



RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY:
HOW MIGHT IMAGES INFLUENCE
COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING?

A Thesis submitted by

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Abstract

This research responds to the increasing number of significant challenges faced by regional communities, as evidenced by the ongoing crippling drought in Central Western Queensland. Natural disasters pose both unpredictable and severe threats to the wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities (Bhamra, Dani & Burnard, 2011). The use of expressive processes to respond to crises is one way to increase resilience. The question “To what extent does participation in an image-producing project foster resilience?” became my key point of departure to explore how photographic images might promote resilience and capacity building for communities faced with environmental crises.

This research investigates whether encouraging people to express their experiences through photography could increase resilience during the ongoing drought crisis in the communities of the Barcaldine region in Central Western Queensland. It investigates the connection between images, resilience and wellbeing. The findings particularly relate to the “third wave” of resilience inquiry, which focuses on the use of creative expression (Richardson, 2002). The use of Grounded Theory and reflective practice to gather, code and analyse my findings allowed me to slowly accumulate data over time, and permit the findings to “bubble up” from the image-making site in Barcaldine. I curated these images (reification) to produce a significant exhibition at The Globe gallery in Barcaldine, entitled *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018).

From this process, I developed four key assertions: 1) Wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience; 2) Photography can effectively express experiences of drought to promote wellbeing; 3) Reification is a practice for resilience; and 4) The project is a model of emergent community capacity building. I then went on to propose a Resilience Through Images Model, which outlines six interlinking steps to follow in order to use image making to respond to environmental disasters. This model can be implemented in the event of extreme weather or crisis events to help communities build resilience, wellbeing and capacity.

Certification of Thesis

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Anne Suse Smith

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Gundabluey Tree (*Acacia Victoriae*), *Drought...What Next?* (2014) Exhibition.

Photographer: Anne Suse Smith

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Community Resilience and Expression Through Art – My Motivation

This research journey began in September 2014 when I was invited, on behalf of Centacare (a family services agency), to take photographs to raise awareness of the drought crisis in Central Western Queensland. I was invited to take drought images on three properties in the Longreach region. While I was on a photo shoot at a sheep station in the region, a property owner and amateur photographer said to me, “Anne, even in the drought there is something beautiful to look at.”



Photograph 1-1: Gundabluey Tree (*Acacia Victoriae*), *Drought...What Next? (2014)* Exhibition.

Photographer: Anne Suse Smith

His comment was prompted by something we saw while stopping to take a photograph of an empty dam: a Gundabluey tree (*Acacia victoriae*) in full bloom. Despite the harsh drought conditions, it was not only alive, but thriving. This man, who was living through one of the worst droughts in Australia’s history, explained to me that every day when he went out on his property, he saw

something new and wonderful. I took a photograph of this Gundabluey tree (Photograph 1-1) to include in the exhibition that emerged from these three photo shoots: *Drought...What Next?* (2014) (<http://annesusesmith.com/drought.php>).

I felt that this tree was a representation of resilience and hope during this particularly harsh drought crisis. Sadly, before the opening of the exhibition in Longreach in December 2014, this man took his own life.¹ His story and the image of this Gundabluey tree continue to raise awareness of the need to support those living through drought. They were also the catalyst for my interest in the role of artistic expression in encouraging community resilience.

The *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition was the beginning of my enduring interest in the impact of the drought crisis on communities in Central Western Queensland. This first exhibition was the prototype for what evolved into my PhD research based around a later exhibition entitled *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), which was undertaken in the Barcaldine region (<https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/regional-events/strength-drought-photo>).

Natural disasters pose both an unpredictable and severe threat to the wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities (Bhamra, Dani, & Burnard, 2011). By 2018, four years after my original photographic exhibition, the drought in the Longreach–Barcaldine area of Queensland had worsened dramatically. This research was undertaken to investigate a community’s understanding of their strength during an ongoing drought through the collaborative reification of photographic images. Reification in this context means to express something that is immaterial (that is, resilience and wellbeing) through something material, such as an image. The key area of investigation for this research was resilience and what I envisaged as the two main characteristics that contribute to resilience: wellbeing and community capacity building. My intent in conducting my research was to use the creative mechanism of photography to

¹ If you’re experiencing distress or personal crisis, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your general practitioner for additional support.

make a significant contribution to the steadily growing body of research on community resilience in crisis.

In addition, I believe that my research is pertinent to ongoing debates around climate change and the increasing frequency and severity of events such as droughts, floods and cyclones. While this is not a politically motivated project, it does emphasise the need for long-term thinking, by governments at all levels, about strategies to help people to live in regional communities that will be increasingly affected by environmental crises.

1.2 Researcher Position and Expertise

This thesis investigates the impact on community resilience and wellbeing of expression through photography by members of a regional community affected by drought. It discusses two photographic exhibitions, separated by four years: the first, entitled *Drought...What Next?* (2014), was the pre-study for the second exhibition, entitled *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), which is the primary topic of this thesis. To understand the connection between these two exhibitions, and their connection to my research, it is important to understand my original role as an emerging researcher and photographer.

In March of 2014, the Australian Government's Bureau of Meteorology reported serious to severe rain deficiencies, the worst in Australian history, affecting large areas of western and inland northern Queensland. The Australian Government responded quickly, with the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott announcing a \$320 million assistance package to support drought-impacted farmers (ABC News, 2014). Some of this funding was used to employ staff to support drought-impacted communities. As a result, I was appointed by Centacare Central Queensland Region (Centacare CQ) as a Drought Facilitator in 2014, tasked with identifying opportunities to raise awareness of the drought crisis to maximise support for drought-stricken communities. I was also a keen amateur photographer.

