in that far greater priority centered on the process of decision-making over the content of decisions (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1998). At the heart of the process model was the introduction of participatory conferences. These conferences comprised ‘meeting places for “those concerned” where they could discuss what goals, ideas or visions they would like to pursue and how to go about doing it’ (Gustavsen, 2006, p. 18). The objectives of these conferences were to incorporate stakeholder participation within a horizontal democratic structure. Although these conferences were originally conducted separately within labour market organisations, they were eventually applied in an inter-organisational level to greater effect. With aims of building cooperation and consensus across groups displaying conflicting interests, Gustavsen (2006) outlined how these agreements eventually led to the development of criteria for democratic dialogue (see Box 1).
Clear similarities may be found between Gustavsen’s (2006) applied communicative structure and Habermas’ (1988) theoretical approach. Such ideas hold clear relevance to the current study, given their capacity to democratically seek common ground with regard to competing agendas, ideals, worldviews, intentions and knowledge claims in real world settings. In both cases, for speech acts and texts to hold validity in the more specific context of community-corporate relationships, Habermas’ criteria to be *comprehensible, truthful, sincere, and appropriate*, stand to be useful points of reflection to the method employed within this current research. These components are outlined in Figure 3.

**Box 1 Criteria for Democratic Dialogue (Gustavsen, 2006, p. 19):**

- Dialogue is based on a principle of give and take, not one way communication
- All concerned by the issue under discussion should have the possibility of participating
- Participants are under an obligation to help other participants be active in the dialogue
- All participants have the same status in the dialogue arenas
- Work experience is the point of departure for participation
- Some of the experience the participant has when entering the dialogue must be seen as relevant
- It must be possible for all the participants to gain an understanding of the topics under discussion
- An argument can be rejected only after an investigation (and not, for instance, on the grounds that it emanates out of a source with limited legitimacy)
- All arguments that are to enter the dialogue must be represented by actors present
- All participants are obliged to accept that other participants may have arguments better than their own
- Among the issues that can be made subject to discussion are the ordinary work roles of participants – no one is exempt from such a discussion
- The dialogue should be able to integrate a growing degree of disagreement
- The dialogue should continuously generate decisions that provide a platform for joint action
Beyond the examples found in Scandinavia, a comparable method of reaching common ground across multiple interest groups is found in the *search conference*. This method was originally developed in the 1960s by Fred Emery from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations as a new strategy to overcome conflict within large organisations (e.g. the first case was designed for an Aero-engine company in Bristol, UK undergoing a difficult merger) (Emery & Purser, 1996). By drawing from the frameworks provided by Lewin and open systems theorists, along with some wider communitarian assumptions, the basic concept of the search conference is that responsibility for planning for the future and taking action should be placed with the people who will most likely be affected by them (Emery, 1995). More specifically,

...a Search Conference is a participatory event that enables a large group to collectively create a plan that its members themselves will implement. Typically, twenty to thirty-five people from a community or organization work progressively for two or three days to implement tasks, primarily in large
group plenary sessions. They develop long term strategic visions, achieve goals and a concrete action plan. After the conference, participants have a strong commitment to implement their plans with a great deal of energy and determination (Emery & Purser, 1996, p. 4)

In likeness to the action research conferences held in Scandiavia, the conditions for an effective search conference consisted of strategies designed to facilitate participant-led decision-making and action within a neutral space liberated of external power structures. According to Emery and Purser (1996), factors of a successful search conference included selecting participants that reflect a wide diversity of options and interests, a commitment to sharing ideals and translating them into joint action, and having people attend as “interested individuals” rather than representatives of their respective institution, group or position within a wider structure. However, criticism has also been directed at this “Travistock Model” which sought to enable representatives within an organisation ‘to work through conflict by a therapeutic process underpinned by action research’ (Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 24). These approaches have been previously employed to seek consensus through technical solutions to organisational problems while ignoring the capacity of those lower in the hierarchy to effectively resist internal pressures (Hart & Bond, 1995).

Notwithstanding such limitations, since 1972 this form of action research conferencing has been widely used in the Australian setting for finding common ground on issues such as organisational renewal efforts, strategic planning in businesses, town planning, urban and community development, school reform, regional water quality planning, setting up codes for juvenile justice and setting up new national policy frameworks (Emery, 1995; Emery & Purser, 1996). Positive case studies of search conferences that combine democratic decision-making structures and strategic planning have been documented in business (Cabana & Fiero, 1995; Weisbord, 1993), university (Warzynski, 2004), and community college (Casolara, Haynes, & Mcpheeters, 1999) institutional settings. Although a level of bureaucratic sanctioning is required for search conferencing to take place within such institutional contexts, Emery and Purser
(1996, p. 277) have maintained that ‘the effect of a bottom-up approach is to redistribute and equalize power relations in the organization’.

As shown in this section, the purpose and desired outcomes of action research strategies present clear differences to traditional “closed” approaches to research. In applying action research strategies to the current research context, it is important to note that the intention of researching community-corporate relationships was centered primarily on its external relevance. In the field of action research it has been argued that taking on a distanced “expert” approach does not account for the full scope and complexity of lived experience (O’Leary, 2005). Treating participants as “objects” of research (rather than “subjects” in their own right) has been argued to exclude the possibility of incorporating local knowledge or previously unheard voices within the research process (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). Others have argued that overall validity of action research is strengthened by processes that ‘address the participative, relational, and social nature of human action’ (van der Riet, 2008, p. 562).

Rather than adopting focus groups as a mode of observing group interaction and generating collective responses, the study opted instead for a strategic and participatory process more in liking to the search conference method. However, in contrast to its previous application, this study proposes to utilise search conferencing in an inter-organisational context where participants are first informed of the power structures that both guide and impede cross-sector relationships. Adopting both types of processes enabled the integration of the specific aims and wishes of the corporate sector with the different aims and wishes of the community sector. Importantly, this method was employed in a way that enabled participant’s considerable freedom to define the systemic problems involved with community-corporate engagement, while providing an open space for collective discussion and democratic planning.

4.4 Conclusion: Towards a Collaborative Multi-Phase Method
In cases where social research attempts to address complex problems which require a higher degree of creativity and innovation, it has been argued that the
best results are generated through ‘the collection, analysis, and integration of qualitative and quantitative data in a single multiphase design’ (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005, p. 224). Some mixed methods researchers, such as Axinn and Pearce (2006), have disputed the relevance of dichotomies between qualitative and quantitative methods. Instead, it has been argued that a mixed approach ‘affords opportunities to use the strengths of some methods to counterbalance the weaknesses of other methods’, while pursuing a ‘valuable strategy for producing a comprehensive empirical record about a topic’ (Axinn & Pearce, 2006, p. 2). Axin and Pearce (2006) further posited that differences between qualitative approaches merely amount to a difference in data generation; between numbers on one side and texts on the other. However, such an apolitical distinction is not entirely helpful within this current research context. Given the broad scope of this research, its manifold aims, and its interest in understanding power relations both within the social setting and applied research process, mixed-methods research has been approached quiet differently. Drawing from the work of Hesse-Biber (2010), the methodology proposed in the subsequent chapter employs a comprehensive approach to mixed methods research in maintaining that the question of paradigm remains a central component of methodological consideration.
Chapter Five

Method:
A Multi-Phase Research Process
5.1 Introduction: Towards an Enhanced Understanding of Australian Community Corporate Engagement

Undertaking a qualitative approach to mixed-methods is like taking a journey without always being in control of your destination.

(Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 211)

As outlined in the previous chapter, PAR presents a unique alternative in place of traditional approaches to social research. A key part of this distinctiveness is the way new methods and processes are drawn upon that better suit (and in some ways mirror), the complexity of social life being examined. However, if participatory methods are to be embraced ethically, then researchers need to be open to changes, amendments and revisions of the research structure along the way. The lack of control Hesse-Biber (2010) described in the context of mixed-methods research was also previously affirmed by Lillis (2000) who went so far as to compare the process of being an action researcher to a ‘journeyman’. This metaphor holds particular relevance to the processes of undertaking engaged research in the current study.

This chapter outlines the principle phases of this research journey, with particular emphasis given to the steps taken in order to achieve the objectives set out in Chapter One. As will be outlined, PAR was operationalised through use of a practical and iterative method designed to investigate the relatively unknown field of Australian cross-sector relationships. So as to achieve a “comprehensive” understanding of the emerging relationships between the community and corporate sectors, a specific mixed-methods approach was employed. According to Hesse-Biber (2010), such an approach emphasises the importance of methodology in linking the research problem with the specific methods used. As such, while qualitative data is most appropriate in gaining a deeper understanding of “why” and “how” certain philanthropic and other cross-sector relationships are formed, a survey was initially required to review the research landscape and locate specific participants to recruit in the study. Hesse-Biber (2010) defined this strategy as a qualitative approach to mixed-
Rather than maintaining a dogmatic adherence to one form of knowledge generation, this research prioritised tools that enabled the achievement of ‘a multivocal understanding of social relations that gets the subjective experience of the researched’ (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 215).

Importantly, the unit of analysis in this research refers to the firm or organisational level. As such, individuals were asked to provide their experience and knowledge as managers from within a community sector body, or as decision-makers within a corporate institution. While these methodological points are of clear importance, the applied method requires more detailed description.

5.1.1 Developing the PAR Structure

In accordance with the collaborative principles of PAR, a research set-up was designed to include the active participation of two collaborative research partners. This collaborative structure, while affording a high degree of flexibility to the academic researchers, also served to ensure that the research objectives were satisfied.

5.2 Setting up the Collaborative Space

In order to set in motion an engaged collaborative process, the preliminary stage of research involved the development of a cross-sector steering committee. The bases for establishing this collaborative committee were manifold. Doing so assisted in:

1. Operationalising the theory, ethics and principles of action research by engaging meaningfully with key practitioner groups (Heron & Reason, 2001);
2. Expanding the knowledge base and relevance of the research beyond the academic setting (Greenwood & Levin, 2005) by incorporating and

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11 To illustrate this point, she explains that a *predominantly* qualitative study that begins with an *auxiliary* quantitative survey (as presented in this current study) would be depicted by the following abbreviation “quant → QUAL” to denote the dominance of one element over another (Hesse-Biber, 2010).
valuing the knowledge-based assumptions of the corporate and community sectors into a comprehensive research design; and

3. Enhancing the capacity for the research to achieve its broad aims through building new participant networks, developing relationships of trust and mutual understanding, and formal agreements as regards shared ownership of research findings (Grant, et al., 2008).

The steering committee was first assembled to have interdisciplinary membership, comprised of academics from the disciplines of the social science and economics. These academics were engaged due to their previous experience supervising exploratory research within the field of cross-sector collaboration. Two of the three academics within this panel were to provide the supervisory oversight of this thesis, while one senior academic was responsible for setting up and facilitating the “linkage” structure of the wider project. Two external ‘industry partners’, one from within each of the two relevant sectors, were subsequently engaged. The first partner comprised a community sector peak body whose members included local community organisations across the Western Sydney region. The second partner was an Australian corporate trust with a history of funding local community welfare activities. Notably, both industry partners held prior experience in supporting cross-sector research, and committed to the research through the provision of resources (including direct funding and in-kind support), personal expertise and their own sector-specific knowledge.

Once the steering committee structure was formed, a series of agreed upon research objectives were developed. These objectives included:

1. The development of a comprehensive understanding of cross-sector collaborations, with a specific focus upon the opportunities and inequities located within existing practice. This exploratory research will result in;

2. The creation of a final tool kit designed to assist local community sector organisations to more effectively engage with
the corporate sector. This tool kit (in the form of a resource handbook), would be developed in consultation with community and corporate sector practitioners.

Objectives listed above formed the “bare boned” intentions of the research, which provided a high degree of flexibility to the exploratory process while maintaining clear focus and direction. Given that empirical knowledge of community-corporate engagement in Australia has been lacking by international standards, it was deemed important to enable scope for more detailed and critical questions to emerge as the research process unfolded.

In order to address the agreed upon objectives, the research was conducted through the following phases:

**Phase 1**: A desk-based review of literature followed by development and implementation of a community sector survey of 100 respondents.

**Phase 2**: Creation of a purposive research sample. Fine-tuning and implementation of 40 semi-structured interviews.

**Phase 3**: One day-long action research search conference involving 35 participants.

The specifics within the three critical phases emerged through a fluid, developmental and collaborative process. It is important to note that some of the tasks were performed primarily by the academic group (whereby I was responsible for the majority of fieldwork), while others were undertaken collaboratively with industry partners. See Figure 5 for a delineation of the roles and responsibilities within the iterative process.
Figure 5 - Operationalisation of the Research Method

Phase 1: Survey fieldwork (academic)

- Development of research partnership
- Project planning (collaborative)

Phase 2: Interview fieldwork (academic)

- Fine tuning of interview questions (collaborative)
- Interview piloting (collaborative)
- Development of analytical approach (academic)

Phase 3: Search conference (academic/collaborative)

- Analysis, reflection and planning (academic/collaborative)

Final: Dissemination, development of tool kit (collaborative)

Analysis (academic)

Survey development and piloting (academic/collaborative)

Survey analysis, reflection and discussion of findings (academic/collaborative)
5.3 Phase 1: Surveys and Participant Selection

5.3.1 Survey Design and Piloting

Phase One commenced with a desk-based review of published research on community-corporate engagement. Surveys were subsequently designed to help build a clearer picture of the “current status” of corporate community engagement, particularly within the Western Sydney region\textsuperscript{12} and of business CSR departments and corporate trusts that funded local community welfare activities. These surveys drew from both literature and the ‘local knowledge’ (Ife & Tesoriero, 2010) held by industry partners in the design a series of questions aimed at understanding the features of community sector organisations that were most likely to gain corporate support. Survey questions canvassed organisational size, types of community sector activities performed, history of engagement with the corporate sector, length of time within cross-sector partnerships and the specific dynamics of engagement (see Appendix 1).

Through discussions within the research group, a telephone questionnaire format was employed. A telephone survey design was chosen due to its cost-effectiveness, capacity to reduce time spent on field work, and propensity to result in a higher participant response rate when compared to face-to-face and mail-out questionnaires (de Vaus, 2002; Frey, 1983; Lavrakas, 1993; Oppenheim, 2005).

Industry partners were asked to provide assistance through conducting “pilot work” in preparation for fieldwork (Oppenheim, 2005). This piloting process was necessary in ensuring that the line of questioning was appropriate, and to reduce ambiguity within specific questions, concepts, variables and categories employed within the survey design (Simmons, 2008). Surveys were piloted

\textsuperscript{12}This region was selected for two reasons. Firstly, on a pragmatic level it was chosen due to the limited resources and time available to the research group. A nation-wide or state-wide exploratory study would not have been feasible given the project’s financial and manpower constraints. Secondly, organisational politics were also played a part in geographical selection. The Western Sydney region formed the core area of interest to the community sector partner, especially given that this organisation’s mission was directly linked to this geographic region. The community sector industry partner’s stakeholder arrangements (i.e. with funding bodies and their members) further limited their ability to direct resources outside of Western Sydney.
directly to key organisational representatives within the community sector industry partner and further emailed to contacts within the corporate sector industry partner for review and feedback. This process of piloting ensured a higher level of reliability to the survey instrument in terms of generating stable data, while offering greater criterion related validity attesting that only those organisations falling into the purposive sample group were directly targeted (Sapsford, 2007).

5.3.2 Participant Selection and Telephone Survey Field Work

Community sector participants were chosen from contact lists of NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) funded projects while respondents from businesses and trusts came from the lists available on the Philanthropy Australia website. All organisations on these lists were subsequently contacted by phone and asked to participate in a brief survey. All surveys were administered from June 2009 to November 2009 with the aim of reaching a total sample of 100 community organisations and 30 corporations/trusts. As Table 2 illustrates, the full sample of 100 community organisations was met although the objective of 30 business sector respondents was abandoned after considerable barriers emerged.

Table 2 - Anticipated sample size and numbers achieved for surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Achieved (n)</th>
<th>Success rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/trusts</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before implementing the survey, a verbal, informal “script” was employed. This script:

- Informed the respondent of the broad aims of the research.
- Outlined the intended use of gathered data.

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13 DoCS lists were provided by the peak community sector industry partner.
14 These barriers form a significant point of analysis in Chapter Eight.
15 A “script” did not exist per se, but rather introductions derived from the information sheet were made formally over the telephone prior to gaining verbal consent.
- Specified the de-identification process used to ensure anonymity.
- Requested the respondent’s verbal consent to participate in the research.

During each survey, responses were transcribed immediately onto simple pre-formatted computer documents (Appendix 1), and the basic de-identified data was applied to an Excel spreadsheet and later analysed. This form of computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), while much less sophisticated than other pre-coded CATI systems (Oppenheim, 2005), was chosen as it offered a considerable degree of efficiency and safety of data collection, storage and analysis (Bryman, 2008).

5.3.3 Development of a Purposive Sample

Aside from extracting information about organisational type, size and experiences with regard to cross-sector engagement, the survey fulfilled a major role in the construction of a purposive sample to be utilised in later phases of the research. Purposive samples comprise a form of non-probability sampling which are deemed appropriate in cases where there is a requirement ‘to select unique cases that are especially informative’ of a specific social issue (Neuman, 2006). The intentional use of a purposive sampling method in this research was to examine the experiences, perspectives and perceived inequities highlighted by local community welfare organisations in their attempts to engage with the corporate sector. As such, community organisations were selected to participate in later stages of the research if in their responses they:

1. Had experience in partnering with the corporate sector,
2. Were at the time pursuing cross-sector relationships, or
3. Had expressed an aspiration to form a partnership at some point in the future.
5.4 Phase 2: Interviews

5.4.1 The Purposive Sample

Managers of community sector organisations who met the sampling criteria were subsequently asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. Only 16 community sector managers who agreed to participate had direct experience in cross-sector engagement, while the remaining 9 were selected due to expressing a higher level of interest and aspiration to engage with the corporate sector. Interviews were conducted in a period overlapping the survey phase (from June to December of 2009). As indicated earlier, corporate sector participants were recruited through publicly available lists within the *Philanthropy Australia* website. Fifteen (15) institutions from the corporate sector that had experience in funding community development, welfare and advocacy activities, were asked and agreed to participate. A breakdown of the types of community sector and corporate sector participants who were recruited in the second phase of the research are provided below (categorised by organisation type).

**Table 3 - Breakdown of interview participants (by category)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO Category (primary area of focus)</th>
<th>Experience of corp. support</th>
<th>Nil experience of corp. support</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood centre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;A / homeless refuge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth / Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s support / refuge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large charity/institution</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total community sector</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.2 In-depth Interview Design and Piloting

Specific interview questions were drafted in response to key themes located in the literature (covering motivations, experiences, and areas of tension, competing accountabilities and representations of success). A similar piloting process that was then used in fine-tuning surveys was also conducted in the lead-up to the interviewing stage. Furthermore, two unstructured ‘pilot interviews’ (Fielding & Thomas, 2008) were carried out on community sector peak bodies located within the Western Sydney region who had close links with local organisations. As a result of this piloting process, the interview schedule was revised and further interview questions were developed in order to explore the background context between community organisations and their traditional government funders. Questions were also developed so as to identify possible opportunities, experiences and barriers faced by small organisations in engaging effectively with corporations and trusts. This process also enabled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Category (sector)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct businesses:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy provider</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate trusts or foundations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/investment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total corporate sector</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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schedules for semi-structured interviews to be fine-tuned and finalised prior to implementation (Fielding & Thomas, 2008).

Two different forms of interview schedules were developed for community sector respondents. Participants in management positions of organisations with experience in developing cross-sector relationships were asked different questions to respondents coming from organisations without such experience (see Appendix Two). Questions directed to the latter sample group were designed to draw-out information and representations of their current funding relationships (predominantly with regard to state funders) and any barriers or tensions that impeded effective cross-sector engagement. All corporate participants were interviewed with identical interview schedules with themes mirroring, as much as possible, those asked of community sector respondents (see Appendix Three). Interview schedules were generally designed to elicit comparisons between participants’ experiences, perspectives and representation of cross-sector engagement.

5.4.3 Interview Approach
Prior to each interview, participants were informed of the research, where permission was requested for the interview to be audio recorded, and further asked to sign a consent form approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix Seven).

Considerable flexibility was maintained during interviews to enable the sequence of questions to be altered, to unpack and explain key terms and to probe for other information as the necessity arose (Fielding & Thomas, 2008). As a result, the length of time varied quite considerably from interview to interview, ranging from 25 minutes in length to over 2 hours in length. As explicated by Fielding and Thomas (2008, pp. 246-247), this style of flexible interviewing is useful in enabling the interviewer to ‘adapt the research instrument to the respondent’s level of comprehension and articulacy, and handle the fact that in responding to a question, people often also provide answers to questions we were going to ask later’.
Opened-ended questions were chosen over other closed methods of questioning, as they assist researchers to ‘understand the world from the subject’s point-of-view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, [and] to uncover their lived world prior to scientific understandings’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1).

The importance in maintaining relative “openness” between the researcher and interviewee was identified, whereby a form of “active interviewing” was carried out. Active interviewing, as Holstein and Gubrium (2003, p. 74) explained, differs from traditional interviewing in that it ‘transforms the subject behind the respondent from a repository of opinions and reason, or a wellspring of emotions into a productive source of knowledge’. By drawing upon a conversational approach, this form of interviewing was structured so that alternative viewpoints, considerations and narratives may be rendered possible (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). While in this research, care was taken not to coax respondents in taking on certain positions, it was found that most interviewees were more inclined to offer extensive subjective insights when the research setting was ‘conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings that address relevant issues, and not be confined to predetermined agendas’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Respondents were often encouraged to discuss, explain and expand upon topics and themes that they regarded as important, even in cases when doing so diverted from the original line of questioning. Through this approach, many of the “diversions” taken during interviews were identified as critical issues, that later became central to research findings provided in Chapter Seven.

This social constructionist style of interviewing was guided by key themes identified from desk-based analysis of existing literature, and through feedback.

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16 For instance, interview questions were worded in jargon and judgement free language so as not to “lead” interviewees. Other strategies employed during interviews, such as being careful not to interrupt the participant, “exploring” rather than “probing”, and minimising the use of “reinforcing” gestures (where possible), which included nodding and muttering statements of agreement (Seidman, 1998), were also useful. However, the latter point was approached carefully as being “empathetic” has also been considered a characteristic of an effective interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
from the survey phase. These themes were coded according to the key opportunities found in cross-sector engagement; motivations beyond the formation of cross-sector relationships; the key barriers to successful partnerships; competing representations of community sector motivations/activities/processes; as well as current and anticipated future trends. As such, the purpose of these semi-structured interviews was to ask questions of respondents within a predetermined outline of topics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All interviews were later transcribed and analysed according to the framework set out in Chapter Six. This exploratory process ultimately enabled the research team to identify the key themes for the search conference.

5.5 Phase 3: Search Conference

5.5.1 Planning the Search Conference

Following the completion of interviews, all participants involved in phase two were invited to participate in a day-long search conference. Within this final stage of research, critical themes, issues and areas of inequity located during interviews were discussed and debated by research participants. In the lead-up to the search conference stage, qualitative analysis was conducted by the academic group and major themes identified were discussed with the two industry partners. A series of meetings were held that provided avenues for collective reflection, feedback and planning before the structure for the event was finally developed.

The search conference was held in February of 2010 and was designed to enable participants to plan ‘large scale systems change in real time’, while ‘generating excitement, energy and purposeful behaviour’ (Emery & Purser, 1996). While this method has in the past been employed as a strategic tool for use within large-scale organisations, it was adapted for this study to work within an inter-organisational context to encourage representatives from community and corporate organisations of any size or type (within the purposive sample) to engage in a cycle of learning, reflection and action.
5.5.2 Facilitating the Search Conference

The search conference was held at a centrally located function centre in Sydney and was attended by thirty-five people. All participants were asked to provide informed consent prior to entering the facility. Of the thirty-five people in attendance, 60% were from the community sector (n=21), 20% were from either a business or corporate trust (n=7) and the remaining 20% (n=7) were made up of various academics and students from the University of Western Sydney (UWS). One academic with experience in the field of community development attended as a research participant, whereas the remaining six university participants were split into three groups of two to function during breakout groups as either:

- A facilitator, whose role was to introduce, keep time, ensure the recording device was in operation throughout and, wherever necessary, to maintain direction during breakout group discussions.
- A note-taker, whose role was to record the key points of discussion while noting various nonverbal and inter-group dynamics (i.e. body language among participants, the level of esteem present among group members, overall tone, speech patterns and style of argumentation, etc...)

All participants were emailed copies of a discussion paper one week before the event was to take place (Appendix Six). This document was designed to inform participants of the various opportunities, barriers and inequities of cross-sector engagement that were highlighted during interview field work, while presenting a series of practical questions for preliminary reflection.

The primary rationale of holding the search conference was to provide a space ‘in which people can join one another as coparticipants in the struggle to remake the practices in which they interact’ (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003, p. 382). More specifically, this conference was designed to help those attending ‘learn to perceive their wider environment, share their ideals for a more desirable future, and pool their efforts toward developing plans consistent with
their ideals’ (Emery & Purser, 1996, p. 5). In order to achieve these goals, the event was structured into three broad sections:

1. **Introductory plenary and guest speakers (3 hours):** This “all of conference” session was conducted over a three hour period. Speakers included four research participants and one UWS Professor, each providing personal case studies and reflections on community-corporate engagement. Interactive group discussion was facilitated following each speaker’s presentation.

2. **Breakout groups (2 ½ hours):** In the second half of the event, those participants who remained were formed into breakout groups over two separate sessions. The participative stage was divided into two 40 minute sessions, consisting of three concurrent breakout groups. In the first session, each of the three breakout groups was allocated a unique scenario to “solve”, whereas in the second, breakout groups were provided with specific debate questions to deliberate and answer (Appendix Four). Each group was asked to elect a group leader who would later report back their strategic response to the wider participant group (each of the two report back sessions lasted for 15 minutes). A breakdown of the groups is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution of origin</th>
<th>Breakout Group One</th>
<th>Breakout Group Two</th>
<th>Breakout Group Three</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Charity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Body</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 Some participants left during the lunch break. Only three corporate participants remained to participate in the breakout groups.
Table 5 – Session Two: Debates Participant Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution of origin</th>
<th>Breakout Group One</th>
<th>Breakout Group Two</th>
<th>Breakout Group Three</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Charity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Body</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Closing plenary** (30 minutes): The final session consisted of an “all of conference” discussion. Within this discussion, participants were invited to draw upon themes, issues and strategic responses located in the preceding sessions to generate an action plan.

5.5.4 Role of the Break-Out Groups and Plenary Session

*Breakout groups* were used as the central format for data collection during the conference. These sessions were not designed in the form of focus groups, even though some similarities between these two methods were evident. For instance, in likeness to focus groups participants were encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions and exchange experiences during breakout sessions (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999).

Within each session, a select group of participants were asked to examine a hypothesis or debate statement that was drafted in the lead-up to the search conference (see Appendix Four). Participants were selected deliberately and divided up by the facilitators into groups so as to encourage a mixture of perspectives and experiences. For example, each breakout group in the first session consisted on one corporate respondent and a larger number of participants from the community sector who were provided with a contentious scenario topic. In preparation for the second session, search conference participants were separated again into new groups and asked to respond to one
of three debate questions. Between seven and nine participants were selected by facilitators to take part in each breakout group along with one session manager and a note taker. Each group then elected a group leader who led the overall discussion and reported back to the full group afterwards.

These interactions were audio recorded and later analysed according to the framework set out in Chapter Six. However, in differentiation to the exploratory role traditionally assigned to focus groups (Barbour, 2008), the purpose of the search conference breakout sessions was to combine elements of individual critical reflection, group interaction, democratic decision-making and strategic planning. Furthermore, facilitators within each breakout session took a marked “step back”, in that group members were to discuss the set scenarios or debate questions internally.

Interactions during the final plenary session were also audio recorded and later transcribed to enable analysis and evaluation of the search conference event as a whole. As part of a final planning session, participants were invited to mind-map their preferences for a proposed final “tool kit” developed to assist in building successful cross-sector relationships and to locate key areas where each sector can work towards a more equitable and socially just future. This process corresponded with Emery and Purser’s (1996, p. 10) framework, whereby:

The entire conference community debates and discusses strategic issues relevant to a system, mapping out areas of agreement and common ground through a process of generating, analyzing and synthesizing data into an integrated community product.

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18 Analysis of breakout groups within the first session is afforded relatively equal space for analysis in Chapter Seven. However, the first group of session two, which had asked the three corporate participants alongside a select group of third sector representatives to debate whether or not community organisations need to ‘be more business-like’, features more heavily in analysis in the later part of Chapter Seven. The remaining two breakout groups comprised of interactions between community organisations, peak body representatives and one academic who debated the role of government regulation in the field of CSR and the nature and direction of social responsibility more generally.
Instances of debate, areas of continued conflict or points of agreement were examined to ascertain the suitability of the search conference format in facilitating democratic dialogue.

5.6 Ethics

The role of ethics required careful consideration within this research. As mentioned earlier, at stage of the fieldwork, research participants were informed of their role within the process, the rationale of the research and the implications of their involvement both in terms of the development of practical outcomes (a resource handbook) and its use within this thesis. This research was approved by the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained during surveys, interviews and upon arrival of at the search conference venue (see Appendix Seven).

Although there were clear reasons to uphold these standard research guidelines relating to informed consent and avoidance of harm confidentiality (O’Leary, 2005), it has been found that complexities have commonly arisen during PAR projects (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009; Williamson & Prosser, 2002). In one example, some participants were asked to present their subjective viewpoints during the search conference, while also sharing their frustrations, issues and opinions during the breakout sessions. As such, while participants were made aware that they would be divulging such information openly to other corporate and community sector participants, it was explained that their contributions would be de-identified in any published material. The diverse array of ethical issues that are usually associated with PAR and collaborative approaches to research – for instance with regard to ownership, participation and academic independence (Roffey, 2006) - means that a simple discussion of “ethics” would naturally conceal the true nature of applied research. The various applied ethical and political issues, complexities and problems that arose through the process of conducting this research will be explored much more openly and discursively in Chapter Eight.
5.7 Conclusion: Charting an Unfolding and Continuing Process

The research method described in this chapter was not designed as a traditional closed academic exercise. As the fieldwork progressed through its various phases a wider and more contextualised picture of cross-sector relationships gradually unfolded. This emerging picture led to new questions being asked and new themes and critical issues being explored. For instance, through attempts to engage with the corporate sector and after examining immediate survey findings, the research group soon identified the question of power as a factor largely absent from published research. As such, a specific mode of analysis was employed that enabled further investigation of the presence of power, hegemony and ideology within community-corporate relationships. The rationale and process leading to the selection of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2003, 2010) is presented in Chapter Six.

Although the selection of an analytical framework is important from a research perspective, the industry partners and participants involved in the research were more concerned with the “real world” outcomes emerging through this process. As such, after the presentation of results in Chapter Seven, this thesis will conclude with a reflection on the continuing impact of this research and specifically, the effectiveness of the “tool kit” on the applied setting.
Chapter Six

Rationale for Analysing Power Critically through Research Texts and Research Practice
6.1 Introduction

It is a feature of the social world that interpretations and explanations of it can have effects upon it, can transform it in various ways. A critique on some area of social life must therefore be in part a critique of interpretations and explanations of social life. And since interpretations and explanations are discourse, it must be in part a critique of discourse... But the critical analyst, in producing different interpretations and explanations of social life, is also producing discourse. (Fairclough, 2010, p. 8)

This chapter presents the specific mode of text analysis employed in latter phases of the research process. As discussed in earlier chapters, various contextual and historical points of contention located in the literature call for an alternative approach to exploring community-corporate engagement. In meeting the research objectives, the approach to text analysis must be able to explore competing motivations, knowledge assumptions and processes located in the applied setting between the community and corporate sectors (see Chapter Two), as well as analyse the potential for unequal relationships of power to be enacted through these cross-sector interactions (see Chapter Three).

It is argued that in order to effectively unearth, interpret and explain some of these areas of tension, the specific approach to qualitative data analysis will need to locate both the overt and covert power structures encountered in the applied context. As such, investigating these various power structures necessitates an analytical framework that is theorised, critically orientated and operational. More specifically, the framework must be cognisant of both the wider systemic power structures that direct, maintain and challenge the ordering of cross-sector relationships, as well as demonstrate an understanding of embedded interpersonal indicators of resistance, authority and control.

Of specific interest to the applied study on community-corporate engagement is how differing knowledge assumptions and institutional practices shape the way in which relationships are explained and interpreted by practitioners. As the quote opening this chapter asserts, understanding these assumptions and
practices requires an analysis of discourse. In synthesising various definitions, Jarowski and Coupland (2006, p. 3) explain that ‘discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order but also language use shaping social order, and shaping individuals’ interaction with society’. Therefore, analysing interpretations and explanations of social life made by participants in the study requires an exploration of how they are influenced by their social context. Such an analytical framework will help in understanding the nuances of power that underpin competing interpretations of social life, as well as clear examples of authority and control located in the applied research context. However, a key problem posed when analysing discourse in applied organisational contexts is in navigating between the competing analytical frameworks. This chapter will briefly examine these competing approaches and provide a rationale for the chosen critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010).

The chosen framework centres on a combination of social and linguistically-oriented views of discourse and, in particular, an examination of how ideologies and hegemonies ‘within particular organizations and institutions and at a societal level are produced, reproduced, contested and transformed in discourse’ (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 9-10). Therefore, this analysis assumes discourse is an unstable social force; it is in a constant struggle with competing discourses and knowledge assumptions, and is thus open to alterations and appropriations by actors in different contexts.

In further differentiation to some approaches, this analytical framework does not end at the examination of research texts. As Fairclough (2010) pointed out, the practice of research is in itself a form of interpretation, drawing on various assumptions and resulting in the formation of new discourses and power relationships. For example, by constructing a participatory action research methodology based on social justice principles, it is worthwhile to reflect on how this in itself reveals an imposition of a specific discourse upon the research process. Furthermore, the values and knowledge assumptions held by the researcher may also result in conjectures about the supposed differences
between research participants, which in turn may shape interactions within this research context. As such, analysis will also be critically reflective of the research process as a whole.

6.2 Competing Approaches to Text Analysis

In reflecting on recent trends in social science, Alvesson and Karreman (2000, p. 1126) noted that ‘language (and language use) is increasingly being understood as the most important phenomenon, accessible for empirical investigation in social and organizational research’. One of the most widely employed approaches to researching language use in organisations is through discourse analysis. However, as analytical concepts go, discourse is often used blithely which some have found to reflect a ‘smokescreen for an unclear and ambivalent view on language’ (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1145). An attention to definition is important in navigating through a confusing array of approaches to analysis of language use and texts. As Oswick (2011) pointed out, studies of discourse have arisen out of very different disciplinary traditions. On one side, interest in discourse is traced back to social linguistics, which examines the highly detailed and localised nuances of language use. On the other, discourse studies have been attributed to philosophical and theoretical works ‘with a focus on broader perspectives and interpretations’ (Oswick, 2011, p. 104). Unpacking some foundations of these different models of analysis will further assist in providing the rationale for choosing a framework more closely resembling one proposed by Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010).

One field of discourse analysis that emerged out of the field of social linguistics approaches language in its immediate context. One of its earliest and most influential thinkers was Ferdinand de Saussure who believed that language use was shaped through individual choices as opposed to social interactions. According to Saussure (1983), there is a distinction between the concepts of

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19 As outlined in Chapter Five, the term texts is used within this research to include transcriptions of interviews, search conference “all of session” discussions and smaller breakout groups. However, beyond referring to direct speech, text also includes wider semiotic factors including body language, tone of voice and other non-verbal inter-group factors. These semiotics were transformed into text through the writing of reflective field notes by academic researchers.
*parole* and *langue*, whereby *langue* represents a system or code which exists prior to language use. *Langue* is unitary and immutable throughout society and sits in contrast to *parole* (that which is uttered or written), determined rather through individual choice. In contrast, social linguists assert that ‘language could not be adequately understood without taking many layers of social context into account’ (Wodak, Johnstone, & Kerswill, 2011, p. 1). According to this concept, social variables directly impact upon the use of language. Since the 1960s, social linguists have contended that variations in language may be quantifiable, as Labov (1972, cited in Mendoza-Denton, 2011, p. 182) explained:

> the speech community is defined... by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant with respect to particular levels of usage.

Criticisms of the earlier social linguistic model lay, to a large degree, in its realist foundations. For instance, Fairclough (2001, p. 6) states: ‘sociolinguistic variation in a particular society tends to be seen in terms of sets of facts to be observed and described using methods analogous to those of natural science’. So while sociolinguists are strong on questions of ‘what?’ they insufficiently address questions pertaining to “why?” and “how?” In studying language and discursive practices in the corporate and community sectors, it is the latter questions that are most pertinent and useful as they highlight the discursive tensions and relational power structures that are felt and depicted by research participants. More recent approaches to language analysis have sought to explore these latter questions via a ‘grounded’ examination of texts and talk through situating analysis at a localised and contextual level (Potter, 2004). Potter (2004, p. 202), for instance, preferred a form of discourse analysis that rejected realist assumptions in favor of a process that examined how participants’ constructions are ‘accomplished and undermined’ and the way texts work reflexively in presenting and constituting an ‘objective, out there reality’.
Alvesson and Karrenman (2000) positioned this detailed localised analysis of language as the *micro-discourse approach* (emphasised by a lower case ‘d’), which is usually undertaken through ethnomethodological or conversational analysis. In contrast, a *grand Discourse approach* (emphasised through an upper case ‘D’) is drawn from a tradition inspired predominantly by Foucault. This alternative field of analysis is much less focused on the local construction of language and instead an examination of the ‘macro-discursive’ trends that transcend and link local contexts. Broadly defined, the macro-systemic analysis of Discourse ‘considers how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000b, p. 493). Foucault’s (1972, p. 54) interest in discourse reflected this theorised and conceptual analysis of language:

> I would like to show that discourse is not a slender surface of contact, or confrontation, between reality and language (langue), the intrication of a lexicon and an experience; I would like to show with precise examples that in analysing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice. These rules define not the dumb existence of reality, nor the canonical use of the vocabulary, but the ordering of objects […] Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe.

This ‘more’ in Foucault’s understanding of discourse denotes not only its impact on social life, but in how discourses are created socially (i.e. through institutionally produced knowledge) rather than linguistically. Discursive practices encompass the various processes involved in communication, including ‘talk, text, writing, cognition, argumentation, and representation generally’, through which ‘the meanings and membership within categories of discursive practice will be constant sites of struggle over power’ (Clegg, 1997, p. 151). However, the role of knowledge in forming discursive practices is central to Foucaultian notions of power. In other words, the *objects* that Foucault discussed in the above quote, refers to “objects of knowledge” which are
recognised by particular disciplines or sciences as of interest and thus worthy of investigation (Foucault, 1972). This analysis has application to the current research context in locating ‘official’ knowledges and regimes of truth that are present within organisations and their relationship to ‘bodies, practices, identities and subjectivities’ (Prichard, Jones, & Stablein, 2004, p. 222). For instance, the advocacy for greater scientific analysis of social outcomes, entrenched management structures and stronger organisational accountability within the field of philanthropic relationships may also take on a political function. These “technologies of power” constitute a disciplinary framework for shaping and ordering the thoughts and behaviors of individual workers and the direction of an organisation as a whole (Dean, 1999; O’Shea, 2007). Such an analysis holds considerable potential in uncovering hidden ideological and regulatory mechanisms (the “order of discourse”) that impact upon individual interpretations of reality. Moreover, studying assumptions, interpretations and collaborations between corporate and community organisations means studying the relationships between competing discourses. Although some discourses may mutually coexist in some contexts, there is also the potential that some contexts are better defined by a state of struggle:

In this infinite play of differences, some discourses and language practices are more hegemonic than others, and, thus, more exclusive discourses marginalize other discourses. Researching and theorizing an organization – of collaboration or revolution – that is situated in fragmented language conventions and wandering discourses, we believe, is a challenge for the many fields of management and organization studies. (Boje, Oswick, & Ford, 2004, p. 576)

However, one significant problem with conducting analysis principally from a macro Discourse approach is that it comes at the expense of the complexities and variations occurring at the local level (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). It is also possible to find approaches beyond the discourse/Discourse dichotomy. Alvesson and Karreman outlined an alternative understanding of discourse that sits midway between the macro and micro approaches. *Meso-discourse* is a view that is ‘removed from the immediacy of the text, but [does] not go so far as forming distanced macrosystemic perspectives’ (Oswick, 2011). Slembrouck
(2001) provided a simplified “strata” of discourse analysis as operating either in the micro level of situated texts, the meso referring to the institutional level, and the macro which considers the socio-cultural level.

A theorised understanding of discourse is useful to this study in the pretext of interpreting the wider ideologies, value systems and assumptions held by specific actors involved in community-corporate partnerships. However, there is also a need to move beyond these broad macro forms of analysis for it to gain relevance to the applied research setting. For it is also the nuances of discourse, the capacity for alternative viewpoints to be shaped and liberated through language, that is of particular interest to this study. More specifically, the analytical approach must delve into the specifics of the action research with an interest in the semiotic and textual valuations located at the immediate face-to-face level of interaction. As such, rather than selecting one of the three broad approaches, this research draws from Fairclough’s (1992, 2010) analysis that incorporates components of each. In doing so, this study employs a system of analysis which examines both the wider social influence on language, as well as the impact of language use within any given social setting.


Norman Fairclough’s (1992, 2001, 2003) and van Dijk’s (2009) practical definition and interpretation of discourse (which focuses primarily on spoken or written language use) provides a relevant and useful analytical tool for this study. Fairclough (1992, p. 63-64) explains that:

In using the term ‘discourse’, I am proposing to regard language use as a form of social practice...it implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation... discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief.
More specifically, Fairclough (2003, p. 124) argues that the ways of representing through discourse are centred on

...processes, relations and structures of the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. Particular aspects of the world may be represented differently, so we are generally in the position of having to consider the relationship between different discourses.

The relevance of this final point should not be understated, as it is not merely the individual subjectivities of participants in isolation that is of interest to this research, but rather in how the interactions between corporate and community discourses are played out in practice. Within his own analytical framework, Fairclough (2001, 2003) maintains that language or text should be considered through its specific context in that it constitutes a social process, and therefore a mode of action. Through language, ‘social actors within any practice produce representations of other practices, as well as (‘reflexive’) representations of their own practice’ (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002, p. 193). Often it is the “positioning” of the actor within a practice that determines the way in which discourses of representations and self-representations are formed (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

The perspective adopted in this research proposed here does not consider individuals as being totally beholden to ideologies and discourses, and further argues that challenges to oppressive or overly abstract (e.g. managerial or bureaucratic) structures are possible. van Dijk (2009) concurs with Fairclough by pointing out that discourse is never fixed, indicating that resistance and alternative frameworks of speaking about and understanding the world are often apparent. However, a significant barrier to challenging discourse lay in the obscured nature of ideology and power.

Through the concept of "ideological-discursive formations" (IDFs), Fairclough (2010) notes the process through which ideology becomes naturalised in social settings to the point where individual subjects become unaware of its presence.
Within institutional settings, hegemonic IDFs provide order to social interactions through the presence of taken-for-granted ‘background knowledge’, which then ‘subsumes ‘naturalised’ ideological representations’ (Fairclough, 2010, p. 31). In more simple terms, IDFs gain dominance through the deployment of speech patterns that make ideological formations come to be seen as everyday “common-sense”. While common-sense knowledge can promote social cohesion through consolidating relations among members of particular social groups, power imbalance occurs when one set of discourses and practices (known as “orders of discourse”) become “hegemonised” at the expense of other less-established though equally valid systems (Davidson, 1992). In examining the neo-liberal context, Fairclough (2001, p 70) defined ideological common sense as ‘common sense in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power’. However, power is maintained only when its true meaning is left implicit:

Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible. If one becomes aware that a particular aspect of common sense is sustaining power inequalities at one’s own expense, it ceases to be common sense, and may cease to have the capacity to sustain power inequalities, i.e. to function ideologically (Fairclough, 2001, p 71).

According to Fairclough (2010), the role of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to render these invisible ideological structures visible. Critical discourse analysts must work to ‘de-naturalise’ IDFs to show ‘how social structures determine properties of discourse, and how discourse in turn determines social structures’ (Fairclough, 2010, p. 30). As such, as opposed to descriptive forms of discourse analysis, CDA is more interested in creating the conditions to effectively challenge and overthrow dominant IDFs. Fairclough (2010) uses the term ‘intertextuality’ to describe such situations where significant shifts occur in discourse, ideology and representation.

Some social contexts have exhibited a degree of intertextuality. For instance, in examining the discourse of entrepreneurialism in the United Kingdom, Cohen and Musson (2000) found that no one set “reading” of the discourse was
evident. Rather, meaning was generally constructed whereby ‘the relationship between dominant and subordinate interpretations of a particular discourse is not static, but a site for struggle and resistance’ (Cohen & Musson, 2000:46). Moreover, an analysis of social entrepreneurialism by Parkinson and Howorth (2007) found a more complicated scenario as social entrepreneurs commonly drew legitimacy from collectivist and community development discourses instead of from social entrepreneurship discourse. The authors argued that the capacity of these actors’ to do so rests on their social position “in between” the community and the wider bureaucratic system (Parkinson & Howorth, 2007: 35). Fairclough (2003) also noted that new discourses can emerge when combinations of existing ones are rearticulated in response to the specific social contexts. As he explained, the discourse of the “third way” may be analysed as a combination of both social democratic and neo-liberal discourses, whereby such hybrid discourses enable unique ways in which the world may be represented socially, politically and economically (Fairclough, 2003).

This current study was carried out in a unique field where previous research had identified varying and often competing community and managerial discourses of representation (Darcy, 2002; O’Shea, 2007; Roffey, 2006). In differentiation to previous studies though, this current analysis was specifically interested in whether the positioning of community sector representatives resulted in a different set of values, assumptions and emphasis on how community work is given meaning, compared to the values held up by external corporate funders (i.e. competing IDFs across sectors) and whether differences were observed with individuals between community organisations and between corporations (i.e. competing IDFs within the third sector and competing IDFs within the corporate sector).

CDA offers a unique framework in examining the nuances of participant subjectivities specifically through applying localised analysis with wider contextual, discursive and structural factors. For instance, Van Dijk (2009) highlighted that variations in subject positions may not be purely a result of ‘participants and identities’ but evident of institutional constraints within a
given social setting (i.e. norms, organisational guidelines and legal requirements). While some broad objectives are likely to be similar across these sectors, the meaning generated and the interpretation of community-based activities may also be significantly different, creating areas for contention in discourse. Conversely, the discourse of strategic cross-sector engagement may well form one example of a new hybrid framework emerging in the Australian setting, which literature on the subject depicts as encompassing material gain for both sides within relationships while simultaneously assuming an alignment of value systems. The foundations and implications of this form of hybridity is relevant to the study on community corporate engagement given that the research was contextually situated between two organisational types, that each have traditionally drawn upon very different ideologies, motivations, knowledge assumptions and world views.

In sum, although the linguistic content of language is important, this research was particularly interested in how relationships were framed and represented through language use, what common-sense assumptions or metaphors underpinned these interpretations and the social and political positioning of speakers with reference to others within the field (this latter interest is pursued through a close examination of the voice and styles of authority, subjugation and resistance located in verbal texts and semiotics) (Fairclough, 2010). Charting language and hidden power structures within the field of community corporate engagement thus required a critical and theorised understanding of discourse. Van Dijk (2009: 63) points to what usually underpins approaches within the broad field of critical discourse studies (CDS):

CDS scholars are typically interested in the way discourse (re)produces social domination, that is, the power abuse of one group over others, and how dominant groups may discursively resist such abuse.

Such an approach is useful in that it encompasses a broad understanding of power – from nuanced to overt examples – and charts how alternative processes, actions and ways of being or thinking may eventuate. However, in
drawing from this field, it is also acknowledged that considerable care is required so as to not assume that community-corporate relationships are based on abusive power structures, or even defined by dominance of one over the other. Rather, the analysis will attempt to locate how relationships are played out through discursive frameworks in context (van Dijk, 2009). This context takes particular note of institutional or legal norms and constraints, the social positioning of the speaker, as well as specific regimes of truth within relations of power (Fairclough, 2001).

6.4 Outlining the Proposed Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis

Of interest to this study is the relationship between knowledge and power, and how the concept of discourse contributes to ‘the production, transformation, and reproduction of social life’ (Fairclough, 1992). The mode of analysis proposed for this study draws significantly upon Fairclough’s view of language use as social practice (Fairclough, 1992), whereby discursive texts refer to spoken and written language use, as well as other semiotic forms such as non-verbal communication (i.e. facial expression, body language and pictures). The rationale for critical discourse analysis is lucidly outlined by Fairclough (1995, p 132-3):

To systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts; and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and (c) to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

It is argued that all three of the above points are highly relevant to research in this field. In the context of alternative language systems in corporate and community partnerships, this study has specifically endeavored to:
(1) Map the ‘orders of discourse’ and the ‘ideological and political effects of discourse’ within the social, cultural or institutional context (Fairclough, 1992: 237-8); 

(2) Examine the construct of the emerging relationships (by examining key motivations of each side in forming partnerships, the preferred types of organisations in cross-sector relationships, and the expectations and common-sense assumptions made by representatives of each side in setting the parameters of “success” within cross-sector relationships); and

(3) Undertake a systematic intertextual and inter-discursive investigation while attempts are made to resolve key areas of tension (during search conference breakout groups).

The first two points relate to the exploratory phases of research which further examined the wider contextual research “problems” posed in Chapter One. In contrast, the final and more detailed mode of analysis listed above was directed specifically to search conference interactions. Analysis of these interactions form the centrepiece of this thesis as it assessed the extent to which participants were able to shift power dynamics within the field of community-corporate relationships.

In order to generate a broad understanding of existing orders of discourse within the community sector, it will initially be useful at this point to reflect upon some wider “macro” Discourses involved in cross-sector relationships. Studies by Darcy (2002) and O’Shea (2007), which previously examined competing discourses in the community sector context, provide a useful starting point for the first task of analysis within this current research (see Table 6). Correspondingly, the work of Windsor (2006) has provided a valuable template to assist in differentiating between alternative corporate discourses (see Table 7).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Community discourse</th>
<th>Institutional discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Organisational</td>
<td>Anti-bureaucratic systems, horizontal management structure; close links between</td>
<td>Professionalised internal processes; top-down management control; segmentation; focus on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure/processes</td>
<td>management, staff, volunteers and community members/clients.</td>
<td>organisational strength and viability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Service provision</td>
<td>Personalised and localised service provision; participatory engagement with community,</td>
<td>Responsive to market demand; meeting clearly specified client/customer needs; distance between</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>emphasising trust, and the value of civil society.</td>
<td>organisation and wider community/clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Goals</td>
<td>Social justice; redistribution of resources; advocacy; social and political</td>
<td>Economic capacity building; poverty alleviation; efficient and professional service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>empowerment;</td>
<td>delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Information systems</td>
<td>Prominence given to local knowledge; minimal reporting outside of outputs, qualitative</td>
<td>High level of reporting and measurement of outcomes; Financial, aggregate reporting;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/measurement</td>
<td>testimonials, case studies; constructionist assumptions to organisational knowledge</td>
<td>realist assumptions to organisational knowledge systems.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) Organisational</td>
<td>Emancipation; social justice; communitarianism; feminism; anti-colonialism.</td>
<td>Charity; paternalism; individualism; economic inclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>philosophies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Table 7 – Ethical, Economic and Strategic Discourses in the Corporate Sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Motivation</td>
<td>Altruism, positive externalities, social</td>
<td>Legal compliance, instrumental self-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>justice, philanthropy.</td>
<td>interest, increased shareholder value,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wealth maximisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Philosophy</td>
<td>Moral philosophy (Rawlsian and Kantian</td>
<td>Economic self-interest of the corporation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ethics), stakeholder rights.</td>
<td>customary business ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Welfare outcomes of CSR approach</td>
<td>Public benefit.</td>
<td>Economic growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Position of moral concerns within the</td>
<td>Mandatory, incorporated into all decision-</td>
<td>Minimal beyond fiduciary concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporation</td>
<td>making structures.</td>
<td>Discretionary giving constitutes ‘theft’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Role of public policy/ regulation of CSR</td>
<td>Expansive.</td>
<td>from shareholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manager discretion, balancing costs with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>benefits and social impacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corporate reputation, stakeholder management, locating market opportunities, wealth maximisation.

Strategic managerialism.

Social impact.
As can be concluded from the above tables, competing ideologically-discursive formations (IDFs) have been previously identified within both the community and corporate sector contexts. Of interest to the analysis of texts within Chapter Seven is degree by which the disparate orders of discourse were positioned with regard to community-corporate engagement within the Australian context. More specifically, the analysis of the research data has endeavored to examine whether corporate and community sector participants exhibited a preference for one IDF over another, or whether an alternative hybrid IDF emerged through cross-sector engagement.

6.4.1 Method of Text Analysis

Both Fairclough’s and van Dijk’s conception of discourse as social practice has been discussed previously as one defined through a ‘dialectical’ relationship between language and social systems. Within this understanding Fairclough (2001, pp. 21-22) distinguishes three stages of discourse analysis:

1. **Description** - the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text.
2. **Interpretation** - concerned with the relationship between the text and interaction; seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.
3. **Explanation** - concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context; the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

It is clear that this process involves an elevating degree of analysis which transforms from stage to stage. It begins at the ‘text’ level, then progresses to ‘interpretation’, and finally draws in the wider research ‘context’. The formation of texts, as understood by Fairclough (2001), involves the reversing of the process beginning from the wider social level.

‘**Description**’ requires an analysis and ‘labeling’ of formal features of texts. Labeling is possible by raising various questions in regard to the speaker’s use
of vocabulary, grammar and textual structures. Locating the themes, contexts and positions raised is initially important to examining discourse (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2009). Fairclough (2001, pp. 92-93) further outlines some questions which were particularly useful in this study of third sector and corporate language systems.

Vocabulary
1. Are there words which are ideologically contested?
2. What ideologically significant meaning relations (synonym, hyponym, antonym) are there between words?
3. What relational values do words have?
4. What expressive values do words have?
5. What metaphors are used?

Grammar
6. What experiential values do grammatical features have?
7. What relational values do grammatical features have?
8. What expressive values do grammatical features have?

Textual structures
9. Are there ways in which one participant controls the contributions of another?
10. What larger-scale structures does the text have?

Description of Different Phases of Research
In the above list ‘experiential value’ refers to contents, knowledge and beliefs, and (broadly) how one makes sense of the world (philosophy); ‘relational value’ indicates the social and power relations between actors; and ‘expressive value’ is to do with ‘subjects’ and social identity through the ‘producer’s evaluation’ of the reality it relates to (Fairclough, 2001, p. 93). Each of these questions is specifically relevant to the second stage of this research (interviews). However, in analysing the third inter-group phase of research (search conference breakout groups), the final two questions under textual structures are particularly important points of description. Such an understanding will form a key starting point to analysis of power structures and discourses, particularly in
the strategies employed by some participants to either constrain or permit certain representations from being made.

The second phase of discourse analysis involves *interpretation*. This is not only concerned with drawing meaning from texts themselves, but also with the situational context of the participant and how these wider factors influence the production of the text or practice. However, Fairclough stresses that the interpretation process reveals as much of the ‘interpreter’ as the ‘text’ or participant. He argues:

> Interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is ‘in’ the interpreter, in the sense of the members’ resources (MR) which the latter brings to interpretation. ... From the point of view of the interpreter of the text, formal features of the text are ‘cues’ which activate elements of the interpreters’ MR, and the interpretations are generated through the dialectical interplay of cues and MR (Fairclough, 2001, p 118).

Fairclough (2001) explains that MR in this phase may also be deemed as *interpretive procedures* and *background knowledge*. Although, he remains skeptical of the latter term ‘knowledge’ which often consists of the interpreter’s personally held common-sense assumptions, which are often ideologically based.

Given the subjective nature of interpretation it is perhaps not surprising that there are many domains through which meaning may be generated from texts (Fairclough, 2001). Without going into too much detail of all resources and approaches available to the interpreter in this stage, the central focus of this study has been to examine both the situational context and discourse type embedded within language. Four questions which help to interpret the context and discourse, especially when the situation under examination involves two or more participants, is outlined by Fairclough (2001, p. 122-4):
1. ‘What’s going on?’ - Define the activity in relation to the social order, the topic of discussion and how they relate to institutionally recognized purposes.

2. ‘Who’s involved?’ – Specify the ‘subject positions’ and the ‘social identities’ of the subjects.

3. ‘In what relations?’ – Look at the subject positions more dynamically, in terms of what relationships of power, social distance, and so forth are set up and enacted in the situation.

4. ‘What’s the role of language?’ – Examine if language is being used in an instrumental way as part of a wider institutional and bureaucratic objective.

Fairclough (2003) outlined a number of factors that may help in the interpretation of text. Some examples are being mindful of intertextuality (the “voices” in a text which are included and those that are excluded), assumptions and common sense assertions (relating to existential, propositional or moral/value inferences), location of ideologies and discourses (as depicted through semantic relations between words, metaphors, assumptions, etc), modalities (the level of commitment a speaker exhibits in relation to truth), styles (relating to the positioning of the individual; i.e. posture, facial expression, vocabulary and tone) and the specific representation of events, processes and other actors (Fairclough, 2003).

Beyond examination of the local and textual formations of discourse, another important layer of analysis to the study of community-corporate interactions centers on the much broader analysis of recontextualization. According to Fairclough (2012), recontextualisation occurs when a discourse is transferred from one context and becomes embedded within another. For instance, Fairclough provides the example of neo-liberalism, a meta-discourse which arose within academic economics and business that was later applied and appropriated in other fields such as politics and the public sector. It is important to question whether this transition of a discourse represents colonisation of one set of interests over another, or alternatively the appropriation of external discourses that are pursued by and for the benefit of social agents within the recontexualised field (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2012). Analysis in this thesis will directly examine the presence of
“introduced” discourses within community-corporate engagement. This analysis is important to assess the degree to which participants exert agency and employ discourses to their own (and their organisation’s) advantage.

Applying this analysis will also require understanding of the process of operationalization, or how these discourses are put into practice. As Fairclough (2012) explained, analysis of this process will require exploration of how:

1. New discourses are enacted through interaction.
2. They are inculcated as new personalities.
3. They may be physically materialised.

In the context of studying community-corporate engagement, all three were of relevance. The first required a focus on structures, including any changing social practices (i.e. accountabilities, management styles, etc), the second has led to an interest in strategies, or ways in which discourses are embedded (through prioritisation of one form of knowledge and the diminished value of others), and the third, how they were made permanent through these structures (Fairclough, et al., 2011).

‘Explanation’ forms the final stage of the analysis, where ‘the objective is to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them’ (Fairclough, 2001, p. 135). Specifically, explanation involves raising questions in regard to the various facets of power relations in play; the ideological character of the discourse; and, the effects of the overt or covert ‘power struggles’ revealed through the analysis (Fairclough, 2001, p. 138). Given the emerging and shifting nature of the third sector relationships under consideration here, the analysis assessed wider discursive shifts within the inquiry process (either on a situational, institutional or societal level). Finally, the research has sought to interpret the dominant ideological frameworks as they became apparent through this analysis, and examine the impacts of these shifts in relation to how
inter-discursive “struggles” have contributed to sustaining or transforming existing power relations.

6.5 The Importance of Reflexive Analysis in the Current Study

Unlike many ‘top down’ research approaches, the research described in this thesis was pursued by a team of researchers with members from both the academic setting and the industry/community setting. Reflective analysis was initially directed to assumptions that informed the research process and how this informed the relations between researchers and other individuals and organisations involved in the data collection process. As will be revealed in Chapter Eight, the various co-researchers from the corporate and community sectors were instrumental in the selection of data, the building of a “corpus” of discourse samples and additional data which were relevant to the field (institutional documents) (Fairclough, 1992). Obtaining such judgments from “panels” of people from within the research setting, or else ‘in some significant relation to the social practice’ under study, is one strategy towards what Fairclough (1992, p. 227) describes as ‘enhancing the corpus’. Therefore, the specific details leading up to the survey, semi-structured interviews and search conference stages of the project formed part of an unfolding reflective process.

Moreover, the role of academic researchers within an applied research space opened up further areas of complexity. Examining power in the applied context was informed by political and philosophical assumptions within the research group that, for want of a better term, provided a “lens” through which to view and approach different participants. Indeed, the conversational approach taken during semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), while opening up new lines of inquiry, also affords considerable power to the researcher. Rather than simply reading from a predefined schedule, qualitative research affords the researcher considerable freedom to direct conversation and probe certain topics and themes over others. Issues such as these require further reflective analysis and critique. Further, the decision to adopt a position of relative objectivity in critically analysing the participatory process through use of CDA (and, in particular, turning a critical eye towards the specific styles, roles
and utterances employed by research participants) is clearly controversial within the field of engaged action research and will thus be of particular interest in the reflective discussion.

Although critical discourse analysis is predominantly informative of discourse in the social context, it is important to note that the results of this form of research may actually have a transformative effect on the setting. Indeed, description provided of the action research foundation to this research place social change as an expected outcome of the participatory process. Fairclough (1992, p. 239) points out that there is a ‘widespread process of technologization of discourse, which uses research upon discourse for redesigning discourse practices and training people to use new discourse practices’. In most cases, academic researchers are less than enthusiastic about the idea that their analysis may in fact ‘become integrated into bureaucratic and managerial agendas’ (Fairclough, 1992, p. 239). Indeed, researchers undertaking critical discourse analysis often hold preconceived (though always not openly stated) agendas against the dominant discourse under study. However, academics rarely have any power in deciding how the results will be used in the public domain.

The research undertaken and examined as part of this thesis was unique in that it had sought to incorporate both sectors in all stages of the project; including the stage of disseminating results. From this collaboration, various institutional agendas had become, and continue to be, embedded within the research design. However, questions concerning the possibility of the process being ‘hijacked’ by one dominant discourse over another less-dominant discourse forms a major area of interest in the reflective analysis. The wider methodology of participatory action research has been positioned to help counter any such discriminatory consequence of the research, but as would be assumed within an engaged research context, complexities are still often apparent (Grant, et al.,

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20 The social justice orientation of this research would place it as intentionally critical of existing management practices. The potential drawbacks and complexities of taking this value position will be the focus of considerable reflective analysis in later sections of this thesis.
2008). Such points will be covered in much further detail within the discussion presented in Chapter Eight.

6.6 Presentation of Data

The analysis presented in the subsequent chapter emerged through a grounded process, with texts coded according to a broad approach outlined above in section 5.4. Due to the considerable size of material developed in the field work (surveys, interviews, break-out sessions, personal observations), many general points are summarised. More significant points of contention are complemented with excerpts from interview and search conference transcriptions, which are unpacked and further analysed. Where appropriate, quantification of themes and ideas are made to show the significance of certain points. However, in many cases depicting numbers of responses was only relevant to community sector texts, and particularly among organisations of similar type and form (i.e. between neighbourhood centres, women’s organisations, or larger NGOs). In contrast, minimal quantification was made between corporate interviews as the sample was considered too small in number and involved a disparate array of institutional forms (indeed, comparing between small numbers of banks, philanthropic trusts, law firms, accounting firms and retail businesses would lead to unreliable and overly simplistic generalisations).

The analysis of texts is divided into two broad sections. In the first section, themes emerging out of the interviews and other forms of texts-in-stasis (i.e. texts involving only one perspective, such as participant presentations during the first stage of the search conference) are presented. Of interest here are the descriptive features of specific discourse, the subjective interpretations of events, processes and interactions, instances of IDFs (located through the presence of "common-sense" assertions), and locating instances of recontextualisation of outside discourses. The second section presents analysis of texts-in-action, centring on transcriptions of search conference breakout group sessions. Breakout sessions will be presented through a thematic analysis of key points of contention. Within this analysis, specific interest is placed on
intertextuality to describe ‘shifting articulations of genres, discourses and styles in specific texts’ (Fairclough, 2010, p. 175). This analysis has sought to examine the degree to which participants were able to challenge and recontextualise hegemonic discourses, the different power positions exerted by participants and linguistic nuances that lead to any final “consensus” position being reached. A key code for participants involved in interview and search conference breakout groups is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant key - interviews</th>
<th>Participant key – search conference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-# Manager of a community-based organisation.</td>
<td>B# Breakout group number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-# Manager of a large charity.</td>
<td>S# Session number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF-# Manager from a business funding community organisations.</td>
<td>B#.S# - # Breakout group participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT-# Manager of a corporate trust.</td>
<td>Example S1.B1 – 1 Participant number one within the first breakout group of session one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A supplementary “a”, “b”, “c”, etc., after the participant code indicates multiple respondents within the same interview (e.g. C-11a, C-11b).

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has canvassed the analytical framework used to examine power within the applied research context. As has been explained, Fairclough’s proposed method of CDA was most appropriate to the current study through its ability to examine both the presence of micro – or locally embedded and interactive – components of language and the influence wider macro ideologies and orders of discourse exerted upon the local level. This framework has enabled a broad picture to emerge of the trends, assumptions and complexities currently present in collaborations between the corporate and community sectors. Further, the subsequent analysis of findings will pull out the nuances that were observed through structured interactions between participants within the broad action research process.
Chapter Seven

Results:
Exploring Opportunities, Tensions and Inequities between the Corporate and Community Sectors
7.1 Introduction

The lack of cohesion in the sector, exacerbated by different interpretations of the new discourse into practice (e.g. to professionalise or not), and some unconscious acceptance of the new discourse and associated practices (due to being too caught up in the day-to-day to see the “big picture”); leaves individual organisations and the sector, as a whole, vulnerable to imposed change

(O’Shea, 2007, p. 492)

This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of discourse in the applied community-corporate setting, presented in accordance with the multi-phased “road map” outlined in Chapter Five. As such, initially, findings from the first phase of research (surveys) will be briefly canvassed locating clear areas of inequity in the distribution of corporate support. Analysis of the second phase of research (in-depth interviews) builds upon this insight and is thus much wider in scope. As part of this section, community sector push factors are canvassed, followed by the contrasting motivations between the community and corporate sectors. Given the strong history of relationships between the state and community sector (Chapter Two), these tensions are considered important as they provide the detailed context behind recent community sector interest in “branching out” in efforts to achieve greater organisational sustainability. Indeed, the findings presented in the subsequent sections reveal that corporate support is considered a viable alternative to organisations in the face of the growing, and in some cases oppressive, institutionalisation and fragmentation of the community sector that O’Shea (2007) had previously found.

Corporate respondents presented considerable diversity in interpretations of CSR and particularly in how the notion of social responsibility forms a key motivator in the development of cross-sector engagement; results which verify existing academic research in CSR outlined in Chapter Two. However, the increasing prevalence of “strategic” discourse within CSR, philanthropic and CCI strategies raises the possibility of new areas of tensions to emerge between the corporate and community sectors. As touched upon in Chapter Three, the
tendency for corporations to align with like-partners raises further questions about equity and power within these relationships.

Analysis of the third phase of research is presented in the latter sections of this chapter. Data analysed in this section consists of interactions documented through two breakout group sessions (each session consisting of three groups running concurrently). By employing the analytical method of CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 2003, 2010) to the action research method, instances of both micro and macro layers of discourse are unearthed and explored.

7.2 Results from Phase One: Surveys

7.2.1 Size Does Matter
The issue of size emerged as a key area of tension during the early stages of field work. Research has often pointed to a greater likelihood in larger NGOs obtaining corporate support (Lyons & Zappalà 2008), and very basic analysis of survey data revealed the degree to which size correlates with a community organisation’s ability to obtain corporate sector support. Categories depicting organisational size were developed after reviewing research conducted on similar Western Sydney community organisations (Darcy, et al., 2009) and in consultation with the community sector industry partner. Generally speaking, those falling within the less than $100,000 category were identified as very small organisations, sometimes including one single full-time or part-time employee and operated predominantly by volunteers. Organisations with turnovers between $100,000 and $499,999 represented small or ‘micro’ organisations. Those with turnovers between $500,000 and $999,999 were considered ‘medium-small’, while a broad range encompassing $1,000,000 or higher were categorised as ‘large’ organisations for the purpose of this research.

Table 8 below provides basic percentages of community organisations who either had once formed, or who at the time, were engaged in a corporate partnership.
Table 8 - Involvement in partnerships by size of community organisation by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of community organisation (in stated annual turnover A$)</th>
<th>Number of organisations surveyed</th>
<th>History of involvement in partnerships with the corporate sector</th>
<th>Presently involved in partnerships with the corporate sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 – 499,999</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 – 999,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above Table demonstrates, the likelihood of a community organisation engaging in a corporate partnership appeared to grow dramatically as the yearly turnover of the organisation increases.

The nature of support gained from the corporate sector also varied in scope according to the size of organisation. For instance, the following table shows that, of community organisations successful in gaining corporate support, those within the larger category were able to draw upon multiple forms of assistance. The provision of information and marketing assistance, for example, was found to be negligible among smaller organisations.

Table 9 - Forms of Corporate Support (Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly turnover (in AUS)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Volunteer/ pro bono</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 to $1,000,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ability to gain wider sources of support would assist larger organisations in gaining a competitive advantage on maintaining this support over the longer term. This point is further exemplified by Table 10, which shows that larger community organisations surveyed are much more effective in maintaining corporate partnerships.

### Table 10 – Involvement in partnerships by period of funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of community organisation (in stated annual turnover A$)</th>
<th>Organisations previously involved in corporate partnerships</th>
<th>PERIOD OF FUNDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 – 499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 – 999,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 27% of respondents who were successful in garnering corporate support maintained that support beyond a three year period. Of this group, the vast majority (83%) were within the mid-to-large size category. Although the above Tables exhibit a clear tendency for larger community organisations to achieve greater success in building corporate relationships and in maintaining this support over a longer period, still lacking is an understanding of the reasons why this trend is occurring.

### 7.2.1 Obtaining and Maintaining Corporate Support

Surveys on community sector organisations within western Sydney reveal a diverse array of methods employed in obtaining corporate support. For instance, the Table below shows that nearly 50% of organisations gained support through a mixture of soliciting donors and being approached by funders. Moreover, there are organisations within all four size categories that exhibited success in both approaching and being approached by corporate funders, although the majority of organisations within the “small” range (with
an annual turnover from $100,000 to $499,999) were far more inclined to obtain funding only through solicitation.

### Table 11 - Method of Obtaining Corporate Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly turnover (in AUS)</th>
<th>Number with corporate support</th>
<th>Approached donors</th>
<th>Approached by donors</th>
<th>Both methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 to $1,000,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surveys also indicated that tax deductibility status played a role in the capacity to obtain corporate support. While the Table below might indicate otherwise, all organisations whose corporate relationships progressed beyond a three year period held deductible gift recipient (DGR) status. Moreover, the “support” obtained by many smaller organisations was significantly lesser in scope than was the case for larger organisations. For instance, the type of support described by most of the smaller charities consisted of minor donations predominantly from local businesses, in-kind contributions of goods and services and involvement in various umbrella programs (one example of the latter would include neighbourhood centres who were involved in the corporate funded no interest loans (NILs) scheme). These forms of corporate giving were generally of a short-term basis, and far removed from longer-term mutually beneficial partnerships.
Interestingly, those organisations within the “very small” category were less likely to be required to meet stringent internal monitoring benchmarks. In contrast, all within the “large” NGO category specified the need to meet corporate demands concerning monitoring and reporting procedures in order to maintain corporate support. Once again, these figures in Table 13 leave absent the quality of the relationships formed between the community organisation and corporate funder and not reveal the specific accountability expectations placed on the community partner in return for this support.

### Table 12 - Expectation of DGR status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly turnover (in AUS)</th>
<th>Number with corporate support</th>
<th>Expectation of DGR status</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 to $1,000,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13 - Requirement to Maintain Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly turnover (in AUS)</th>
<th>Number with corporate support</th>
<th>Must meet requirements to maintain support</th>
<th>Nil requirements to maintain support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 to $1,000,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.2.3 Beyond Indicators of Inequity

As revealed through a brief quantitative survey, various indicators have shown that larger third sector organisations were clearly far more successful in both gaining and maintaining longer-term support from the business and
philanthropic sector. Moreover, the nature of this support garnered by larger non-profits was significantly more diverse than the forms experienced by the smaller locally-based organisations surveyed. While it might be justifiable to assume that larger organisations were either able to position themselves better than smaller organisations, much further exploratory analysis would be required to verify this hypothesis. Moreover, the expectations and wishes of corporate funders would likely add complexity to this assumption, although the absence of an equivalent data set from the corporate sector impedes the ability to locate any such correlations. While these points are relevant to the study of community-corporate relationships in Australia, it is not the intention of this research to merely propose and test a series of hypotheses. This research went considerably further by examining the deeper processes at play within the field of community-corporate relationships. Moreover, it is through analysis of the deeper social, economic and political factors influencing the development of these relationships that a more thorough understanding may be gained of these phenomena.

A valuable starting point of analysis is in questioning “why” third sector organisations are developing new links with the corporate sector. Indeed, given the long-established (albeit sometimes acrimonious) relationship between government and third sector providers throughout Australian history, the foray of some local organisations into the fields of corporate philanthropy and cross-sector partnerships is noteworthy (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008; Macfie, 2005; Spall & Zetlin, 2004). As such, before examining barriers and tensions that impede the development of more meaningful relationships between community organisations and corporate sector institutions, the factors pushing Australian NGOs to look beyond the state for financial and other forms of support is a suitable point of departure.
7.3 Results from Phase Two: Interviews

7.3.1 Third Sector Push Factors: The Value of “Grass-Roots” Organisations

Although most were not asked specifically, nearly 40% of community organisation representatives interviewed nominated the “embedded” or “grass-roots” nature of their work as crucial to operational effectiveness. This point was emphasised in multiple ways; be it through their management structure, organisational location, accountabilities or decision-making processes. The statements below provide some examples of the value placed on functioning within the respondent’s community:

*We work with kind of grass-roots, like we’re out there and with the community and with the people and with the family (C-11b)*

*…we’re part of the community and we have, I guess, a much more warmer human relationship with the community. It’s genuine because I think that the community might have criticisms of organisations like mine at different times, there’s always someone who’s unhappy with what you do, but I think people would know we’re not really here for the money, we’re certainly not making a profit, the staff certainly aren’t getting paid anything like you would get in any other sector. So I guess there’s a sense that we’re more genuinely a part of the community (C-13)*

*One of the key things about what we are able to achieve that I don’t think the big organisations can, is the real personal touch at a community level (C-17)*

Similarly to previous studies, the discourse of community was placed in significant contrast to impersonal bureaucratic institutions of government (Everingham, 1998) and touted as a way of involving those communities and clients who are most affected by social welfare practices (Darcy, 2002). For instance, C-11 is a manager of a moderately large arm of an Australian Indigenous organisation (with the NSW branch boasting over three million dollars in annual turnover). Notwithstanding their relative size to other grass-
roots organisations, the respondent maintained that their “bottom-up”
decision-making structure reflects their wider philosophy which is ‘consistent
with the whole Aboriginal ethos of being self-determining, but also having our
own voice and the community involvement and all that kind of stuff’ (C-11).
Underlying this form of grass-roots structure is the political project of self-
determination and organisational autonomy which has been positioned in stark
contrast to the paternalism of traditional welfare approaches (Maddison, 2009).
The discourse of self-representation is also clearly apparent in how C-11
framed both accountability and measuring the “success” of their activities which
are discussed further below.

Perhaps most interesting in the above quotes is that, while each embodies very
different organisational types, the geographical centeredness “within” the
community is presented as a positive attribute. The second quote above by C-13
(a very small neighbourhood centre located in outer Western Sydney)
acknowledges the contested nature of community development, but the
organisation is supported by the community because of its moral capital
associated with working for the “public good” (Keevers, et al., 2010). Notably,
this organisation consisted of a community management structure, typified by
the election of committee members who are involved in all major decisions
impacting upon the organisation’s direction. A perceived benefit of this
structure is that community concerns are more likely to be communicated to
management and affording members a higher chance of participating in
decision-making (Gevers & Goddard-Jones, 2007). However, as Lyons (2001)
had noted, the management committees in small organisations often fulfilled a
somewhat limited role when compared to larger third sector organisations,
with this study finding usually one paid staff member (the coordinator or
executive officer) taking on most day-to-day administrative functions.

As with most of the community organisations interviewed (95%) C-11 and C-13
were majority funded by the federal and state government whose management
was elected either by membership or staff. In contrast, C-17 was something of
an anomaly among the community respondents interviewed in that, despite
being small with turnover consisting of around $250,000, the organisation was entirely resourced by the corporations and the general public. Focusing on youth and education, the majority of this organisation’s school-based activities were run by volunteers and their effectiveness was positioned to be tied entirely to having local community support, especially from the schools themselves. Interestingly, they did not have a community management structure, but one of a community foundation which included a CEO, President and small board of directors (each being “experts” in their relevant fields). The purported “personal touch” sits in contrast to this corporate-like structure by the CEO emphasising his embedded role within the community, often taking part in the activities, being known as “uncle” to the volunteers and clients, and the organisational boundaries being “seamless” with the local community.

Each of the above form different representations of an umbrella “grass-roots” representation, which does not necessarily infer a democratic ideal, but one placing trust and being a genuine part of the community at its core. Trust was placed as a key component of Putnam’s (1993) notion of social capital, and more recently Onyx and Edwards (2010) found that strong community ties, shared values and perseverance can greatly assist in developing new projects in spite of funding constraints. One respondent who proudly defined the neighbourhood centre she managed as a “micro organisation” was clear in the role trust played in their ability to operate effectively:

Because we’ve been here for a long time we’ve built up trust with the local community and we’ve built up trust with the community over time. And to the most vulnerable groups, target population, whatever you want to call them, we are a non-threatening place to come, and many people from this most vulnerable category, would not front up to an activity that had fifteen to twenty people there. They feel much more comfortable with eight people (C-15)

Maintaining high levels of community-based trust was a major concern, with the manager later indicating that this was achieved by not bringing in “outsiders that are going to be judgemental and confronting” and keeping their
activities to a very small size. Another neighbourhood centre manager also reflected upon their reliance on the local community for continued support:

*Generally we source our support from community goodwill so if the community is behind it or if they come up with these ideas that they think is a good thing for us to be doing and it’s very much owned by our community* (C-14)

Working within the community was also framed as having more tangible benefits. For instance, when asked what differentiated a small service from a larger charity in the same field their “loose” structure was framed as a positive.

*I think there’s a level of flexibility that happens in smaller organisations and a responsiveness that we have access to that they don’t have* (C-6)

The minimal resources allocated to administration and responsiveness to social changes may be interpreted as key to community sector “efficiency”. However, when this suggestion was made to one manager in a family assistance organisation, a clear irksomeness with such managerial discourse was apparent:

*I’m not sure efficient is the right word [...] but ability to quickly respond, and respond on the ground* (C-8)

### 7.3.2 Third Sector Push Factors: The Competitive Tendering Environment and the Question of Size

Despite the perceived strengths in working at the grass-roots level, significant tensions were also apparent with third sector respondents. This tension often concerned their relationships with the State and perceived structural inequity within the community sector. Respondents pointed to considerable drawbacks to the vulnerability and stress experienced by those classified as “small”.

The main issue facing locally-based community organisations was related to funding, with 71% of local organisations interviewed indicating that the
government provision was insufficient for what their organisation had been endeavouring to achieve. In fact, only two (5%) of the twenty-one locally-based community sector respondents interviewed were entirely happy with their level of funding, one of which (C-17) was not reliant on government funding at all. The other respondent, a manager of an organisation that provided youth accommodation support (C-18), attributed the sufficient funding to “luck”; a result of being quick to secure a larger proportion of government support in their early years. In contrast, representatives from all four large NGOs interviewed expressed much greater happiness with government funding levels.

Of the twenty locally-based organisations reliant on government support (90%), all maintained that funding was no longer “secure” even for the well-resourced:

They don’t say “recurrent” anymore, I think they say “renewable”, which means yes we’ll give it to you every year but only because... yeah we decide to renew it. [laughs] (C-13)

Definitely the sense that I’ve got is that it’s more precarious, and that there is greater pressure to amalgamate neighbourhood centres (C-14)

I think just the fact that although we are a well funded service, everything can change overnight. We are a small stand alone non-government organisation so we’re a very small fish (C-18)

I don’t think our funding is ever guaranteed (C-21)

Over two-thirds of respondents pointed to the competitive tendering model pursued by multiple funding bodies as being the cause of this instability. According to Lyons (2001), this market-oriented model emerged in the mid-1990s through which governments would decide upon the issues to be funded, the amounts allocated within each contract, and would have organisations compete against each other for a successful tender. As Keevers, Treleaven and Sykes (2008: 462) explain, neo-liberal discourse underpins this approach to welfare provision, while at the same time being ‘disguised through language
that is imbued with semantic ‘virtue’ through the appropriation of words such as ‘quality’, ‘responsiveness’ and ‘accountability’. However, considerable criticism has been expressed regarding this process. According to the same authors, a contradiction emerges whereby market driven policies have instead lead to greater State control as needs are no longer determined by local communities but the provider, thus limiting their capacity to achieve such ideals (Keevers, et al., 2008). This contradiction was also found by Lyons (2001: 188-9) who argued that a supposed market which involves a single “purchaser” (the government) holding considerable power, no direct influence allocated to the consumer and the absence of ‘competition over price’, fails to constitute a “market” in any traditional sense. This concentration of power is also observed by one respondent:

*I think that DoCS’ biggest problem is that they are buyer, seller, manager, you know, they are both accountable and responsible and... whatever the opposite of that is. Like, they are responsible for the money they give us to spend and so they are supervisor; there’s too many hats... ... to manage for one relationship. You can’t play all those roles, can you? You can’t be supporting and resourcing someone and encouraging them to grow or flourish and unfund them if they are not doing the right thing* (C-10)

Staples (2008) notes wider political outcomes of government contracting evidenced by propensity of contracts being awarded to services that adhere to the government’s agenda over the interests of their own members. Within the guise of turning away from the “special interest groups”, the Howard government, in particular, began a process of de-funding advocacy organisations who ‘did not fit with the government’s family and moral agenda’ (Staples, 2008: 272). Two women’s services operating under a feminist philosophy indicated having a highly precarious relationship with government funders. One of the two managers of a local women’s health centre, framed this precariousness as a question of *trust*:

*If we’ve been funded for thirty years, surely there’s that level of trust now, they know we’re doing a good job. You know, why not extend that out?* (C-1)
Another manager from a women’s refuge was even more critical of their relationship with the State, pointing to the impact of policy changes under the Howard government on their ability to pursue women’s empowerment:

> We’ve systematically seen domestic violence being removed from the agenda over the years, we’ve actually taken quite a step back. In the general community’s profile domestic violence is far more visible, but as far as eroding our focus, our primary focus on domestic violence, um we’ve been placed under generic homelessness services (C-7)

Curiously though, the same participant saw this process of de-funding local advocacy services as occurring under the rationale of “financial viability”:

> The big change in the Howard government was that all services were to be set out to tender. Now we’re placed in a situation where if we’re deemed as “not viable” by the government, meaning if we have less than a million dollars of funding – like we don’t actually have a choice in that – then we are deemed as a non viable service and they would tender us out to another service (C-7)

Not only was this process damaging to relationships with the state, but as respondents had indicated, their relationship to other organisations had also been tested. In earlier research, Brown et al. (2000: 140) found voluntary services were anxious of the then emerging government contracting requirements which ‘introduced competition into a sector traditionally based on cooperation’. While interviewing for this research, smaller organisations were also strongly wary of highly competitive submission processes:

> NGOs like mine then start to compete for a small funding pool and then become very secretive about their projects. What’s happened to when we used to collaborate; “hey, we want to talk about such and such project, who wants to come on board?” Um, people who have good ideas about projects start to become secretive and territorial (C-13)

> Well you still have to be [competitive] sometimes. But I find you get better results by actually working together (C-16)
Participants repeatedly made reference to the pool of funding for the NSW Community Services Grants Program (CSGP) which, at the time interviews were conducted, had not undergone any increase for two decades despite public demand for services and the number of non-profit organisations growing during this period. Within a resource constrained environment, considerable emphasis has been placed upon those organisations that can prove financial viability and efficient service delivery, although this was often aided with the help of large bureaucratic structures. Participants noted this tendency for governments to fund the more “professionalised” NGOs who have both the business structure and pool of volunteers to deliver services.

I certainly won’t name some of them, but in some instances they have their own legal departments, human resources departments, and here we are as this little community service provider that run with a community-based management committee, and have been doing so successfully for a number of years, um how do you compete within a tender process (C-7)

I can’t compete with the big faith organisations, or whatever they are now, because a lot of them are not faith organisations, they say they’re not anyway, who have submission writers on tap, or consultants, or contractors whose sole job it is in life is to come up with these brilliant, brilliant submissions. Which have everything that everybody loves: “partnerships” and “sustainability”, and all of that lovely stuff that everybody loves and packaged up and presented in such a lovely way... (C-15)

But funders seem to feel safer with the big organisations; and the other thing about that is if a tender comes up and we have all these consultative meetings and things and people all go off and form partnerships and apply, but the big charities and the big organisations have people employed full time to just work on that (C-20)

The second of the above quotes, while facetious in tone, alludes to a central issue facing the sector. O’Shea (2007) similarly noted the spread of a new discourse of “professionalisation”, whereby many organisations previously

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21 CSGP was the main source of funding for 76% of locally-based organisations interviewed.
22 This pool now falls under the NSW Government’s Community Builders program, which has undergone modest funding increases.
reliant on untrained volunteer staff were increasingly pressured to adopt more 
bureaucratic institutional forms. However, according to an executive officer of a 
community sector peak body (PB-1) many Aboriginal organisations in 
particular have been lost in recent years due to the competitive tendering 
model and being regarded as financially unviable. Indeed, during one interview 
with two community sector workers (C-11a and C-11b), the lack of entrenched 
bureaucratic structures and expertise in submission writing was found to 
disadvantage the ability of many Aboriginal non-profit organisations to 
compete with the larger well resourced charities. The text below provides 
substantial insight, whereby one participant is describing the competitive 
tendering process around a funding “bucket” of six hundred and thirty million 
dollars:

“Well in the last round of funding there was an expression of 
interest process, which was um... would have been a little bit 
easier to give your first born child away I think [laughs]. It was 
really quite daunting and even big agencies like Barnardo’s and 
like [...] that have people to do this sort of stuff found it really 
difficult, because what happened was, there was a large bucket 
of money and there was lots of services they were refunding, 
who had been funded already... it was sort of like wipe the slate 
clean and everybody has to go for that carcass in the middle of 
the road to get their funding back, and services missed out. And 
then there was a direct negotiation process, because they 
realised there was whole gaps of areas that people weren’t 
funded. But for that expression of interest process we were the 
only Aboriginal service that were successful (C-11b)

It may be argued that a carcass in the middle of the road metaphor provides an 
amended version of a “survival of the fittest” framework. A major difference 
found in the current metaphor is that competition within the third sector is 
constructed as human-made (the “carcass” is likely to be road kill) rather than 
referring to a natural state of evolution. Moreover, the linguistic imagery paints 
a “grotesque” competitive process where the funder steps back and watches as 

23 This framework is reflective of 19th Century Social Darwinian ideology. Hebert Spencer was 
the first to employ the concept in *Principles of Biology* (1864), through describing an 
evolutionary process of human social development.
the various scavengers vie for meat. Undoubtedly, larger and more assertive organisations thrive within this scavenging environment.

When some participants were asked why they thought governments preferred to fund larger organisations, all pointed to the “safety” and “ease” of giving to a larger institution:

_You see governments don’t like to think so much. They’ve got X amount of dollars, the best thing you do is just give it to all those big organisations, because they’ve got all the infrastructure, they’ve got all the reporting procedures, they’ve got history in their side. And so for organisations like [mine] that do the work that those other organisations don’t do... it’s difficult for us (C-17)_

_But funders seem to feel safer with the big organisations; and the other thing about that is if a tender comes up and we have all these consultative meetings and things and people all go off and form partnerships and apply, but the big charities and the big organisations have people employed full time to just work on that. Whereas the community coordinator and myself had like an hour here, half an hour there, three quarters of an hour there to throw this thing together and put it in and were told it wasn’t sophisticated enough. Well, I’m not surprised! I’m not surprised. Yeah, so you feel like you can’t even compete (C-20)_

Many smaller organisations were critical of the advantages afforded larger charities. The perceived inequity within the sector was reinforced by the more recent phenomenon of sub-contracting, as revealed by one manager:

_But the way DOCS will do it, they’ve already started to do it, they’ll give it to the big church-based welfare organisations who are then going to hand it out to the smaller sort of community-based. I don’t see that as a good thing. I don’t think that’s the way to go. That’s just my opinion (C-4)_

Again, the reason given for this layering of funding structures was put down to “ease”. As indicated though, managers of smaller charities were sceptical that sub-contracting would address the problems facing the sector. Neighbourhood centres in particular, found considerable problems with larger charities.
“piggybacking” on their ties to local communities, while one community development organisation manager located in Auburn held clear reservations to having a competing organisation with no local connections exploiting her “cultural capital” for access into her community. Darcy, Waterford and McIvor (2009: 35) similarly noted that smaller organisations have become less willing to collaborate with larger charities as ‘they are neither awarded tenders, nor are they remunerated for their local knowledge’.

Perhaps the most scathing critique of the recent tendency for larger charities to take contracts away from local organisations came from within an Indigenous organisation (C11a). This participant expressed dismay that many of the religious organisations now funded to redress the issues related to Australia’s Stolen Generations were, in the past, perpetrators themselves of Indigenous removals and abuse. The fact that other autonomous Indigenous organisations were losing funding as a result added to the perception that larger charities and governments continue to “disempower” Indigenous communities.

In contrast to the perceived financial security of larger charities, representatives from some smaller organisations highlighted the “invisibility” of their activities as a major impediment. For instance, one pointed to the lack of media attention to the positive side of community-based activities (only scandals in the non-profit sector were reported), as a factor which severely limited their ability to obtain sufficient funding:

_We’re just sitting there in the background strengthening our communities, developing people’s connections with each other; it’s not sexy, it’s not funny, it’s not headline stuff_ (C-12)

In response to multiple institutional and economic forces, a small number of community organisations expressed considerable fear that the State’s preference to support large, well established and highly professionalised charities was starting to see grass-roots organisations become increasingly vulnerable. To some, questions of “survival” embodied their main concern when looking to the future.
It’s important that we don’t stay too small, and I don’t know how the little organisations are surviving. I truly don’t. And I can’t see that they will in the long run (C-8)

The future is at the crossroads, and we have to form some really strategic partnerships now to survive because we are a micro organisation, not just a small non-government organisation, they’ve sort of classified us as micro, and I understand that we are (C-16)

Survival! [laughs] That’s what this year has been about in a way. Like, survival with the threats of funding cuts... Well they’re not threats, they’re actually happening. Now we have the youth worker finishing in November, and at this stage we don’t know if we’ve got any work for her (C-18)

We might disappear altogether. We’re getting smaller and smaller (C-20)

The above pressures paint a bleak picture of the forces limiting the capabilities of small organisations to survive within a competitive environment. Interviews suggest that the vulnerabilities experienced by community-based organisations are more caused by external forces, thus adding continued validity to the widely cited resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978a). Under this theory organisations with high dependency on a single funding source often see their autonomy eroded and are increasingly having to respond to the priority areas of funders. These difficulties were further entrenched with regard to monitoring and reporting procedures which were often attached to government funding.

7.3.3 Third Sector Push Factors: Managerial Discourse and Government Reporting

The increasing demands placed on Australian community organisations in return for government contracts have been well documented (Keevers, et al., 2010; Lyons, 2001; O’Shea, 2007; Rawsthorne, 2005). Although this study did not attempt to cover the same ground as previous studies, the nature of reporting among community sector respondents stood out as a significant area of tension, and as discussed later, a key reason why many are now looking
beyond the State for support. As has been found, the internal impact of purchase-of-service contracting with the State has been the adoption of top-down management structures and an increasing reliance on paid staff over volunteers (O’Shea, 2007). This permeation of “institutionalisation” discourse within non-profit structures has occurred largely without the need for overt coercion from State funders (O’Shea, 2007).

7.3.3.1 Risk management and instrumental reasoning
Over 75% of locally-based organisations interviewed expressed some level of criticism of the monitoring arrangements tied to State funding. One third directly made reference to the “onerous” systems in place for monitoring, reporting and wider accountability. When organisations were asked to describe some of these systems considerable frustration was often evident:

*The experience is that paperwork, the red tape is enormous, and the timeframes for accountability are really slim* (C-1)

*The whole face of working in a refuge has changed incredibly since I’ve been around for that many years, in that never before have we had to do the mountain of administrative work and statistical data to justify what we get* (C-7)

*Well the accountability that we have is enormous* (C-10)

*Frustrating. Frustrating. You learn to adjust to it and I’ve always been very happy to report on our achievements for whichever bucket of funding that we get, but because each funder has different requirements it is very time consuming, and because many of them use different indicators to indicate success it makes it very hard* (C-15)

The time demands and diverse expectations between funding bodies was continually framed as a major problem experienced by participants. Managers running projects with outcomes directed toward Indigenous communities in particular felt reporting requirements for Federal grants to be exceptionally burdensome. Within one family support service, monitoring requirements was perceived as institutional racism:

*C8 I don’t like having to put in three-monthly financial returns, um, for example, um which is what we’ve had to do in one
program, an Aboriginal one which is where the racism is really obvious.

Int  How so?
CB    In all the other programs we have to send in annual financial returns; and in the Indigenous one it is quarterly.
Int  Oh... right.
CB    Yeah! And there’s a lot of other things in there that you could just see the racism.
Int  They’re more critical?
CB    Absolutely. Microscopic... accountability.

The above interaction was not the only complaint raised about governments “nit-picking” over Indigenous programs. One neighbourhood centre manager objected to what he perceived as “paternalism” in the requirements of their local council when the centre was asked to provide the *curriculum vitae* of an Aboriginal artist participating in one of their reconciliation projects. It was felt that such demands ignored the nature of community development, coupled with a disregard and insensitivity to Indigenous culture. In another instance, a counsellor for a NSW-based Aboriginal organisation was less dismissive of accountability, but found government monitoring an unnecessary obstruction to the organisation’s day-to-day activities:

*It’s frustrating because it’s really kind of time consuming in terms of... and it takes literally hours away from work that you could be doing. I know in the position I’m funded for requires that there’s ... I just have to account for everything I do. And I don’t have a problem with doing that, but it’s, do you know what I mean, it’s time consuming having to log every single phone call I make and the contents of that phone call even if it goes to an answering machine* (C-11a)

This organisation was unique in that it was forced to comply with a centralised data input system, which enabled their funder to monitor their activities in real time. Such systems were placed on top of a government instigated national review of the wider organisation’s effectiveness.

Issues such as these were broached with a manager of a community sector peak body for the wider sector’s perspective. Interestingly, rather than racism being the motivator (‘bureaucracies are very careful not to appear racist’ [PB-1]), the
rationale for such requirements were attributed to “risk management” practices. Although such measures might be based on protecting organisations from failing, applying the one-size-fits-all approach to reporting for large and small organisations alike is characteristic of managerialist discourse (Keevers, et al., 2008). Part of this discourse is a realignment of organisational focus from service delivery to greater accountabilities, causing particular tension for locally-based organisations used to horizontal structures:

The extensive procedural demands of managerialism, combined with the effects of mandating competition, compromise collaborative and participatory approaches to organising local community services. (Keevers, et al., 2008)

The reality of managerialist discourse is that smaller organisations that maintain their horizontal management structures and prioritise service delivery (over accountability) run the risk of losing funding in future tenders. Having to decide between upholding a democratic discourse or adhering to a hegemonic “bureaucentric” discourse has resulted in considerable tension, as expressed by the aforementioned counsellor:

... there’s this real competing ideology of the fact that you’ve got a government body that’s saying “these are the standards that must be adhered to, and these are the standards that must be met” and in order for us to fund a BDH worker, these are kind of the conditions and the roles and the responsibilities. There’s a whole lot of policy around that... which is kind of against the whole notion of a community organisation being self-determining. So it’s really... do you know what I mean? It’s how do I balance that notion of we’re a self-determining community organisation. But essentially, look, the bottom line is we could say “no, we’re going to do it this way. We don’t like being directed and told what to do”, and we have the right to be able to say that, but if we say that we lose the funding (C-11a)

Observing instances of similar organisations collapsing after opting for self-determination provided considerable motivation for this worker to adhere to government reporting requirements. Nonetheless, the growing expectations in return for attenuated funding only provided further impetus for them to begin searching beyond their traditional state providers for support.
7.3.3.2 Experiences of Neglect, Despair and Frustration

In contrast to the direct oversight experienced by some organisations, conversations with neighbourhood centre managers indicated an altogether different experience. Although reporting was at times framed as onerous, their funding relationship with funders was alternatively depicted as being one of “neglect”. Frustrations were evident when progress indicators had little meaning to their clients:

_We’ve now got surveys, we never used to survey people to get food relief, but now the government RBA insist really that we get at least a survey of what benefit having that food has been to the family. That, to me, is just ridiculous because if someone is going to come in here for emergency food they are going to get a benefit aren’t they? And why does the government need to know how many apples they’ve got and what is that going to do for their lifestyles? It’s just ridiculous._ (C-4)

Another organisation branded their own reports sent to government funders as “worthless”. When she was asked why this was the case, she explained:

_I don’t know who actually reads them at the funding body end and I again I think it all comes down to the relationships that you have with the personalities with the funding bodies. [...] And the forms are written in a way that’s difficult to put in your achievements, your actual achievements. A lot of them are very much based on statistics and the statistics don’t necessarily tell the whole story. [...] even though we’ve got a good relationship with our funders, I don’t think they really know what we do here (C-18)_

This quote summarises three of the regular criticisms directed toward government funders. The first complaint – that funders do not read monitoring reports – was unique to neighbourhood centres and women’s centres.

_They’re not reading them, not taking it in_ (C-1)

_It’s alright to write what were your constraints and issues for the year, and you write that every year. I’ve written that for eleven years now. I don’t know if anyone reads it_ (C-4)

_Well, there is a view that no one reads the._ (C-12)
Although 50% of neighbourhood centre managers made fleeting comments about their experiences of being ignored by their funding bodies, the last respondent went further. In explaining the extent of the frustrations experienced across the neighbourhood centre network, she recounted a story of two organisations that decided to test whether or not reports were read.

*The organisations involved weren’t named but they actually swapped reports, the details and actually sent them to DoCS to see whether anyone would notice, and no one did (C-12)*

Although nearly 30% of respondents were happy with their existing measures, some found considerable difficulty converting the day-to-day effectiveness into “evidence”. One manager found community-based knowledge (which to her was intuitive) to be in contradiction with the discourse of the funding body:

*It’s just been so hard to use practice wisdom, but to find the evidence base behind it. You know that it’s more than just practice wisdom, you know that it’s more than it’s just your own records telling you things, but the government departments and the bigger corporate funding you’ve got to show an evidence base (C-15)*

Preference for positivist approaches to measurement by those within funding bodies were also noted by Keevers, Treleaven, Blackhouse and Darcy (2010). As found in their study, qualitative data, which included stories, case studies and testimonials, was only viewed relevant as supplementary to quantitative data. Needing an ‘evidence base’ to support ‘heresay’ underpinned institutional efforts to downgrade the significance of local knowledge and the individual experience of clients and communities using social services (Keevers, et al., 2010).

*So I worry about that, because I think it’s set up in a way that requires you to be quite clear about your results being based on fact, scientific fact, proof, research even. And they’ve spent a lot of time showing us how to research and so then you will be very selective with what you report about what you report on, because you’re only going to report on things that are going to make you look good, right? But the accountants are going to say “well, that’s good that’s terrific, that’s value for money”. (C-20)*
Excluding qualitative “relational” knowledge meant that informal processes, outcomes and achievements were left unreported. According to the participant above, there is danger in overlooking these factors over the long term as “it will influence how policy is made”. This assertion indicated a fear in the capacity for accountability discourses to limit the scope of policy, and by extension, which services and activities receive funding.

The perceived eminence of quantitative measurement sat in juxtaposition to the contradictory impression that “funders don’t really know what they want”. Continuous amendments made to reporting for the NSW community services grants program (CSGP) resulted in many expressing cynicism toward the ability of government funders to develop an accountability framework that satisfactorily captures their organisational effectiveness. For instance, mixed feelings were often directed towards the adoption of Results Based Accountability\(^2\) by the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS), which was at that time in the process of being implemented. While managerial discourse was evident in this study, perhaps of greater interest are examples of resistance, where small organisations rejected institutionalised discourses.

*Well the problem is that we could become a small quasi-bureaucracy. What’s meant to be the strength of being a community sector NGO is that we have community connections with grass-roots, we listen to people and are engaging with people, and that happens to a greater or lesser degree at different times at different organisations. But yeah, if we solely focus on the relationship with the funding body and ticking boxes and filling out forms, then that takes us away from the [community] (C-13)*

*It’s no good going to where all the funding is if you’re only giving your community what the powers that be say they gotta have. Your community knows best what it wants. Your community knows how it wants it delivered. Stay true to that. But there is a way I’m finding that you can meet all of those things, but it takes time, it takes effort, it takes creativity and it takes passion (C-15)*

\(^2\) This framework was originally developed by a US scholar Mark Friedman and now adopted by the NSW Department of Community Services which prioritises the outcomes rather than processes of community activities (Friedman, 2005).
As the context of Community-State interactions reveal, several tensions have been experienced by managers of organisations operating at the local or grass-roots level. Of specific concern to respondents was the marketised environment that had resulted in the infusion of competitive and managerial discourses within the community sector, coupled with the onerous and contradictory relationships formed between the third sector bodies and the State. Many of these themes also reflect findings of other previous Australian studies (Darcy, et al., 2009; Keevers, et al., 2008; O’Shea, 2007; Treleaven & Sykes, 2005). Indeed, the infiltration of competitive discourse (Darcy, et al, 2009), has led to increased animosity, both toward government funders and within the community sector. Larger NGOs were commonly viewed as mere extensions of government and a source of many difficulties faced by smaller organisations in endeavouring to sustain their activities and maintain a degree of autonomy. However, to one manager, the preference for larger charities simply represented a wider shift away from an idealised discourse surrounding a perceived value of “the grass-roots” (C-20). While these tensions are widespread, it remains to be seen whether corporate funding is positioned as a viable alternative. The following section takes this analysis one step further by canvassing some of the motivations behind the movement towards community-corporate engagement. Within this section the perspectives and assumptions of both sides will be explored.

7.3.4 Community and Corporate Sector Motivations

7.3.4.1 Community Sector Motivations: Survival and Financial Sustainability
The above analysis has provided an overview of the existing tensions experienced by managers of local community organisations with various levels of government. Although these factors were located as the central reasons community organisations were looking beyond government to sustain their activities, perceptions of the corporate sector as an alternative source of funding was met with a large degree of ambivalence.
For instance, some participants maintained a high level of selectivity in their sources of funding. Of the 21 participating local organisations interviewed, two (10%) representatives indicated their organisation was not interested in obtaining corporate funding during the time of interviewing, whereas seven (33%) completely ruled out receiving funding from for-profit sources that were deemed as “unethical” in nature. Three common examples of perceived unethical for-profit sources included Community Development and Support Expenditure (CDSE) or “clubs funding”, as well as contributions from cigarette and alcohol manufacturers. According to these participants, receiving money from such areas would be counterproductive given the role of services is often to counter the effects of drug, alcohol and gambling addiction:

As far as corporates are concerned, it’s probably better for me to say who I wouldn’t receive funding from; and I’m talking about cigarette companies and companies of that ilk... Even where gambling is involved, that’s from my perspective all negative stuff, because someone’s probably lost a home or lost a family. So I’m not interested in that sort of funding (C-17)

Others were far less discerning. While the role of government as primary provider was often upheld, seeking corporate funding was highlighted as a way of generating greater financial sustainability:

It’s been a very comfortable place to be funded by the government in the middle of a recession, [although] as a strategy for the organisation one of the things that I’m working on is reducing the percentage of government funding, because it’s all eggs in one basket and it’s a very dangerous place to be (C-5)

To me if we get money to do what we need to do, I guess it doesn’t matter where it comes from. But on the same point governments just cannot shift their responsibility from needing to fund community projects as well as community services (C-15)

While the authenticity of corporate motivations was often questioned, seven (33%) respondents from the sample of local organisations maintained that a
unique responsibility was placed on corporations to support community projects.

*I think the government has an obligation, I guess the corporates have an obligation too. [...] Well they’re part of the community and they should be responsible towards the community in a way, not just to get their money*” (C-20)

One representative from an organisation that provided services solely to Indigenous Australians saw corporate motivations as considerably more instrumental in nature. However, being able to understand the self-serving nature of philanthropy provided a unique opportunity to organisations within their field:

Yeah, because what does it give them, what do they get out of it? They get the opportunity when people say ‘oh yeah, you’re kind of raping the land’... All the greenies go up there and go ‘you’re raping the land and you’re doing this, this and this and this’. And they’ll go, “oh yeah, but we’re funding [names organisation]” – even though their operations might be based up there in the Northern Territory for example... they go “we’ll yeah we’re funding [names organisation] up there for three years to do these healing weekends”. So it makes them look good (C-11a)

In contrast, two organisations (10%) described corporate funding as more ethical and responsive to community needs. The following quote was from one manager who was at the time, relatively new to the community sector. In this case the relative speed in funding was a major reason for preferring corporate support over government:

*Sometimes the private sector is far more in touch with what’s actually happening out in the world than the government is. And because of the freedoms that the corporate funders have, they’ve got the freedom to address an emerging problem right now. Where the government sometimes takes twelve months to actually wind up to it* (C-5)

Generally speaking, local community sector organisations viewed corporate funding as a potential source of supplementary funding. However, the degree to
which corporate relationships may be considered as an alternative to government funding remains to be seen. The following sections examine the alternative push factors of corporate respondents and some key tensions that emerge when very different world views, experiences and objectives collide.

7.3.4.2 Corporate Sector Motivations: Philanthropy, CSR and the “Business Case” for Supporting Communities

Corporate respondents were asked to explain how they saw “corporate social responsibility” both generally and in relation to their business. Additional follow-up questions concerned the role of these principles in motivating community engagement. Similar to other applied studies on CSR in Australia (Gettler, 2004), a wide array of interpretations was provided revealing some level of confusion and variability in the concept. For instance, some corporate managers saw CSR as being synonymous with altruism. Doing “good things” provided a regular theme in many interviews:

From our point of view it’s just really trying to do good (BF-1)

I think in its purest form it’s simply being a responsible corporate citizen. (CT-5)

It’s about being excited about doing good things just for the merit of it (BF-8)

While altruistic statements were common in interviews, only two corporations (13%) were found to adhere to the approach that Windsor (2006) categorised as “ethical” CSR. In these two cases, social justice principles were embedded as part of organisational philosophy which then influenced management decision-making and the specific mode of community engagement. The first respondent from an ethical investment fund (BF-1), cited a unique anti-whaling stance in guiding a decision of management to not trade in stocks from a select group of countries. Their community grants process also drew upon these principles in their donations structure whereby 5% of all profits were distributed each year to a broad list of local and national charities. CSR, according to this manager, was a substantive concept and enabled his corporation to be compared favourably to other less scrupulous businesses:
I think a number of organisations stay on the edge of the law and often the law is well behind community expectations. So what we’ve tried to do is actually be ahead of the curve obviously in a very modest way. (BF-1)

The second “ethical” business sector respondent, a global retail chain (BF-8), also made comparison to other businesses. In this case, CSR was framed as a way of exhibiting ‘leadership’ in the fields of advocacy and human rights. Moreover, pains were made to stress how the motivations for doing so were not based upon self-interest:

As big corporations with big budgets have started to make corporate social responsibility a more common place practice, we’re mindful that some of this newfound benevolence is being motivated by brand reputation or the need to green wash or even worse just for cause related marketing. [We] believe that we have a leadership role to play in business in the business community because we’re activists at heart (BF-8)

Interestingly, another manager in the retail sector placed leadership as central to their CSR program. However, their understanding of CSR was tied to more business-focused practices:

We do talk about corporate responsibility, but we call it ‘cause marketing’ really; anything associated around that (BF-3)

According to BF-3, being responsible formed part of a brand that was intricately packaged and marketed in order to differentiate a company from its competitors. While this respondent’s principle competitor relied on the status of its CEO as an Australian icon, this organisation instead relied upon the recognition of local heroes. This strategy required the creation of two “brands”, one centring on the company as a whole and the other the local store manager, who was given discretionary power to distribute profits to organisations working at the grass-roots level. CSR, in this case, was inherently tied to business outcomes:

I think if you talk to any company out there is that fundamentally we don’t just do things for nothing. You know, there has to be some rub off on the business. So if we gave away
a million dollars as an organisation, if that did nothing for the organisation in some shape or form - would we do it? ... I would! But I see the benefit. Would we as a corporate citizen? I think in some form of shape and form, fundamentally every business is there to make a profit for, whatever, shareholders or stakeholders. But the rub off benefits on the business is exponential (BF-3)

Three corporate funders located in Melbourne (BF-2, BF-7 and CT-6) linked their respective CSR programs to narratives around a long-standing history and culture of community engagement. While business outcomes were acknowledged, being seen as an integral part of the community was also emphasised as a guiding principle. One of these respondents, who managed the local giving arm of an Australian retailer, described his organisation’s history as a leader in the Australian philanthropic community. Again, community engagement from this retailer’s perspective was positioned as a way of maintaining unique brand differentiation:

In terms of philanthropy we have a strong view given our heritage, the fact that [our founder] was strongly involved in philanthropy and local communities. Each of our stores is an arm of this fund and each of our stores supports a local charity on an annual basis, and this fund matches their donation (BF-2)

Aside from the motivations of altruism and self-interest, another significant theme centred on corporations “giving back” to communities in which they operate. These following quotes drew upon a reactive conception of CSR, in that it was concerned with addressing the impact of a firm’s social and environmental footprint:

How you give back to the community, it’s about the community projects you do, it’s about your people your staff (CT-6)

Given that that’s where we take all our profits, we feel that its only right that we should be investing back into the communities that our people live in and that the communities that we work in (BF-5)

The rationale given for CSR in the second quote is interesting in its use of hypotaxis. As Fairclough (2003) had explained, hypotaxis occurs when one
clause is subordinated to another ‘main’ clause. In the case of the above text, the underlying assumption is that social responsibility is contingent upon a connection being made between physical location and profit-making. Furthermore, the use of terms such as ‘investing back’ alludes to the business orientation of the underlying discourse. It is perhaps not surprising that terms such as ‘investment’, ‘viability’ and ‘adding value’ featured strongly within this interview given that it involved a representative from a major Australian bank.

Other representations of CSR emphasised the role of social pressure and expectations on corporate behaviour. These quotes indicated that improved corporate behaviours have arisen in response to social perceptions:

Being a good corporate citizen - it's expected of us. It's absolutely expected of us (BF-9)

In some respects it just works, but in other I think it's really important, because I think the words "corporate social responsibility" really imply that the corporates doing something wrong and that they have to redeem themselves (BF-8)

I think there is a specific focus on this at the moment because consumers are increasingly expecting organisations to be, not only socially responsible but also environmentally and economically responsible, and particularly in the last year it's been interesting with the global financial crisis (CT-5)

It was clear during some interviews that evolving social and political perceptions of corporate behaviour following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) were influential in how corporate respondents represented their activities. From this standpoint, CSR served as a tool to improve frayed reputations and brands. However, one respondent from a corporate foundation (CT-2), explicitly maintained that no marketing or advertising benefits were accrued through their community programs. Interestingly, the international company had been among a group of companies that generated negative media attention for their role in the lead-up to the GFC. CSR, in this case, was described simply as a ‘licence to operate’ (CT-2), and it might be assumed that greater care was deemed necessary presenting an image of selfless philanthropy rather than
corporate strategy. The only corporate benefit of this program was centred on efforts to retain staff through volunteering and pro bono activities.

The role of community engagement in cementing a firm’s place as an attractive employer was particularly strong among participants within the fields of accounting and law. In some cases, CSR was presented as a complex interplay between social responsibility and self-interest, as one respondent revealed:

*People might think it is a very self-serving thing, but I think it’s more complex than that. There are so many benefits to having a corporate social responsibility agenda that you can’t ignore it. It’s not just in the way that you relate to clients or in services procurement, it’s also in the way you attract your staff, retain them; a lot of staff want to be employed by very responsible organisations especially junior staff and you’ve got to really consider those issues as well if you want to be an attractive employer (BF-4)*

A variation of this emerging complex array of motivations is how a corporation interacts with stakeholders. Interestingly, the following quote draws from an ethical (stakeholder) perspective of CSR, but in a way corresponds with strong management discourse. The reference to “management of” wider stakeholders is centred on control over wider perceptions of the business. As such, CSR in this context fulfils a central business function of public relations:

*It’s management, and stakeholder management. It’s management of your stakeholders. And being aware that your stakeholders aren’t just your customers or your stakeholders... It’s how you do business on that broader term (BF-9)*

During the semi-structured interviews, participants offered diverse representations of CSR in response to being asked about their motivations for community engagement. No single set “reading” of CSR was made, indicating that community-corporate engagement was at the time, still in an emergent change. Many representatives acknowledged that further thinking was needed about how best their corporation could meet its CSR requirements. However, one clear trend was present, and this trend depicts community engagement moving from a ‘philanthropic’ standpoint (i.e. providing grants and charity at a distance) to a ‘strategic’ standpoint (i.e. tying business interests with wider
social objectives). Indeed, thirteen of the fifteen corporate representatives interviewed (87%) indicated that their organisation either had or was moving towards a more strategic approach to CSR. Underlying this approach is the formation of a unique discourse that infuses the language of investment and control with the language of responsibility, social impact and support. One outcome arising from this emerging interdiscursive space is increased tension between this new hybrid discourse with other incompatible or conflicting discourses. Although these theoretical points are of academic interest, of more applied importance is how variations of this hybrid discourse directly influence relationships of power; with particular reference to the quality of engagement (within the range of arms-length “involvement” and true collaborative “partnership”) between local community sector bodies and their corporate supporters. The following sections canvass some of these tensions.

7.3.5 Tensions within Community-Corporate Relationships
This section outlines some key areas of tension that arose during the second phase of research (in-depth interviews). Commonalities drawn from participant experiences, expectations and evaluative assessments of partnerships are analysed according to a number of critical themes. The following sections present these emerging themes in four broad sections. Tensions concern issues with regard to use of institutional language systems, discourses within community work, sustainability, and interpretations of accountability and success within partnerships.

7.3.5.1 Telling Them What They Want to Hear: Strategy, Values Alignment and Speaking the Corporate Language
Despite the permeation of strategic rhetoric in interviews with corporate representatives, many participants asserted that their organisation’s commitment to engaging with communities was based on altruistic principles. Motivations for community-corporate relationships were ‘obvious’ (CT-6), with many respondents citing the importance for successful business giving back to the community. However, complementary to these sentiments was a desire, particularly from the nine representatives of direct businesses, to form relationships that were of “mutual benefit” to the funding organisation. The
structural and regulatory environment guiding corporate CSR in Australia automatically provides constraints on publicly listed companies who wish to act in a way that is purely altruistic (Corporations Act 2001). However, tax law concerning charitable giving alternatively prohibits foundations and trusts from structuring their grant-making as business transactions (Ward, 2008). As such, expecting a direct return or tying funding to specific mutually beneficial outcomes is restricted if charitable bodies (i.e. a charitable foundation, trust or public fund) wish to preserve their ability to obtain tax concessions. Corporate trusts can take on a number of forms and often reside within a legislative framework that sits between these two regulatory poles (Ward, 2008). It is for this reason that most of the six corporate trusts interviewed played down any potential marketing or reputational benefits accruing from their community relationships. Three (or 50%) of corporate trusts interviewed preferred to define their activities as being explicitly philanthropic:

*I’d say we’re predominantly philanthropic [...] which I guess is giving in-kind, resources and financial support for the benefit of the greater community* (CT-1)

*We are philanthropic so we do not need to get any kudos for anything we do* (CT-2)

*Certainly we consider the work of the foundation to be philanthropic, because we don’t have any expectations back from the organisations that we fund to deliver for us any benefits or any outcomes* (CT-5)

Despite endeavors of corporate sector participants to emphasise the wider social benefits of their cross-sector relationships, many retained specific expectations on potential partners. For instance, an Australian energy company representative emphasised the importance of alignment when asked to outline her institution’s community engagement requirements:

*Alignment with our strategic aims. An opportunity to communicate with the community. We’re looking for opportunities to leverage products, innovation, information and brand reputation. So it needs to not only align, I guess in terms of strategic pitch, but also in terms of providing those opportunities because it’s seen as an investment* (BF-9)
As is evident within the above text, these requirements are strongly infused with a linguistic system that is deeply rooted in corporate culture. In drawing from a Foucaultian analytical framework, Deetz (2003, p. 31) argued that dimensions of linguistic systems ‘are utilized to produce classifications and thus produce groups and their relations’. Although maintaining an appearance of neutrality, these systems form attributes that entrench identities, social relations and institutional, cultural and political values within specific applied contexts (Deetz, 2003). The language of alignment in the above text may therefore be interpreted as a system used to differentiate between those organisations where the corporation is able to ‘leverage products, innovation, information and brand reputation’ and those where the corporation cannot. Furthermore, ‘communicating with the community’ (BF-9) is viewed not as a discussion but rather as an investment strategy; thus prioritising exchanges that result in outcomes which are of benefit to both the corporation and the wider community.

As might be expected, managers of “grass-roots” community organisations who instead emphasise building local ties, networks of trust and community goodwill, have found this language entirely foreign. In reflecting upon these differences in language and motivation, the manager of the energy company outlined a common problem she had experienced:

*We tend to find people in charitable organisations are there because they have a very strong mission or calling or there’s a reason, a personal reason... so there’s a lot of emotion sometimes. Sometimes you need to diffuse some of that passion I guess when it comes into a corporate environment because we deal with twenty to twenty five different [NGOs], not to mention the 561 small grants that we [distribute]. ... It is that balance between I know you’re really passionate about it and I’m going to help you deliver that to my employees and customers as well as I can. BUT – one of twenty! (BF-9)*

When asked how emotion or passion impeded the development of partnership, the corporate representative proceeded with a case example:

*With one particular charity we’ve got, I understand that but it’s not for our group [employees]. I bring in some people and they...*
tell the most amazing stories and they’re real tear jerkers but it
doesn’t work for my group: ‘I keep telling you my group is ninety
percent male – that’s not going to work here!’ And you just keep
having the same conversation. It means that when you do
progress stuff, it’s slower. But you just have to continually
educate them I guess: ‘That was great and it may work for
another company – but it will not work for us’ (BF-9)

The above texts reveal use of a specific form of “rational” corporate discourse.
In this case, disciplinary power is employed in the form of the corporate partner
educating a community partner against overt displays of emotional
transgression. In doing so, critical distinctions are formed (corporate/
community, rational/irrational, male/female, etc…) which serve to monitor and
regulate the behaviours of potential partners and further entrench a “male”
corporate identity. Deetz (2003) noted that these distinctions were
commonplace in the corporate environment. However, through depicting the
energy company as falling predominantly within a “male sphere” (Padavic &
Reskin, 2002), values alignment was also caste through these ideological
binaries. Groups specifically targeted for partnerships were thus found within
similarly “masculine” fields, which included volunteer firefighting, surf
lifesaving and local sporting teams.

Notwithstanding this form of masculinist discourse (which was located in only
one interview), values alignment based on gender became a common theme
throughout the research and took on a number of forms. For instance, a
manager from an Australian retailer (BF-2) alternatively located “women” as a
key target group for their community engagement strategy. This decision was
made in response to internal research which found women, and mothers in
particular, constituted 70% of their customer base. In response, funding criteria
was formed which centered on aligning with highly visible causes connected to
women or children. Another example was provided by a representative from a
corporate trust, who defined “education” as a priority area in response to staff
members within their field (international finance) being ‘highly educated’ (CT-
2). Aligning with the community sector in each of these cases was positioned so
as to resonate with and present a unique image to particular stakeholder
groups (i.e. staff members or customers). It was unusual for a corporation or
trust to fund a wide variety of community organisations outside the business’s value focus, consumer base or geographical area (BF-1, BF-6 and BF-8 were the exceptions to this rule).

Much greater variation occurred in corporations that had employee-directed giving programs\(^{25}\). In these cases, there was a much higher likelihood of smaller community-based organisations or more “political” NGOs, such as those with a human rights or environmental focus, being selected for funding. Only one corporation had positioned its partnership strategy specifically towards ‘difficult’ social issues (BT-8). In contrast, six corporate respondents (or 40\%) completely ruled-out supporting organisations that were categorised as either religious or political in orientation. The rationale for doing so was attributed to maintaining brand reputation, as aligning with ‘anything that may discriminate or isolate’ (BF-9) was considered a threat to their image. In the case of an Australian bank, steering clear of religious and political causes was important in protecting staff from volunteering in unsafe or potentially volatile environments. This perspective was also influenced by a wish to remain politically neutral, and to avoid offending specific subsections of the wider community:

\[
\text{We couldn’t be seen to be giving our people time off to go and strike and have a sit down in the middle of Fed Square over something political (BF-5)}
\]

Although religious causes were off-limits, many still supported larger institutionalised charities which had strong religious affiliations.

The presence of a recognisable and trusted community sector “brand” was regarded by corporate sector respondents as an important factor in a community group’s capacity to develop partnerships. During an interview with another respondent from a charitable foundation within the insurance sector, a stark differentiation was made between what he saw as an ideal community

\(^{25}\) Employee directed giving programs occur when corporations match or exceed charitable donations made by staff members.
relationship with another that was defined as an ideal corporate relationship.

With reference to an example of a good ‘community relationship’, he stated:

They are very very good at service delivery, they are very very bad at monitoring and evaluation and this is a fully professional, not a volunteer based organisation. So this is a bit of an anomaly – they aren’t good at understanding the impact of the work that they do within the community. And that’s what our experience has been. They’re not great communicators. However, we continue to fund them. (CT-5)

Although the above relationship was maintained as positive, the participant spoke in less qualified terms when explaining what he saw as a good ‘corporate relationship’:

At a more corporate level, I think the relationship we have with [name withheld] Foundation, for instance, is an extremely good corporate relationship. They are high professional, they know the game, they know what excites us, they know what we want to hear, they know what we’re looking for. Um, we’ve funded a couple of big projects with the [name withheld] Foundation and they have a good profile, they are well loved, they deliver a terrific service in hospitals, they’re fun, they’re engaging, all those sort of things. Our staff love what they do, love the brand, love what it stands for. All that sort of stuff, so that’s a very successful partnership (CT-5)

An examination of the semiotic styles (Fairclough, 2003) employed within the two above texts reveals the degree to which corporate discourses inform how cross-sector partnerships are categorised and evaluated. In the first text, it is interesting that the funder objectively knows that the community group is ‘very, very good at what they do’ and without being able to properly evaluate and measure their ‘impact’. In the second, the voice of the corporate funder is elevated while the community sector voice is almost entirely absent (Fairclough, 2003). The community organisation was judged by a set of corporate criteria, which included being “professional”, “knowing the game”, having a “good profile” and being highly regarded (or “well loved”), with no reference to what the community organisation obtains from the partnership. The second example is highlighted as ‘a very successful partnership’; while in the first no evaluation
is made of the partnership whatsoever aside from referring to the continuation of funding.

As is evident from the above examples, a central aspect of values alignment is being able to speak or present in a way that resonates with corporate funders. The importance of making the right ‘pitch’ to corporate partners was maintained by representatives of both the corporate sector and those community sector respondents with experience in corporate partnerships. According to one corporate sector manager, being able to speak the corporate language was a feature of a competitive funding environment:

*It’s competitive, it’s competitive. Money raised from corporate Australia is limited. There’s a lot of people doing it but it’s limited. So you’ve gotta go out there and ‘pitch’. So it’s gotta be done professionally* (BF-2)

Small community organisations interviewed who were more successful in generating corporate support noted the importance of framing and working their activities in ways that gained the most traction with corporate funders. In the words of two community sector representatives:

*You have to reframe I think, without taking away the essence of what you do [...] You need to frame for what the funding programs about, whether it’s, you know, the Vincent Fairfax Foundation wants to focus on children or X wants to focus on aged care or the quality of life in aged care [...] so of course you reframe, but within obviously what you can do. I still haven’t worked out how to do that...* (C-12)

*It’s very much giving them what they want... without telling lies!* (C-17)

Partnerships were differentiated from arms-length philanthropic funding relationships primarily through the quality of relationships formed. Being open to suggestions and advice from a corporate partner was cited as a factor that enables relationships to be maintained over the longer term.

*Being prepared to adjust and change... being flexible and being open to ideas* (CT-6)
If they tweak the program they will get a better response (CT-6)

The capability to present a corporate image and interweave between community culture and corporate culture was also deemed crucial to community organisations of all sizes in being able to attract the attention of funders. When one CEO of a very small (but highly successful) community organisation was asked if he presented himself differently to corporate executives than he did to his community, he replied:

Oh yeah, very different! Very different. Oh yeah. And what I must tell you... when I go and visit the corporates I look and sound corporate! [...]Because they’d be horrified if I was dressed like this! Cos, you know... and that would be wrong too (C-17)

Tying the capacity to obtain corporate funding to “looking” and “sounding” corporate revealed the degree to which a corporate ideologically-discursive framework (IDF) permeated Australian cross-sector relationships. However, community applicants did not naturally assume these characteristics, but rather adopted corporate language and culture strategically. As such, to successful community organisations this IDF was not in any sense “hidden” from view (Fairclough, 2010), but constituted the “reality” of cross-sector engagement. As a result, many well resourced charities/community organisations had invested in corporate liaison officers to facilitate closer cross-sector ties. As outlined by a participant from an Australian law firm, having this contact gave larger charities a competitive edge:

The larger charities are able to fund, or usually able to fund even if we don’t get a lot of time, a relationship manager for the partnership. And that relationship manager person, often we know they’ve got twenty other corporates that they’re managing, but for right or wrong, that person does make a difference. I’ve got somebody that I can ring. This is different to our CEOs liaising with their CEO, but that dedicated partnership resource does make a difference (BF-6)

According to some corporate managers interviewed, the tendency for community groups to airbrush their activities was noted as a common problem. In presenting a rare critique of the more corporatised and larger charities, a
CSR manager from a Newcastle-based law firm outlined his interest in looking past presentation and style:

> The highly polished side of things comes into play when the organisation is clearly resourced, and sometimes you don’t necessarily feel that they’re in need. Yeah, it’s interesting. Whereas the ones that are floundering, I suppose, I think you do think that there is a genuine need but they don’t know how to communicate that to you, and they don’t know how to package it with you. But for them to get beyond that involves either someone very skilled within their organisation that will take on that role and that responsibility, or if they’ve got resources then they’ll need someone who specialises in that sort of process (BF-4)

According to an operations manager from a major Australian retailer, the problem was not so much language but honesty in cross-sector relationships:

> Not being honest. Trying to say something you’re not going to do. Trying to say you want money and it’s not going to go where it’s going to go (BF-2)

Despite most corporate funders preferring to work with corporatised NGOs, at times individual contacts were enough to build and maintain partnerships. Corporations with less developed CSR structures (i.e. those whose self-professed motivations were based on “altruism” over “mutual benefit”) tended to form partnerships through individual networks and friends. However, questions of inequity were raised regarding an historic practice where major decisions about the distribution of philanthropic funds were made by company directors. This critique was particularly strong among research participants from the legal profession (BF-4 and BF-6).

The ability of one non-corporatised neighborhood centre to garner local business support was put down to luck. In this instance, the chairman of a company agreed to fund a men’s suicide prevention program after having one of his own friends commit suicide. Although many community sector respondents accepted the reality that a large swathe of philanthropic funding was based on individual contacts, the highly tenuous nature of these links was often raised as
a point of concern. A tendency for partnerships to discontinue or flounder once a tie was broken (due primarily to the absence of structural support) continues to pose a key issue across both sectors.

7.3.5.2 Tensions in Organisational Culture: Divergences between “Needs” and “Strengths” Approaches to Community Work

In instances where more developed CSR programs were apparent, speaking and acting ‘corporate like’ only went so far in being able to garner philanthropic support. During interviews with mid to large sized non-profits the problems experienced were less concerned with getting the attention of corporations, but rather in the way they were able to represent their community activities. Of the representatives from the four larger charities interviewed (LC-1, LC-2, LC-3 and LC-4), each had been recruited due to their earlier experience within the corporate sector and this provided a major comparative advantage when courting prospective partners. However, friction was also found where the ‘comfort levels’ of long-term employees were tested by the new staff coming in from the corporate sector. According to one corporate-liaison officer, a key frustration in developing cross-sector partnerships within a large charity centred on the general staff’s tendency to treat corporate philanthropy as an ‘afterthought’ (LC-2).

During an interview with another medium sized religious community organisation, similar issues were expressed. However, it was only after the audio recording had ceased that the respondent felt comfortable in discussing the ‘real’ frustration she was facing (LC-4). It was the inability to represent her organisation’s activities through a narrative of ‘need’ that inhibited her ability to gain corporate funding. In contrast, she explained that the majority of volunteers and workers within this organisation strongly preferred to focus on their community’s ‘strengths’. Lyons (2001: 23) noted a similar tendency in that ‘certain values, beliefs, identities and enthusiasm’ are resistant to external pressures, sometimes leading to clashes between senior managers and the volunteer base. The processes of defining “needs” are also becoming highly political. For instance, Ife and Tesoriero (2006) pointed out that that in many
institutional settings the ability to define and assess needs has shifted away from those within the community who experience the ‘need’. Instead, external experts (social workers, demographers, social researchers, psychologists, etc...) are afforded responsibility to define populations through a discourse of *deficit*, and sometimes in ways that disempower and marginalise the wider community (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006).

One family support centre manager directly drew from a number of *strengths-based* assumptions in explaining her organisation's approach. This approach centred on building the capacity of marginalised groups in defining their own stories and narratives, rather than having negative categories imposed upon them:

> For us, I suppose, it would be expressed in our values of believing that mostly, with enough support and respect and whatever, families do want to do the best by their kids. And most have the ability to do that, if they have the resources to develop that. Those resources would include a need to develop some other stories about themselves; like mostly the families I suppose have come – the people we work with – have come from difficult backgrounds that may well have featured abuse, or mental illness, or whatever, and so in the process they've, I suppose, had stories imposed on them about themselves about their abilities.

> They're not the whole story, because I like the philosophy I suppose around narrative therapy, I don't know if you're familiar with it, which [...] is that we have many stories. Our lives are storied for us, or by us, and there are many stories – some stories get privileged and others in that privilege get neglected or overlooked. I guess for the families that we work, the story that is privileged is one of *deficit*. And we would want to explore with the family some other stories because that won't be the total story about them. There will be lots of stories about resistance to abuse rather than victimhood. There will be lots of stories of ableness and caring, that we'd want to explore and help that story to flourish (C-8)

Alternatively, when asked what exactly appealed to funders about the three key focus areas (‘disability’, ‘emergency relief’ and ‘young mothers’) of a large NSW based charity, the respondent made clear the prioritisation of *need* and *deficits*:
What’s the attraction? It’s people... knowing that there are people worse off than you; and that’s why they contribute. It’s pulling at heart strings [...] It’s bang for your buck! (LC-1)

Consequently, community welfare organisations who focused on broader philosophies such as community development and social justice, and the wider array of third sector organisations who simply failed to define their work through the umbrella category of “poverty alleviation”, often failed to win over corporate supporters. Despite the preference for activities that prioritise “strengths”, 19% of local community sector participants indicated that representing their work through the discourse of need simply required a greater degree of creativity and imagination. Being able to adopt corporate discursive structures, while not entirely accounting for the broad spectrum of the activities, was seen by a number of participants as a reality that need not threaten the focus and mission of the community organisation (C-5, C-6, C-16 and C-17). These organisations indicated that the language and approach presented to the corporate sector was significantly different to that presented in their work on the ground. Being able to do so often requires a level of knowledge of the corporate sector that was based considerably on personal experience:

“I’ve got a very good business background, strong business background. And I know exactly what corporates expect. How they expect people like myself, to present myself to them. I also realise that for our constituency... I’ve got to play things down to the common level, and that’s easy for me. Yeah, because that’s actually the level I prefer, to be quite honest... in spite of my years in business (C-17)

However, the same respondent maintained that presenting the right impression on any potential partner was critical (‘‘To do anything else is sheer death!’ [C-17]). In some respects smaller organisations who presented their activities

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26 Organisations wishing to achieve the Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) tax status – a necessity in competing for philanthropic support – must first exhibit a commitment towards alleviating poverty. As a result, community organisations who do not explicitly state this commitment and wish to obtain corporate support often find themselves rethinking their core constitutions/mission statements, and thus their direction and focus.
through a strong corporate image and who appealed to needs-based discourses were in a stronger position than larger departmentalised charities. In the latter group, each department or level contained a unique culture, language and approach to community work. According to one corporate sector manager, dealing with larger organisations like this was a ‘nightmare’:

_They can be a bit of a nightmare to deal with because, you know, you’ve got a state level that’s corporatised, you’ve got a regional level that’s semi-corporatised, you’ve got branch level that’s completely volunteers. You know, they all have very different ideas about how stuff gets run. And we deal with all of those levels. So that can be painful, but that’s a very important relationship for us due to the match (BF-9)_

Most corporate funders preferred to partner with larger corporatised charities that had departments capable of generating alternative narratives about their work from within a pro-corporate IDF. In this respect, it might be argued that corporations worked as disciplinary institutions through their capacity to regulate, reshape and redirect the way community sector organisations are embodied (Foucault, 1979). This pro-corporate embodiment is not only facilitated through the adoption of a corporatised brand, a specific focus in community engagement and a clear marketing strategy in non-profit organisations, but the “mixing-in” of corporate subjectivities and discourses within the community sector. In this respect, the increased interest in community-corporate partnerships by third sector bodies hold significant implications for the future of the Australian third sector.

Nonetheless, not all corporate funders were enthusiastic about the direction headed by some community sector groups. Research participants from law firms (BF-4 and BF-6) in particular were keen to maintain a strong commitment to locally-based and non-corporatised charities, despite the difficulties experienced in building closer relationships. One of the two went further by arguing that some larger charities were ‘too polished’ in their approach (BF-4). In another instance, the largest business interviewed in terms of annual revenue (which at the time was estimated at US$48 billion) acknowledged the different thinking and processes between the corporate and local community
sector contexts (CT-2). The Australian arm of this business provided examples of partnerships both with local organisations and those working at the national level. Knowing that financial support was going directly to community programs rather than being absorbed by the NGO structure was the rationale provided by some corporate managers in overlooking the perceived deficiencies of some local community organisations. The ability for “adding value” through provision of funding and bro bono support was one significant reason the following corporate trusts in the field of accounting remained committed to supporting projects at the local level:

*We go for the smaller ones because we can make a big difference and because we can help them with professional service* (CT-4)

7.3.5.3 Tensions between the Corporate and Community Discourse of Sustainability

The “sustainability” of community organisations also emerged as a theme during interviews. Interestingly each sector appeared to define these issues quite differently. While sustainability was framed on both sides in economic/financial terms, each saw the end result of sustainability in ways that varied dramatically. Corporate notions of sustainability and community capacity building rested on philanthropy and other forms of support being viewed as an *investment*, whereby the provision of money over a relatively short period of time would result in lasting effects to the wider community. This sentiment is clearly evident in following quote provided by a CSR manager of an Australian bank:

*I’ve always moved away from providing, um, going into relationship where there’s financial dependency as we are not a foundation... In my capacity and as the [names bank] we move away from engaging with partners who need core funding, because nothing that I, there’s always a “take out” for the corporate in any partnership, and my dollars, $50,000 or so that I might engage a partner with is not of the scale for them to be paying their bills with. So I have partnership parameters with what size, maturity, and type of partners we engage with and that’s where we can add maximum value to them. So if they’re looking for core funding ... I send them off to go talk to local government, go to talk to some of the private foundations, go...*
and get your central funding to pay for bills, your staff, for your computers and things in hand, and then come talk to me about how we can help take you to the next level (BF-5)

This text reveals the extent of ownership held by the specific corporate organisation over the parameters of potential partnerships. Fairclough’s analysis of linguistic styles is useful in this case, as it provides grounds to unpack the role of language in naturalising discourse (Fairclough, 2010). For instance, Fairclough notes the role of modality in emphasising the degree of commitment a speaker places in their assertions (Fairclough, 1992). In the above text, the speaker’s authority is emphasised (through repeated use of ‘I’ in referring to key organisational decisions) and the corporation’s strategic approach is positioned as common-place (‘there’s always a “take out” for the corporation in any partnership’ [BF-5]). This assumption about an expected takeout is used to provide an objective rationale for the subsequent parameters adopted to categorise, differentiate and evaluate. Hierarchical social relations are also emphasised within the above text. For instance, when community organisations seek core funding, the corporate manager assumes a degree of authority over them in redirecting where to go (‘I send them off…’ [BF-5]). The overall effect of these semiotic styles and modalities is to rationalise supporting only larger, financially sustainable organisations who have reached a certain level of ‘maturity’ in their operations over other “dependant” organisations. Within this discursive framework, organisational ‘need’ is represented as a significant liability to mutually beneficial relationships. Financial support is instead designated to reshaping an organisation by taking a partner ‘to the next level’.

Such provision of “seed grants” to Social Enterprises and other self-sustaining community sector organisations were of particular interest to corporations in the field of banking and investment (BF-5 and CT-3). This form of “seed grant” philanthropy appears congruent with a social investment discourse, and one that is responsible for an increased interest in corporations engaging in partnerships with Social Enterprises (Barraket, 2008). Presenting a sustainable balance sheet formed a precursor to obtaining corporate funding, as earlier
analysis revealed. Corporations in other fields were similarly concerned about the financial position of partnered organisations:

*We have to be comfortable that they have enough money to cover their operating expenses, and you’re not pouring money into a never ending, or ever deepening hole* (CT-6)

Throughout interviews, businesses commonly represented new cross-sector arrangements exist to *complement* rather than *replace* government funding.

In contrast, smaller community sector respondents considered financial sustainability differently. The capacity of third sector organisations to secure reliable and constant funding over the long-term has been a common and enduring issue in many liberal democracies (Bridge, Murtagh, & O’Neill, 2009; Brown, et al., 2000; Lyons, 2001; Spall & Zetlin, 2004). Moreover, tendencies by funding bodies to “invest” only on a short-term basis has commonly led to community disillusionment when project funding eventually dries up (Twelvetrees, 2008). These points were noted by a CEO of one volunteer-based organisation that was particularly successful in garnering corporate support. When asked why his organisation only committed to long-term partnerships, the issue of funding sustainability was raised:

*Always long term; always long-term. And can I say... that’s part of my objection to a lot of the funding that goes around. That’s part of my objection... It’s generally short term! And I can tell you mate, I can give you a demonstration, of organisations right here, right here in the Campbelltown area who take short-term funding, and it’s going to last six months, twelve months, and they get communities involved in these programs. And when six months off the program is up, what happens do you think? No more! Why do that to our communities!? Set them up... let them fall. I’m not interested in that, I’m not interested in that stuff* (C-17)

Such frustration and disappointment were often expressed by some within the community sector at the tendency of funders (both corporate and government) to only support activities over the short-term. While the CEO of the above community organisation was able to exhibit sustainability to corporations by integrating his organisation’s activities to the school culture and school curriculum within the involved communities (C-17), many others found it to be...
a very difficult process. One manager of a neighbourhood centre was even more critical of this form of funding model, as the following interaction exhibits:

\[C-15\] At the moment what happens with all the funding is you have to show an “exit strategy”. And the program has to be sustainable. They’re looking at short in and out, and we see...

Int: So by “sustainable” [funders] mean they give you money, but once they’re out the project continues on?

C-15: Yes! Yes! They live in “la la land”!

According to the above respondent, the fantasy of “seed grant” sustainability contradicts the nature and structure of grass-roots activities. External funders were commonly represented as being either oblivious or disinterested with the reality of community work during interviews. As the above participant further explained, community work is often run by volunteers who reside in the very same marginalised community that grass-roots organisations operate (C-15). The increasing expectations that activities be constantly resourced and staffed beyond the funding period ignored these realities:

\[C-15\] You still need a professional worker to support the volunteers, because you’re training new volunteers all the time. When you build enough people up as community leaders, they get enough confidence then to go out and get a job. Get paid for what they’ve been doing for nothing for you. So the whole system is ongoing...

Int: Which means they might leave the community?

\[C-15\]: [whispers] And if they’ve got any sense they would in most cases, because their future is out there in the bigger wider community. [...] People think that this pool of volunteers, all these people sitting around doing nothing are going to somehow just keep everything sustainable, and that we’re not going to need paid workers anymore. But when you’ve got child protection legislation, when you’ve got OH and S legislation, you’ve got privacy legislation, you’ve got complaints handling legislation, you’ve got all of those things that... volunteers don’t know about those things, don’t even think about those things, let along research them and find exactly out what it means in whatever endeavor they’re trying to
do. So unless you’ve got some organisation out there with some dollars behind it they can’t... and normal volunteers aren’t going to think of that.

It is due to the above reasons that community disenchantment (tied in, at times with perceived feelings of neglect) and wariness to future short-term funding opportunities, was often cited as a negative outcome of such approaches to funding.

7.3.5.4 Tensions between Competing Definitions of Accountability and Success

Accountability measures and definitions of “success” proved to be cause of considerable tension between corporate and community sector research participants. These tensions marked considerable similarity to issues previously outlined within Community-State relations. However, expectations on reporting and monitoring within relationships varied among corporate respondents. For instance, respondents from the two companies that adopted an “ethical” CSR approach were relatively unconcerned with measurement and accountability. While the retail company preferred simple ‘success stories’ (BF-8) over empirical analysis, the ethical investment company held no expectations on recipient organisations:

\[ \text{No, we’re just trying to give them a few bob at the end of each financial year (BF-1)} \]

In contrast, other corporate respondents saw accountability as essential to good cross-sector relationships. Corporate managers with the highest expectations on accountability were predominantly from foundations (who were generally invested in outcomes and impact assessment) and businesses in the field of banking or finance:

\[ \text{If you’re going to play in the community space you need to take accountability for your action (BF-5)} \]

\[ \text{I like to know where the money’s going (CT-4)} \]

\[ \text{They have to ensure that where they’re putting the money it’s getting optimum outcomes. We don’t want to put our money into a community organisation where they’re not going to do} \]
The third statement above exemplifies the role of accountability in being a tool used in order to distinguish *between* community projects, rather than just an analysis of the project itself. Such evaluations were considered necessary, given what many corporate representatives saw as clear deficiencies in measurement and reporting standards throughout the community sector. Despite these criticisms, representatives from regional firms (i.e. those corporations that partnered with community groups located within their local vicinity) and law firms tended to concede that voluntary groups faced unique difficulties in applying rigorous internal monitoring and reporting processes:

*I think we engage with a lot of organisations that don’t necessarily have the level of accountability that we do or the level of accountability that a peak not-for-profit has. We deal with small incorporated bodies. They are accountable to their members; so there’s always a level of accountability. But the way that people manage their not-for-profit activities... I’ve seen a broad spectrum from dysfunctional committees of management to the most professional and accountable boards of management. I’ve seen the full spectrum. But nevertheless, it’s a matter for consideration, but it’s one matter in a broader decision-making process* (BF-4)

Corporate preferences for accountability tended to be built around mutually agreed upon key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs served to monitor the progress of community projects which may be achieved through measurement of inputs, outputs, outcomes or wider social impact. In this way, the progression of corporate community engagement from a *philanthropic* to a *strategic* approach has seen corporations imposing equivalent modes of governance on NGOs as their government counterparts (Gainer, 2010). Although some of these measurement tools replicate government expectations in both scope and detail, no one set approach was applied across the board. In further contrast to the cumbersome measurement tools located in state-community sector relationships, one participant preferred to represent his institution’s expectations as more fluid and responsive to the specific
organisation in question. This representation was also reflected in the efficient linguistic style used in describing his relationship development process:

It’s obviously about seeking out prospects, then evaluating them, bringing them in, determining if you can work together, showing your hand ‘this is what we will do – what will you do?’ Yes, we’ll hold you accountable to these things, these are our KPIs, you’ll need to provide us with this… do we move forward? We sign an agreement together, and then we just go and do it. (BF-2)

As revealed in the above example, many corporate funders approached partnership development similarly to other business ventures. Internal measurement within this framework was often described as straightforward and objective, utilising a range of different “metrics”. These forms ranged from the provision of basic “financials” (i.e. in ensuring money is spent as originally specified) to impact assessment (examining the wider social changes resulting in the funded activity). Again, similar to the argument posed by Ebrahim and Rangan (2010), funding organisations tended to apply accountability tools that “matched” the specific nature of the activity being carried out and the structural capacity of the community sector organisation in question.

When asked about accountability measures, the community organisation that was entirely reliant upon funding from the corporate sector (C-17) pointed to a stark difference between the way reporting was received by state and corporate funders. While agreeing with the widespread perception within the community sector that reports are seldom read by government departments, in contrast, corporate representatives were described as very eager to see evidence of the social impact of their funding. The use of “evidence-based” measurement tools in analysing success was positioned as an effective way of maintaining and eliciting further corporate support:

I’m certainly happy with the approach that we do take delivering outcomes, definitive outcomes to our funders across a range of programs. For example the music program with these behaviourally challenged kids… and this is the genius of the program, this is the uniqueness of the program; the music therapists themselves scientifically evaluate these children.
They evaluate under clinical conditions. The program is run under clinical conditions, so they have a way of being able to evaluate the progress of these children involved in the music program. And I mean the outcomes are amazing mate! But you’ve also got teachers who accompany these kids and know these kids well on a day-to-day basis and even their amazed with how musical notation can actually effect the cognitive skills and social skills of children who quite frankly their severely challenged. But we’ve had a twelve month evaluation of these children and I’ve just recently received that evaluation and there have been some marked improvements. So for people who provide the funding, when they see the report on where these kids were this time last year to where they are today, they say to me “mate here’s some more funding”. That’s actually happened (C-17)

It is useful to note the above text interweaves various discursive features that are highly valued from the corporate side. For instance, the activities are described more through the framework of outcomes rather than process, the activity is presented to address a clearly defined need, evaluation is conducted in clinical conditions, and clear measurable outcomes are presented regularly to corporate funders. This description of accountability was entirely unique during community sector interviews.

In contrast, the process of measuring success was met with much greater complexity during interviews with participants from a larger Indigenous rights-based organisation. Within this interview, the very notion of measuring behavioural change and impact of their counselling activities raised considerable political and ethical dilemmas:

And so it’s really difficult to kind of know what success is, and how do you measure that? Because really we work with people and we are talking about people’s lives. And if I was to say... this is successful... well who am I to judge? And be God and determine what you need to do to be successful. It would be like me coming into your family and saying I’m going to measure success in your family. I mean you’d be highly offended by that. So it’s difficult, it’s really difficult (C-11b)
When asked how the organisation was expected to judge success of the client group, the problems associated with quantifying ‘levels of functioning’ was raised:

*Levels of functioning are really socially constructed and... often that construction has come from a dominant beurocentric discourse... who am I to go in say what an appropriate level of functioning is?* (C-11b)

The strong response exhibited during this interview to the prospect of monitoring and evaluating their activities, related to the history of racial paternalism experienced by their client group. Paternalistic ideologies continue to be acted out upon Indigenous cultural groups in the form of realist neo-colonial research (Tuhiwai Smith, 2005). This critique also positions accountability as a *social construct*, where meaning is informed by a plethora of social, political and economic discourses. As a result of the multiple interpretations and assumptions, the term accountability is often met with confusion (Jordan & Tuijl, 2006). As noted previously, a significant tension between the community sector and the state centred on competing conceptions of accountability. A similar problem was also experienced within the field of community-corporate relationships.

Despite considerable interest in third sector accountability in recent years, disparity existed between funders’ *desired* level of reporting and the *actual* reporting presented by third sector organisations involved in cross-sector partnerships. This gulf was depicted as a major source of frustration to corporate funders. However, some corporate sector participants acknowledged that reporting tended to add a layer of unwanted bureaucracy within the community organisation. The challenge posed in expecting outcomes assessment from resource poor and informal volunteer organisations was often noted. However, it was argued that understanding of community sector capacity needed to be balanced with fiduciary responsibilities business has to upper management and shareholders (CT-6). According to one corporate representative, the problem with accountability was that it ‘is only as good as the people involved in the organisation’ (CT-5):
We have a pretty significant reporting process that ensures they're being accountable. But you know, accountability is sometimes difficult for volunteer organisations. You know, you’ve got well meaning, very well meaning people, in senior positions on boards and executive communities who may not be at qualified in business management and service delivery, accounting, financial management, but they have a passion for the charity and they've just found themselves in a senior role (CT-5)

One common characteristic of accountability within partnerships is its role in ensuring a degree of funder oversight, indicating that relationships were managed through a top-down structure. A common response by corporate participants to being asked why accountability was deemed important revealed its use as a regulatory technique:

*Ensuring that they deliver on the agreed programs and the KPIs* (CT-6)

*I think that sector is getting more sophisticated and they are understanding the importance of governance and of reporting and certainly I’ve seen a move over the last five years to clearer [reporting]* (BF-4)

While many corporate sector respondents (50%) tended to depict the “problem” of accountability as attributable to a lack of organisational capacity and expertise, others noted the different priorities between the two sectors. For instance, one manager within a corporate trust acknowledged that their interest in KPI measurement was sometimes far removed from the very immediate processes and objectives of local sector organisations:

*I don’t think that necessarily corporates have the better way because community organisations’ aims and outcomes are often very different to what a corporate’s would be. So peddling back to my original comments about having contracts and key performance indicators; that’s all fine, and they’re important things to have if you’re looking at accountability, but if you’re looking at the day to day reality of dealing with homeless people... you know, is a key performance indicator having have five people off the streets? Does it matter if it’s five or if it’s ten? The fact that you’ve taken one or who is a pretty good start* (CT-2)
Statements like the one above support the perception that some corporate funders were more understanding of the realities facing local organisations than government departments. According to CT-2, having a close relationship to the community organisation enabled them as a funder to better understand the impact of the community activity being performed. However, one representative from a law firm (BF-6) that had traditionally expected only minimal internal measurement of partner community organisations, reflected on some wider background changes at play. The likely impact of these contextual shifts related specifically to how relationships and project outcomes are monitored and assessed:

*In all the seminars that you go through, it’s all starting to be about “measurement”, and whether that’s partly come... I think there is a number of factors... I think because of the GFC; because of the mission creep thing, it’s like us the pro-bono firms are all reaching the... its great you are all reaching a goal, but there’s not an infinite [sic] resource, the charities are all looking at funds not growing so what do you do? And I guess then that you all come back to what we’re starting to do here which is well if when we’re not going to find more money are their programs working? Can they be refined? If we want to bring on something new, it means reconfiguring what we are already doing... so I don’t think it’s a bad thing, I’m just hoping that those bottom three were the right ones* (BF-6)

The above text is unique in that it links an increasing interest on measurement as being attributable to external factors. By semantically positioning these wider push factors as independent of the corporate funder (such as ‘the GFC [...] the mission creep thing’, the finite nature of philanthropic funds and influence of other advocates within the legal profession), the rationale for increased expectations is presented through a somewhat passive linguistic style (Fairclough, 2003). Interestingly, the global financial crisis (GFC) was viewed here as an abstract causal factor interpreted only through its impact on the capacity of firms to finance partnerships. This interpretation is far from being the only possible account of such an event. As noted earlier, corporate and community participants commonly positioned the GFC as an event that exhibited the “failings” of the corporate sector, thus providing the moral imperative to “give back” to the community. The point in this example is not so
much in the content itself, but in how events are represented and given meaning in the applied context. Moreover, a strategic response is defined through this representation (looking closer at whether existing programs are working), and an evaluative judgment is made. Examining the modality (Fairclough, 2003) of this judgment shows a certain level of uncertainty is apparent; albeit with a tone of resigned optimism.

It might be argued that this response is built upon an instrumental rationality as it is geared toward developing a practical solution to a perceived problem, rather than critically analysing potential inequities within the structure itself (Habermas, 1990). As the above text reveals, even passive decisions are imposed on the community sector, rather than reached through consensus on both sides of a relationship. Interpreting the text in this way exhibits a clear component of how power is naturalised within community-corporate relationships (Fairclough, Pardoe, & Szersynski, 2010). One interesting finding here is in the absence of mutual benefit discourse, which now permeates much of the Australian philanthropic sector (as exhibited through manuals and other industry documents).

In contrast to evaluation and measurement of third sector activities, some corporations alternatively measured success in accordance with strategic business objectives. Regarding mutually beneficial or commercial partnerships, success was defined specifically through benefits that accrued to the corporation. These alternative objectives were assessed by the corporation, rather than the non-profit recipient:

> Obviously looking at impact from our commercial arrangements, we’re looking for brand awareness, we’re looking for reputation, we’re looking for that association (BF-4)

Accountability within this context served to build or maintain corporate reputation. Furthermore, mutual benefit within this context was assessed according to a level of comfort within this arrangement and a “fit” with the values of the business:
Our reputation is everything. You spend too long working on a reputation to lose it over little things. So that why we look at things like when we enter into a contract with our providers we need to know that they are comfortable, they are a fit with [our] values (BF-7)

As this section has revealed, interpretations of accountability within community-corporate relationships are imbued with complexity. For instance, many corporate respondents expressed an interest in seeing various improvements in third sector accountability systems. However, awareness was also apparent in some responses of the limitations and drawbacks in implementing such changes. The specific indicators or success was also diverse. These indicators varied considerably, including:

- Basic financial compliance (inputs).
- Assessment of client numbers within a program (outputs).
- The ability to meet KPIs (performance milestones).
- An analysis of social impact (or social outcomes).
- An assessment or the ability to maintain staff, and strengthen public image, reputation and overall profitability (or business outcomes).

While some corporate funders were indeed more cognisant of community sector processes, there is a potential that a new principal-agent relationship can emerge through the infusion of new management systems.

Hudson (2009) noted that Australian academic literature has strongly criticised ‘quality management systems’ as there is a tendency to form monitoring structures around the wishes of donors (government regulators), with little evidence of improved benefits to service users or the wider community. Whether this same critique may be applicable to community-corporate relationships remains to be seen. However, Brett (1993, p. 278) noted that accountability is only possible within a principle-agent relationship when there exists a shared understanding ‘of what constitutes an adequate performance, and can value and measure it accurately at an acceptable cost’. In cases where
the criterion for organisational success is based on broad intangible goals, systems designed to monitor social impact can be both onerous and counterproductive (Roffey, 2006). Moreover, competing definitions of program “success” (which would specifically be present between funders and community sector organisations that operate on democratic, social justice, anti-colonial and feminist philosophies) would likely present another stumbling block to the implementation of meaningful accountability systems.

7.3.6 An Emerging Discourse of Corporate Strategy in Australian CSR

An analysis of the tensions experienced by both community and corporate sector participants in the second phase of research reveals the opposing motivations, cultures, processes and language systems between the two sectors. These points of difference have resulted in a situation whereby some well-positioned community sector organisations are able to attract and maintain much greater levels of corporate support, whereas others struggle to be noticed altogether. To some degree, the discourse of institutionalisation (Keevers, et al., 2008; O'Shea, 2007) has been one factor leading some organisations to be chosen over others, although it is still only one factor among many. Indeed, overt displays of professionalisation within some segments of the community sector were received disparagingly among nearly half of those corporate representatives interviewed. According to other corporate sector participants, well branded, publically recognisable, accountable, engaging and responsive non-profits were highly valued. A picture thus emerges of community-corporate engagement in a state of flux. The meshing of various competing corporate motivators such as philanthropy (doing good), an interest in presenting a positive social image (enhancing reputation) and opting for partnerships that bind corporate support to economic and other expedient outcomes has resulted in the construction of an entirely new hybrid discourse. By ‘hybridisation’, Fairclough (1992, 2003) refers to the blurring of discursive boundaries which concurrently result in the mixing of old practices and institutional forms with the new. Arising from a hybridisation of old forms of philanthropy, CSR and business collaborations, is the permeation of strategic styles, genres and discourses within the field of community corporate engagement. The outcome of
this shift has been the adoption of a new hegemonic order of discourse (Fairclough, 2003) influencing:

- The values placed on community-corporate engagement.
- The way key actors are categorised, positioned and represented within emerging social and linguistic structures.
- How the genre of relationships are pursued (i.e. as informal networks among equals, top-down contractual collaborations, or else somewhere in between).

Although participants had reflected on the emerging trends primarily through their immediate and localised settings, the hybridisation of CSR and community-corporate engagement is indicative of a wider neo-liberal context through which modern corporations operate. Within this context, old discourses surrounding ethical CSR and instrumental CSR are assimilated to meet changing needs of the corporation within a shifting social, political and economic environment. For instance, public pressure after the GFC has led to an increased expectation on corporations to present themselves as responsible citizens by "giving back" to the community. However, the funding constraints have concurrently led to an increased interest in how "being ethical" might translate into improved economic performance. Interestingly, the broad support for the Australian liberal welfare state has enabled corporate support to be positioned as complementary to government funding\(^\text{27}\), and as such, there is minimal obligation on corporations to support the broad scope of community sector activities. In contrast, corporate funders often positioned their community engagement endeavours to align with their own market niche. In this way, fulfilling the needs and wishes of corporate stakeholders (i.e. customers and employees) may in the process be excluding various non-marketable and peripheral social causes from being funded (Edwards & Onyx, 2003). Of those organisations that were successful, an interest in measuring and

\(^{27}\)When asked, many corporate funders maintained that various tiers of government had a clear responsibility to fund the community services sector. This finding represents a significant difference to studies in the United States where philanthropists saw only a minimal role for government in society (Ostrower, 1995).
assessing social impact results in a preference for activities that span a larger geographical area and institutions with highly developed accountability systems in place. As an outcome of these processes, smaller locally-based organisations working on philosophies of social justice were generally incapable of competing within such a competitive corporate funding environment. The inequitable distribution of funding arising through the naturalisation of a strategic ideologically discursive formation (IDF) was clearly located throughout the second exploratory phase of research.
7.4 Results from Phase Three: Search Conference

7.4.1 Introduction: Analysis of Search Conference Breakout Groups

A number of inequities have been highlighted in response to the development of a hybrid strategic discourse. It is clear that small organisations stand to lose out on many opportunities posed by these new forms of corporate social responsibility. Still, some local groups have managed to thrive within this context, and by outlining one case in particular the power of an emerging strategic IDF may be exemplified. According to the CEO of one organisation that has flourished within the Australian competitive corporate funding environment, it did so only after a long-running process of corporatisation. Through this process, extensive changes were made to the organisation’s name, board, mission, activities, language, accountability systems and overall “brand”. In effect, this organisation had transformed its image from an informal group of volunteers working within a predominantly culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community, to a mainstream and highly professional local charitable foundation. When asked about the reasons for pursuing such drastic change, the manager instead pointed to the “reality” of corporate philanthropy within which it was purported that ‘whoever holds the gold makes the rules’ (C-17). To this participant these wider processes are immovable and inevitable, and to thrive within this environment his organisations needed to adapt. In this way, strategic CSR is presented and reaffirmed as natural and objective.

The variations of corporate CSR programs and degrees to which a strategic discourse has been employed would alternatively indicate that these trends were not as fixed as might first be assumed. Indeed, the state of community-corporate relationships appears to be one typified by an ever-shifting struggle between alternative community, institutional, corporate and philanthropic IDF. As such, the capacity of individuals and collectives to evince change upon the wider system ought not to be ruled out. It is from this standpoint that the third phase of research was pursued. Within this phase, a number of corporate and community sector participants convened through a search conference to identify “best practice” in community-corporate engagement, and explore a
number of potential alternatives in cases where clear inequities were found to exist. Analysis of various breakout groups reveals both the complexities involved in sparking democratic dialogue within this space and the micro inter-textual strategies employed to assert, maintain and challenge competing IDF within the field of community-corporate engagement.

7.4.2 Session 1: Search Conference Scenarios

This section outlines various critical themes raised in the first session of the search conference. While in many ways each breakout group was unique in the style and content of discussion (each were provided with unique scenarios to consider), where possible, common points of analysis are presented that were located across multiple breakout groups. The sections that are presented below consist of key points of commonality, divergence and significance that arose through the first round of dialogues between community and corporate participants.

7.4.2.1 Strategic Discourse in Action

Within the first session, a strategic and instrumental discourse presented a powerful framework that delineated a considerable body of discussion. This IDF was strongly present in breakout groups one and three, and influenced part of the dialogue in breakout group two. In the case of the first breakout group, one representative from an Australian Bank set the tone of discussion early. As the first speaker this participant put a suggestion forward for the hypothetical women’s referral service to ‘think about the corporate sector’, thus casting discussion immediately to align with a strategic standpoint. Anecdotes were subsequently provided of small organisations that had, in her experience as a manager of a CSR unit, improperly sought funding from businesses of the ‘wrong type or size’ (S1.B1 – 1). When asked by the group facilitator to elaborate, the participant maintained that a ‘good match’ would require finding and approaching a business that had aligning interests. A retail firm was nominated as a probable fit due to women constituting the majority of their customer base.
A corporate strategic discourse was drawn upon throughout the majority of the first breakout group to rationalise the selection of some community sector organisations for corporate partnerships over others. Concepts such as “return on investment”, “branding”, “financial sustainability” and “organisational strength” were employed to differentiate and evaluate between community organisations. The rather lengthy monologue provided below draws upon a number of these themes to set out the “truth” of corporate funding:

S1.B1 – 1: The only truth is if corporates can’t talk about the work that they’re doing then generally they’re not very interested because they need to be able to justify why they put a dollar into this organisation and not a dollar into bush fire relief or something, which makes it really difficult for smaller organisations who might be unsexy or operated on the very hard end of disadvantage to actually pinch themselves as being an organisation that can provide that story. Which gets passed onto employees which I suppose justifies why that investment has been made in that organisation. I know that this does sound very blunt and self interested but that is the truth. You know, if it was my money I would spend it very differently. But it’s not my money and I have to be able to say that me funding that $5,000 for this organisation I need to be able to tell that story. Because if not then it’s purely just a donation and corporates aren’t... well in my view, my corporate isn’t just a philanthropic giver. Then there’s a role for the Government there that should be played. My feeling is that there is a lot of confusion over whether or not corporates should be giving core funding or whether or not corporate should be giving additional funding to organisations that already have their core funding and sustainability in place. And my personal view is I never engage with organisations that I feel are struggling and need funding to stay afloat because I’m irresponsibly keeping them afloat with funding that could dry up in six or 12 months and I’m not a funder. I don’t know who in the welfare sector is the right organisation delivering the best resources. So I will only support organisations who I know have got their core funding in place and are sustainable and that there is a value add.
Through a series of truth assertions, the above corporate representative laid the foundations for why the women’s welfare service would not meet the criteria for funding. The need for community sector stories to be marketable to corporate sector stakeholders (such as employees or customers) is cast as a failing of small community sector organisations. Furthermore, community organisations are represented in the text as oblivious to this failing (i.e. they need to “pinch themselves as an organisation that can provide that story”). Corporate giving is positioned to require instrumental justification that, in doing so, shuts out other moral concerns (Habermas, 1990). As such, corporate funding in this context is neither a form of philanthropy, nor should its intentions be viewed as altruistic.

While the above text articulates some components of ‘instrumental’ CSR discourse (Windsor, 2006), a unique form of morality is also present in rationalising strategic action. The prospect of a corporate funder keeping an organisation “afloat”, at least in the context of the prescribed scenario, is positioned as irresponsible. When asked to elaborate the corporate participant proceeded to differentiate between strong and weak organisations:

S1.B1 – 1:  

... Again I don’t have a lot of, a huge amount of money and most of [our partners] are very successful at getting their core funding from Government or other trusts who have got a lot of money and we then see that they’re sustainable. They’ve got strong leadership, we know what they’re doing, they’re specialists in their field. We can add more value to an organisation like that than falsely keeping alive very small organisations who we really have no idea whether what they’re doing is worthwhile, meaningful... I’m sure it is but...

Clearly there is a preference in this form of instrumental discourse to support only those organisations defined as institutionally strong. Strength within this context is exemplified through “strong leadership” (professionalised structures), “financial sustainability” (exemplified by a capacity to secure external grants) and the funder “knowing what they’re doing” (through
adequate report, monitoring and accountability procedures). These traits closely corresponds with the discourse of institutionalisation or new-managerialism (O’Shea, 2007), which has come to challenge the legitimacy of other discourses present within the community sector context (Darcy, 2002). More specifically, this text also alludes to organisational strength as being a natural phenomenon. Accordingly, any well meaning corporate intervention to support these weak organisations be would “falsely” (or unnaturally) keeping them “alive”. Organisational weakness is further correlated with legitimacy as the reference to effectiveness as the final sentence had alluded.

Although the corporate representative in breakout group three was much less firm than the abovementioned participant, a similar role was played in maintaining a strategic discourse throughout the discussion. The corporate sector participant was influential, particularly during the early stages of discussion, in asserting a similar instrumental discourse to that found in breakout group one. For instance, during one point early on when community sector participants began to critique the motives of strategic CSR, the sole corporate participant (S1.B3 – 6) was successful in guiding participants away from this critique. In its place, tentative efforts were made toward developing a CSR program firmly within a predefined framework of strategic corporate engagement\(^2\). In the face of continuing and building critique from community sector participants later in the discussion, the corporate representative sought to reposition debate around the scenario problem to the search for simple “technical” solutions. At this point, “a checklist” to help categorise and differentiate between applicant organisations was proposed. The benefits of doing so were based upon corporate discourse, emphasising ‘safety’, and risk and stakeholder management in aligning with generic social groups or issues:

\(^2\)The specific voices, linguistic styles used and dialogic effects of this participant’s involvement are unpacked further in section 7.4.2.4.
we choose to educate Mauris over educating disadvantaged youth in Campbelltown, how do we justify that to staff? So one of the criteria has to be around if you’re a big global... The reason we pick big organisations and cross because it’s safer.

**S1.B3 – 4:** It confirms what we already know!

**S1.B3 – 6:** Because you have to answer to your people. So if I go and help St George I’ve got people from Campbelltown and Liverpool going, that’s what about all the people in my area that I see are disadvantaged so it’s around it’s an interesting point and something that we’ve talked about with quite a few organisations is that some of you do actually need to come together and work. If there was a pool of five people in the organisations through the regions of Sydney that said we’re working with the homeless this week and there’s actually a program being done out of Hope Street I think that’s bringing in all the different organisations together. Corporates are falling over themselves to be involved with this because it’s covering enough a number of different areas but it’s the same issue. So if St George got together....

As is evidenced from the brief retort by S1.B3 – 4, the level of acceptance of strategic discourse was far lower in the third breakout group. The presence of critical dialogue in this latter group was largely attributable to a single community sector participant (S1.B3 – 4) who actively challenged the pervasive strategic discourse.

Although community sector discourses and dissident voices were present within each of the three breakout group discussions (to varying degrees), impediments to these alternative frameworks were not entirely a result of the activism of corporate participants. In contrast, some community sector participants actively drew upon a strategic IDF, and in some cases intergroup dynamics reveals its more subconscious role in steering discussion.
7.4.2.2 Questions over Size and Legitimacy – The Adoption of Strategic Discourse by Community Sector Participants

The embedding of strategic discourse within the first group was not achieved coercively, but rather through consent of the wider participant group. For example, after the tone was set by the corporate representative in the first breakout group, one of the three corporate liaison officers took a ‘step back’ by raising doubt about the legitimacy of the women’s referral service more generally. To achieve this point, an association was formed between the capacity to acquire government funding and organisational effectiveness:

S1.B1 – 2:  How important is the service if they’re going to get further cuts in funding? Will they be able to survive? And I suppose what you really need to ascertain is how important is this service.

In another case, attempts by the facilitator to reframe the narrative towards the limitations experienced by community sector organisations were met with additional self-critique by a community sector participant.

Facilitator:  The reasons for cut backs are not usually because of mismanagement rather there because of the change in the way the funding is structured. So that people are being funded you know on a per-occasions-of-service basis or something like that. Or they’re being funded for a very narrowly specified service, where what they do is actually broader and so they’re often...

S1.B1 – 4:  ...for a long time, some of the smaller organisations have got away without having proper precedents.

This response, on one level, appeared to internalise the pro-institutional and pro-corporate discourse that formed an undercurrent to the breakout group discussion. However, on another level, it also served to position the above-mentioned manager’s own neighbourhood centre as different to other poorly managed organisations that have managed to ‘get away’ with their informal structures and processes. It might be hypothesised that this strategy was employed to win over other pro-institutional speakers within the breakout group, and approval from the corporate representative in particular.
In contrast to the first group, dynamics within the sector group was unique in it was assumed that participants were to ‘think like a banker’ despite most members in interviews having preferring a social justice IDF. In this case, the adoption of strategic discourse was only temporary.

S1.B2 – 3:  But here we need to try, for this exercise, to think like a bank manager, I think...
S1.B2 – 4:  But also...
S1.B2 – 7:  See I disagree with that because for me it’s about, ok, it goes back to what we were saying about we’re the bank now so we can now swap that language over and start looking at it, you know, buying in from positives.
S1.B2 – 8:  Yeah I think that this exercise is to try and inject, how you would engage with that problem given your background so...
S1.B2 – 1:  If we were, instead of community organisations, a bank what would we...
S1.B2 – 2:  Or from the perspective that you worked from yeah.

In the above text, B1.S2 – 7 (a manager of a community development organisation) explicitly challenged the suggestion to adopt corporate language in structuring a community-corporate funding program. This viewpoint was also taken up by other members of the breakout group, including the corporate participant.

Discussion within the third breakout group provided an insight into the confusion, dynamism and impediments that this predominantly community sector group faced in developing a “strategic” CSR approach for a major retail chain. In the early stage of this discussion, one member expressed some confusion over the meaning behind the word “strategic”:

*I’ve got this question, it says that your shareholders have requested a more strategic approach to be developed. What would that mean, what would that mean?* (S1.B3 – 4)

The concept of “strategic” CSR was unpacked in light of the hypothetical company moving from being family owned to shareholder driven. A distinction was made that a “filter has changed” (C1.B3 – 4) in the nature of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility.
Interestingly, other community sector respondents withdrew from this early attempt at communicative discussion, as according to the group leader, “I think we could get into you know running circles here and I mean the shareholders want to allocate a percentage of profit to community welfare” (S1.B3 - 2). The intertexuality between communicative argumentation (typified through discursive analysis and reflective discussion) and instrumental argumentation (which is focused upon solving the immediate problem within the preformatted social/linguistic structure) became a recurrent theme within this breakout group (Habermas, 1984). Voices that were critical of the assumed understanding of strategic corporate social responsibility were suppressed in favour of working from within the dominant corporate discourse.

Community sector group members proceeded to propose ways that the focus of giving can align with the hypothetical corporation’s values. Dynamic discussion ensued with many suggestions provided as to how the corporation could meet its strategic aims. Again, this discussion maintained a technical or instrumental undertone, with respondents focusing on what the staff and customer-oriented interests of the corporation might be and how to build a framework around these taken for granted aims.

### 7.4.2.3 Community Sector Resistance and Alternative Framing

Although the first breakout group was typified by a pervasive and powerful strategic discourse, minor points of resistance were located. The academic voice in the room (who notably had prior experience as a community developer) drew upon an entirely different discourse. In attempting to reframe the debate, it was proposed that management of the women’s referral service might alternatively wish to employ a “strengths-based” IDF to improve the community organisation’s “brand”:

S1.B1 – 3: *I also wonder if it would be worth trying to do some work around just adopting language which I’m not comfortable with, but the purpose is getting outcomes is to look at brand, and say I*
don’t want to be turning around the kind of deficits descriptions of young women here and to strengths descriptions and say ok we want our brand to be about second chance education for developing strong confident young women.[...]

This is the image that you could [portray], that is, what we’re trying to achieve, building on the strengths with these young women rather than deficits of what’s bad about their life. All the things that they have that could be good so, for example, they’re often smart but they might have dropped out of education so we’re looking for educational opportunities so that kind of stuff.

(S1.B1 – 3)

This reframing had some limited impact on early discussion. Emphasis on the positives of the women’s service’s client group met with immediate approval from the corporate participant. In her response though, the benefits in reframing the social issue positively served primarily to solve a common problem corporate funders often face. In doing so, the community “voice” was thus excluded from the following evaluation:

S1.B1 – 1: I think that’s a great point that’s almost looking at the most marketable way of positioning your services and your proposal which, you know, with dealing with corporates [it is what] they need because a lot of corporates get so depressed just hearing about the depth and complicity of social problem, which is they run away because it’s just too much for them. They just can’t cope and your point makes that very positive thing.

Of further interest in the above quote is the reinterpretation of a strengths approach of social work (Arnold, Walsh, Oldham, & Rapp, 2007; Scerra, 2011) through marketisation discourse (Spall & Zetlin, 2004). The assumed need to meet the approval of corporate funders is not only controversial but indicates that organisational branding is not the only factor facilitating cross-sector partnerships. The representation of the social problem and the framing of those “in need” must combine a positive narrative of the social problem with clear outline of how the organisation proposes to address the social issue.
Only one interaction, in this case between the academic participant and the corporate participant, presented a rather tongue-in-cheek challenge to this instrumental discourse. The lower level of commitment evident in the responding corporate voice was only momentary (‘I’m no expert in that field’), whereas by the close of the following interaction the corporate funder’s voice regained its earlier stance in reaffirming the moral argument against grassroots community “investment”:

S1.B1 – 3: *I wondered too whether in fact it’s not so much how to promote something but who should promote it might be a consideration, and in that regard you know if you were thinking about some of the things that [names corporate participant] here was saying that about ‘I’m not interested in people who are struggling’ and...*

S1.B1 – 1: *I didn’t say it that badly did I? [all participants laugh] I’m no expert in that field...*

S1.B1 – 3: *You know it’s like going to the vet and saying it’s the vet that’s not going to make it [laughs]...*

S1.B1 – 1: *You can call that irresponsible investment in the community.*

While only limited resistance was evident within the first breakout group, dynamics present within the second and third groups was defined by reframing of scenarios from a strategic to a social justice agenda. Interestingly, this higher level of communicative dialogue (typified by seemingly unimpeded debate, analysis of rationale behind arguments, examination of evidence and personal experience, and collective efforts to reach consensus on outcomes) found in the second group was originally facilitated by the corporate representative in the room. After group reflection on the complexities in “fitting” a giving structure around existing corporate values, the corporate voice in the room instead indicated that these values were open to alteration by participants within the group if it was their preference (the corporate participant asserted that ‘you can set them’ B1.S2 – 4). This participant proceeded to outline ways that her organisation combined global, national and local structures to community sector engagement and how they were able to support organisations in ways that went considerably against the grain of corporate giving. This response also...
acknowledged the perceived value of supporting local ‘reactive’ organisations as well as the larger nationally based ‘sustainable’ community sector causes (B1.S2 – 4).

After the corporate participant spoke at some length, a community sector participant proposed an approach whereby community organisations would no longer need to “spin” their activities to potential funders:

B1.S2 – 2: *Given that most of us are probably from the community sector background we could, and this is an ideal world, we could fund it positively rather than... yeah because you know we have the opportunity to do that. Because often we have to spin stuff to fit with what corporates want who [...] to hear about need; we want to talk about strengths and the good things that we’re doing. So let’s talk about it that way. So that said I can’t think what the response would be, so that’s not helpful. We could talk about strengthening communities. It is a government slogan but it’s not a bad one.*

A very similar argument was made by a representative of a peak community development organisation in the third breakout group as well:

S1.B3 – 4: *I think like for me if we’re looking at community people who suddenly are given the power and the opportunity to make a difference in a different way, in that this is, all bar one person, we’re are all from the community sector, and suddenly we’ve been placed in a position where we actually have the scope to make a difference. It’s asking of us what are the things, the principles the things that would drive us to make; so for me I’m sort of...*

Although the alternative discourse proposed in the above text sat in contrast to the ideas proposed by the corporate representative in the third breakout group, such ideas were received differently by members in the second group. The use of strengths discourse proposed by B1.S2 – 2 ‘made sense’ to the corporate participant in breakout group two (B1.S2 – 4) who saw alignment with local bank branches and an interest in strengthening communities. Another manager
of a community development organisation also proposed that instilling positive strengths-based language had wider cultural implications for the funding organisation:

B1.S2 – 7:  
As well as having that common language where both there’s a real... there’s a kind of mutual understanding as to what strength in the communities actually means. So you when you’re setting out your criteria and your guidelines to that criteria that programs manager’s job should be to be able to get this bank manager from I don’t know the local organ... whatever it is. And the everyday community organisation person is going to be running that funding submission. To have a mutual understanding as to what strength the community is actually means, rather than saying well ‘let’s just build the capacity of communities’, so what does that actually mean? It’s about leadership and once that bank manager understands what that strengthening community means then they’re more than likely able to get that understanding across to their own staff.

As the above text reveals, the “strengths-based” IDF proposed by community sector participants has the potential to be transferred and embedded within the corporate institutional setting.

Attention was also directed to addressing the tendency for corporate engagement to ignore the pressures facing community groups. For instance, requests at very short notice for community groups to hold corporate volunteering or “team building” days were located as a source of frustration (S1.B2 – 1). In response to this problem participants proceeded to “build-in” these concerns to the bank’s corporate giving framework. While community wishes were incorporated, it was also emphasised that the needs and expectations of the funder should also be included:

B1.S2 – 2:  Actually maybe one of the things we can include is a model MOU to cover some of those things. So if you’ve got a model MOU so there’s an expectation that the local bank manager in making this decision will develop an MOU with the community
organisation they’re going to fund and you don’t want to do that for little bits of money but for bigger bits of money. Including that you know these are the expectations from the bank’s side. These are the expectations from the community organisation.

This memorandum of understanding theme introduced in the above text was pursued through the subsequent discussion as a structure to help regulate the collaborative process and mediate conflict situations. It was argued that this structure would not only minimise conflict between the collaborating organisations, but would ensure a reciprocal form of accountability.

Various participants outlined additional preferences to ensure a system that was ‘fair’ and equitable by generally ‘giving people a chance’ (B1.S2 – 5). Interestingly, it became clear through the ensuing interactions that this broad framework, designed by community sector participants, was legitimised by use of moral justification, rather than objective rationalisation (Fairclough, 2003). In doing so, the proposed model of community engagement incorporated different levels of direct funding, in-kind pro bono support, along with opportunities for “impressive applicants” to gain access to corporate networks even if unsuccessful in obtaining funding (B1.S2 – 8), a feedback process for all applicants (B1.S2 – 1), and the implementation of an accountability and review process that was a ‘little more organic so it doesn’t become like a useless bureaucracy’ (B1.S2 – 5).

The corporate representative clearly endorsed this model, but the benefits of ethical foundations were not assessed just through a moral stance but also through a credible “business case”:

B1.S2 – 4: And it’s also from a completely corporate perspective really, really good PR because if you think about it, if you go for a job and you knew you were really good, you did really well and you never hear back from the interview; you just go ‘I’m not shopping there anymore I’m not. I’m going to tell everyone how crap that competing was’. But if you don’t get the job and they treat
with you respect and then you think you know it doesn’t matter that I didn’t get the job but I still like you as an organisation. So the same thing if you’ve got a number of people going for funding and you can only give it for one of them but you treat the others like oh well see you later we’ve got our people that we can help now. Then your reputation as corporation is with those people and everyone they speak to is down the gurgler so. So from completely from the business perspective that PR is really important to still have those relationships in the community.

The above text shows how ethical CSR need not rely solely upon moral justification, but can also be rationalised from a corporate perspective through the lens of reputation and public relations management. Framing ethical behaviour in this way showed how “soft” community sector discourses of care, trust and respect could be incorporated into a corporate brand and strategically commodified and marketed to the wider community. Although the commodification of discourse has been the subject of critical debate due to ill-ease in applying market principles in the community sector (Brown, et al., 2000), in this instance the marketing of ethical CSR was deemed to be a “win-win” among participants.

One neighbourhood centre manager within the group raised concerns about the prospect of corporate staff members ‘to take on an extra role’ of visiting community sites with ‘no extra resources or extra powers for them to do that’ (B1.S2 – 5). In reply, the corporate participant maintained that ‘we make it part of their role… we make it part of their job description’ (B1.S2 – 4). These seemingly ephemeral interactions are interesting as they revealed the extent to which the group opened up an intertextual space which incorporated a diversity of voices and subjectivities. Through the shift between community and corporate subjectivities, breakout group participants from the non-profit sector were able to gain a useful insight into the complexities of corporate funding. Concurrently, this experience provided an opportunity to implement applied strategies that served to rectify some principal areas of tension within the community sector context. Reading of the text reveals that the sole corporate
contributor in the group was afforded similar opportunities to better understand the tensions experienced by community sector managers.

7.4.2.4 The Role of Semiotic Resources within Session One – Changes in Styles, Voice and Genres

Various interactions during the first session exhibited the linguistic devices and interpersonal relations that guided breakout group discussions. For instance, analysis of a number of statements made by the corporate participant in the first breakout group was indicative of underlying power relations between corporate funders and community sector applicants. Beyond laying out an ideological and practical argument against supporting “unsexy” non-profit organisations, it is also useful to unpack how language had been employed by the corporate participant throughout these example texts. Indeed, the intricacies of language use go some way toward revealing how dominant IDF s are produced and naturalised (Fairclough, 2010). In the lengthy quotes examined in section 7.4.2.1, the initial statement formed the key declarative within the text (‘if corporates can’t talk about the work that they’re doing then generally they’re not very interested’) and the remaining text provides detailed rationalisation to support this argument (Fairclough, 2003). Repeated appeals to the objective ‘truth’ of these statements reveal how it is positioned to draw upon a higher level of legitimisation in comparison, for example, to statements presented as individual opinion and experience. This linguistic device served to entrench the argument as a series of objective facts, that were not just irrefutable, but positioned outside of debate (indeed, the speaker was later commended by the facilitator for ‘articulating something there’). Of further note is the process used by the speaker to separate her own opinion from this wider reality (‘if it was my money I would spend it very differently. But it’s not my money’), thus extricating any personal commitment to the statements made. Interestingly though, language used further on depicted a high level of personal commitment to these social practices (‘I never engage with organisations that I feel are struggling’). As can be seen, these “micro” components of text illustrate
how the “macro” discourses are recontextualised and embedded within the context of community-corporate engagement.

The power of the corporate representative in breakout group one to influence others was not only apparent within the individual statements, but also through various interpersonal dynamics. For instance, the dynamics between the three participants in the following text reveal how social positioning is produced and reaffirmed through language:

S1.B1 – 4:  If you don’t know what you’re asking for...
S1.B1 – 1:  If you don’t know what you’re asking for, that’s the first thing that a corporate would say is well what do you want from us? Be really clear and break it down so that we can think about it at a high level because we’ve got 15 other people like you waiting outside.
S1.B1 – 4:  Because I know there are a lot of NGO’s are paying market rent and that is the biggest portion of their budget and solve this price cutting...
S1.B1 – 2:  But the proposal I think we also need to make sure as Stephen talked about before was that we need to have a proper structure in place for this organisation and one of the reasons we don’t know this but the fact that they’re getting less funding they need to make sure they’ve got a proper structure in place. Because I know that what I’ve been involved with we wouldn’t lend money to an organisation if it had a post box number on it or this it used to have a proper constitution, particularly if they’re going to go to corporate.

A few conclusions may be drawn from the relatively brief dialogue presented above. At an interactional level, the two examples presenting both a corporate participant and a corporate liaison officer (S1.B1 – 1 and S1.B1 – 2) interrupting the voice of a manager of a local neighbourhood centre (S1.B1 – 4) is noteworthy. In the first instance, the response “cuts-in”, repeats and finishes off the sentence in order to emphasise a problem corporate sector funders experience in working through community sector applications. Corporate

29 This research participants name was changed.
sector needs and identities were thus elevated (‘be really clear and break it down so that we can think about it at a high level’) and the social and power relations between the funder and recipient are symbolised through the imagery of potential partners ‘waiting outside’ a room where decisions are made (S1.B1 – 1). The elevation of one voice over another and enactment of social relations through various strategic acts of dominance may be interpreted as a way of affirming corporate power while marginalising the community sector voice within the intertextual space (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992).

The second interruption in the above text goes further than the first by completely disregarding the statement made by the community sector participant. Of emphasis here is that community organisations should adopt a specific structure or organisational form in order to attain corporate support. Endeavours to push for improved “standards” in the form of higher levels of institutionalisation within the community sector has been a common source of tension (Keevers, et al., 2008; O’Shea, 2007). It is interesting that this argument was pursued by a representative from within that sector, rather than by an external voice. Moreover, it is also important to note that the controversial nature of institutionalisation is not raised by other participants, leaving the impression that these were merely a series of technical, uncontentious suggestions.

The juxtaposition between strategic and democratic discourses within third breakout group resulted in a number of resources being used by each side. While a strategic approach dominated language use in the first section of the breakout group, when one community sector representative made the following facetious statement, a glimpse of an emergent critical perspective emerged:

S1.B3 – 4: It’s the image... cause yeah, it’s the image
S1.B3 – 3: Yeah, what they want to portray.
S1.B3 – 4: Because of they claim to be very strong community based and you know...
S1.B3 – 2: It’s responsible...
S1.B3 – 1: [interrupts] It’s strategic business to provide services to children who then are potential customers!

[all laugh]

The styles and voices employed in the above text (Fairclough, 2010) led to the construction of strategic CSR as open for critique and amusement. For example, after touching upon corporate ‘claims’ about a positive social ‘image’, S1.B3-1 interrupted the discussion to represent corporate giving as self-serving and comical. This representation was achieved through asserting that it is in the interests of the corporation to offer services to children in the hope that they one day become profit-generating customers. Here, a facetious tone has been drawn upon as a resource so that the speaker is able to “cut through” general discussion and challenge the dominant discourse of self-interest (Fairclough, et al., 2010).

Immediately after this above interaction took place, a curious dynamic arose within the group resulting from the belated involvement of the sole corporate representative within the discussion. Despite being ‘outnumbered’ (S1.B3 – 3), noticeable linguistic changes developed whenever the corporate representative began speaking. This change was typified by adopting the procedure of “turn-taking” among participants immediately after the corporate sector manager spoke and the re-emergence of “givens” in the scope of dialogical discussion.

S1.B3 – 6: As well it’s staff within large organisations like us who dictate who you support. So it’s not the big wigs at [the corporation] saying “well we’re going to support kids this years, we’re going to support cats and dogs” and whatever. Big organisations like us, because we’re accountable to so many staff, run a survey every two years and identify the community issues and we have to go out and find organisations within that.

S1.B3 – 2: That’s a democratic process.
S1.B3 – 3: That’s interesting.

The first six lines above are infused with the language of certainty which served to constrain the capacity for critique. This argument was also mediated between the modality of instrumental language (like “dictate”, and “have to”)

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and a critical democratic and anti-authoritarian theme (“it’s not the big wigs”),
which served to recast strategic CSR by overlapping two previously conflicting
discourses. This alternative approach to CSR appealed directly to other
community sector participants in the group. The specific genre of interaction
also shifted, from debate and discussion to successive questions being posed to
the corporate participant. This participant would subsequently “inform” the
other participants of how corporate giving “is” carried out.

Discussion also took on a more thoughtful, reserved (and near inhibited) tone.
The change in tone may well have been, at least in part, attributable to the
realisation within the group that not all participants were community
organisation managers, a realisation further entrenched by alternative semiotic
structures (or languages) being employed. It is interesting to note that the
instrumental orientation “won out” again within the text whereby participants
endeavoured to understand the existing framework laid out by the corporate
participant and devise a CSR program to “fit” within these boundaries.

According to this participant, an expectation to meet the constantly changing
‘whims’ of various interests groups within the hypothetical corporation (staff,
management, shareholders, etc...) were an impediment to what was termed
‘sustainable giving’. This theme was immediately taken up by other community
sector participants. A reenergised and critical alternative ideologically
discursive framework (IDF) was adopted to recast the “shareholder” approach
to CSR:

S1.B3 – 3: Remember, as a shareholder, my dividends is going to be reduced for any profit that is given ...
S1.B3 – 4: But if you set up a fabulous trust that was a perpetual trust then you would feel so good about giving because it would be self-sustaining. It would take one point, no point something percent of the profits and you set up a trust. Right, that trust only gives out what...
S1.B3 – 3: Yeah its interest usually what is interest....
S1.B3 – 4: Yeah, yeah that means its self perpetuating but...
S1.B3 – 3: ...Australia until they changed the tax laws around that it's not great.
S1.B3 – 4: But then maybe shareholders feel great because this trust has capacity then to do something quite good for a long time. I don’t know.

The modality of the sole “agitator” voice (S1.B3 – 4) within the room exhibited a higher degree of commitment to the degree where an IDF was positioned as a liberating alternative to the standard instrumental approach to philanthropy/CSR (and clearly the perspective of the corporate sector participant). In the following interaction, a previously silent community sector representative began to join in on the critique:

S1.B3 – 4: I think like for me if we’re looking at community people who suddenly are given the power and the opportunity to make a difference in a different way, in that this is, all bar one person, we’re are all from the community sector, and suddenly we’ve been placed in a position where we actually have the scope to make a difference. It’s asking of us what are the things, the principles the things that would drive us to make; so for me I’m sort of...

S1.B3 – 3: You see, I get a little bit pissed off with companies that use the words corporate social responsibility when it’s actually releasing their staff to go out one day a year all for staff giving...

S1.B3 – 4: Yeah that’s right...
S1.B3 – 3: ...because to me that’s not true corporate social responsibility. Because that take everything about how you ... You know, what [corporate name withheld] was talking about. You know it should be corporate philanthropy almost if they’re giving in some way. Giving staff that could be very expensive for one day but it’s actually the staff that’s doing the giving. So that’s why there’s that multi level focus need and I actually get really angry with companies that trade off on that. I really loved that it was do a matching, you know...

The emergence of emotion during the discussion (“I get a little pissed off” and “I get really angry”) to emphasise the perceived social injustice is significant as it laid the groundwork for others to critique the assumptions of corporate social responsibility. As critical discussion continued it was argued that the problem
was, not the grass-roots organisations themselves, but the inability to effectively communicate the “reality” of community development work on the ground to corporate funders (S1.B3 – 5). The ability for larger institutionalised NGOs to “get away with” overly exaggerated submissions was highlighted while community organisations were further differentiated as being “honest” by comparison. This broad assumption that large NGOs “cheat” in funding submissions was framed as an even greater example of injustice.

Considerable frustration was expressed at the assumption that partnering with these larger organisations was without risk to a potential funder. The remaining group discussion centred on collective efforts to incorporate the needs and wishes of local community sector participants within a framework that also sought to manage risk. For instance, both existing and “innovative” projects were deemed acceptable to include within the proposed corporate framework, with funding ranging from small grants to large pools of core funding. It was also suggested that projects should be reassessed after two years of receiving original funding (one year, in contrast, was deemed too short a timeframe). Group dynamics during this final stage was highly dynamic with all participants, even the occasionally dissenting corporate voice, providing suggestions on a proposed ethical “strategic” framework.

The social interaction evident within the process of developing a CSR strategy for a retail chain within the third breakout group provided fascinating insight into the power structures, subject positions and strategies present when competing discourses and IDs are present. Perhaps of greatest interest in the above analysis was the clear tension present between the instrumental ideology of “strategic” CSR and communicative rationality emerging through an alternative critical ideology built on social justice principles. While, as in previous breakout groups, only one corporate representative was present within the discussion, her considerable influence over other group members (observed through the changes in styles, tone and linguistic frames) reveals the significant power corporate “common sense” assumptions held over other participants within different sectors. However, the struggles between styles and
voices within the ensuing discussion revealed that participants were able to enter into this inter-discursive space (in some occasions) to challenge, reject or assimilate corporate discourses.

### 7.4.2.5 Summary of Session One

The first session provided a fascinating glimpse into three very different breakout group discussions. For instance, the overall impact of an increasingly embedded corporate discourse on the first breakout group discussion was profound. Although interviews depicted considerable diversity in the ways large corporations structured their community engagement, the constraints presented by the sole corporate participant in the group provided a discursive framework that set up limits on opportunities available to local non-corporatised community organisations. In response participants endeavoured to locate practical strategies that would enable the women’s refuge centre to access wider resources. These strategies assumed that, if the women’s refuge wished to maintain its culture and form as an “unsexy” grass-roots organisation, then financial support from a major corporation would remain off-limits.

Analysis of the second breakout group revealed a very different form of mediation between conflicting discourses. Participants were presented with a scenario that might have been easily led by pre-existing ideological assumptions, but instead a situation arose where alternative subjective experiences, discourses and practices were openly discussed. Although the group began by “thinking like a corporate”, after some persuasion a more communicative model of argumentation arose. These processes that enabled discursive change to take place corresponded with Fairclough’s (1992, p. 201) concept of **democratization**, which is defined as ‘the removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people’. This process required previously marginalised discourses to be on equal footing with hegemonic discourses, which was further facilitated by eradication of existing power markers and positions of authority. For this reason, the role of the corporate respondent in also adopting the same open
style of engagement as other community participants was significant in
providing the opportunity for an idealised IDF to take form.

The third breakout group alternative provided insight into the potential for
critical dialogue to emerge in examining a scenario that was much more
conducive to instrumental discourse. On a macro Discursive level, this breakout
group depicted a state of antagonism between two seemingly discordant
ideologically-discursive frameworks (IDFs). It was clear that the capacity of the
original agitator within the group (S1.B3 – 4) to de-naturalise, challenge and
reframe an entrenched IDF required considerable personal investment and
commitment. However, implementing and naturalising an alternative IDF was
further reliant upon the willingness of wider group participants to locate and
define inadequacies within hegemonic discourses and to reflect upon how
oppressive structures were operationalised in their everyday lives. This
combined process of denaturalising ideology while locating its discursive
context proved effective in facilitating democratic dialogue (Habermas, 1987,
1990).
7.4.3 Session 2: Search Conference Debates

Similarly to the presentation of session one analysis, the following section is divided into overarching themes and key points of contention. During this second session of breakout groups, participants were asked to debate rather than respond to a unique contentious statement. It is partly due to this alternative genre of discussion that a greater variation in viewpoints was noted.

7.4.3.1 Strategic Discourse and the “Business” of Community Development

Endeavours to reaffirm a strategic IDF within session two were once again apparent in the first breakout group. In similarity to the first breakout group from session one, the participant representing an Australian bank reattempted to lay the parameters of discussion early. During session two, once the facilitator had read out the debate statement and unpacked its rationale, a point this participant found to be omitted from the debate topic was asserted. This assertion attracted the interest of one member of a peak community sector body present:

S2.B1 - 1: Or that they would feel ethically responsible if one of their partners went under, I think is also a consideration, speaking from the corporate perspective. You missed that point.

S2.B1 - 2: You mean that they funded the wrong community organisation?

S2.B1 - 1: Yes potentially.

S2.B1 - 2: ... not that it would be their fault but that they mismanaged their side of things?

S2.B1 - 1: Yes... and should they, did they make the problem worse by injecting money, should they be giving more money, it puts corporates' in a difficult situation.

As the interaction above reveals, the corporate representative had once again begun a process which Fairclough (1992) described as topic control. Given the diversity of topics that may be construed as relevant within a conversation, the way people ‘chain topics together by talking topically, can give a lot of insight into the preoccupations of ordinary life and the commonsense structuring of the lifeworld’ (Fairclough, 1992, p. 155). This participant’s (S2.B1 – 1) preoccupation with the assumed moral responsibilities corporate sector
institutions hold in not funding certain groups was consistent throughout the search conference. However, the capacity of participants to direct topics relies (rather unpredictably) on the propensity of other participants to take-up and respond affirmatively to topic cues (Fairclough, 1992). In this current case, the attempt at redirecting the topic was superseded by another participant’s very different reading of the debate question. This participant from a small neighbourhood centre drew attention back to the original assumption within the statement. In the following text, the original assertion – that community organisations are poorly managed – was instead challenged:

S2.B1 – 3: Can I say I have a problem... that this is a generalisation and it assumes that all community welfare organisations do not conduct themselves in a businesslike manner... It might be true of some but it is certainly not true of all and it also doesn’t take into account the immense amount of work that has been done in this sector through peak organisations in terms of developing “best practice”, looking at governance, all the really important things about being a good small business, which is what community organisations are. So I just have a little problem with the assumption in this statement.

The above text lays bare the participant’s frustration in the frequent labelling of community organisations as amateur and unprofessional. Here, the participant drew upon a “small businesses” metaphor to argue that community organisations are justified in a renewed sense of legitimacy through their adherence to ‘best practice’ and ‘governance’ (S2.B1 – 3). This form of instrumental rationalisation (Fairclough, 2003) draws upon the social validity afforded to these newfound governance structures (advanced through the discourse and politics of new managerialism) in arguing against negative perceptions of the community sector. Notably though, this point was only present within the first breakout group. The absence of business discourse in the second and third breakout groups of session two indicates the role is to attain greater legitimacy from outside actors (those within government and the corporate sector), rather than from within the community sector.
Discussion during the first breakout group centred on the possible role of “business” principles and practice within third sector governance structures. The question of risk also emerged throughout this dialogue. However, rather than centring risk on non-institutionalised and volunteer-driven organisations (as argued previously by S2.B1 – 1), an alternative case was made that in branching beyond their standard modus operandi, community organisations were inviting increased instability:

S2.B1 - 2:  However running social enterprises is very risky business really, that requires measurement that you don’t necessarily know from the beginning, what sort of return you are going to get on it, so it could be actually in being more business-like which is having a variety of forms of funding including social enterprise, could put you at more risks than just doing the core business.

As Bridge et al (2009, p. 227) noted, social enterprises have been politically represented, particularly in the UK, as a “third way” alternative in bridging the competing ideological projects of a ‘fair society’ (social democratic) and a ‘strong economy’ (neo-liberalism). In the above text, a trend of some traditional organisations hybridising into social enterprises was instead portrayed as a source of further volatility and risk for the community sector. Notably, it is not so much the business model itself that is in question, but rather the act of moving outside of an organisation’s ‘core business’ (S2.B1 – 2) that posed a problem.

7.4.3.2 Problematising Strategic CSR
Although strategic discourse was reasserted within the early stages of the first breakout group, many problems with its role in regulating community-corporate relationships were soon highlighted by both community and corporate participants. One representative from a local community organisation began to openly question the rationale behind the debate statement:

S2.B1 – 6:  Doesn’t this very statement in itself kind of I guess confirm, you know I am going into the background of what you were talking about in
terms of why this statement is even there, doesn’t it kind of confirm the lack of real understanding from corporates of how community organisations are suppose to work or do work?

By challenging the statement itself, the community sector representative redirected focus away from deficiencies in the community sector to a perceived ignorance within the corporate viewpoint. This critique was also taken further by corporate participants within the room. Two corporate participants located the potential for power abuse to arise between the community and corporate sectors, and specifically when expectations are placed on community organisations ‘to be more like me’ (S2.B1 – 4). Interestingly each of the two corporate representatives came from opposite poles of the “strategic” (S2.B1 – 1) and “ethical” (S2.B1 – 4) approaches to CSR. However, they both located a common problem with the debate statement:

S2.B1 – 1:  
It was a bit like the comment that he made about whoever holds the gold makes the rules, I mean I found that atrocious.

S2.B1 – 6:  
Who said that?

S2.B1 – 1:  
One of the speakers this morning, said whoever holds the gold dictates the rules basically, which is talking to that very, exactly what you were talking about [names S2.B1 – 4].

S2.B1 – 4:  
So saying that they have to be more businesslike, I think it is just saying that they have to be more like me because I can’t understand them if they are not like me, rather than saying you know... And perhaps there is an arrogance about ‘well I haven’t got time to understand you and so you have to speak my language’, rather than take the time to understand because that’s... if we talk about corporations as being a person, then if I was a person saying that, then I would be being prejudiced; ‘I can’t give you any of my money because you are not like me’. But a corporation can say that.

The first corporate speaker in the above dialogue was referring to a community sector CEO (C-17) who outlined the rationale for his organisation embarking upon a process of corporatisation. By describing the CEO’s reference to a funder’s ability to set the rules of engagement as ‘atrocious’ (S2.B1 – 1), the
corporate respondent, by inference, differentiated her own institution's approach as more ethical by comparison.

The second corporate speaker in the above interaction (S2.B1 – 4) launched a more direct attack on the underlying assumptions by condemning what she perceived as corporate sector 'prejudice'. By casting a parallel between corporate expectations on community organisations and a metaphor of the intolerant individual, the corporate respondent opened way for further debate and exploration of key assumptions within the hegemonic "strategic" discourse. For instance, another corporate participant located the root cause of the problem as being one of worldviews and subjective experience:

S2.B1 – 5:  I think that is part of the issue is that corporations don't know how to think like that, they are so structured and so learned in that, because I went from not for profit to corporate, that they don't think outside the box, most of them you have to remember in corporates have been in corporations all their life, they have never seen the other side. So they think okay this is how we do it, this has to be done, I have to answer to my people and I have to answer to the CEO who is putting the money out and so this is how to do it because I don't know any other way.

Through questioning the core assumptions behind the debate statement, corporate participants within this breakout group embarked on a process of denaturalising the dominant IDF which underlies specific forms of "strategic" cross-sector partnerships (Fairclough, 2010). Discussion continued by highlighting the need for a 'middle ground' between the expectations of the corporate and community sectors. In proposing a solution to the competing subjective experiences, assumptions and processes between the two sectors, the representative from an accounting firm proposed that corporate

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30 During interviews this respondent indicated considerable interest and concern for her community sector partners and outlined a 'moral responsibility' to ensure that all partners were in a strong position to benefit from the "strategic" relationship. However, her institution's selection criteria imposed on potential applications clearly indicated that a considerable degree of control and discretionary power was at play, even by comparison to other corporate respondents.
representatives might go into community organisations to seek a position of compromise:

S2.B1 – 5:  ... that’s where I think it is working a little bit, so corporates going into charities and saying okay let’s find a middle ground, this is sort of how they think and so let me work with you and so that they come on board a little bit and I think that is something that needs to be explored more, I think that’s why there needs to be more corporate secondments as well.

S2.B1 – 4:  That is something that I would agree.

Even the representative from the bank (S2.B1 – 1) proposed that a true partnership would result in a process of mutual learning, whereby success would be dependent upon the corporate sector funder learning the language of the community sector and vice versa. This was described by a representative of a retail chain as an ‘equal partnership’ (S2.B1 – 4).

7.4.3.3 Impediments to Strategic Partnerships

Within the first breakout group, community sector representative outlined further structural impediments to forming true partnerships with the corporate sector. According to a manager from a community development organisation, there was a requirement to convince staff of the potential benefits of aligning with the corporate sector. This already difficult task was made harder by a high level of ‘staff turnover’ (S2.B1 – 6). As a result, community groups would often fall back on pursuing funding from government which is also described as problematic (‘I don’t actually think are any better in terms of their understanding of community, absolutely not, if anything they are worse’ [S2.B1 – 6]). This point was agreed to by the other community sector manager in the room (S2.B1 – 3). Furthermore, the corporate perspective of third sector duplication was unpacked and added further complexity:

S2.B1 – 6:  Somebody made a point about working together, resisting duplication and all that kind of stuff... well you know if you have an area like Auburn and everybody is doing... there is not many services there considering all the complexities and the needs of the community. But we are still
being challenged by the importance of developing strategic partnership with each other, let alone the corporate sector.

Discussion continued centreing on various barriers faced in the community sector in pursuing corporate support. This point was further taken up by one corporate respondent who maintained that her organisation’s capacity ‘to leverage the small amount of money we have and the other things that we have which are nice premises, lots of offices, you know big accounts that where we can host events, lots of people willing to share their skills and we have money to support that engagement’ (B2.S1 – 1) was invariably dependent upon their ability to ‘take something out’ of the relationship. However, community organisations were also invited to take advantage of the corporate sector’s wish for mutually beneficial partnerships (in this case, through corporate volunteering) by looking at their role through a business lens:

B2.S1 – 1: That’s what I see in that business-like manner, it’s you guys looking at yourselves as more of a business and saying gee I have got this and this is what a corporate wants and this is what a corporate might give me money for because more and more we try and get our partners to actually say, well package this up and the next corporate that comes and says I have ten volunteers to send you, you say fantastic and we will charge you $500 a person, and we will create this community experience for you.

It is interesting in the above statements that the community sector voice is incorporated into a strategic IDF. Further discussion led to ideas on how community groups could sell their wares more effectively to corporate funders. This process of “packaging”, “marketing” and “selling” community activities to external funders (otherwise known as ‘commodification’) is widespread within the more institutionalised segments of the third sector. While commodification has been highlighted as a point of concern by some researchers due to its capacity to oversimplify the complexity of social problems and impede more challenging projects (Brown, et al., 2000), the practicality of this process was well received by the facilitator of the group (‘I think that is a really great contribution’) and left unchallenged by others.
During another point in the dialogue, a member of the peak community sector body raised an issue with ‘discredited’ business practices in light of the recent GFC:

S2.B1 – 7: To me from this statement that the non for profit sector becoming more of a corporation, like a future partnership or things like that. So that is my impression from the statement, like we work together, use more business-like practices, I think in the current ideological moment, I have a feeling that the business model has been discredited. I have been in this sector for a long time, and ten years ago I remember there was a strong push to adopt business-like practices, the way you run your organisation, how you manage your volunteers, manageable tiers, I remember it was a strong push for that, you had to create a lot of manuals and policy around the staff and document everything but it seems to me that in the last two or three years, maybe the way to go is that not-for-profit practices can colonise the business sectors.

This text portrays an example of overt resistance towards the previously dominant institutionalising IDF that had pervaded community sector governance practice. This participant went on to outline how the ‘integrity’ and public ‘trust’ experienced by the not-for-profit sector will enable it to survive into the future (S2.B1 – 7), irrespective of current funding constraints. Furthermore, this high public regard for the community sector provided a rationale for a reverse ‘colonisation’ of business sector CSR principles and practices through a meaningful dialogue between the two. According to this participant, being a ‘shadow of a business’ (S2.B1 – 7) is not ideal, particularly during a time of economic upheaval when those very business practices were under review. However, this deeper critique was not taken up. Instead, the participant representing an accounting firm proceeded to outline that the ‘first step’ in generating dialogue consisted of forming a mutually beneficial partnership. Doing so would enable a small organisation to learn how a corporate partner could further help both financially and through in-kind support (S2.B1 – 5). By offering a ‘technical’ solution to what the peak
community sector organisation representative perceived to be a systemic problem, discussion was deviated away from continuing along a communicative path (Habermas, 1990).

One point of confusion during this debate was in differentiating between what it meant to be a social enterprise and whether this was a requirement for achieving financial sustainability. Moreover, community sector representatives (S2.B1 – 3 and S2.B1 – 6) expressed some confusion as to how traditional community sector activities differed from those conducted through a social enterprise. After the facilitator explained some points of difference, it was generally established that social entrepreneurship was not an ideal goal for those organisations within the room. Instead, one manager argued that her organisation was able to do ‘a lot of things’ while being financially unsustainable:

S2.B1 – 6: *I don’t think that there is any doubt that in order for an organisation or programmes or whatever you want to call it, they need to survive in the future and they can only survive with financial sustainability. It is as simple as that for me, from our perspective. But I don’t think they need to be social enterprises to do that, that’s where I would probably, that for me from looking out from my personal experience, which is from a very small organisation but does a lot of things. I mean we don’t have financial sustainability, we have got recurrent DoCS money but recurrent for how long? We have no idea. But that’s it, everything else is $10,000 here, $5,000 here.*

According to this organisation, the problem lay to a large extent in wider funding structures, not in the organisational processes alone. The only way this organisation is able to continue within this context is through the commitment of its volunteers (‘I couldn’t survive without our volunteers’ [S2.B1 – 6]). At this point, a representative from the peak body affirmed that this organisation *would* be considered financially sustainable through its repeated funding from the same government source (S2.B1 – 2).
In contrast though, another participant highlighted the problem of community organisations not looking outside of their own context:

S2.B1 - 1: *That is a common trend of a lot of our partners is that they are so in touch with their local community that they have 15 fabulous projects but they die in the arse after six months because there is no sustainability through them and therefore you ask the question was all that effort and that expectation around that community to start that driving school, was that worth it, could you have invested that time and money into creating more sustainability around your funding?*

Another manager saw this issue differently. To this representative, the time and resources needed to achieve financial sustainability was beyond her organisation’s capacity:

S2.B1 – 6: *But the question in this sector is always who will do the other work? [...] If I don’t do it, who else is going to do it?*

As this analysis revealed, considerable discord remained apparent between the assumptions of strategic corporate discourse and the realities facing local community organisations. A higher level of critique, which in this case was directed to the instrumental approach to corporate CSR, is argued to be attributable to the diverse group of participants present. In contrast to the first breakout group in session one, three corporate participants were present – each with their own position and experience concerning relationships with the community sector. As such, the high level of commitment (Fairclough, 2003) afforded to a one-size-fits-all approach was significantly diminished. Moreover, the louder community sector voice evident within this group was likely due to the role played by peak body and “agitator” community sector participants taking part in discussion.

Although an open discussion emerged in the first breakout group, the other two concurrent groups mounted a far greater defence of community values, processes and governance structures.
7.4.3.4 Recasting Social Responsibility

Community participants in breakout group three were asked specifically to critically examine the broader theme of social responsibility. In doing so, participants within this group revealed how notions of responsibility and justice differed between the community and corporate sectors. Notably, viewpoints presented were not all homogenous. Arguments and assertions deviated between those drawing upon social justice principles (proposed principally by representatives of local community organisations and peak bodies) and charitable principles (proposed by one representative in particular from a large religious non-profit organisation).

Discussion within this breakout group began with the participants representing local community organisations differentiating between two core levels of responsibility:

S2.B3 – 1:  
*I think that from my perspective to be socially responsible is to acknowledge that we are all in a reciprocal independent relationship, whether we acknowledge it or not and whether we have a good understanding of it or not, that it’s all around us, that if we actually have an opportunity to stop and think that whatever is happening around us we are impacted that and we impact on other people around us. So to me it is fairly logical that we all have some level of responsibility to each other.*

S2.B3 - 2:  
*We have a responsibility, so it comes down to whether society is even going to be sustainable, so what you are talking about is very much like a personal level but do we need to think bigger as well in terms of do we need to make some decisions as a society about what is going to be responsible and how do the two levels relate to each other.*

The two statements above represent an expansive definition of social responsibility. Notable features of the above text are the assumed “logical” nature of a reciprocal model of interaction, and the alternative use of the concept sustainability in providing an ontological foundation behind *just* social structures. In breakout group one of session two the concept sustainability was
employed in reference to micro-organisational structures and as a way to rationalise the limits of corporate support (i.e. a project or organisation must exhibit sustainability to qualify for corporate support). Whereas in the above text, the term sustainability represents a wider social ideal; the responsibilities individuals hold with regard to their wider social environment.

In agreement with the above proposals, another representative – again from a local organisation – sought to add further detail and clarity to the concept. Interestingly, this following statement draws upon wider structural assumptions of instability to outline why it is in the interest of corporate representatives to adhere to expansive notions of social responsibility. In doing so, this statement also acknowledges that power relationships experienced by individuals within the corporate and community sectors could switch at any given time:

S2.B3 – 4: *I don’t know, I think that social responsibility is not only dealing with the here and now but perhaps planning and thinking about the “what if’s”. I mean the reality is one of the things that has become really true to me over the past year is that by some twist of fate or whatever may happen, in a blink of an eye, your life can change for the better or worse and so in dealing with the situations we deal with, I have had your corporate high flyers who all of a sudden are there, and there with their family going “help”. I think it is a very real lesson for everyone to learn, to step back from their judgemental, to step back from the okay, I will do my choice, to realise that social responsibility, we are all, as (name) was saying, we need each other, we have a responsibility to each other, we need to plan for the now, we need to plan for the what if’s because none of us are immune from the what if and we need to recognise that as a society and gain personal reward.*

S2.B3 - 2: *So in that sense then the whole idea of relationships between corporate and community sector could itself be a form of social responsibility. To put the effort to develop that relationship could be a way of...*
... And who knows when your roles can change at any given time, the recognition of that and respectful relationships that do recognise that.

It is likely that the timing of this discussion two years following the global financial crisis has impacted on assumptions about the nature of the economic, social and political system. As the above text indicates, a heightened level of uncertainty facing individuals during this time is positioned as a major point of concern. This perceived systemic instability is presented to outline a universal principle of social justice, whereby welfare is not targeted to individual “deserving” subgroups but available to all as needs arise (Mau & Veghte, 2007).

Although the majority of representatives drew from a social justice philosophy in defining social responsibility, discussion also turned to differences in moral and ethical thinking among the wider public. While one manager from a local organisation noted ‘life experiences’ (S2.B3 – 4) as factors shaping individual notions of responsibility, one representative from a large charity argued that appropriate behaviour was attributable to ‘the way you are brought up’ (S2.B3 – 6). For instance, one representative from a large religious charity drew upon individual behaviour as an area of social concern.

You can take it into your own home, just talk to your own kids, leaves clothes on the floor, you tell them to do things, pick this up, you trip over it, I mean where does it start? I mean there is a generation of people that are courtesy, I found it on the train today, I was surprised that actually somebody turned around and said to my wife would you like to sit down, but that is sort of the old custom. Whereas other people would take up three seats, so I don't know where it starts and finishes. It is like if I am driving and someone gives way to me I have a habit of acknowledging them, I don’t give them any royal solutes but I acknowledge them.

Responsibility in the above text is relegated to family rather than wider society and negative behaviour is attributed to the absence of traditional values. Although adhering to a traditional conservative viewpoint (Boucher & Sharpe, 2008), this argument was incorporated by the wider group as one part of a
pluralist understanding of social responsibility (S2.B3 – 3). However, disagreement arose among representatives of local groups when a corporate liaison officer of a large charity attempted to defined positive social values through a series of rules (‘I want it to be more than that’ [S2.B3 – 4] replied one community sector manager). Moreover, the assertion by representatives of two large charities that Christian values served as a foundation for social responsibility was openly challenged:

S2.B3 – 6:  *I think you can go back to things like the core values of the Australian Society, is a basis of Christian values and I think that treating everybody equally and things like that is the key.*

S2.B3 – 1:  *They have a dismal record in the development role.*

S2.B3 – 5:  *Yes but that it is that core value.*

S2.B3 – 4:  *But I don’t think that is a Christian value, I think that is value, all those people sort of have that same value, I think it is a human value.*

The role of religion in shaping social values constituted the most significant point of contention between representatives of small locally-based organisations (who invariably adopted an activist framework) and representatives of larger organisations (who drew consistently from a charitable framework) (Kenny, 2002). Nonetheless, all participants within the debate agreed on an approach to social responsibility that emphasised mutual respect, solidarity, activism, redistribution of resources, and giving voice to marginalised groups within the community. Participants from local organisations and peak community sector bodies also acknowledged that while these values and assumptions were common in the community sector, they were far from being universally adopted in wider society. In doing so, the group concluded that the social and individual context plays a major part in the formation of notions concerning socially responsible behaviour. In more conceptual terms, this group discussion acknowledged how ‘people’s ideas of social justice and of who deserves what also [emanates] from the institutional context which they inhabit’ (Mau & Veghte, 2007, p. 6). It was subsequently noted by participants that more expansive notions of social responsibility found
within the community sector, while forming a positive ideal, still need to be mainstreamed and popularised in wider society.

7.4.3.5 Alternatives to Strategic Discourse

While no corporate representatives were present in the second and third breakout groups of session two, participants’ exposure to strategic discourse in the earlier session informed a perceived need for change. For instance, in the second debate, the problems posed by strategic discourse on smaller NGOs were articulated further in commencement of discussion:

\[ \text{S2.B2 - 2: The lady from [bank name withheld] in the last group said they virtually funded what government wants anyway and so for NGOs you are not getting diversity. So the things that have slipped through the cracks for government you miss out again.} \]

Although the argument posed by the abovementioned corporate representative concerned only one possible CSR approach among many, it is clear that the commitment by which this viewpoint was presented resulted in it being received by some community participants as a generalised corporate approach. Moreover, as the above text shows, the generalisation of strategic CSR was framed as decidedly negative for the community sector. As a consequence, issues with regard to strategic discourse were used as grounds for arguments in support of increased government regulation of corporate contributions, which would form a 'stop gap for some things that miss out' (S2.B2 – 2). The academic representative within this breakout group went considerably further by arguing that a progressive taxation system would be more equitable in distributing a portion of business profits than both philanthropy and CSR:

\[ \text{S2.B2 - 2: Corporate organisations [...] are entirely run by their shareholders, largely on the basis of blocked funds. The only way that you can actually guarantee an equitable distribution of the resources in society in an equitable way is through a democratic structure and the best democratic structure we have got, even though I don’t particularly like it, in social democracy is government. It is the best model we have got.} \]
Sorry I know that is controversial but I just see that as a separate, as an argument in favour of a progressive tax system and I believe that progressive tax system is more socially adjust than charity.

According to this redistributionist argument, the democratic structures present within government were considered more socially beneficial in comparison to the instrumental and discretionary reality of corporate CSR (Banerjee, 2008).

Not all community representatives agreed with this alternative to corporate charity. According to one participant, government regulation would make little difference, as 'it is always the smaller organisations that miss out' (S2.B2 – 3), while another saw similar discretion in how specific segments of the third sector were funded by government over others (S2.B2 – 6). These perceptions were similarly found during the earlier interview stage of research. Although all participants drew upon a broad social justice philosophy within the second breakout group, viewpoints were often tied to an anti-bureaucratic discourse. In this case, the waste that was considered part-and-parcel in government funding programs S2.B2 – 2) was contrasted unfavourably to the speed and efficiency of corporate support (S2.B2 – 5), as highlighted below:

S2.B2 – 6: Working with corporate can sometimes be quicker and easier in getting money than it is through government supporting systems and funding application processes tend to be quite complex, saying that we are pro on other corporate side and within the government money is taken up by administration whereas within corporate it doesn’t tend to be because obviously they are going to keep the admin of it very, very minimal and so use their money elsewhere to make profits.

Furthermore, one representative from a larger charity noted the benefits of increased empathy and solidarity that was often formed when corporate executives experienced social issues firsthand. Through recounting one experience, the original strategic objectives of a corporate funder were replaced with much higher levels of altruistic giving. The individual contact facilitated
through such events was much more fluid than formal relationships with government funders:

S2.B2 – 1: *But what it has allowed us to do is talk to CEO’s who not only now understand the issue, experience the issue, so it was really experiential and they now want to engage with us because they have slept out for the night in the rain.*

Despite some participants expressing a preference for the corporate relational approach to funding, the role of competition in facilitating both corporate and government funding was positioned as a considerable problem.

S2.B2 – 5: *It is like we have to sell ourselves, prostitute ourselves to get money and that is what we are doing because competition, we in welfare not for competition is for the business sector, not for welfare.*

S2.B2 – 2: *Well we certainly have to compete.*

S2.B2 – 5: *And competition doesn’t belong in welfare, I don’t think so.*


S2.B2 – 5: *Competition, well how do you measure human suffering and it affects us all, it is everyone’s responsibility and regulated by government.*

The use of emotive language in the above text reveals the degree of acrimony some participants felt towards the measures taken by organisations to secure adequate funding. Moreover, the assumption that ‘competition doesn’t belong’ in the community sector is significant, as it reveals continued resistance to the assumptions of neo-managerialism. This resistance has been maintained despite neo-liberal discourse having permeated the inter and intra organisational dynamics in the third sector for a considerable amount of time (Darcy, et al., 2009; Keevers, et al., 2008).

Participants noted the continued impact of competitive discourse on an organisation’s capacity to maintain autonomy and an ability to effectively respond to the wishes of local communities. In response to the threat posed by competition and marketisation, participants in the second breakout group proposed a need for greater assertiveness within the community sector:
S2.B2 - 8: You have to come to some sort of agreement to come forward and I said that whole thing around community organisations pulling together and looking to gain corporate funding or challenging the government and have the principles, this is what the service costs, this is what we need to actually run this, so what are you going to do about it, we want this, this, this rather than almost waiting for these scraps to come out and grabbing what you can and then anyone being stretch to such an extreme that those stretches get bigger and bigger and we end up doing what we have been saying all day and it doesn’t change, it just stays the same.

Forming coalitions to resist negative pressures or assert the needs and perspectives of community sector voices was presented as one possible alternative. A similar sentiment was proposed in the third breakout group, with one peak body representative commenting on the loss of community mobilisation in third sector practice:

S2.B3 - 1: I had a friend is job was high up in bureaucracy say to me recently and he had worked in the welfare community sector before, what he is was I suggest that the only way you will get something moving on this is that you do one of the things that you guys have stopped doing, which is that you mobilise your community and you get them to have the language and the support to actually articulate the injustices of the system.

Possible outcomes of taking a greater activist stance were discussed in much greater detail during the second breakout group. In the ensuing discussion, the challenge facing individuals within community organisations who chose to resist government and other pressures was considered immense. However, one dramatic example was presented by S2.B2 - 3 to remind other participants of the power they possess as quasi-welfare agencies:

S2.B2 – 3: I think often that requires... that requires courage that is often difficult to muster, I mean there is a famous story, Jane Thompson is a feminist from the 70s, but she ran a thing called the Women’s
Centre in South Hampton and they have got her, and the Women’s Centre is doing great things and she just said, get stuffed we are closed and suddenly everybody woke up and said wow, they actually closed the joint down. But that level of personal courage, on the other hand if you like that kind of commitment.

Interviewer: *Is it courage or is it leadership?*
S2.B2 - 3: *Well I think in her it was courage and leadership but what it meant was she was saying I don’t care about my job and if we are going to be that compromised about accountability for funding, she literally said you can shove it where it fits. People were mortified that someone had actually said that.*

While the possibilities of forming coalitions and mobilising resistance to wider inequities were debated widely in session two, others were wary of the internal realities facing local community organisations. In concluding the second breakout group, one participant saw the difficulties in striking a balance between requirements for funding and stakeholder management as the greatest challenge they faced.

S2.B2 -1: *We would certainly struggle on and struggle with, the more we have come to where we have become, the more we have had to report back and the more structured and strategic we have become as an organisation, because we really are, I mean the only reason we are still in existence is a miracle because of the grass-roots, it is a democratically voted volunteer organisation, so on our board of directors, you don’t necessarily have the best in writing, the best in finance, you have someone from a very local level who just wants to help. So when we start business-like in corporate, we get such a backlash from our membership, we are ripping the heart out of the organisation; how can you spend money on that brochure, you are taking the food out of the mouths of the homeless? Like it is just dramatic, so we really find this balancing act because our membership is our organisation and without them we can’t enlist and yet they don’t always understand why we have to do it at this level. So unlike most businesses, we are really trying to meet so many different objectives in the*
No solution was suggested to the challenge posed in balancing the expectations of stakeholders while endeavouring to present a “professional” image to prospective funders. Discussions in the final plenary session also reflected similar themes raised in the above analysis. Of particular note was a stated need for new resources to help local organisations and corporate institutions achieve mutual understanding of the differing languages, processes and stakeholder needs across the two sectors. However, one representative of a larger charity agreed with “agitator” voices within this all-of-conference group setting and maintained that an organisation need not go ‘cap in hand to the corporate and accept what the corporate is telling us’. This sentiment was also considered relevant to relationships between community organisations and their principal government funders as well.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of the research data, starting with some key survey findings, to the location of critical themes emerging through exploratory interviews, and finally concluding in the more nuanced interactions between participants during the final search conference. These findings encompass both the macro (Discourse) and micro (discourse) components that regulate languages and processes between corporate and community participants in the study (Fairclough, 2010). This chapter has located a number of systemic Discursive trends, including:

- Tensions between pro-institutional and anti-establishment discourses within the community sector.
- A social justice IDF guiding local organisations towards corporate funding.
- An emerging "strategic" discourse in the corporate sector that relegates philanthropic or altruistic motivations.
- Tensions between an instrumental or strategic discourse (or IDF) and a democratic discourse between the corporate and community sectors respectively.
- A tendency whereby highly successful and professionalised community sector organisations are far more likely to gain corporate sector support.

Aside from these broad trends are more nuanced, relational components of power. Some such “micro” findings are:

- An underlying obsequiousness afforded to corporate voice in cross-sector interactions.
- An ability to utilise various styles and genres associated with strategic discourse to silence democratic or activist perspectives (i.e. through seeking *technical* solutions to complex structural points of contention).
- The use of common-sense or truth statements to naturalise one perspective of CSR and position it as objective and universal.

Notably, the research also found that the relational power corporate participants experience over community sector groups (through an emergent hegemonic discourse) remained open to resistance. However, this resistance was found to be reliant on the capacity of participants to locate inequities and denaturalise oppressive IDFs. Those able to successfully present alternative democratic frameworks often did so by drawing upon entirely different styles, genres and discourses (Fairclough, 2003). This study thus revealed that representatives from community organisations – while being in precarious positions structurally – were able to draw upon various resources to push their own agenda in an inter-organisational setting. The final session of the breakout group, in particular, indicated that the capacity for community organisations to pursue their own agenda with regard to corporate relationships will likely be an ongoing point of concern in light of increasing fragmentation and competition within the third sector.
Chapter Eight

Unequal Partnerships: Parallels in Power Relations between Community-Corporate Relationships and in the Applied Research Process
8.1 Introduction

As with building relationships, we assert the importance of researcher reflexivity, taking time to consider our positions of power and the ways in which we share our power

(Grant, et al., 2008, p. 593)

As highlighted in Chapter Seven, considerable power has been found to permeate the field of community-corporate engagement. These findings point to the intricacy and complexity of power relationships played out when two “equal” partners engage in, what might appear to be on the surface, well-meaning philanthropic endeavours. However, revealed through these relationships has been the role played by wider discursive frameworks and interpersonal conventions that serve to regulate and define the scope of what constitutes as a viable and successful cross-sector partnership. Indeed, the experience of work in the community sector has been one of tension between the values and philosophies of community development, and wider strategic and instrumental imperatives that work according to entirely different assumptions, motivations and processes. While seemingly objective and “truthful”, these discourses serve to constrain the breadth of cross-sector engagement through setting the “conditions of possibility” (Foucault, 1972).

This chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the overall success of the research, with specific relation to achieving the broad objectives. As previously presented in Chapter Five, the key practical objectives of the project were as follows:

1. The development of a comprehensive understanding of cross-sector collaborations, with a specific focus upon the opportunities and inequities located within existing practice. This exploratory research will result in;
2. The creation of a final tool kit designed to assist local community sector organisations to more effectively engage with the corporate sector. This tool kit (in the form of a resource handbook) would be developed in consultation with community and corporate sector practitioners.
As will be revealed, each of these pragmatic objectives was successfully achieved through both the exploratory (Phases 1 and 2), and engaged research (Phase 3) methods. In relation to the first objective, analysis of results presented in Chapter Seven have gone some way towards painting a more detailed picture of the experiences of cross-sector engagement – analysis which will be further expanded upon below. Participant feedback during the search conference event was further integrated into a “hands-on” resource handbook published in early 2012 (see Appendix 8), thus achieving the second objective. While attaining these pragmatic goals was without a doubt important, this research involved far more than just a practical evaluation of the applied setting. Instead, this thesis is principally concerned with the underlying relations of power between participant groups, and, as stated in Chapter One, whether more marginalised actors involved in the study were able to shift power within community-corporate relationships to gain an even playing field. The overarching aim of this thesis, which was to assess the possibility that dominant discourses could be challenged and reframed by participants in the applied setting, requires a much more detailed discussion. Although measuring this capacity presents a highly complicated task, this chapter seeks to do so through a reflexive analysis of the research results, and discussion of the engaged process more generally.

To achieve this objective, Chapter Eight begins by further discussing the nature and significance of a strategic corporate discourse in regulating philanthropic relationships. In line with the research problems set out earlier within this thesis, this analysis reveals a conflict of objectives and interests that have impeded the development of equal cross-sector partnerships. However, the capacity of the research to achieve its core objective – that is, to examine the degree by which participants were able to negotiate a more even playing field – is a far more tenuous undertaking. In order to analyse the capacity for alternative outcomes to occur among the participant group, first required is a thorough critique of the research process that served to open up a space for such dramatic power shifts. Indeed, it would be inconsistent with the ethics and
philosophy of PAR to examine solely the nature of power, influence and control that is “out there” among research participants. As Chapter Four highlighted, the reflexive researcher must also be cognisant of the positions, assumptions and influences he or she holds in entering the field of study, and particularly in such a multifaceted environment where unequal power relationships are commonly played out. Grant et al (2008) found that being able to face this complexity requires a wider consideration of the assumptions, roles and power dynamics played out by both the researchers and researched within “messy” collaborative spaces. As such, the process of conducting this research will also be critically analysed within this chapter. As the discussion will reveal, the research process was far from linear, straightforward and devoid of political interests. The numerous complexities faced had considerable impact upon the ability of the research method to provide a foundation for enduring democratic dialogue to emerge.

The messy and often frustrating experience of PAR described below points to variability in the practice of collaboration, which in many ways reflected the experiences of community-corporate engagement and the role of power within this field. Indeed, the “three-way” relationship formed between university researchers and members of the community and corporate partner institutions provides, in itself, a case study of power within supposedly “equal” partnerships. Partially due to these experiences, it is argued that the capacity for participants to reframe, challenge and shift power relations within the confines of the engaged research space were modest at best. A reflective analysis of the barriers faced and missteps made throughout the research process leading up to the search conference event, is essential in order to ensure that future research in this area is able to avoid similar pitfalls and dilemmas.
8.2 Discussion of Findings

8.2.1 Emergence and Significance of a Strategic Discourse

A central finding of this study is the presence of a strategic discourse that has increasingly come to underpin representations of CSR, corporate philanthropy and CCI in Australia. As outlined in Chapter One and expanded further in Chapter Three, the emergence of instrumental positioning as the standard *modus operandi* in corporate engagement with the third sector was found to be reflective of wider societal factors. Strategic philanthropy and strategic CSR not only constituted a description of a specific engagement type, but was also reflective of a hybrid discourse (Fairclough, 2010) that has successfully incorporated elements of former ethical (stakeholder) and economic (shareholder) theories of CSR (Carroll, 1999; Windsor, 2006) into a new powerful reinterpretation of corporate responsibility. This discourse forms part of a wider dialectic struggle with other competing ideological formations, and its hegemonic status has been attributed by corporate participants to its perceived suitability within a changing social, political and economic context.

Participant responses revealed that corporate engagement in the community sector contained elements that were both reactive and proactive in nature. Strategic CSR was specifically *reactive* to negative social perceptions of corporate behaviour (these perceptions were even more compounded in the aftermath of the GFC), while also being *proactive* to the market environment by positioning community engagement in ways that served to assist in maintaining brand awareness, retaining staff, and engaging with key consumer groups. According to participants from both sectors, CSR was socially expected and morally justified. However, corporate institutions were also found to engage in a struggle to *appear* ethical to some stakeholders while ensuring maximum returns are accrued to the business (shareholders). Moreover, it is further argued that strategic approaches to CSR represent a reassertion of neo-liberal (or economic rationalist) discourse in the face of cultural expectations for improved corporate behaviour. In this way, an interest in appearing socially
responsible represents a form of “stakeholder management” rather than of “stakeholder responsibility” (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2009).

A major strength of strategic corporate discourse has been its high degree of adaptability to multiple situations. For instance, the three retailers interviewed represent unique interpretations of a strategic corporate approach. One of the three had positioned community giving as part of “the history” of the institution. While maintaining a long-standing commitment to philanthropy since the time of its founder, their approach has also moved into more strategic avenues through engaging community organisations aligned with their core customer base and integrating giving to various business ventures. The second, much newer retailer sought to strategically position its brand through creating a “local hero” persona around store managers. In this case, the business-oriented genre of cause-marketing was employed although this allowed for more creative, locally-based issues to be supported. In contrast, the final retailer interviewed presented an ethical approach to community engagement. While emphasising a willingness to support “unpopular causes” over standard muses of corporate support, and a focus on being “leaders” within their field, it was also clearly assumed that being a good corporate citizen was also considered good for business (Zappalà, 2004). As outlined, each of the three had incorporated components of ethical and instrumental motivations within their strategic approach, albeit in diverse ways.

Even the more benign concept of philanthropy was not immune from the allure of strategic discourse. Interestingly, the specific meaning behind philanthropy differed considerably according to a corporate institution’s preferred model of community engagement. To representatives from direct businesses, the term was often employed to describe an archaic mode of corporate support – one that occurred before businesses began to “think deeply” about how to integrate community sector giving into a wider institutional strategy (Lyons, 1998). From this perspective, the word “philanthropy” has come to describe a direct process; the transfer of corporate capital to the community sector. While the underlying dynamics of this recent interpretation might well appear trivial, its
rearticulation is significant when considering the context of wider corporate processes. The history outlined in Chapter Three revealed philanthropy to be ‘a complex and sprawling concept’ (Frumkin, 2006, p. 11), which has been subject to struggles according to its localised social, cultural, political and economic context (Harrow, 2010; Sulek, 2010a, 2010b). In light of such diverse interpretations, Fairclough’s (1992, p. 188) assertion that ‘different configurations of meanings’ are utilised to dispute words in contexts that suit the strategic objectives of a wider discourse which has been supported through the research. The narrowing of this definition away from earlier historic trajectories has revealed a discursive reconfiguration where questions of morality are rendered irrelevant within a corporate context. By removing moral conceptualisations from corporate decision-making, the move toward mutually-beneficial forms of engagement has been represented merely as the next logical step in a wider evolution in thinking.

Other participants viewed philanthropy differently. According to three respondents from corporate trusts, the rationale for philanthropic giving rested on a willingness to “do good”. Giving back to a community was evaluated on a moral basis, with minimal up-front rationalisation provided (Fairclough, 2003). However, further exploration has revealed an intricate array of factors that describe how philanthropy is useful in positioning the corporate entity associated with the foundation or trust. For instance, aligning with community activities in order to gain maximum resonance with both employees and customers was cited in some (although not all) interviews, and such cases pointed to a strategic intent behind the act of giving. Moreover, the profile of the corporate brand within the community has been another way in which altruism was geared to positively impact on the wider business. In fact, two corporate trusts specifically identified “being part of the community” as synonymous with the corporation’s brand, thus enabling it to further differentiate itself from competitors through the virtue of being associated with the community. However, one notable point with regard to philanthropic giving has been the lack of empirical research measuring the impact of these activities on the corporation itself. It might be argued that the absence of research supporting
these assertions concerning philanthropy in this context, were employed more as a process of soft persuasion. As such, being seen to measure the outcomes of good works would render claims to virtuousness as defunct.

8.2.2 Inequality and Inequity in Community-Corporate Engagement
The strategic orientation of corporate philanthropy and community engagement has generally been depicted positively within Australian research (Jones & Tilt, 2005; Lyons & Zappalà, 2008; Zappalà, 2004; Zappalà & Adams, 2010; Zappalà & Cronin, 2003). Indeed, the infusion of social responsibility throughout the wider business approach holds the potential to increase community investment both in scale and scope (Zappalà & Adams, 2010). The possibility that corporations are becoming more responsive to the needs and interests of a wider array of stakeholders is welcome, especially in light of a history littered with corporate scandals (Banerjee, 2008). In contrast, others have located clear problems with the instrumental nature of corporate strategy. Knights and Morgan (2011), for instance, reflected upon the increasing dominance of strategic discourse over the previous 30 years and its implications on the nature of power and control. In their analysis, they noted the role of this discourse in demonstrating managerial rationality within the business sector, legitimising the exercise of inter-organisational power, providing a clear framework of corporate “identity” and external “reality”, while in the process, negating alternative perspectives and discourses (Knights & Morgan, 2011). When applied to the field of CSR, strategic discourse has been found to exclude moral concerns from the field of corporate behaviour (Windsor, 2006).

This thesis supports such a critique of strategic discourse. For instance, one significant downside to the embedding of community-corporate engagement within the construction of corporate strategy was that only those community sector bodies that aligned with corporate interests were able to attract significant support. As explored in Chapter Seven, social causes that either: matched a business’s consumer base; generated interest among employees;
were located within the geographical region of the business or; were deemed socially popular were highly sought after by potential funders. One community organisation went so far as to undergo a dramatic process of transformation through corporatising its structure, philosophy and language (C-17). This finding would suggest that isomorphic tendencies may well be strongly within the field of community-corporate engagement (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b). However, the ability of C-17 to successfully navigate between dialectically opposing community and corporate languages in maintaining accord among all of its stakeholders would indicate that small groups need not “throw the baby out with the bathwater” in the search for corporate funding.

Nonetheless, clear inequities have been located within the field of community-corporate engagement. Through interviewing key players within the corporate sector, it became clear that some organisational forms were positioned as “better suited” to corporate partnerships over others. For instance, those organisations that offered a unique brand, were professionally structured, had accountability mechanisms in place, defined to address an area of “worthy need”, and whose members spoke the corporate language were also able to attract and maintain corporate support. As a result, many smaller, locally-based organisations that operated under social justice or other alternative anti-establishment discourses (Darcy, 1999; O'Shea, 2007) failed to resonate and made only minimal inroads within this strategic CSR environment. The considerable discretion afforded to corporate sector institutions has instead resulted in the provision of greater support for those organisations that are considered “strong” and “financially viable”, over those already struggling within the competitive tendering environment. Within this context, corporate philanthropy presents not alternative to government funding, but rather a supplement to those organisations already well positioned to differentiate themselves from their third sector “competitors”. These results hint to the possibility that an emerging culture of corporate engagement with community welfare activities will likely lead to the further fragmentation and marketisation of the third sector as a whole.
In response to the various research problems identified through both the literature and exploratory findings, this project embarked upon an engaged process that served to open up space for participants to actively reframe, challenge and resolve key areas of tension. However, from the inception of this research, it had become clear that the academic group was forced to navigate similar power dynamics located within the field of community-corporate engagement. These institutional structures and discourses filtered into the collaborative structure, potentially undermining the capacity of the research to achieve its broad objectives. The following sections provide a discursive account of the various difficulties, obstructions and misapprehensions which were incurred throughout the process of conducting PAR. Although we as researchers were considerably impeded in our ability to fully achieve the research objective, the experience of these entrenched power imbalances revealed a much broader understanding of the opportunities and constraints posed by existing dialogic structures in the applied setting. Moreover, it is argued that an account of the journey undertaken to navigate such nuances, reveals how alternative opportunities for ongoing democratic dialogue and debate were located and pursued.

8.3 Discussion of the Collaborative Research Process

8.3.1 ‘Designing the Plane while Flying It’

Given the dramatic inequities present within this field of study, the active and meaningful participation of key players from both sectors was considered central to our ability to ethically meet the core objectives of the research. As outlined in Chapter Four, an engaged research approach provides an alternative to traditional approaches by means of synthesising democratic, post-colonial and feminist principles in addressing complex real-life problems (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Freire, 1972; Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Maguire, 2001; Nydon, 2006). Through engaged research structures, individuals from different fields come together to pool various academic and local skills towards the achievement of socially just goals (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003). While these principles and processes may be the primary motivator for those wishing to
evince positive social change, complexities often arise when the ideals of action research face the realities of multi-institutional settings (Roffey, 2006; Smith, Bratini, Chambers, Jensen, & Romero, 2010). Indeed, our experience of participatory research saw a number of difficulties arise during certain stages of the inquiry process.

Incisively, Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 69) had equated the process of conducting action research to ‘designing the plane while flying it’; a metaphor which held relevance to this study. Indeed, the process of planning, conducting and analysing research in collaboration with a corporate sector partner and a community sector partner resulted in some unexpected turns and stumbles. In many ways, these issues reflected some experiences highlighted in the field of community-corporate engagement. It has been argued that critical reflection on the lessons learned through this unique process is useful in understanding and avoiding similar problems in future engaged projects (Smith, et al., 2010). In the case of this research, the complexities faced are instructive of the opportunities, benefits and drawbacks of working collaboratively with industry partners.

It is important to initially note that working alongside two partner institutions provided a number of unique opportunities to the research. Our early interactions with members of external partner organisations in particular were positive, with the research objectives, phases and instruments being developed through a series of iterative discussions. Within a very short space of time, a clear method was implemented for a comprehensive exploratory process along with mutually agreed upon academic and practical objectives. Through casting aside traditional role relationships, it was found that the input of industry partners was integrated into a successful process of joint goal setting, open communication, information and data sharing (Schmuck, 2006). However, while aspiring to the principles of ‘democracy in action’ (Schmuck, 2006, p. 31), a shift in the styles of engagement emerged soon after the research advanced into the fieldwork stage.
It was in the absence of a clear demarcation of roles that a degree of confusion within the academic group emerged. For instance, in contrast to other studies where competing claims over positions of authority were present (Smith, et al., 2010), industry partners expressed little interest in assuming responsibility for carrying out the fieldwork. In further distinction to earlier experiences of engaged community research (Roffey, 2006), this shift was not a result of internal personnel changes within the collaborating organisation. Rather, the restructuring of roles emerged through the process of embedding top-down relationships in the form of funding agreements.

8.3.2 Power within Research Collaborations

Through the partnership formalisation process, the collaborative structure within the three-way research partnership soon revealed the wider relationships of power within each respective sector. It is contended that power relations in the current case was not solely located within the confines of individual agency or social structures (as outlined in Lukes’ (1974) typology), but more reflective of a Foucaultian conception, whereby power permeates through and regulates the entire research process. As also found by other action researchers, social control is inherent to the process of collaborative engagement, and in this research, was enacted in the form of organisational and individual identities (McNiff & Jack, 2000). Power identities adopted in the early stages of research occurred when members of the academic group observed a change where collaboration evolved from a process of working alongside to reporting to external partners. Within this structure, tangible differences to interpersonal dynamics were identified between the two partners.

Drawing from Fairclough’s (2003, 2010) analytical framework, it can be established that both the style and genre of engagement with each partner reflected their specific political, ideological and intuitional contexts. This divergence emerged through a lack of unified expectations on the level of critique, analysis and overall stance informing the research. In its place, the interests of each respective partner took hold. For example, one stumbling
block emerged in an early stage when the project’s corporate funder found a background paper to be ‘too theoretical’. Criticism of this kind was interpreted by some members of the academic group as disagreement with the critical stance adopted – although this viewpoint was never overtly stated by the corporate funder. A similar issue was highlighted by Coghlan and Shani (2005, p. 536) who noted the tendency for conflict to emerge when ‘different members or factions hold different expectations on what the role of the researchers are to play’. The expectations were also influenced by the wider social power positions. In reflecting on supposedly “collaborative” research environments, Jacobs (2010, p. 370) made the following observation:

The existing power relations in society and institutional arrangements will inevitably infiltrate a project, and can lead to a splitting of tasks or attributing good/bad feelings to different members within the project group when anxiety arises.

Interestingly, the power relations experienced by academic researchers in this project ran parallel to similar anxieties expressed by community organisations concerning their funding relationships. These issues centred on differing interpretations of “accountability” and “monitoring procedures”.

On the community side of the collaborative relationship, once the official research agreement was signed in 2008, the genre of communication (Fairclough, 2010) continued through informal channels with a clear preference directed toward face-to-face meetings and phone conversations. It was through these channels that we reported upon the progress of the research and where partner feedback and guidance was incorporated into the research cycles (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). While maintaining a level of detachment, the peak community body appeared to express genuine interest in the research topic, particularly in maintaining the centrality of social justice objectives (a viewpoint shared with members of the academic research group). In this way, collaboration would fall under a process that Fairclough (1992, p. 227) conceptualised as ‘enhancing the corpus’. The corpus of material used within the research (i.e. discursive samples or data) was specifically enhanced by staff
members who highlighted themes, emailed relevant resources, background articles of interest, as well as event invitations for the academic group to examine. Such a process not only added to the richness of research analysis and findings, but also fostered closer mutual respect and regard between the two institutions.

The communicative structure formed with the corporate funder opened the way for a much different relationship to emerge. In contrast to the informality of the university-community relationship, formal monitoring procedures were enforced by the corporate sector partner. Mandated procedures included quarterly progress reporting in the initial year, followed by half-yearly reports from the second year onwards. While a degree of reporting was expected, particularly in light of our corporate partner’s strict fiduciary requirements as a philanthropic trust (Ward, 2008), an interesting phenomenon emerged whereby the academic group were sent through the identical report guidelines that their traditional funding recipients were expected to complete31. For instance, researchers were asked to summarise the causes of the social problem to be addressed by your program and explain how your program/ organisation operates as a social enterprise. These questions were often met with baffled confusion and (at times) frustration from the academic group. The question asked of who will benefit from this program and their geographic location was particularly interesting given that, as defined from the outset, it was the corporations themselves who formed part of the target group of the research. In light of this, such questions reveal two critical points about working with this corporate partner.

Firstly, we as academic researchers were no longer framed as research partners involved in a ‘cogenerative enquiry’ (Greenwood & Levin, 2005: 54), but rather recipients of funding – subjected to the same power dynamics of “external consultants”. Constructing the collaborative relationship in such a way may be argued to replicate similar experiences in the third sector. According to Conroy,

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31 Traditional recipients of philanthropic support included charities, community organisations and, more recently, locally-based social enterprises.
when a task is too complex, costly or difficult for one principal to carry out single-handedly, then an external agent is needed to take on one or some of these tasks (Conroy, 2005). As discussed earlier, the relationship between third sector organisations and the state is understood to be a result of broad privatisation discourse (Hartman, 2005; Nowland-Foreman, 1998), and the response has been a process of governments contracting-out welfare activities to third sector organisations. This process views State funders as being facilitators of social welfare (Everingham, 2001), in that they retain the right to choose which ‘types’ of services are funded (and thus financially viable), and the organisations and target populations who receive financial support. Parallels may be found in philanthropic relationships where similar top-down accountability processes are apparent, especially given the same format used to judge social enterprises which was also applied to a university research centre. In the case of this research, positioning the partner organisation (university academics) as external enables the funder to transfer accountability outwards, while maintaining control over resources and overall design of the program.

Although the barriers faced in forming closer relationships with the corporate partner were unfortunate given their divergence from collaborative principles, the impact on the field work was perhaps more serious. These issues may indeed be reflective of the standard modus operandi of research partnerships between corporations and universities, whereby critical management theorists have argued that researchers can easily assume the role of being expert “clients” of the funder. However, it is clear that the imbalanced nature of this developing relationship meant that greater efforts could have been made to facilitate closer ties. The academic research group could have sought greater clarity of the nature and responsibilities within the relationship. As such, early planning would have needed to extend beyond the standard questions of ownership, reporting and timelines. Furthermore, as Stringer (2007, p. 42) had outlined, effective collaborations must also endeavour to ‘stimulate stakeholders’ interest and inspire them to invest their time and energy’. If such efforts were made during the preliminary phase, subsequent barriers experienced in the early stages of fieldwork may have been minimised.
8.3.3 Access to Participants and Research Sites

Throughout the course of this research, the external partners exhibited stark differences in their approach to the field work. The discussion of engaged research partnerships within the field of action research invariably describes processes and issues located when working alongside marginalised or powerless groups, and these negative outcomes which arose within the research partnerships were often felt by the community co-researchers (Jacobs, 2010; Smith, et al., 2010). This research project differs in that two separate partners were engaged, whereby one possesses considerably more economic and political power than the other. As such, the complexities of balancing between the expectations and style of approach proved to be a consistent challenge. Although analysis provided by Savan (2004, p. 382) had arisen from a community-university perspective, she pointed out a reality that is of clear pertinence to our experience within this research:

Research collaboration is never easy, and the difficulties of different agendas, competing interests and priorities are exacerbated when partners are based in very different cultural contexts.

Comparing the experiences of working with each funder during the field work stage indicated divergent expectations, personalities, cultures and discourses, specifically around the notion of “partnership”. The question of access proved to be a major point of difference between the two sectors. For instance, it soon became apparent within the research group that planning, implementing and analysing surveys in the non-profit sector is replete with practical constraints (Berry, Arons, Bass, Carter, & Portney, 2003). The sheer size of the community sector, (whereby current estimates place the number of organisations at up to 600,00032), combined with a lack of public directories listing third sector organisations which engage in philanthropic relationships, meant that external assistance in generating a research sample was necessary. A difficulty in achieving a representative sample was acknowledged in the annual non-profit survey conducted in Australia, where the peak body who undertook this task

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32 This estimate is derived from the Productivity Commission report titled *Contribution of the not-for-profit sector* released in 2010.
continues to rely upon word-of-mouth, existing organisational networks and membership lists for participant recruitment (ACOSS, 2011). Similar problems have been experienced in Australia with regard to surveying corporations that are active in community engagement (Zappalà & Adams, 2010).

In addressing these shortcomings, the community sector partner was instrumental in the success of the survey research, through the compilation and provision of existing NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) funded organisation lists. These lists included the names and contact numbers of local community organisations in the Western Sydney area, and in doing so, provided a population group through which the research was able to achieve its target sample of one hundred organisations. The corporate sector partner did not provide similar contact information of relevant corporate entities, but instead directed the academic steering committee to utilise public information found within the *Philanthropy Australia* website. It was found that the different approach and quality of engagement between the corporate and community industry partners had an impact upon our capacity to adequately complete survey research. As a result, it was possible to complete one hundred community sector surveys over a short period of time, but only five corporate surveys were successfully accomplished. The presence of gatekeepers and other contextual factors also combined to limit the capacity to achieve the desired sample of corporate participants.

### 8.3.4 Working through Corporate Gatekeepers

Online lists of corporations that advertised highly developed CSR programs were useful in identifying possible participants. However, gaining access to key decision-makers in the corporate sector proved a major challenge. This experience in many ways reflected others’ claims that researching within organisations is often dependent upon the cooperation of key gatekeepers who have the ability to ensure the success (or failure) of the research (Bryman, 1988; Stringer, 2007). The experience of this research found that barriers posed by gatekeepers were particularly apparent when attempts were made to gain access to decision-makers within corporate institutions (Tombs & Whyte,
Notably, similar impediments were not experienced in efforts to research the community sector. While it can be expected that difficulties may arise in researching the context of white collar and corporate crime (Tombs & Whyte, 2007), the barriers faced throughout this research was somewhat unexpected to the academic group. Indeed, this research was designed to provide corporate participants an opportunity to give insight into the positive experiences and related barriers faced when working alongside community sector organisations. Moreover, the outcomes of this research were designed to generate a “best practice” model to help facilitate effective community-corporate engagement.

It became clear that many corporate sector gatekeepers were less concerned with social outcomes than in protecting the interests, processes and culture of the institution from external review (Sieber, 1992). This realisation was confirmed by one corporate representative, even after access was gained during the early stage of interview field work. Upon the close of this interview, the participant (an executive officer) offered a rather tongue-in-cheek apology for failing to provide more dramatic information ‘that you probably wanted to publish’ (BF-2). In doing so, the participant revealed a common realist misconception where the objectives and analysis of qualitative research were confused with the motives and processes of investigative journalism (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). While this interaction was likely to be reflective of the specific participant’s assumptions of social research, it led to a rethink of approach within the research group, leading to efforts to establish greater rapport with the corporate sector participants engaged. A constant challenge to the research group was in balancing efforts to build trusting relationships while maintaining a focus on the critical and practical goals.

Aside from overcoming wariness of external researchers, another barrier to academic access was attributed to wider background factors relating to timing and social context. In 2009, when the surveys and interviews were conducted, targeted organisations were often faced with internal upheaval resulting from the GFC. This point was made overtly on a number of occasions by personal
assistants and secretaries, resulting in difficulties getting through to the “appropriate” corporate representatives. The seriousness of the GFC on the corporate sector was starkly evident when access was flatly denied, namely on two occasions due to the corporate institutions facing imminent bankruptcy. However, as dramatic as these examples appear, they proved to be apparent only in a minority of cases.

These insights reveal the politics inherent to gaining access to research sites. It became clearly apparent that the process of ‘cold calling’ businesses (i.e. approaching participants out of the blue) would be an extremely time consuming and intensive process (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). The lack of personal contacts and assistance from the project’s corporate industry partner in establishing rapport and access with the target population (Sieber, 1992), meant that considerable persistence was required in recruiting the desired number of participants to interview\(^\text{33}\). Interestingly, the fact that the research was co-funded by a corporate sector institution reassured those managers who were initially recruited to participate in interviews. Once a small number of well-known corporations and trusts were recruited into the research, it was found that listing those who were already taking part to other potential participants significantly reduced the level of scepticism directed towards the research. In some cases, a corporate representative exhibited significant interest in taking part once it was learned that a competitor institution was already participating. The subsequent recruitment of a research assistant who was able to successfully “pitch” the research to potential corporate participants greatly aided this process.

8.4 Opening up New Lines of Inquiry through the Interview Process

In contrast to complexities experienced in the preliminary and survey phases, the interview fieldwork proved to be a highly effective mode of data generation.

\(^{33}\) As outlined in chapter five, surveys on corporations were scrapped altogether due to persistent difficulties in gaining access to key participants over the phone. In most cases, only face-to-face interviews could be arranged.
Much of this success is attributable to early planning, whereby the role and approach I adopted as the interviewer was discussed at length with members of the academic advisory group prior to the field work. There was good reason for discussing this role, particularly with reference to the applied social contexts within which research of this kind is conducted. Kvale and Brinkermann (2009) noted that the interviewer constitutes the central instrument of interview research, often acting as a major force in defining the tone, scope and overall quality of the “conversation”. As such, a number of elements have been proposed that helped to differentiate between effective and ineffective interviewers. For instance, it has been deemed important that interviewers are able to employ their own judgment in deciding between different forms of questions, dialogues and further exploration as the situation necessitates (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 166) further argued:

A good interviewer knows the topic of the interview, masters conversational skills, and is proficient in language, with an ear for his or her subjects’ linguistic style. The interviewer should have a sense for good stories and are able to assist the subjects in the unfolding of their narratives. The interviewer must continually make on-the-spot-decisions about what to ask and how, which aspects of the answer to follow up – and which not; which answers to comment on and interpret; and which not.

Due to the intricacies of qualitative interviewing, it was decided that no interviews would be carried out by the research assistant who contributed during the earlier survey phase. The task required sufficient understanding of philanthropy, CSR, community-corporate engagement, community development and corporate strategy, which was not expected of someone within an external RA position. Moreover, being the sole interviewer led to a higher degree of standardisation to questioning and conversational dynamics – thus minimising the impact of the research due to variations in participant feedback.

Applying this specific approach to interviewing was not chosen solely to enable comparisons to be made on a structured set of questions. For instance, the process of initiating each interview by asking the respondents to speak about their own experience and some basic organisational attributes served to “break
the ice”, prior to covering more detailed and conceptual territory (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In terms of the research analysis, asking background questions also revealed a considerable amount of institutional and ideological information concerning the interviewee (i.e. the wider social context of the text). For instance, some of the interviewed managers from community organisations detailed their previous professional experience within the for-profit sector (C-5, C-6 and C-15). These experiences often corresponded with entirely different attitudes and assumptions towards corporate-community engagement, when contrasted with insights of managers who had not worked beyond their own sector. These insights were useful in enabling a better grasp of the subjective positions, or stance, of the interviewee, and the discourse drawn upon in representing social processes or events (Fairclough, 2003). Such background insights were also crucial in examining the degree by which isomorphic tendencies pervaded third sector organisations. As noted in Chapter Three, the increased presence of a highly qualified workforce in the third sector context may indeed be reflective of either mimetic processes, or normative pressures within and upon organisations to “professionalise” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b).

Other strategies which were adopted to ensure interview success included the manner of presentation, learning the language of the respondents (often achieved through researching about the organisation’s activities beforehand), therefore gaining trust and establishing rapport (Fontana & Frey, 2005). These strategies were employed even so far as dressing in specific clothing according to the interview environment. For instance, formal business wear was worn during interviews with corporate participants, whereas less formal attire was worn for interviews with community sector managers. Fontana and Frey (2005) found that the impression given by the interviewer leaves a “profound” impact on the respondent and thus was influential in the success of an interview. Experiences within this research would similarly suggest that interviewees are more likely to engage if the research either has the appearance of an “insider” or is presented as comfortable within the respondent’s organisational culture. As noted earlier, gaining access to these different environments and building trust proved to be a major impediment during the interview stage. The
dynamics involved when interviews were conducted with business managers was particularly problematic, as Easterby-Smith et al (2012, pp. 76-77) had also noted:

Managers are usually in a position where they can easily decline to provide information for researchers; they are also adept at handling face-to-face interviews and at managing interactions with strangers. In such circumstances they are fully aware of the significance of information and the importance of determining what it might be put to, and by whom.

While corporate managers have been identified to hold considerably more power than other participant types within qualitative social research, there is also the possibility that such an attribution is alternatively reflective of assumptions held by researchers and of wider society. An assumption certainly developed in this research of which community organisations were presumably weaker parties in cross-sector relationships, a perception largely informed by the social justice orientation of the research group. The more active engagement of the community sector partner in the research, also led to a close identification with the needs, wishes and perceived inequities experienced by community participants. This association may have been reinforced by both the academic group and community sector partner holding similar discomfort at being required to succumb to “top-down” administrative processes in return for funding. Punch (1994) noted that, as is particularly common in qualitative research, close involvement in a specific setting can lead to full identification with one sub-group over others. Given the possibility that this close involvement and possible antagonism of one party over another may ’close doors to further research’ (Punch, 1994, p. 93), care was required in order to maintain a conscious level of objectivity and rigour. Throughout the field work, an uneasy tension was often felt in the need to balance between individual political stances within the research group, while maintaining loyalty to the pragmatic objectives set out to benefit both sectors – not just one. Having a steering committee was very effective in this regard, as focus was consistently shifted towards the social and academic objectives of the research.
8.5 The Search Conference as a Pragmatic and Analytic Tool

8.5.1 Issues with the Traditional Search Conference Format

Benefits and limitations were found in the capacity of search conferencing to meet the research objectives. Some features found to be standard in earlier search conferences run in Australia were replicated within this event. For example, Emery and Purser (1996) strongly recommended limiting search conferences to 20-35 attendees. The maximum number of thirty-five participants attended this event. The first session was structured around an introductory plenary. As the sponsor of the event, the executive officer of the community peak body, in collaboration with an academic from UWS, assisted by ‘presenting an overview of objectives, roles, structure, process, timetables, and essential details of the meeting’ (Emery & Purser, 1996, p. 222). However, the approach taken was considerably different to the format proposed by Emery and Purser (1996), through its role in informing participants both in the lead-up and during the event.

Prior to the search conference, the academic researchers sought to integrate key points of contention and inequity located during the interviews into a discussion paper. Although Emery and Purser (1996) considered briefing papers and individual presentations unhelpful to the purposeful action-oriented aims of search conferences, it was felt that provision of analysis from phases one and two, along with case examples, were crucial to the success of the final phase. Planning in the lead-up to the search conference concerned, in large part, a focus on translating the highly conceptualised analysis of interview data into a language that would suit the predominantly non-academic participant group. Indeed, Mills (1959, p. 239) had astutely noted some time ago that ‘a turgid and polysyllabic prose does seem to prevail in the social sciences’, and discussions within the research steering committee highlighted that replacement of community-based or business language with an academic form would be as equally exclusionary. The ability to meet the research objectives was dependent upon the role played by research instruments such as the discussion paper spurring participant engagement and open dialogue. As such, plans were made
to minimise use of academic jargon and overly technical language so to avoid excluding corporate and community representatives from actively participating in the action research process.

Although a key contact within the corporate partner institution assisted with the planning of the search conference, all requests for participation during the actual event were declined. The absence of a representative from the corporate side of the research partnership was received negatively within the academic research group (as well as among other corporate participants), and reinforced a perception that their level of interest and perceived ownership of the research was low. To some members, their absence was interpreted as a continued strategy in order to maintain their position as being “above critique” within the research process. Although this hypothesis was never fully verified, the absence of a corporate partner in attendance resulted in further differentiation with traditional search conference formats. Indeed, Emery and Purser (1996) maintained that success of their model is dependent upon those in authority or management positions to work alongside other less powerful representatives of an organisation or system in seeking alternative futures.

8.5.2 Power Relations among Search Conference Participants

Search conferences are designed to provide a communicative space where alternative futures and purposive action is facilitated (Emery & Purser, 1996). While the third phase of research was designed to reflect these emancipatory ideals, analysis provided in Chapter Seven revealed the degree by which power permeated the interactive process. Rather than separating individuals from a colonising discourse of the system (Habermas, 1987), it was found that institutional and ideological assumptions were deeply ingrained within group discussions. This analysis reveals that communicative action is reliant upon both knowledge of the discourse held by others, as well as a capacity for an individual to self-reflect and identify the ideologies within their own language use and thought processes. Some participants during the search conference were demonstrably able to achieve such ends, while others were not.
The different genres and styles located in “micro” analysis of the various breakout groups revealed that discourse was not just reflected in utterances or statements. Many representatives alternatively performed various strategic, ethical or community discourses to others within the group, revealing the degree by which individuals are embodied by the institutional, political and cultural contexts within their respective professional fields. For example, both the representatives from the bank and local community development organisation consistently drew upon unique linguistic and semiotic strategies that reflected a strategic IDF and activist IDF respectively. The former of the two spoke and interacted as a “corporate funder”, whereas the latter participant often performed the role of an “agitator” who openly stated prior to the event, a specific intention to hold corporate assumptions to account. To these participants, the objectives of the search conference were reinterpreted through their own specific IDF. This finding reveals the extent to which the philosophy behind search conferences, which assumes that participants contribute as interested individuals rather than professionals within discursive structures, ignores the hidden nuances of power and the way discourse informs action.

The search conference format was greatly limited in its ability to achieve the goal as a conduit for open communicative dialogue and wider systemic change. However, by locating this limitation, an alternative and important benefit of this format is highlighted. The strength of the search conference was in its role as a participatory research process, through which discourses, personalities and interests were laid bare and open to analysis. Furthermore, a rather fascinating finding was located in the different forms of dialogic structures, discourses and resources between different participant groups. For example, discussions which took place among community sector managers emanated predominantly through lively dialectic debate. Within these dialogues, participants were more open to examining issues through a variety of genres (argument, planning, storytelling), styles (interweaving between assertive, thoughtful, and facetious semiotic approaches) and discourses (alternating between entrepreneurial, strategic and social justice principles and perspectives), often resulting in a
communicative process very similar to that which had been proposed by Habermas (1984, 1987). Conversely, the involvement of the three corporate managers during the search conference resulted in the emergence of a different set of intergroup dynamics. Aside from one participant from an “ethical” business who engaged quite similarly to community sector participants, the remaining two corporate participants approached discussion through a more instrumental style. This minority group was initially successful in steering the scope and style of discussion. Nonetheless, over the course of the two break-out group sessions, assumptions centred on strategic discourse faced increasing challenges (often quite successfully) from participants of both sectors. As revealed in this analysis, a richer exploration of relationships between community and corporate sector participants was made possible that would have otherwise remained obscure through traditional research methods.

However, far from being yet another unique tool for academic analysis, the search conference provided a number of benefits to participants in attendance. Representatives from both the community and corporate sectors provided positive feedback after the event, lauding its role as a useful learning experience. Furthermore, by giving participants the ability to further explore, probe and critique common points of contention on their own terms, a process of denaturalising hegemonic discourse was commenced and opportunities for resistance were made possible. At the very least, breakout groups were approached by participants with considerable enthusiasm and purpose, revealing its success as a dynamic mode of participant engagement (Emery, 1995).

To others, the day-long conference revealed the different use of language between the community and corporate sectors and its role in constituting relationships. Interactions during the final plenary session highlighted the importance of opening up the process of discourse analysis in action research contexts. Although there is a tendency within both sectors to prioritise action over talk, Weick (2004, p. 406) argued that it is incumbent upon researchers in the field of discourse analysis to assist practitioners to ‘be less casual about
their talk when they strive to organize more effectively. It is further contended here that the search for social justice alternatives in the field of community-corporate engagement requires a deeper understanding of both language and ideology in order to break through some of these hidden power structures.

8.5.3 Wider Effectiveness and Impact of the Engaged Research

The participatory structure of this research was not solely concerned with the capacity to analyse social practice and locate areas of inequity. This study has sought to synthesise two streams of action research, whereby it is effective as a problem-solving tool to groups and organisations, while also working towards wider conscientization and empowerment (Brown & Tandon, 2008). Involvement of participants in developing the final product of the research was thus inherent to the philosophical and ethical foundations of PAR. Such involvement was sought during the final session of the research conference, at which point participants were asked to provide feedback on a proposed “tool kit”.

Although originally designed to facilitate more effective engagement between the community and corporate sectors, most of the feedback generated during the search conference had come decidedly from the community side. As such, the academic group was directed to clarifying key points of confusion experienced by community organisations, while providing new resources to assist those struggling to break into the field of community-corporate engagement. While, the final resource was designed to fulfill this criteria (see Appendix Eight), the low level of interest exhibited by corporate sector participants in this final product limited the scope of this publication. It has been argued that when commitment is lacking among key partners within a network, they are far less likely to share know-how and act upon any recommendations made (Buttery, Fulop, & Buttery, 1999). It remains possible that the low commitment exhibited by most corporate participants in the final
phase\textsuperscript{34} limited the overall effectiveness of the search conference to live up to its change-oriented ideal.

\textbf{8.6 The Benefits and Limits of Generalising Applied Knowledge}

It is important to briefly discuss the role and limits of generalisation in this research. As is often the case, an uneasy tension is apparent within action research between the traditional benchmarks of worthwhile knowledge, and the process and action-oriented goals which appear to contradict the core tenets of social science. Writers within the field of action research, such as Springer (2007), have argued that this form of engaged enquiry focuses not on generalised explanations at all, but specific situations and localised solutions. Although less prescriptive, Gustavsen, Hansson and Qvale (2008) reflected upon the complexities of researching social patterns through such a localised, context-specific approach. In traditional research, these complexities are usually circumvented through theory – a process found by action researchers to be insufficient in understanding the nuances of localised cultures and processes (Gustavsen, et al., 2008). In contrast to such wariness toward generalisation, this research sought to move beyond solely providing context specific analysis by locating wider points of commonality within the field of Australian community-corporate engagement. To approach this rather ambitious task, the multi-phased research method employed both qualitative and quantitative tools to enable a wider grasp of experiences, interests and discourses underpinning these relationships. Greenwood and Levin (2005) had similarly sought to reframe generalisation away from a ‘rule-based interpretation’, instead towards an inter-contextual approach to knowledge generation. In this case,

\ldots generalization becomes an active process of reflection in which involved actors must make up their minds whether the previous knowledge makes sense in the new context or not and begin working on ways of acting in the new context (Greenwood & Levin, 2005, p. 55)

\textsuperscript{34}This low commitment was observable by four of the seven corporate participants leaving before the breakout groups were set to commence.
The debates and dialogues facilitated through the action research process provided a framework where participants were able to accept or reject generalised statements and broad assertions about the field of community-corporate engagement. However, analysis provided in this thesis located numerous cases of ideological assertions which were presented as objective “facts”. The subversive nature of power and discourse within this field has added further complexity in attempts to reach generalised conclusions based on the subjective experiences of participants. In response, it is argued that drawing upon both participant and researcher reflexivity, in conjunction with more distanced critical discourse analysis, has presented a useful way of advancing both social validity and rigour within the research findings.

Nevertheless, the absence of a representative sample further impeded the capacity to make broad generalisations within this research. While trends and commonalities were identified within the research sample, the experience of third sector organisations was limited primarily to those within the Sydney, Western Sydney and the Newcastle regions. Further research will be necessary to examine whether similar experiences are evident for organisations situated in other Australian states, and regional and rural areas in particular. This research also prioritised the role of businesses and corporate trusts in major metropolitan areas. However, the relatively small sample of corporate sector institutions, and broad spread of institutional types, poses additional limitations on the findings. Considerable differences may be apparent for small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and those operating outside of major business districts.

8.7 Post-Script to the Research

In discussing the research process and findings, various limitations and complexities have been raised. While these points highlight the “messy” nature of PAR, it is important to note the enduring impact of the engaged research process. For instance, widespread interest of this research was received particularly among peak bodies within the community sector. Highly positive response to the research was gained following a presentation of these findings.
during the 75th Anniversary NCOSS Conference held in late 2010. Furthermore, the development of a resource handbook designed for community organisations interested in cross-sector partnerships was effective on a number of other levels. Publicity generated through its launch had firstly resulted in a wider than expected dissemination or research findings. This exposure was particularly pronounced in the publication of a blog reporting various findings on a popular Australian research website. Aside from reaching a nationwide audience of community, corporate and academic practitioners, the blog reignited debate about the value and importance of small organisations in Australian civil society:

Whilst they may fail to meet the Treasury test of ‘economically significant’, small organisations are often vital at the local level. They deliver low-cost support and services to disadvantaged clients and in the process help to build the networks of social capital that create communities (Shergold, 2012, para 2).

This article also highlighted three key areas that could differentiate local community groups from larger charitable organisations in the eyes of corporate funders. These areas were the value of neighbourhood, the sense of authenticity and the power of small-scale (Shergold, 2012), thus reframing attention to the positives and potential alignment of community philosophies with corporate supporters. In response to the release of this blog, a number of local peak bodies and municipal councils expressed interest in facilitating greater awareness of the opportunities and barriers to corporate engagement. The further application of the research through creation of a new state-funded intermediary position within the community industry partner also poses further opportunities for more lasting, practical application of the applied research beyond the academic setting.

8.8 Conclusion
The process of conducting engaged research has been one of complexity, contradiction and tension. However, despite the multiple issues that emerged throughout this process, a reflective analysis provided in this chapter revealed
how collaboration with external partners and the multi-phased method employed in this project was highly effective on a number of levels. From an academic standpoint, the combined use of a PAR format and critical discourse analysis within this research enabled a highly detailed picture to emerge of what lies behind the rhetoric of community-corporate relationships. Complexities experienced in attempting to engage more closely with both sectors also opened up the academic research group to unique insights into the uneasy role CSR plays within the corporate sector, and issues community organisations faced in gaining access to the corporate decision-makers. Perhaps even more fascinating was the close parallels exhibited between the academic group with external funders and community organisations with corporate supporters. Many of the issues, complexities and power relations located within the collaborative structure of the research were found to mirror the power imbalance and frustrations felt by dependant parties within wider cross-sector relationships. These insights provide further strength to the argument that this field of study is replete with inequity and thus requires further critical exploration. In spite of the difficulties experienced in undertaking this applied research, the clear value in doing research in this way was affirmed by the positive reception of community organisations to the participatory method and research findings. The ongoing engagement of practitioners in a process of learning and reflection stands as testament to the validity and significance of PAR as a power tool for the pursuit of socially just ends.
Chapter Nine

Reflections and Conclusions:
Neo-liberalism, Corporate Strategy and Alternative Futures
9.1 Introduction

An understanding of historical processes helps one realise that the present social, economic and political system, with its injustice, inequity and loss of community, is a relatively recent phenomenon, and that major change is not only possible but is normal and inevitable. (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006, p. 345)

This thesis has sought to critically explore the contextual arrangements concerning community-corporate engagement, and to uncover the hidden relations of power within this emerging field. One core component to the undertaking of this study was to outline how concepts central to this area of inquiry – such as philanthropy, CSR, community and civil society - have undergone considerable evolution. However, the evolution of these terms is by no means presented as natural, linear or devoid of controversy. Rather, as Ife (2006) had noted, they reflect ever-changing assumptions about how society best operates and the role of institutions within this context. Indeed, this thesis supports the standpoint that there is not anything inevitable about the current neo-liberal framework which presently underpins relations between the community and corporate sectors.

From this stance, research was conducted to further examine the nature and variability of power relations and IDF's that currently regulate community-corporate engagement, and the degree by which the associated motivations, processes and structures are open to contestation. As reflected upon in Chapter Eight, the applied methodology of PAR, combined with the framework of CDA proposed by Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010), has presented new critical insight into community-corporate partnerships. Many of these inequities are similarly present within research relationships. In this chapter, a reflection is provided on the implications of the findings on future research and applied practice.

It is argued that a deeper understanding of the unconscious and hidden ideological processes does hold the possibility to emancipate practitioners from overly restrictive and oppressive “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 1972). This point is as relevant to hegemonic discourses in the community sector as it is to
their equivalents in the corporate sector. Moreover, adopting an historian view of these wider social forces holds the capacity to expand the scope of possibility available to those wishing to advance the cause of social justice – irrespective of their place within the community or corporate sectors.

9.2 Marketisation, Destabilisation and Survival in the Third Sector

As Chapter Two explored, the history of the Australian third sector has been typified by a shift from a charitable or volunteer genesis to its gradual position as uneasy partners with government in the provision of welfare. Within this arrangement, ‘the community sector had a role, nominally separate but functionally articulated in relation to the State’ (McDonald & Marston, 2002a, p. 2). While often being far from harmonious, these relationships experienced a level of stability in the post-war years on the back of a political, social and economic context that Hobsbawm (1995) described as ‘The Golden Age’. The economic and subsequent political crises in the 1970s resulted in several major policy shifts, culminating in the devolution of the Australian welfare state especially during the 1980s and 1990s. Along with the increased permeation of neo-liberal discourse, these shifts resulted in the rearticulation and repositioning of community sector activities (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). As outlined in the literature review (Chapter Three) and supported through analysis of results (Chapter Seven), concurrent to the infusion of market rationality in the provision of welfare (typified by the increasing reliance on a competitive tendering model of governance), has been the growing myth of institutionalisation, a myth further strengthened through the discourse of neo-managerialism (Keevers, et al., 2008; McDonald & Marston, 2002a; O’Shea, 2007). Within this context, community organisations are presented with little choice but to compete within a marketised welfare environment (Le Grand, 1991), and are further challenged to adopt new approaches, discourses and institutional forms to ensure their survival (O’Shea, 2009). As McDonald and Marsden (2002a) reflected, this process has led to the destabilising of organisational identities within the third sector, whereby different
organisational forms vie for a place as the ‘natural’ successor within the new discursive order.

Despite pressures to adhere to the tenants of new-managerialism, analysis presented in this study would certainly concur that the ‘community sector is currently engaged in a furious struggle to articulate a legitimate role in the nascent regime of welfare’ (McDonald & Marston, 2002a, p. 2). Indeed, the uneasy place experienced by organisations pursuing informal “grass-roots” activities and social justice philosophies has been located as a particularly troubling result of the wider systemic shifts. Far from being passive subjects to these pressures, many small community organisations were found in this research to have been active participants in a process of interpretation, resistance and transformation (O’Shea, 2007, 2009). However, beyond internal struggles, the research revealed that some organisations have sought to reposition themselves by locating and adapting to new trends within this shifting terrain. As noted in Chapter Three, social enterprises are presented as an example of a growing isomorphism, whereby new hybrid organisations – combining community and entrepreneurial discourses – have arisen in response to enduring tensions between community and market-driven discourses (Barraket, 2010). Rather than adopting these new forms and processes, some organisations have begun to look elsewhere for funding. The corresponding rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate philanthropy and community–corporate engagement in recent years has been represented as providing a new hope for the Australian welfare sector (Madden, 2006). It is within this context that corporate philanthropy and other forms of corporate support are perceived as the possible solution to pressures that threaten community sector organisations. At the very least they provide an opportunity for non-profits to build further financial sustainability within an increasingly uncertain funding environment (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008).

As further outlined in Chapter Three, community-corporate relationships have been depicted in Australia as offering a viable alternative in sustaining community sector activities, and enabling new creative solutions to be found for
enduring social issues (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008; Madden, 2006). However, these new relationships are not in themselves devoid of tensions and controversies. This analysis has shown that only certain segments of the third sector stand to benefit from a newfound interest in the business sector to become greater involved with “the community”. Previous research has conceded that larger community organisations retain a competitive advantage within this emerging inter-organisational context (Lyons & Zappalà, 2008), and while some thrive, other less marketable or “unsexy” non-profits lose out altogether (Edwards & Hulme, 2002). As this research has found, a form of compounded inequity exists where those larger, well branded and highly institutionalised organisations that prosper in the contractual funding environment between the third sector and the state, are also best placed to attract and maintain corporate partnerships. Being able to “speak the corporate language” (McQueen, 2004), and prioritise a “business case” for engagement (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2000), were found to be two significant requisites that enable non-profits to attract and secure higher levels of corporate support. The degree to which community-corporate relationships have become as ordered, structured, and entrenched as community-state interactions have become was far less clear. Given that corporate support in Australia remains in a somewhat emergent and developing stage (Madden, 2006), further exploration of the underlying assumptions, expectations and processes within this field is warranted.

This research had sought to redress part of this knowledge gap. However, analysis within this thesis has endeavoured to avoid embarking upon a process of exploration that implicitly perceived the motivations and “best practice” of cross-sector relationships as uniform and given. Nor was it assumed that corporate decision-making was standardised and that the language and discourses representing interactions was applied universally within the corporate sector. Rather, both the engaged research method and analytical framework assumed that discourse and power within this context was relational, insofar as corporate decision-making was reliant on dialectical relationships between different language systems, cultures, assumptions,
objects, genres, structures and processes (Fairclough, 2010). To instead present CSR and corporate partnerships as homogenous and permanent (i.e. universally moving from a philanthropic to integrative forms), would not only have sidestepped the potential diversity that exists, but it would leave unexplored the possibility that certain ideological viewpoints (or IDFs) are adopted and favoured over others. When hegemonic IDFs are naturalised as a set of objective rules or procedures (i.e. in the form of funding criteria, accountability measures, relationship guidelines, etc.), social action can all too easily slip ‘out of the political domain of contested ideas into the realm of given’ (McDonald & Marston, 2002a, p. 14). For researchers committed to the advancement of social justice principles, the possibility of further entrenching inequity by ignoring these covert processes, poses not only a theoretical problem, but an ethical one. From this standpoint, the research was conducted in a way that sought to denaturalise these underlying ideologies, discourses and structures within community-corporate relationships, and in doing so, expose the existing relations of power (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2010). In addition to exploring these factors, this research took on a more active role in facilitating open dialogue and discussion among key actors. It is through a critical analysis of community-corporate relationships within an engaged, multi-phase research method, that this study is able to make a unique contribution to existing knowledge.

9.3 Power, Control and Resistance in Community-Corporate Engagement

This research has emphasised many benefits in the establishment of greater links between the community and corporate sectors. Indeed, corporate sector support affords organisations greater financial sustainability while offering unique and valuable forms of knowledge, skills and expertise. Given the existing pressures on community organisations to adopt new standards of professionalism, being part of a cross-sector partnership may indeed build greater capacity for small organisations to do so without sidelining their core stakeholders. However, as discussed in Chapter Eight, various areas of inequity
have also found to exist within the field of community-corporate engagement. As revealed in this study, the balance of power within Australian cross-sector partnerships is clearly angled towards the interests of the corporate sector. Businesses and corporate trusts have been found to exert considerable control over how community engagement is defined, and which community causes, institutional types and specific activities are worthy of support. While these findings appear equivalent to the entrenched power relations located between the community sector and the State, a discussion of participant interactions during the search conference (Chapter Eight) provided an alternative glimpse into the way power relations function between the two participating sectors.

These findings hold significant implications to the field of community-corporate engagement. Participant interactions during the search conference revealed the contested nature of seemingly impenetrable discourses, whereby local organisations within the community sector are in a position to influence the discursive formation, and thus direction of community-corporate engagement. However, the capacity for single organisations – regardless of size – to resist the infiltration of strategic, competitive and other institutionalised discourses in this contested space appears unlikely. As analysis of the breakout groups revealed, participants were only able to resist, challenge and reframe debates through an active process of learning, reflection and democratic dialogue. It is in this space that a communicative rationality can take hold, replacing an instrumental rationality that leaves unchallenged the assumptions, contradictions and inequities of the current system.

This analysis certainly supports the argument that achieving this alternative rationality is dependent upon both researchers and practitioners reflecting ‘critically and self-critically’ on their roles within the ‘historically-formed culturally-discursive, social and material-economic fields that constitute the conditions of their practice and the situations and settings in which their practice is conducted’ (Kemmis, 2008, p. 135). At the very least, it is hoped that this research has begun such a process, whereby third sector practitioners in
the Western Sydney region are better equipped to identify and challenge the inequities faced within the field of community-corporate engagement.

9.4 Implications for Further Research

Although this research has added further clarity into the experiences, contradictions and tensions within the field of community-corporate engagement, this picture outlined is – at best – only partially complete. Indeed, the various limitations with the findings outlined in Chapter Eight support the need for further exploratory and critical research within this area. As with most action research studies, both the data and findings are largely context-specific (Stringer, 2007), resulting in difficulty transferring these findings to other communities and regions. However, the positive interest generated in the findings\textsuperscript{35} suggests this research has much wider resonance and value. It is strongly recommended that similar engaged research be conducted in other Australian regions in order to ascertain areas of commonality and difference in the experiences of local community sector groups and their corporate funders.

The unique histories, tensions and requirements experienced by certain organisational types also warrant more pin-pointed research. For example, the additional pressures and barriers that were experienced by representatives of Indigenous groups interviewed, both in gaining government contracts and corporate support, are deeply concerning. Similarly, it is asserted that the discourse of corporatisation deserves much greater academic and community scrutiny. Its implications in reconfiguring organisational objectives, processes and philosophies towards “the mainstream” (a shift which is inherent to corporatisation), is particularly stark for organisations representing CALD and other less “marketable” communities. Some may be able to strike a balance between two languages, but this is neither ideal nor possible in all situations (McQueen, 2004). More exploration is needed of the role and interpretations of philanthropy, CSR and CCI on specific corporate sectors (i.e. institutions within the field of law, accounting, banking, etc...), and whether differences in approach

\textsuperscript{35} At the time of writing this thesis, the community sector partner estimates that over 250 copies of the resource handbook have been distributed to third sector groups across Australia.
are apparent between the size and geographical location of such institutions. Wider research on corporate motives and processes should remain cognisant to shifts in discursive formations and structures, but there exists opportunities to examine the underlying nuances from a critical feminist perspective. As this research has found, the specific discourse permeating CSR not only holds relevance to corporate institutions and their immediate stakeholders, but also to third sector organisations and civil society more generally.

Nonetheless, traditional methods of research can only go so far in exploring the field of community-corporate engagement. Highlighting trends, interpreting experiences and developing theories are core to academic research, but it is also important that the generation of knowledge in this contested space is used to improve practice and reshape social relations for the better. While PAR clearly draws from a number of “radical” philosophies (Rahman, 2008), its purpose is inherently practical. Whether future PAR projects on community-corporate engagement pursue pragmatic or critical ends, this research supports the argument for practitioners from both sectors and the wider community to be meaningfully and ethically involved within the process of inquiry.

9.5 Final Comment: Enduring Inequities and Future Directions for Democratic Dialogue

This thesis has outlined ways in which various opaque concepts such as philanthropy, social responsibility and community become embedded and recast according to their specific social, cultural, economic, political and environmental milieu. CSR is currently afforded meaning within the context of neo-liberalism, which reaffirms corporate power while identifying “good causes” as those that correspond rather than contradict the principles of the ideological system. However, the relatively short history of the corporation has consistently revealed an uneasy tension with regard to its place in wider society. Corporate relationships with external stakeholders have been found to be largely reactive to internal and external pressures, leading to the current practice of CSR that resembles a synthesis of ethical and economic agendas. This
current formation is also likely to evolve further as values, dominant ideologies and public perceptions change.

Given the instability of CSR and philanthropy, the onus therefore is on communities and civil society to identify and highlight the inequities they face, and commence a process of renegotiation and reassessment. This reassessment need not be reserved solely for practitioners within the community sector, but should also involve corporate management, shareholders, consumers and employees within democratic dialogues. One starting point for change is policy. This research has located inequities apparent in the regulation of corporate giving (through the Corporations Act, 2001) and in the categorisation and provision of DGR status to locally-based community organisations. Indeed, the viability of organisations wishing to gain greater financial sustainability can all too often become impeded by an inability to fulfil the crucial requisites of corporate support. Beyond policy, the internal dynamics and processes within cross-sector relationships have been found to prioritise highly institutionalised and professionalised structures. The increased focus of accountability in strategic decision-making has seen the further shutting out of smaller, non-institutionalised groups from gaining funding. Indigenous and CALD organisations are further marginalised in the clamour for corporations to support “worthy” and “marketable” social causes. This thesis contends that such issues deserve a more central place within public debate.

As discussed by participants during the final session of the search conference, what may be required is the readoption of coalition-building, community organising and activist principles that were central to past successes of the third sector. As Ife and Tesoriero (2006) argued, efforts to re-engage with these co-operative and consensus-building structures pose a direct challenge to the joint neo-liberal tenets of competition and individualism. To practitioners facing the day-to-day pressures and demands of work within the community sectors, these tenets can all too often be perceived as the “reality” of practice within the modern Australian liberal welfare state. However, it is argued that by maintaining an historical awareness of the discursive and ideological changes,
workers in the third sector will be better equipped to see past seemingly insurmountable barriers they face in working for and with local communities (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). In some respects, signs are beginning to emerge of positive shifts already taking place. The drive toward interagency collaboration and development of regional coalitions is a major step in advancing greater cooperation. One current example may be seen in the advancements made by the Sydney Alliance, which seeks to open up new possibilities for local community groups – alongside larger charities and trade unions – to pool resources and embark upon a process of reflection and action towards a broad social justice agenda (Sydney Alliance, 2012). The capacity of these emerging structures to aid community workers in engaging openly and constructively with other powerful interest groups, such as governments and corporations, toward shaping a fairer civil society is reason for renewed optimism.
References


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Phone survey for representatives of community organisations

Date__________________

1. Name of organisation:_________________________________________________________

2. Name of respondent:___________________________________________________________

3. Position in the organisation:_____________________________________________________

4. What is the broad focus of your organisation?
   □ Personal and social support
   □ Family support
   □ Community development
   □ Childcare
   □ Training and employment
   □ Financial and material assistance
   □ Residential care and accommodation support
   □ Policy, service support and development
   □ Advocacy
   □ Other____________________________________

5. What is the yearly turnover of the organisation?
   □ Less than $100,000
   □ $100,000-499,999
   □ $500,000-$1,000,000
   □ More than $1,000,000

6. (a) Have you been involved in any partnerships with the corporate/business sector?
   □ Yes
   □ No

   (b) How many times has the organisation been in such partnerships?_________________

   (c) Are any of these partnerships current?
   □ Yes (Specify how many)____________________
   □ No

   (d) Have you made applications that have been unsuccessful?
   □ Yes
   □ No

7. How long has the organisation received corporate funding?
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ______

8. On average, what is the length of tenure of these funding partnerships?
   □ Less than 6 months
   □ 6 months
   □ 1 year
   □ 3 years
   □ Other________________________
9. Which corporations/businesses/trusts support your organisation?________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. Did your organisation approach the corporate donors for support or were you approached?________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. Did they require your organisation to meet certain criteria in order to obtain and/or maintain funding?

□ Yes
□ No

12. If so what were those criteria?________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. What is the nature of the support which is provided?

□ Direct financial support
□ Provision of corporate staff time to work in or for community organisation
□ Provision of corporate facilities (e.g. for meetings, seminars)
□ Information on other funding sources
□ Marketing assistance
□ Other____________________________________

14. Would you be willing to take part in an in-depth interview on community-corporate partnerships?

□ Yes
□ No

Phone/email:___________________________________

Interview date/time____________________________________

Website information (or brochure)__________________________
Phone survey for representatives of corporations/foundations/charitable trusts

Date__________________

1. Name of organisation:__________________________________________________________

2. Name of respondent:____________________________________________________________

3. Position in the organisation:_____________________________________________________

4. Is your organisation involved in philanthropic activities?
   □ Yes
   □ No

5. Are you involved in other types of community involvement or CSR activity that you would not
   consider as philanthropic?___________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

6. How would the organisation be categorised?
   □ Corporation/business CSR unit
   □ Ancillary Fund/Public Fund
   □ Private Charitable Trust
   □ Testamentary Trust
   □ Other______________________________________________________________
       ____________

7. How does your organisation define “philanthropic activity”, “community-corporate
   involvement” or “corporate socially responsible”?
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

8. When did your organisation become involved in philanthropic activities?
   ____________________________________________________________________________

9. In your philanthropic or social responsibility activities, does your organisation provide any
   support for community based activates or social enterprises?
   i. Yes (either or both?__________________________________________)
   ii. No

10. Are there threshold criteria organisations must meet to receive support?
    ____________________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________

11. Does the organisation support particular target group/groups (e.g. young children, the aged,
    the unemployed, the disabled, etc)? If yes, which groups?
    ____________________________________________________________________________

---

3 Ask for the definition of whichever they had indicated in questions 4 and 5. For instance, some organisations may
not categorise themselves as philanthropic but still undertake CSR activities.
12. What type of programs do you support?
   i. Personal and social support
   ii. Family support
   iii. Community development
   iv. Childcare
   v. Training and employment
   vi. Financial and material assistance
   vii. Residential care and accommodation support
   viii. Policy, service support and development
   ix. Advocacy
   x. Other ________________________________

13. How many community organisations do you support?
   i. 0
   ii. 1
   iii. 2-3
   iv. 4-5
   v. 6 or more (exact number________)

14. On average, how long do you provide support for a community organisation?
   i. Less than 6 months
   ii. 6 months
   iii. 1 year
   iv. 3 years
   v. Other ________________________________

15. Other than direct funding, does your organisation provide any other form of in-kind philanthropic support?
   i. Provision of staff time to work in or for community organisation
   ii. Provision of corporate facilities (e.g. for meetings, seminars)
   iii. Information on other funding sources
   iv. Marketing assistance
   v. Other ________________________________

16. Would you be willing to take part in an in-depth interview on community-corporate partnerships?
   i. Yes
   ii. No

   Phone/email: ________________________________

   Interview
date/time ________________________________

   Website information (or brochure) ________________________________
APPENDIX TWO

Community sector interview

Date: 
Time: 
Organisation: 
Name: 
Consent: 

Respondent and organisation:

1. Please tell me a bit about your history working in the community sector.

2. What is your current position in the organisation?

3. Outline the activities run through your organisation?

4. What are the aims of your organisation?

5. How do the activities of your organisation help to achieve these aims?

Funding and accountability

6. Where do you obtain the funding for these activities?

7. Is the amount of funding sufficient?

8. What has your experience been in dealing with the public sector in terms of funding?

9. What processes are involved in these funding arrangements? (Reporting?)

10. How do you view the issue of accountability? I.e. what is the ideal structure/approach to accountability systems? Who do you feel accountable towards?

Formation of partnerships with the corporate sector:

11. What led you to seek or accept corporate support?

12. How do partnerships with the corporate sector develop? (i.e. did your organisation approach the corporate donor for funds, or were you approached?)

13. Which corporations fund your activities?
14. For how long do these funding relationships usually last?

**Defining and measuring success of corporate sponsored activities:**

15. What are the expected benefits of the activities funded by the corporate sponsor?

16. What would be the factors that indicate success or otherwise of your organisations activities?

17. How do you measure the performance of these activities?

18. How effective are these processes in representing the performance of your activities?

**Defining and measuring success of partnerships:**

19. How successful are these funding partnerships in achieving your organisation’s aims?

20. What do you perceive to be the cause of the success or breakdown of these relationships?

21. What assists to maintain these relationships?

22. What factors impede these relationships?

23. Could you provide a case example of one successful partnership with a corporate donor? Why was this partnership particularly successful?

24. Could you provide a case example of one negative partnership with a corporate donor? Why was this partnership particularly problematic?

**General:**

25. In your opinion, what do corporations get out of forming partnerships with community organisations?

26. Does it matter who funds your organisations work? Is there a difference between corporate and community funding? Preference?

27. Where do you see the future heading for community organisations such as yours?

28. What government policies (if any) help or hinder these relationships?
Community sector interview
(For those not in corporate partnerships)

Date: 
Time: 
Organisation: 
Name: 
Consent: 

Respondent and organisation:

1. Please tell me a bit about your history working in the community sector.

2. What is your current position in the organisation?

3. Outline the activities run through your organisation?

4. What are the aims of your organisation?

5. How do the activities of your organisation help to achieve these aims?

Source of funding:

6. Where do you obtain the funding for these activities?

7. Is the amount of funding sufficient?

8. What has your experience been in dealing with the public sector in terms of funding?

9. What processes are involved in these funding arrangements? (Reporting?)

10. How do you view the issue of accountability? I.e. what is the ideal structure/approach to accountability systems? Who do you feel accountable towards?
Perceptions on corporate support and future in the sector:

11. Have you considered applying for corporate funds? If so why? If not, why not?

12. Why haven’t made applications thus far?

13. What are the main impediments to obtaining corporate funding?

14. Impact of not having DGR/PBI status?

15. How do you anticipate any future possible relationship with the corporate sector?

16. In your opinion, what do corporations get out of forming partnerships with community organisations?

17. Does it matter who funds your organisations work? Is there a difference between corporate and community funding? Preference?

18. Where do you see the future heading for community organisations such as yours?

19. What government policies (if any) help or hinder these relationships?
APPENDIX THREE

Corporate sector interview

Date: 
Time: 
Organisation: 
Name: 
Consent: 

Professional background

1. Please tell me a bit about your history working in the corporate sector.
2. What is your current position in the organization?

Why the institution is involved in philanthropy/charitable giving:

3. What do you think is meant by “corporate social responsibility”?
4. How do you understand the terms “philanthropy”, “charity” and “community-corporate involvement”? Are there differences?
5. Which of these best describes the way your organisation supports community based organisations?
6. Please describe the specific nature of this support (e.g. corporate donations, matching of staff donations, staff volunteering, other in-kind forms, etc…)
7. Why is your organisation involved in [philanthropic] activities?
   a. What social benefit is derived from these activities?
   b. What benefits accrue for your organization, and how important are these benefits?

How the corporation/trust chose the activities to be supported:

8. Do you have a grantmaking strategy? If so, please explain what this is.
9. How do these partnerships develop? (i.e. do you seek out community groups to fund, or are you usually approached by community groups?).
10. Which community activities do you target with funding or in-kind support?
11. Why do you target these activities in particular?

12. Are there community organisations that you will not support? Why?

**Defining and measuring success of community activities:**

13. What is meant by accountability?

14. What are the specific expected benefits of the activities you support?

15. What would be the factors that indicate success or otherwise of the community activities you fund?

16. How do you measure the performance of these activities?

17. How effective are community organisations in representing the performance of their programs/activities?

18. Would you like to see change in how community organisations account for their work?

**Representation of a successful/unsuccessful partnership**

19. Could you provide a case example of a successful partnership with a community organisation/social enterprise? Why was this partnership particularly successful?

20. Could you provide a case example of a negative/problematic partnership with a community organisation/social enterprise? Why was this partnership particularly problematic?

21. What assists to maintain these relationships?

22. What factors impede these relationships?

**Other general**

23. What government policies (if any) help or hinder these relationships?
APPENDIX FOUR

Breakout Groups – Session One

SCENARIO 1:

You are a “Young Women’s” referral and support service – a small not for profit community group based in a lower social economic located on the periphery. Most of your clients are women predominantly aged under 25, most have not completed education beyond year 10, have more than one child not in school, are embedded in a cycle of domestic violence, and have or continue to struggle with drug abuse.

You help access a range of services including counselling, crisis and long-term accommodation, health care and education. Your organisation has been operating on a budget of 95K per year, accommodating wages for one full time worker and one part-time worker, rent of premises, and admin and infrastructure. All funding has come from government – each year the manager spends 2 full weeks developing applications for the forthcoming year and acquittals for the past financial year. Much of this work is done in the Manager’s own time since staffing resources are low.

You have received news that your budget will be cut by 30%. This is the second cut in the last year. The word is this trend will continue.

You have decided to approach the corporate sector - how would you go about developing an application and “promoting” your organization?

** PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.
SCENARIO 2:
You are a global bank with branches all over the world. As a bank, you have a functional and legal obligation to ensure you make a profit. However, part of your charter is to “give back” to the communities you operate in. Given that you are a global service provider, you have identified “community welfare” as a common concern.

You have recently become established in Australia and the bank’s foundation has developed a position for a “Community Programs Manager”. **You have the task of:**

- Defining criteria and priorities for funding.
- An accountability process
- Strategies for measuring outcomes and success.
- Enhancing social enterprise.

**PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.**

SCENARIO 3:
You are a large retail chain and have recently merged with another. In the process your company has been publicly listed and is now accountable to shareholders. You have a legal obligation to show you have taken every effort to create profit.

Before you became a publicly listed company you engaged in philanthropy and charitable giving. You were approached by a broad range of organizations and made a wide range of donations. Your shareholders have identified that “corporate social responsibility” is part of being a large company and have agreed to continue to allocate a percentage of profit to community welfare. However, shareholders have requested a more strategic approach be developed.

**As the manager of community programs you have been asked to develop:**
- A strategic process with a clear structure
- Criteria and expectations for organizations receiving funding.
- An accountability process that shows how money has been spent.
- Evidence that funding is productive for the company’s profile.

**PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.**
APPENDIX FIVE

Breakout Groups – Session Two

GROUP ONE

Please discuss and debate the following:

*If community welfare programs are going to survive in the future, they need to conduct themselves in a more ‘business’ like manner. They need to run as social enterprises and be financially sustainable.*

** PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.

GROUP TWO

Please discuss and debate the following:

*Corporate social responsibility (CSR) should be administered and regulated by government. Corporate involvement leads to too much inequality and private decision-making.*

** PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.

GROUP THREE

Please discuss and debate the following:

*What does it mean to be socially responsible? Where do you think that social responsibility should be directed? Who should be responsible for community welfare and philanthropy; clients, local/ state governments, executives, shareholders, or the community itself? Anyone else?*

** PLEASE SELECT A PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND REPORT BACK TO THE GROUP.
“Corporate Philanthropy, Social Responsibility and Community Welfare Organisations: Finding a common language”

Discussion Paper

16th February 2010
Search Conference
Sydney Mechanics School of Arts
280 Pitt Street, Sydney

Christopher Roffey
Michael Darcy
Debra Keenan
Maria Varua
Barbara Doran

Research support by Westpac Foundation and Western Sydney Community Forum
Over the past two years we have been studying relationships between local community welfare organizations and the corporate sector, and their understanding of each other. The overall objective of the research is to assist in the development of a “common language” for community organisations and corporations who either aspire to form, or who are currently involved in cross-sector partnerships. Our research has revealed many successful examples but also considerable areas of difference, contention and possible inequity. This paper draws on academic and industry papers, and on the findings of our own survey and in-depth interviews in Australia, to identify some of the outstanding issues, and to stimulate discussion and open dialogue between the sectors.

**Community-corporate partnerships in Australia**

Recent decades have seen a rise in the level and extent of business support for community based organisations in Australia (Cronin & Zappalà, 2002). Despite this emergence, only a small amount of research has been completed exploring the nature of emerging relationships between corporate and community sector organizations in this country. Drawing from data collected by McNair Ingenuity Research, Sargeant and Crissman (2006) put the total value of corporate giving in 2003-04 at $3.3 billion, with 67% of Australian businesses engaged in some form of philanthropic activity. While this contribution appears impressive, Sargeant and Crissman acknowledge that it is inflated due to increased media and social pressure on corporations to adopt a more charitable approach following the Pacific Ocean tsunami. Lyons (1999) found that corporate support for non profits takes on a range of forms, from money, goods and services to “loans” of staff. Notably, in Lyons’ study, larger companies supported different fields of non-profit activity from those supported by the smaller companies. A recent study on cross-sector partnerships indicates that smaller community organisations are far less likely to form collaborations with the corporate sector. This finding was thought to reflect “natural and ideological suspicion about the motives of businesses seeking to partner with them” (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008, p. vi). After interviewing many representatives of small community organizations over the past year, we would add “lack of resources” and “time constraints” as further pressures limiting the ability of small community organisations to form partnerships with potential donors from the business sector.

Some commentators have attempted to provide a theoretical framework for understanding community-corporate partnerships. McIntosh and Thomas (2002) developed a rudimentary typology of corporate-NGO relationships categorising them according to the stance and activity of the organisational participants, from hostile through facilitatory to participatory. Austin’s (1999)
collaboration continuum, on the other hand, categorises cross-sector partnerships in three stages from philanthropic to transactional and onto to integrative. The philanthropic stage represents basic financial donations or in-kind support, whilst transactional and integrative stages point to greater and more complex levels of cross-sector collaboration (see Table 1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Relationship</th>
<th>Stage I (Philanthropic)</th>
<th>Stage II (Transactional)</th>
<th>Stage III (Integrative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of engagement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance to mission</td>
<td>Peripheral</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of resources</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of activities</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction level</td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial complexity</td>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic value</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ‘developmental’ framework has been drawn upon in attempts to understand and categorise the Australian scene (Zappalà, 2007; Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008). The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2008) depicts more developed partnerships as those in which the missions of community organisations come into “alignment” with the strategy of the corporate supporter. Research has also shown that strategic approaches to social responsibility (termed as enlightened self-interest) are becoming more prevalent amongst the corporate sector in Australia, and this also reflects a move towards ‘integrative’ relationships. Despite holding a clear preference for integrative partnerships, Austin concedes that stark choices are involved in this “evolution”:

> Although our research suggests that there are significant collaboration gains to be had by moving to a high level of engagement, both in specific benefits accruing to the respective partners and in the social value added by the alliance, the effort and investment (i.e., the costs) to obtain those are greater. (Austen, 2000, p. 72).

Of course, the test of good theory is whether it helps us to understand real practices, and we must be very careful not to allow theoretical frameworks to define what ‘should’ happen as opposed to what does happen. A developmental framework for understanding corporate community partnerships carries the danger of suggesting that ‘integrative’ partnership is the highest and most desirable form – which might well reflect the hopes of the theorist rather than the realities of the practitioners. Typologies and continua may capture just one dimension of extremely diverse and
multidimensional relationships and often appear to give little consideration to the qualitative aspects (Peters, 2001; Edwards & Onyx, 2003). Continuous exploratory research and feedback is required, from the perspective of both sectors, to assess whether such typologies and frameworks are appropriate and desirable, and to avoid these pitfalls.

In the current project we have focused mainly on relationships that, in McIntosh and Thomas’s typology, fall within the facilitatory to participatory end of the spectrum. However, as outlined above, this poses more questions than it answers. The level of involvement between corporations and NGOs can vary from, at one end of the spectrum, being support provided through sponsorship of projects; product endorsement – fair trade eco labeling; company endorsement-codes standards certifications; sight or project dialogue – mediation, facilitation and impact assessments; strategy dialogue – as regards business issues; through to more participatory involvement such as joint project ventures – formal time limited partnerships; to ultimately strategic joint ventures – formal partnerships or alliances. This project aims to assist organisations in both sectors to develop more constructive partnerships.

The following sections outline some of the themes that emerged in surveys and in-depth interviews with both corporations and community-based organisations in Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle during the latter half of 2009. These themes reflect either trends in relationships or areas of contention and complexity experienced by study participants.

**Motives behind CSR: Is self interest driving corporate philanthropy?**

The academic literature tends to depict corporate social responsibility (CSR) through rather simplistic conceptual frames; as being either ‘economic’ (centering on shareholder interests), or ‘ethical’ (a much wider stakeholder focus), or based on a more recent “corporate citizenship” model2 (Windsor, 2006). However, feedback from in-depth interviews indicates that the state of CSR in Australia is considerably more complex than that described through the literature, although no less philosophically ambivalent. This was also reflected in feedback gathered by St James Ethics Centre and Ernst & Young, which found that while almost all major corporations advertised some form of CSR program, very few understood what social

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2 According to Windsor (2006), corporate citizenship asserts a more limited understanding of responsibility, concerning only those obligations that currently exist within the legal system. As with CSR, there are two broad undercurrents within corporate citizenship theory. Ideal citizenship with an emphasis on the expansion of moral duties and virtue; and instrumental citizenship which is seen as a strategic tool by which corporations develop reputation and gain further market opportunities (Windsor, 2006, p.99).
responsibility means and its relevance to their core business (cited in Gettler, 2004).

Despite this complexity, our discussions with executives indicate that, in practice, corporate social responsibility may have a tendency to progress from more ethical (or altruistic) motives towards being more instrumental in focus (centering on mutual benefit and economic gain) as more thought and organisational processes are applied to such activities. Thus, more developed CSR strategies often lead to funding being directed to either those organisations that fall in line with the perceived values of the corporation and its workforce, those with highly developed monitoring and reporting structures, or to organisations that embody and cater for the funder’s specific customer base. While some exceptions exist, it is unusual for a corporation to fund a wide variety of community organisations outside the business’s value focus, consumer base or geographical area. Greater variation occurs in corporations with employee directed giving programs (i.e. those corporations that match or exceed donations given by their workforce), where there is higher likelihood of smaller community-based organisations or more “political” NGOs (such as those with a human rights or environmental focus) being selected for funding. Nonetheless, organisations selected are by and large the more well known or “branded” community or welfare organisations.

An interesting trend to emerge out of the recent global financial crisis relates to changes in perceptions of social concerns. Corporate interviewees indicated a greater interest in social issues related to the negative impact of the economic downturn (for instance the increase in unemployment and poverty). In recent times, some businesses have actively redirected philanthropic support away from environmental causes to more welfare focused organisations.

Question: To what extent is philanthropy a “reactive” affair, and what is the long term impact of such changeability?

CSR in this context might be seen as seeking to either counter the negative impacts of a corporation’s activities (corporate footprint) or direct money to areas of greater public profile and media interest. Some participants, even in the corporate sector, have called for a more proactive approach to social responsibility where long term interest and wider social benefits are at the fore.

Question: Given the current trend toward more instrumental forms of cross-sector partnerships, how possible and/or desirable are more proactive approaches to corporate social responsibility?
Charitable trusts appear to view philanthropy differently from corporate CSR units, in that geography and customer base are lesser priorities in the selection criteria of which community organisations to fund. To trusts, community organisations that match their values are more desirable, although in such cases the ability to communicate exactly how the specific activities of the organisation might reflect those values is crucial. Not surprisingly, the prioritisation of values and vision results in a greater focus on proving the effectiveness of an organisation’s work through more or less developed outcome measurement and benchmarking procedures than those which are applied by most business CSR units.

**Are community organisations inefficient?**

The last point raises the issue of “efficiency” which emerged as a point of contention among interviewees, especially when corporations were asked questions on perceived limitations in dealing with the community sector. Here the critique of the community sector as inefficient was focused on two areas: [1] that community organisations are unable to effectively account for their activities and financial expenditure; and [2] that the sector as a whole is plagued with replication of services, and thus wasted resources.

The first was largely expressed as a preference for working with organisations which exhibit a centralised management structure, with clear accountability processes in place – characteristics often associated with larger, more “branded”, organisations. Small community organisations generally responded to this critique by pointing to the severe lack of time, resources and manpower to live up to funders’ expectations. Nonetheless, a small number indicated that this was a matter of “choice” and “organisational priority” rather than being an unreasonable request. According to many in this group, efficiency and “value for money” is best managed by ensuring that the bulk of organisational resources are directed to their core welfare and community development activities. Onerous accountability processes are even sometimes considered a threat to efficient use of resources. Further complexities lie in the manner of which community organisations represent their activities, which often differ significantly to how corporations prefer the same work to be represented and measured. Such issues relate to culture and language and will be outlined below.

The second critique is also one claimed to be shared by governments, which relates to the inherent waste in the apparent replication of community-based activities. To corporations the main problem lies in choosing between

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3 Some of these questions include “would you like to see change in how might community organisation account for their work?” and “what factors impede community-corporate relationships?”
the various community activities that, on face value, appear to be carrying out the same or a similar activity. Amalgamation of services appears to be the preferred policy response to this “problem” from both the state and corporate sectors. Community organisations resisting such moves were described by one participant as “ego kingdoms”, which is also tied in to perceptions of structural inefficiency and lack of accountability.

**Question:** Is such a critique justified, or is it oblivious to the intangible and highly specific nature of community-based activities? If so, how might community organisations uphold their autonomy and community focus while undergoing amalgamation?

**Defining sustainability**

The “capacity” and “sustainability” of community organisations also emerged as prominent themes in our in-depth interviews. Interestingly each sector appeared to define these issues quite differently. While sustainability was framed on both sides in economic/financial terms, each saw the end result of sustainability in ways which varied dramatically. Corporate notions of sustainability and community capacity building rest on philanthropy and other forms of support being view as an “investment” where the provision of money over a relatively short period of time would result in lasting effects to the wider community. Here corporate support provides a base of capital and knowledge to enable specific activities to run over the longer term without the “reliance” on recurrent funding. On the other hand, community sector respondents considered financial sustainability as the capacity to secure reliable and constant funding over the long-term. Frustration and disappointment was expressed by some within the community sector at the tendency of funders (both corporate and government) to only support activities over the short-term, specifically given the limited nature of funds available to smaller organisations together with the nature of work in the welfare sector. Community disenchantment (tied in, at times with perceived feelings of neglect) and wariness to future short-term funding opportunities, was often cited as a negative outcome of such approaches to funding.

**Question:** How might community organisations conduct their activities in a way that adequately serves their core community stakeholders, while continuing to prove financial sustainability to their corporate funders?
Is culture clash really an impediment to community-corporate partnerships?

A significant area of difference lay in organisational culture, more specifically, a perceived “clash of values” is often highlighted as a major impediment to community-corporate partnerships, and which is especially marked in the Australian context. Gray, Bebbington and Collision (2006) clearly define NGOs as autonomous, non profit-making, self governing and campaigning organisations with a focus on the “well being” of others. In contrast with both the public and business sectors, the stated purpose of community organisations is bound along “environmental and/or social goals rather than the achievement or protection of economic power in the marketplace or political power through the electoral process”. Difficulties arise in the perceived value of the social activity in question: who is able to define that which is worthwhile activity? and how best to measure the impact of such activity?

This difference was most starkly apparent in the way in which interviewees from each sector viewed community work and the rationale for such activity. Corporations expressed a wish to see funding going to those activities addressing the greatest need, and in a way that optimises “value for money”. A small number of community organisation representatives volunteered a considerable level of distaste in being required to represent their activities as such through submissions for funding and through reporting procedures. Community organisations on many occasions expressed a clear preference for “strengths based” approaches to community activity, where the aims and outcomes were judged accordingly to how best they build upon the existing strengths within the community rather than responding to community deficits expressed as ‘needs’ and defining their core stakeholder groups as “needy”.

Despite the preference for activities that prioritise “strengths”, many community sector interviewees indicated that representing their work through the discourse of need simply required a greater degree of creativity and imagination. Being able to speak in a way that corporations understood, while not entirely accounting for the broad spectrum of the activities, was seen by a number of participants as a reality that need not threaten the focus and mission of the community organisation. A small number of organisations clearly indicated that the language and approach presented to the corporate sector was significantly different to that presented in their work on the ground. Clearly, the community-based organisations more successful in gaining corporate support were those better able to shift between these “dual personalities”.

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Too much accountability or too little?

Community organisations are often accused of lacking appropriate standards of accountability (McDonald, 2000). In this context ‘accountability’ commonly has been assumed to take a single direction in principal-agent relationships whereby the “agent” must comply with a monitoring and evaluation structure as defined by the “principal”. The implications for such a top-down ‘culture transfer’ in Australia, has been increased demands for a corporate style of accounting; processes of internal review; benchmarking; the identification and meeting of organisation specific objectives; and requirements of open transparency (Conroy, 2005). Quite a number of corporate executives and community organisation managers interviewed through this research restated this critique, especially where success is to be measured through outcome-oriented and other financial processes. Community organizations, however, often rankle at the idea of not being principals in their own right, simply because they do not generate economic returns and often pointed to the considerable time and resources required to meet specific reporting expectations placed on them by government. A significant number in this group cite this as a motivation for turning to the corporate sector for assistance. However, as corporations and trusts increasingly view philanthropic and CSR activity as “investments” rather than “gifts”, it is becoming more common for corporate funders to expect or require community organisations to account for their activities through Net Present Value models, such as that of social return on investment (SROI). Some community organizations also struggle with the cause-effect concepts applied to their activities in SROI, and with the translation of social or community values into measurable ‘indicators’ or ‘outcomes’, and often expressed as financial returns or savings.

Question: How can community organisations uphold their unique culture while pursuing partnerships with corporations? What opportunities and limitations arise with this dual approach to representation?

Question: Given the complexity of values and expectations between the two sectors, what alternatives exist for community organisations to more effectively account for their activities? Are these alternatives desirable?

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4 This is also reflected in the tendency of those community organisations with more successful relationships with their state funding body to see little need for corporate support.
Interviews with corporate executives also raised questions in the mode of which philanthropic funds are distributed. Organisations with less developed CSR structures (i.e. those with motivations based on “altruism” over “mutual benefit”) tended to form partnerships through individual networks and “friends” – raising questions of inequity in the allocation of philanthropic funds.

**Is corporate funding “tainted” funding?**

A small number of community organisations have expressed cynicism towards corporate funding, a view fueled significantly by the public outcry in response to the global financial crisis. However, despite this only a small minority of those interviewed said they would refuse funding on those grounds. Usually, only extreme cases of “unethical” corporate behaviour were cited as grounds for exclusion on face value. Conversely, some community groups expressed a specific desire for funding from corporations and other bodies with a history of social abuse, mismanagement and neglect. The general perception among community organisation managers was that it matters less where the money comes from, as the greater focus is paid to the impact which eventuates from the dedicated funding on organisational processes and their activities.

**Is corporate philanthropy inequitable?**

The processes through which philanthropic funds are distributed opens further questions concerning equity. While many in the community sector respond positively to the interest paid by corporations wanting to support “good causes”, the instrumental and discretionary nature of this interest (Banerjee, 2008) poses its own issues for community organisations. While the aims and motivations of CSR programs vary greatly, as do those community organisations and communities considered most “in need”, significant segments of the community sector are often left behind in the distribution of funds. Community welfare organisations who focus on broader philosophies such as community development and social justice, and the wider array of third sector organisations who simply fail to define their work through the umbrella category of “poverty alleviation”, often fail to win over corporate supporters. Further, the tendency of businesses to partner with more desirable organisations (for instance, those assisting a “marketable”

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5 Organisations focusing on Indigenous issues pointed to mining corporations and church groups as those that “should” be providing funding and investment. Here philanthropy is not considered discretionary but obligatory.

6 Organisations wishing to achieve the Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) tax status – a necessity in competing for philanthropic support – must first exhibit through their mission or vision statements a commitment towards alleviating poverty. As a result, community organisations who do not explicitly state this commitment and wish to obtain corporate support often find themselves rethinking their core direction and focus.
social demographic, high-profile charities associated with a celebrity’s name, or the larger “branded” NGOs), leave behind many small community organisations that are equally in need of support. Despite the good intentions of corporate philanthropy and sponsorship, the manner in which these funding opportunities are distributed will ultimately warrant greater debate and attention.

**Question:** How might corporate funding of community organisations be distributed more equitably?
References


APPENDIX SEVEN

Information Sheet

Corporate Philanthropy & Social Responsibility and Community Welfare Organisations:
Finding a common language.

This project seeks to examine the emerging relationships between small community-based welfare organisations and their corporate sector partners in the funding and provision of welfare services/activities at the local level. The research will examine the different languages, discourses, accountability practices and activities of each sector, as well as define possible opportunities, complexities and potential issues within these partnerships.

The research is conducted by an interdisciplinary team from the University of Western Sydney, consisting of social scientists and economists. The study employs the methodology of participatory action research, and involves three broad stages of research. The overarching aim of the project is the development and implementation of planning, monitoring and evaluation tools tailored to assist these cross-sector arrangements. The practical knowledge and expertise that participants such as yourself will provide is important and valued in the development of the proposed toolset.

The first stage of research will involve a series of interviews that will be audio recorded and a survey. This stage is exploratory and will address the aims, objectives, values, decision making processes and management practices of both community based organisations and corporate funding institutions, in relation to corporate philanthropic activities. Interviews will take approximately 1-2 hours to complete, and the survey will take approximately 30 minutes. The second stage will involve a SEARCH conference, through which the exploratory data will be discussed with members of community organisations and their corporate funders over one or two days. Feedback from participants during the conference will be documented and analysed as research data. On the basis of the data collected and analysed through these two stages, 6 community organisations and 3 corporations will be selected to participate in a total of 9 detailed case studies (over a period of six months). It is through this third and final stage that a tool set will be developed to assist in the process of establishing relationships, contracting, monitoring and evaluation in various situations.

This research is being conducted collaboratively with the Westpac Foundation and Western Sydney Community Forum, and as such a report will be produced for these sponsoring organisations. Details of the results will be available to all participants in the form of a final report. Further, these results will be made available in the form of a publicly accessible website. Data collected through the interviews, surveys, case studies and conferences will also be analysed as part of the principal researcher’s doctoral thesis.

You are invited to participate in this project. As a participant, you could be asked to take part in one or all of the three stages in this project. You may cease your participation at any time and without notice and you will be informed of the outcomes of this research through a report distributed to all participants.

If you have any questions concerning this research please feel free to contact Christopher Roffey by phone: 0406 133 595 or by email: c.roffey@uws.edu.au, or Dr Debra Keenahan by phone: (02) 47360045 or by email: d.keenahan@uws.edu.au.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact Associate Prof Rosemary Leonard, Director of SJSC Research Centre (ph: (02) 9772 6799). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Consent form


Stage 1: Interviews/survey

I have read and understood the information sheet and consent to participate in a series of interviews and a survey for the above mentioned project. The interviews will take approximately 1-2 hours to complete, and the survey will take approximately 30 minutes. I understand that any interviews in which I may participate will be recorded and I give my consent for this recording and subsequent transcription of those interviews. Additionally, I consent to participate in one follow up interview if it is deemed necessary.

My participation in this study is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that this research has two formal reporting mechanisms:

1. A final report for the Westpac Foundation and Western Sydney Community Forum, the sponsors of this research incorporating a practical toolset for future cross-sector partnerships; and
2. A doctoral thesis to be written by the principal researcher analysing the culture formed and language used between the two sectors.

The information provided for this form will be kept separate from the research material within a secure location at the university, and will not be made available to any other person. For the purposes of enabling your possible involvement in future stages of the project, we require you to be identified and your contact details kept. However, you will be de-identified in the final report and doctoral thesis. You will also be kept anonymous in the event of this data being used in future journal publications or the planned project website.

If you have any questions concerning this research or the interview please feel free to contact Christopher Roffey (chief investigator 1) by phone: 0406 133 595 or by email: c.roffey@uws.edu.au, or Dr Debra Keenahan by phone: (02) 47360045 or by email: d.keenahan@uws.edu.au.

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I, ___________________________, am willing to participate in the audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and survey for the project titled Corporate Philanthropy & Social Responsibility and Community Welfare Organisations: Finding a common language.

_____________________________  __________________________
Signature of participant          Date
Consent form


Stage 2: Search Conference

I have read and understood the information sheet and consent to participate the search conference for the above mentioned project. I am aware that this conference will be conducted over 1 or 2 days and outlines the initial findings of stage 1 of the project. I understand that my feedback will be sought on these findings. I recognise that my participation in the conference will be audio recorded and give my consent to this recording and subsequent transcription. Finally, I also give consent for data collected here to be used in the final project report and doctoral thesis.

My participation in this study is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that this research has two formal reporting mechanisms:
1. A final report for the Westpac Foundation and Western Sydney Community Forum, the sponsors of this research incorporating a practical toolset for future cross-sector partnerships; and
2. A doctoral thesis to be written by the principal researcher analysing the culture formed and language used between the two sectors.

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I, __________________________ am willing to participate in the SEARCH conference for the project titled Corporate Philanthropy & Social Responsibility and Community Welfare Organisations: Finding a common language.

_____________________________ Date

Signature of participant
Developing a Common Language between Corporations and Small Community Organisations

A Resource Handbook
Developing a Common Language between Corporations and Small Community Organisations

A Resource Handbook

Christopher Roffey
Michael Darcy
Debra Keenahan
Maria Varua

March 2012

A collaborative project between Western Sydney Community Forum and University of Western Sydney

“Increasing understanding of corporate community partnerships to better resource and support disadvantaged communities in Western Sydney”
This handbook was co-written by Christopher Roffey, Associate Professor Michael Darcy, Dr Debra Keenahan and Dr Maria Varua. Analysis presented herein has been informed by PhD research conducted by Christopher Roffey (to be submitted in 2012) and supervised by Dr Debra Keenahan and Dr Maria Varua of the University of Western Sydney. This work draws considerably from a wider collaborative project titled “Finding a Common Language for the Corporate and Community Sectors”, made possible only through the generous support of Western Sydney Community Forum and Westpac Foundation.

The authors would like to express their appreciation to all of the community organisations, charities, intermediary organisations, peak bodies, businesses and corporate trusts who participated in this research project. It is only through the time and effort of participants that enabled this research to be a success. Special mention must also go to Mary Waterford and Miguel Ferrero of Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) for sharing their enthusiasm, knowledge and guidance throughout the course of this research. We would also like to acknowledge Barbara Doran and Emilie Auton for their work in coordinating various aspects of fieldwork.
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Background to the research

This research was undertaken so as to address a practical problem faced in the community sector. As competition for federal, state and local government funding has increased dramatically in recent decades, many organisations within the community sector now feel compelled to look elsewhere to supplement their financial base. Corporate support is increasingly viewed as a viable alternative, although many (particularly small) organisations are finding it hard to navigate and effectively compete within this new funding environment. The role of language across these two very different sectors has been located as a major stumbling block, as the cultures, expectations, ideals and personalities between the corporate and community sectors may vary dramatically. In response, this research has attempted to explore the opportunities of corporate funding for community organisations, as well as resolve some key areas of difference, confusion and inequity.

As part of the research, 100 community organisations were initially surveyed, followed by interviews with 24 non-profit organisations, 14 corporations, 3 peak bodies (2 community and 1 corporate) and 1 intermediary organisation. Data drawn from both surveys and interviews informed us on the motivations, expectations, benefits, frustrations, as well as positive and negative experiences on both sides in developing philanthropic partnerships. Finally, a “Search conference” was held with participants from both sectors to help resolve some of the “problem areas” located.
The purpose of this handbook

Developing a Common Language between Corporations and Small Community Organisations: A Resource Handbook is designed to assist managers from both sectors to better understand and manage organisational partnerships. More specifically, this handbook is focused on developing greater insight and awareness of the benefits and limitations in partnerships, while equipping particularly small community organisations with the means in which to pursue and build upon successful relationships with corporate funders.

As will be outlined in later sections, language plays a central role in building mutual understanding and trust between the two sectors. However, all too often language forms a significant barrier to true partnerships, and this barrier has much to do with how we understand various activities, roles, processes and key terms that are located across the corporate and community sectors. As we speak, meaning is often drawn subconsciously from a number of areas; such as personal experience and organisational background, as well as a wide array of social, cultural and sometimes ideological assumptions about the world. Not everybody thinks the same way, and it is also clear that not everybody reading this handbook will view community activities or corporate citizenship in the same manner. Given the importance of language in building good relationships between the corporate and community sectors, various strategies and resources are presented in this booklet to assist managers in working through these barriers and better reaching their objectives.

Corporate-community partnerships in context

Recent decades have seen a rise in the level and extent of business support for community based organisations in Australia (Cronin & Zappalà 2002; Lyons & Zappalà 2008). However, businesses and community organisations apply different language and approaches to organisational form, planning, evaluation and accountability which are not easily integrated, understood, and often appear contradictory. While a number of studies have attempted to locate the perceptions of problems on both sides, this research marks the first attempt to get both sides together so as to find practical alternatives some of these issues. Before outlining
some of the research findings, the section below provides some background into Australian corporate philanthropy and its various forms.

**Corporate philanthropy**

According to Philanthropy Australia, “philanthropy” is defined as:

> The planned and structured giving of money, time, information, goods and services, voice and influence to improve the wellbeing of humanity and the community.

Lyons (1999) found that corporate support for non-profits takes on a range of forms, from money, goods and services to “loans” of staff. The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2007) lists such forms of corporate philanthropic activities as inclusive of:

- Sponsorship
- Cause related marketing
- Collaborations
- Community relationships
- Volunteering / pro bono
- Engagement as “influencers”
- Research partnerships

Corporate-community partnerships are increasingly being defined as those embodying the principle of mutual benefit, and less so being built upon the principles of charity. The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2008) depicts more developed partnerships as those in which the missions of community organisations have come into “alignment” with the strategy of the corporate supporter. Research has also shown that strategic approaches to social responsibility (termed as enlightened self-
interest) are becoming more prevalent amongst major players in the Australian corporate sector, also reflecting a move towards “integrative” mutually beneficial relationships (Centre for Corporate Public Affairs 2008).

However, smaller NGOs in Australia are facing barriers in obtaining corporate support. Larger charities and the more “marketable” non-profit causes are found to be those most likely to win out in the competitive philanthropic market. Primary reasons for the preference to fund large NGOs were put down to their knowledge of corporate processes, ability to efficiently invest staff, time and “resource” successful partnerships (Lyons & Zappalà 2008).
Some Useful Tips for Effective Partnerships

➢ **Be effective in when approaching a corporation**

You should be aware that not all corporations conduct businesses in the same way. Due to this complexity, the likely contact with the corporation (i.e. community partnerships or CSR manager) will appreciate prospective partners who show they have completed some **background research**. You may wish to find out more about the corporation (through their Corporate Social Responsibility section of their website), look into the types of partners and causes they support and ensure beforehand that your activities meet their core “focus area” before submitting. After researching a partner, a submission will be more successful if it is written relatively jargon-free, direct, brief, and provides some detail of what you intend to do in a project and how you intend to spend philanthropic funds. Manuals such as Meachen’s (2009) *A Grantseeker’s Guide to Trusts & Foundations* provide clear pointers on what funders usually expect to see in submissions. Some corporations like to search for their own community partners while others prefer to have NGOs approach them. Finding more about the corporation may be useful in saving time and effort before (perhaps needlessly) applying for funding.

➢ **Presentation**

Corporations like to see community organisation managers put effort into “selling” their organisation’s aims and activities. The most effective community organisations are those that are clear in explaining their operations. It is useful to remember that corporate executives do not have the same experiences and world views as many do in the community sector, so try to meet them half way when making a proposal. Being dynamic, dressing appropriately and generally “looking the part” will go quite some way in winning over a sceptical funder.

➢ **Communication**
Great care is needed in communicating with corporate representatives. While exciting a prospective partner is important, they also want to hear, in basic terms, what it is your organisation does, how you intend to go about doing it (i.e. if you were to form a partnership how will you spend the philanthropic funds?), whether you have effective structures in place to “account” for how the funding is spent (will you meet their financial requirements?), and what your project will do for the communities you work within. Being able to clearly exhibit the “impact” of your work on individuals, groups or communities will greatly assist in impressing and reassuring corporate funders. However, forming your language may be particularly difficult for managers of smaller community organisation who have had little experience with the corporate sector. Some key words may actually have different meaning from one sector to other – see pages 12-16 for examples. Explaining community activities in a way that makes sense to corporations may take some care to perfect.

- **Maintaining relationships**
  
  Some corporations only provide relatively small grants or forms of in-kind support. However, showing continued interest toward a partner may be beneficial over the long term – some of the more effective and long-lasting partnerships begin small. If possible, allocate time on a regular basis to make phone or email contact with your funder and, on occasion, invite them down to your organisation (particularly for special events). If there are ethical reasons for keeping distance with a funder (i.e. your organisation works with very vulnerable individuals) it is useful to inform your funder of this. Doing so exhibits a high level of courteousness (that is often very well received) and exhibits that you are interested in the relationship beyond simply in receiving funds.

- **Having the relevant tax status**
  
  It is a reality of Australian corporate philanthropy that funders often expect to receive tax benefits when donating money to community causes. Having Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) status will be of great use to community
organisations wishing to form partnerships with corporations, as it enables a philanthropic gift to earn a considerable tax deduction (see glossary of key terms). However, DGR status remains a central area of inequity in the community sector (for instance, of the neighbourhood centres interviewed around half held DGR status while the rest did not). This very point was highlighted in the first Voice for SONG (2006) publication titled The way forward: Tackling the issues confronting small community organisations. Feedback from numerous community organisations indicated that renewed discussion and debate is warranted on the eligibility requirements for DGRs. Change Makers is an Australian organisation advocating for the removal of inequitable restrictions on DGRs and Public Benevolent Institutions (PBIs) through their Charity Law Reform Project. The broad objective of this project is to change the tax ruling so that charities currently undertaking or funding advocacy may qualify for DGR status. A link to the Change Makers website is provided on page 33 of this handbook.

For further information on DGR status and other non-profit related tax legislation visit:
Below are some questions community-based organisations may wish to consider prior to forming a partnership:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What is a corporation looking for in a community partner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What are the core values of the corporation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do these values correspond (or “align”) with your organisation’s values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is the corporation aware of what makes your organisation unique and/or effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What does the corporation expect in return for funding/support (for instance marketing benefits, brand promotion, volunteering, evidence of outcomes, etc)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Are you able to meet these expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Are the prospective funder’s expectations reasonable and ethical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is the prospective funder aware of any organisational constraints in fulfilling the funding objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>What form of relationship would you like to see develop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Does this match up with what the funder wishes to see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>What level of communication do you prefer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Are structures in place to support this level of communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. If no, is the corporation willing to work within these limitations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What motivates both sides?

Corporate executives displayed motivations to partner with small community-based organisations. However, frustrations were almost universally expressed with regard to reporting processes and general communication with Australian NGOs and smaller community organisations. As a result, the perceived deficiencies from within the third sector spurred wariness in corporations to engage with organisations that exhibited financial difficulties/limitations, an unestablished profile or “brand”. These perceptions provide some idea as to the reasoning for partnerships to commonly form between large non-profits and large businesses (Lyons and Zappalà, 2008). On the other hand, some executives had expressed concerns over partnering with very large charities due to uncertainty concerning value-for-money, and in some cases, a level of cynicism towards the motivations of the said charity.

“José” – Head of partnerships, NSW based Law Firm

“The organisation needs to tangibly benefit from the partnerships. I have to be honest with you, I get approached by organisations that I would say have a lot of resources. I would say that some of them are what would be termed peak not for profit groups, who do have a lot of resources and we partner with peak not for profit groups, that is not a problem. Ultimately we need to balance their needs against smaller incorporated associations and grass root organisations that have (I believe, sometimes) a greater need for strategic advice, legal assistance, in kind support and all the other elements that we can assist throughout our scheme.”
Community organisations were highly critical of onerous accountability processes tied to public funding, and corporate support was sometimes viewed as an alternative source with less “strings” attached. One small community organisation to have expressed this point was entirely reliant on corporate funding, and remains successful in both maintaining existing relationships and forming new ones. However, this example is not replicated on a general basis, and for most community based welfare organisations, corporate support is sought in order to supplement existing government or individual (donor) support. Other motivations include organisations facing financial pressures due to reduced state funding, the speed of corporate support (especially in cases of emergency), and the opportunity for greater autonomy and creativity.

“Sara”, Team Leader, Community Engagement Department of a major Australian Bank

“If they are looking for core funding and they’re not financially viable, or they don’t have a great pipeline of funding and sustainable financial backing, don’t come [here] because I don’t have the money to pay salaries... I like to focus our program around capacity building.”

“Farrah” – Manager of a Community Cottage

“The thing with ongoing funds is that they’re usually [...] a one to three year project and then they stop, and you’ve got to show sustainability. So that’s a bit of a problem... and the other side of the coin is pro bono work, and that’s very valuable in, for example, submission writing, although I know all the things that go into a submission, I know all the evidence, I know what outcomes I’m searching for (and so forth): One, I don’t have the number of hours, I can’t devote enough of the resources of the cottage to the number of hours that are needed for all the submission writing that we need to do, and then the follow up reporting that needs to go off if we are successful in that. Because I’ve got to put in so much of the resources into direct service delivery, and I can’t compete with the big faith organisations (or whatever they are now, because a lot of them are not faith organisations, they say they’re not anyway) who have submission writers on tap, or consultants, or contractors whose sole job it is in life is to come up with these brilliant, brilliant submissions. Which have everything that everybody loves: “partnerships” and “sustainability”, and all of that lovely stuff that everybody loves and packaged up and presented in such a lovely way... So yes pro bono work would be lovely.”
Summary of the main motivations

The table above summarises the motivating factors (on both sides) that influence the formation of partnerships as outlined by research participants.

While most corporate participants responded to questions concerning motivation of giving by stating variations of “because it is a good thing to do”, many pointed to a “take out” that is also required. Furthermore, there exists considerable constraints to the nature of corporate philanthropy in the Australian context. A few of these constraints are listed below:

- The Corporations Act 2001 (Part 2D.1) effectively limits the ability of corporate managers to give funding to non-profits in a purely altruistic (selfless) manner. Some form of return is required, as all corporate activity must be discharged ‘in the best interests of the corporation’.
- Although some exceptions exist, it is unusual for a corporation to fund a wide variety of community organisations outside the business’s value focus, consumer base or geographical area.
- A wider array of non-profits benefit when businesses engage in employee directed giving programs (i.e. those corporations that match or exceed donations given by their workforce), where there is a higher likelihood of smaller community-based organisations or more “political” NGOs (such as those with a human rights or environmental focus) being selected for funding. Nonetheless, organisations that are selected are likely well known or “branded” community or welfare based organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate</th>
<th>Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The right thing to do” (altruism)</td>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being perceived as socially responsible</td>
<td>Speed of assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax concessions</td>
<td>Less strings attached in terms of monitoring and evaluation measures (in some cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions to expand consumer base</td>
<td>Enabling community organisations to focus on “area of expertise”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and advertising benefits</td>
<td>Increased autonomy, flexibility, creativity, etc...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff retention through increased morale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding - trust by associating with the community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Language does not just describe events, activities and intentions. The way we speak and write is also influenced by our personal world view or organisational perspective. As such, the manner in which we use key words or phrases within the field of philanthropy is often informed by our personal experience, and made sense of through each individual’s professional, religious, cultural, social and political background. In the field of community welfare, language is an extremely powerful aspect of corporate-community relationships, as it assists in defining the scope of overall direction, but can also be the cause of much tension and confusion. The way ideas, submissions and plans are presented to prospective funders often requires considerable skill. As a result, language can impede the efforts of community organisation managers in forming successful partnerships with corporations.

Our understanding of language, and more specifically of key terms, may also differ significantly across (and even within) the two sectors. Although participants across the two sectors acknowledged the similar vocabularies in describing their experiences and objectives, the way these words were understood differed dramatically. Efficiency, accountability, sustainability, success, returns, social responsibility and even partnership are often understood differently between community welfare and corporate participants. While “returns” on funding may seem simple enough, some corporate trusts view returns through social return on investment (SROI) measures, which is in itself a highly complicated measurement tool (involving an organisation measuring the dollar value of its social impact).

A danger in language is that it may come to portray ideas and processes that seem detached from the everyday activities of community organisations. It is worth noting that the language used within community development is very powerful, with terms such as “grass-roots”, “community-based”, “capacity building” and “empowerment” holding considerable sway with prospective funders. Funders also like to be informed of the social “needs” demanding redress, while being reassured about an organisation’s “strengths”. As such, “sustainability” from a corporate perspective is usually associated with the financial viability of a community organisation.
According to one corporate participant, ‘every corporate’s worst fear is that one of their partners goes under’. To alleviate such concerns, consistent reassurance would need to be given to a corporate funder so they are aware of your long-term sustainability, and that your organisation is not “dependant” on them for core funding.

In short, the most successful community-based organisations were those able to adapt and traverse between the two languages. At the same time, managers should maintain a strong connection to the values that are important to an organisation (and its stakeholders). Long-term partnerships can be highly beneficial, particularly for small organisations. In some cases, corporate partners have been known to develop highly engaged relationships with organisations, and have the capacity to provide linkages to additional funding sources through their networks, or provide much needed accounting or legal expertise on a pro bono basis. However, in the short term, approaching corporations “professionally” will assist in standing out from other applicants as the quotes below attest.

The manner in which words are framed are depicted in the following diagrams. Suggestions on how to “bridge” the language divide are also provided in the following pages.
Finding common ground on efficiency

**Community:**
Efficiency is best defined within a voluntary context through allocating funding with minimal reliance on overheads. Difficulty persists in proving efficient use of money given the often intangible nature of community development activities.

**Corporate:**
Efficient programs display "value for money". Doing so requires existing structures in place to prove their effectiveness. However, businesses are often unwilling to provide funding for these structures (this is a primary reason for the greater success of larger, well established NGOs to secure philanthropic funding).

**Tips:**
Care is needed when exhibiting “efficient” use of funding as it often prioritises financial value over social benefit. For small organisations, it may be sufficient to draw from existing annual reports (showing yearly input and output) to outline the efficient use of funds. Another option is to be creative and find Australian and international research papers and journal articles that explore the impact of comparable approaches or activities such as those of your organisation. This information can sometimes be presented supplementary to your own organisation’s “outputs”, to better explain likely social impacts and thus efficient use of funds.
Finding common ground on social responsibility

Community:
Providing support for the less well off and marginalised, even when the cause is not socially popular. Responsibility is often heavily tied to values of democracy, fairness and reciprocity.

Corporate:
Giving back to the community by helping those most “in need”. Often directed to empowerment programs aimed at children and women. High value is placed on education and financial literacy programs.

Tips:
Do some research on funders before approaching them. You may find that they wish to focus philanthropic assistance on an area that sits outside of your organisations aims, operation and objectives. Also, you will often be required to clearly explain the social “need” or problem you wish to address when seeking funding/partnerships. Providing in-depth details through the use of statistics or wider research will certainly assist your submission. Of course, this may not sit well with some community organisations, as community activity is often viewed as working with marginalised groups (working on community/strengths based approaches), rather than through the “language of deficits”. Some community organisations are able to uphold their core values while “framing” their activities to resonate well with corporate funders. Note: the manner in which you will address needs should be clear and direct- but still encapsulate the values of your organisation.
Finding common ground on **sustainability**

**Community:**
Securing recurrent funding over the long-term (i.e. through committed partnerships).

**Corporate:**
Being able to operate in the long-term, without the reliance on external funding (i.e. through seed grants).

**Sustainability Tips:**
Sustainability is a key area of misunderstanding within philanthropic relationships. Corporate funders usually like to fund specific projects on a short term basis, rather than community organisations more generally, so reassuring potential funders of an organisation’s financial sustainability needs to involve outlining other sources of funding. A *Grantseekers Guide to Trusts and Foundations* (Philanthropy Australia 2009: 13) suggests organisations exhibit a diverse array of funding sources including assistance from: government grants, fundraising, fee based services, sale of merchandise, sponsorship, individual donors, wills and bequests, etc. However, many of these funding sources are only relevant to larger charities and social enterprises, rather than small community–based organisations.

Note: corporations are often willing to assist in places where other corporations previously exhibited interest. If a current or past corporate relationship with your organisation has been managed well, you may find that this provides considerable reassurance to future funders. Community organisations are also much more adaptable to financial pressures than many larger third sector organisations (due to a reliance on dedicated volunteers, prior ability to survive in a competitive funding environment, etc...), so thinking about and developing any safeguards to managing financial risk would be useful.
Maintaining Existing Partnerships

Exploration of existing partnerships

Interviewees provided considerable insight into the success or otherwise of cross-sector partnerships. A number of guidelines for good practice from both sectors may be found below:

Key factors of successful partnerships

According to corporations:

- Alignment of values – like to see evidence of shared purpose.
- Support through seed grants – funding as targeted “investment”, designed not to breed “dependency” (falls into corporate definition of sustainability).
- A community partner knowing what the funder expects.
- Good communication and presentation.
- Being able to accept help/advice.
- Honesty / consultation.
- Considerable time spent on maintaining the relationship.
- Appreciativeness.

According to community organisations:

- Being selective of funder/partner.
- Corporations taking an interest and understanding in the value of the organisation’s work – i.e. through visiting the community and giving their time.
- Partners understanding the nature and pressures of the community activity.
- Both parties engaged, beyond self-interest.
- Staying connected with the grass-roots.
- Financial security (falls into NGO definition of sustainability).
- Being able to define relevant accountability measures – built on organisational learning, and reflecting a wider list of stakeholders.
- Both partners being on equal footing.
- Ensuring a partnership survives in the event of staff changes.
Key factors limiting successful partnerships

According to both corporate and community sectors:

- Poor communication/understanding between the partner organisation/s.
- Focus on poverty alleviation and “needs”, limits the capacity of some organisations in seeking corporate support.
- Market pressures and the discretionary nature of corporate support – less corporate support during a downturn, targeting popular and marketable causes (changeability).
- Communities wishing for recurrent funding, when this is often unavailable.
- Corporations often frustrated with “poor accountability” processes – corporate understanding of measurement is future oriented and often restrictive (outputs, outcomes, impact, dollar value, SROI, etc…).
- Inability of corporations to decipher between community organisations (perceived duplication of services).
- Partnerships that are built solely on individual contacts – staff turnover threatens the long-term viability of the relationship.
- Insufficient time allocated to sustainably maintain the relationship.
- Working with a “tarnished” partner.
**Tips for maintaining positive relationships**

- In the early stages of a relationship the expectations on each side should be discussed, with an agreement on project/partnership requirements reached. The nature of communication, monitoring and evaluation processes, and key objectives to be met in return for funding should be achievable and fair for both sides. You do not want to agree to highly onerous reporting requirements if there are no structures in place to support them.

- Keep in regular contact with a corporate funder. A good corporate partner will be interested in what your organisation is doing, inclusive of both achievements and failures. Funders may also be willing or able to help when difficulties arise.

- Having corporations visit a community organisation or event is a useful way for them to see your work from a new perspective. Of course, fostering direct contact with a corporate partner should be balanced with the wellbeing of the community, clients or stakeholders. If there are ethical dilemmas in having close contact, you should clearly explain these reasons to a funder.

- Develop alternative organisational strategies to maintain relationships in the event of personnel leaving (on both sides). Many relationships do not survive when single lines of communication/contact are cut.
Peak bodies are in a unique position to pursue change in the area of corporate-community relationships. Interviews found that a number of corporations wished to provide support to grass-roots causes. However, doing so was often impeded by the inability of corporations to distinguish between smaller organisations, deciphering the way community organisations monitor and account for the support provided, and some funders simply not knowing where to look. Moreover, problems are also experienced on the community side, whereby the everyday structural demands on small community organisations means there is little time, resources and know-how available to search for and develop positive relationships with corporations.

Within this environment, peak bodies are well placed to mediate between the two sectors, while advocating for change of where corporate support is directed and how community organisations are generally viewed within the corporate sector. Various strategies may be developed to better foster a common ground and mutual understanding. For instance, providing various forms of intermediary assistance and training for managers will better place community organisations in a position to meet the requirements of corporate funding. Building cross-sector networks and educating corporations of the pressures facing the community sector and benefits in assisting community-based projects, are some other ways that corporate-community involvement may begin to be distributed more equitably.

Peak bodies such as NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS) have begun to take greater interest in corporate-community partnerships. An example of this interest was demonstrated during the 75th Annual NCOSS Conference 2010, where a session was held to promote this research. Other peak bodies have taken up the challenge of modernising current DGR legislation, most notably, the Local Community Services Association (LCSA) and Change Makers Australia (CmA). Widening the scope of organisations who qualify for DGR status to include all charities, neighbourhood centres and advocacy organisations (with a focus on “prevention”) would be a crucial step in creating a more equitable third sector.
**APPENDIX ONE Glossary of key terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td>Most commonly used in reference to the reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements placed upon the recipient by the funder/s. This term is also employed to denote a higher degree of transparency, or a process of democratic governance. Sometimes NGO accountability can be directed internally rather than externally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charity</strong></td>
<td>An altruistic act (or institution) designed to alleviate need. Many critique this concept due to earlier paternalistic approaches and a tendency to focus on the “donor” rather than the “recipient” of good works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate-community investment</strong></td>
<td>Similar to CCI, but with a strong focus on “returns” and building the capacity of recipients to achieve self-sufficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate-community involvement (CCI)</strong></td>
<td>A value-free term used to describe some form of relationship between the corporate and community sectors. Some corporations prefer this descriptive term over CSR, as not all community involvement is philanthropic in nature (i.e. sponsoring sporting clubs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</strong></td>
<td>CSR may take on a number of forms; i.e. from a company working in the best interests of society or the planet (“ethical CSR” or “stakeholder CSR”), to maximising profits in the interests of the company’s shareholders (“economic CSR”). Most major corporations adopt an approach that sits somewhere in between.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DGR status</strong></td>
<td>The category of an organisation or charity that is legally permitted to receive tax deductible gifts. A DGR status is endorsed by the Tax Office, and is limited to NGOs who are able to demonstrate objectives relating to poverty alleviation or health promotion.</td>
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- For more information on monitoring, evaluation and reporting: [http://philanthropywiki.org.au/upload/7/73/Reporting%2C_Monitoring_and_Ev](http://philanthropywiki.org.au/upload/7/73/Reporting%2C_Monitoring_and_Ev)
Inputs The financial capital, goods, volunteer time or any other resource invested in a given activity.

Outcomes The key changes to arise out of an activity, measured usually in social terms.

Outputs The direct quantifiable results from a funded activity (i.e. number of families provided assistance or clients having participated in a program)

Philanthropy Literally translates from ancient Greek to “love of mankind”. A term increasingly used to describe various types of donations aimed to benefit wider society. However, this term is not always used to describe activities that result in a transfer of wealth to the less well off (i.e. philanthropy in the area of art and culture).

Returns Either refers to future-oriented (measured) returns on philanthropic “investments”, or present day fulfilment of basic needs. Future-oriented approaches are highly valued from a corporate perspective, although many small community organisations face difficulties assessing/measuring long-term “intangible” goals.

SROI As defined by the London School of Economics (2004), social return on investment (SROI) “is a quantitative measurement of how effectively an organisation uses its capital and other resources to generate value for society”. SROI is gaining considerable interest within business due to its purported ability to place a monetary value of on organisation’s impact and comparing this value to the original philanthropic “investment”.

Want to know more about social return on investment (SROI)? See the following link: http://sroi.london.edu/Measuring-Social-Impact.pdf
Change Makers Australia (CmA) is an incorporated national organisation which aims to support the growth of social change philanthropy in Australia. The mission of CmA is to encourage and resource people and organisations in the philanthropic world and beyond to focus on social and economic justice, equality for all, and environmental sustainability. CmA are currently advocating for change to inequitable nonprofit tax policies (i.e. the criteria for DGR and PBI status). Their website also provides links to resources for people interested in social change philanthropy.

Email: changemakers@reichstein.org.au  
Website: www.changemakers.org.au

Philanthropy Australia is the national non-profit peak body representing corporations, trusts, foundations and individuals who give to the community. While they do not make or distribute grants, Philanthropy Australia conduct various relevant workshops and events, while providing manuals, research reports, contacts, and general information relevant to the philanthropic sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head office (Melbourne)</td>
<td>03 9662 9299</td>
<td>03 9662 2655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney office</td>
<td>02 9223 0155</td>
<td>02 9223 0877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Email: info@philanthropy.org.au  
1.burton@philanthropy.org.au

Website: www.philanthropy.org.au

United Way is a world leading non-profit intermediary organisation that provides ‘necessary expertise to bring together the programs and people who deliver powerful outcomes’. Working specifically in the fields of health education and income, their role is to link corporate partners with communities in need across Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head office (Sydney)</td>
<td>02 9321 0300</td>
<td>02 9321 0333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Email: nsw@unitedway.com.au

Website: www.unitedway.com.au

Western Sydney Community Forum is the Western Sydney regional peak organisation which provides regional leadership, facilitates collaborative action and develops resources to enable community organisations to effectively address issues relating to social justice and social inclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02 9687 9669</td>
<td>02 9687 8665</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Email: wscf@wscf.org.au
This information is of use to practitioners as it shows the types of organisations that are more successful in gaining corporate funding and the length of time partnerships last. A number of inequities were located through this data and results painted a similar picture to that previously found in studies on corporate-community involvement. For instance, research often points out that there exists a tendency for larger NGOs to win the lion’s share of corporate funding (Lyons & Zappalà 2008), which was generally supported through this study. The survey listed four size categories and participants were asked to self-select which of these best defined their own organisation. Generally speaking, those falling within the less than $100,000 category would consist of very small organisations, sometimes including one single full-time or part-time employee and operated predominantly by volunteers. Organisations with turnovers between $100,000 and $499,999 would represent small or ‘micro’ organisations. Those with turnovers between $500,000 and $999,999 would be considered ‘medium’, while a broad range encompassing $1,000,000 or higher are categorised as ‘large’ organisations for the purpose of this research. It should be noted that given the selectivity involved in this sample, these results are not representative of the third sector as a whole. Community organisations were predominantly selected from the Western Sydney region, and either had experience in partnering with the corporate sector, or had expressed the desire to form a partnership at some point in the future. However, we hypothesise that a similar (if not, more pronounced) trend would emerge if a random/representative sample were possible and utilised.
Table 1  
Involvement in partnerships by size of community organisation by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of community organisation (in stated annual turnover A$)</th>
<th>Number of organisations surveyed</th>
<th>History of involvement in partnerships with the corporate sector</th>
<th>Currently involved in partnerships with the corporate sector (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 – 499,999</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 – 999,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above provides a snapshot of community organisations who had either once formed, or who had at the time been engaged in, a corporate partnership. These figures demonstrate that the likelihood of a community organisation engaging in a corporate partnership appears to increase dramatically as the yearly turnover of the organisation rises. Of those with a history of corporate funding, a similar pattern emerges concerning the duration of the relationship. Furthermore, Table 2 reveals that larger community organisations are more effective in garnering longer-term support.
Table 2  
Involvement in partnerships by period of funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of community organisation (in stated annual turnover A$)</th>
<th>Organisations previously involved in corporate partnerships</th>
<th>PERIOD OF FUNDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4-9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 – 499,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 – 999,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 27 per cent of respondents who had been successful of garnering corporate support maintained it beyond a three year period. Of this group, the vast majority (83 percent) were within the mid-to-large size category. Although the above tables exhibit a trend whereby larger community organisations are able to achieve greater success in gaining and maintaining corporate support, there still remains a lack of understanding as to the reasons why this trend is occurring.

When interviewed, community organisation representatives were often unaware of the wide variety of corporate support available, beyond direct philanthropic donations and volunteering. In addition, small NGOs who had expressed interest in obtaining corporate support, usually looked toward the local business community for assistance, rather than seeking partnerships with established trusts or large corporate CSR units. These findings indicate, in part, a lack of knowledge of wider funding options and sources, instead of an unwillingness to engage with larger corporate bodies. However, during the search conference in 2010, one delegate expressed a preference for local business support due to the greater likelihood of success, quicker response rates, less “leg work” and increased chance of a longer term relationship being formed.
Through analysis of desk-based literature and in-depth discussion with community organisations and corporations, it was clear that new understandings of cross-sector relationships are required. A typology of relationships will help in developing a profile of the organisations being targeted for corporate support and vice versa. For instance, interviews indicated that some community organisations preferred “less integrated” forms of partnerships, such as direct donations of cash and goods (with a considerable degree of separation between organisations), whereas others were keen to meet a partnered corporation as “equals”. A small number of participants were engaged with multiple forms of relationships concurrently.

Furthermore, research found a tendency for organisations to either follow suit with a corporate donor – even if this disadvantaged the organisation structurally – or, in some cases, assert the terms through which an acceptable funder will engage with the community. We argue that future research in corporate community relationships should further examine the complex field of corporate philanthropy in Australia.

In response, we propose a revised typology that considers relationships through the form of a horizontal “spectrum”, rather than a hierarchy or continua (Austin 2000). As shown in Table 3, this spectrum seeks to incorporate the criteria or “demands” of both organisations within the relationship. Explanations of the various components to relationships are outlined in Table 4, and an example of a “successful” integrative partnership is provided in Table 5.
Table 3: The community-corporate relationship spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uninvolved “de-coupled”</th>
<th>Philanthropic “Charity”</th>
<th>Transactional “Marketing”</th>
<th>Integrative/collaborative “Coupling”</th>
<th>Social Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Org</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Activity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Comm Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Comm Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Comm Criteria</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Comm Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
<td>Corp Criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The top row indicates the type of relationship. **Integrative relationships** are built on a model whereby both sides are involved in aspects of design, implementation and monitoring. These relationships blur the line between the “donor” and “recipient” of funding.

Table 4: Explanation of Integrative partnership section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGO Criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corporate Criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGO Criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corporate criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These columns represent the **criteria** or expectations each in the partnership have on an **organisational level**.

Some questions include: Will the NGO be required to provide staff, time and resources to maintain the relationship without funding being allocated for this component? Will the corporation provide specific funding (or in-kind support) for the maintenance of the relationship? Will the NGO be okay with promoting the funder? Will the NGO consent to the corporation “marketing” the community organisation on their website?

These columns represent the **criteria** or expectations each in the partnership have on the **activity level**.

Some questions include: What types of activities does the corporate funder prefer to support? Is the NGO comfortable with the funder suggesting changes to the types and forms activities being run? What level of interaction will take place between both organisations in the running of the community-based project? Are both organisation “on the same page” with regard to the aims and timeline of the specific activity?
Table 5: An example a successful “integrative” partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGO Criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corporate criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small non-profit organisation with a focus on promoting educational opportunities among “at risk” children.</td>
<td>Happy with close relationship and requires only basic financial reporting (via annual reports). DGR status is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructured as a “corporatised” organisation with a very strong grass-roots volunteer base.</td>
<td>Relationship is developed though networking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management is proactive in acquiring corporate funding.</td>
<td>Business is open to inclusion of wider stakeholders in the partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers a close relationship to corporate partner – volunteering programs and pro-bono activities reinforce cross-sector links.</td>
<td>Willing to assist with further in-kind administrative support (pro-bono legal assistance, paid volunteer program, use of office resources, facilitates the development of further corporate partnerships).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A key criterion - various key community stakeholders must also support potential partnerships.</td>
<td>Is happy with a long-term “open-ended” partnership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alignment of values

During in-depth interviews corporate respondents pointed to “alignment of values” as a core component to successful partnerships. However, this research indicates that such alignment (which often forms a top down adherence to the CSR strategy of the donor or an organisation sufficiently corporatized in structure) centres on relationships usually categorised as “transactional” in nature. Research indicates that a common ground must also be sought when relationships are centred on “value alignment” as smaller community organisations are often ill-equipped to negotiate the relationship criteria and accountability processes. As such, a transfer of values emerges whereby a non-profit organisation would seek to appeal to the existing criteria of the prospective funder. Interviews from both sectors indicate that “lose-lose” situations often emerge as a result of community organisations adapt a project to external pressures in a way that contradicts their core focus or mission (see table 6).
Table 6: An example of a negative “transactional” relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional “Marketing”</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGO Criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corp criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>NGO Criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community development organisation is committed to running its activities at the grass-roots level – prefers to conduct its activities from within a “strengths based” approach.</td>
<td>Value for money – grant framed as a “social investment” (small scale “seed” grant). DGR Status is required.</td>
<td>Obtains funding for an activity that sits peripheral to its core vision (in adherence to set corporate funding criteria).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very focused on survival – new finances are needed to assist in an already overstretched budget</td>
<td>Does not allocate finances to administration of organisation</td>
<td>Activity needs to be largely developed from scratch - ultimately causing further drain on resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has little knowledge of what a prospective corporate funder expects.</td>
<td>Expects the non-profit organisation to donate its own time/staff in completing accountability processes. Partnerships are only available on a short-term 6-12 month basis.</td>
<td>Finds difficulty in measuring expected outcomes based on “need”. Has little experience with quantitative measurement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weblinks

- Australian Tax Office information for non-profits

- Change Makers Australia
  www.changemakers.org.au

- London School of Economics on Social Return on Investment (SROI)
  http://sroi.london.edu/Measuring-Social-Impact.pdf

- Local Community Services Association (LCSA)
  www.lcsa.org.au

- NSW Council of Social Services
  www.ncoss.org.au

- Our Community
  www.OurCommunity.org.au

- Philanthropy Australia
  www.philanthropyaustralia.org.au

- Philanthropy Australia directory of major grant makers

- Philanthropy Australia information on monitoring, evaluation and reporting:

- United Way Australia
  www.unitedway.com.au

- Western Sydney Community Forum
  www.wscf.org.au
References