Because of my experience as a photographer, I was subsequently commissioned by Centacare CQ as the photographer and curator for an exhibition to raise awareness of the drought crisis in Central Western Queensland. I was responsible for the coordination of all tasks related to creating an original exhibition of my drought images. The *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition was created in collaboration with drought-affected landholders who wanted to share their stories with other communities that might not fully understand their plight, particularly those on the coast. They hoped that sharing their stories would lead to a greater awareness of the drought crisis in Queensland and the need for government support. When landholders were asked by the Centacare CQ CEO, who travelled with me on my photo shoot, how best to support them and their mental wellbeing, they responded overwhelmingly that they wanted the wider community to better understand the reality of their struggles. They hoped that encouraging people to understand the harsh reality of the drought crisis would bring pressure to bear on government to continue support to drought-impacted regions (ABC Open, 2014) (<http://annesusesmith.com/abc-open.mp3>).

1.3 Pre-Study Exhibition and PhD Image Project

The first exhibition did raise awareness about the impact of drought on farmers' wellbeing, and also about the flow-on economic and social impacts that extend beyond rural regions. The exhibition travelled across drought-affected communities in Central Western Queensland local government areas, and also to areas in Wide Bay and Brisbane. The exhibition schedule was as follows:

- Longreach – 11 December 2014
- Central Highlands – 2 February 2015
- Fraser Coast – 8 May 2015
- Brisbane – 8 August 2015
- Whitsundays – 11 September 2015
- Barcaldine – 29 October 2015.

The exhibition established a platform for communities to share their perspectives on drought and their lives.

As curator, I reviewed over 4,000 of my own images for this exhibition in order to cull them to the 19 final exhibition images. This process became extremely stressful for me as I felt a weight of responsibility to select images that would raise awareness of the drought crisis and help farmers successfully lobby for government support (which was forthcoming – see [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#)). The resulting comments on the exhibitions, left by visitors from all over the world, provided clear evidence that the exhibition had a personal impact on viewers. These comments ranged from “inspiring”, “very real, well captured”, “amazing photography – something so that more people are made to realise what can happen in the rural areas” to others that expressed empathy for our farmers, for example, “very moving”, “very touching”, “stark reality of the life of the outback”. Similar comments were left on the exhibition webpage, and articles on drought increased in the Queensland print and electronic media wherever the exhibition was installed (<http://annesusesmith.com/drought.php>).

During this first exhibition, I listened to the stories told by the landholders who helped to focus and frame the images I was taking on their properties. As discussed previously, a deeply moving part of this project was when one of the landholders whom I visited in the Longreach region took his own life prior to the opening of the first exhibition. With the permission of his family, I was able to use prudent images from his property to enable the issue of suicide to be raised and discussed at each showing of the exhibition. This was life-changing for me. I developed a great sense of empathy and sorrow for these people and felt a sense of responsibility to ensure that my images told their story accurately.

All communities have their own issues that affect community wellbeing and wear down resilience. The images in the first exhibition became a stimulus not only for drought-impacted communities to tell their stories and talk about their communities, but also for each community to begin their own conversations about their own wellbeing.

My experience of the first exhibition evolved into a belief that drought-impacted communities should have the opportunity to take their own images of their drought journey (explained in more detail in Chapter 3: Research Methodology). It was due to this belief that I recruited local amateur photographers for my PhD image project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018). I believed it would have a powerful impact for local people to take images in local crisis settings. While the pre-study took place in the Longreach region, this project focused on the Barcaldine region, an area of 53,677 square kilometres approximately 440 km west of Rockhampton. The Barcaldine region is made up of the former shires of Aramac, Barcaldine and Jericho, and includes the towns of Alpha, Aramac, Barcaldine, Jericho and Muttaborra.

The *Drought...What Next* (2014) exhibition, although not a research project, became the pre-study for my PhD research image project. The pre-study laid the foundations for the three areas of investigation for this research:

- How does the reflection of the pre-study influence how the story of drought might be told?
- To what extent does participation in an image-making project foster resilience?
- How do the previous two areas of investigation for this research contribute to resilience and capacity building under ongoing drought conditions?

These questions helped to formalise my key research questions, which are discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 3: Research Methodology.

1.4 My Emotional Experience of Photography

I started taking photographs four years prior to undertaking the role of Drought Facilitator with Centacare, and soon began to discover its therapeutic qualities for myself. After taking photographs, I always felt relaxed and exhilarated. Photography swiftly became a passion, so I decided that I needed to study the

art of photography formally, and completed a Diploma in Photography, which resulted in a better understanding of how to take good images.

As a keen photographer in the Whitsunday region, I began to engage in a community arts practice as well as an individual arts practice. I founded the community Facebook page [Bowen and Whitsunday Photography Group](#), which now has 800 members (<https://apps.facebook.com/groups/674371715935209>). I negotiated the weekly inclusion of a selection of images taken by the members of this group in the local paper, the *Bowen Independent*. I mentored, and continue to mentor, local amateur photographers, and coordinated community projects/events to enhance their skills. One of these events is the yearly [Bowen Superboat](#) event (<https://annesusesmith.com.au/bowen-superboats/>), where I have been a volunteer photographer for the past five years, appointed by Bowen Tourism. I was asked to participate in major arts projects such as [Landscape and Memory: Frank Hurley](#) (<https://annesusesmith.com.au/landscape-in-memory-exhibition/>), discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4: Findings. As the Chair of the Bowen/Burdekin Local Marine Advisory Committee, convened by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), I take and distribute relevant local images to other members and to GBRMPA. Commercially, my images are distributed and sold around Australia by a major gift and homeware wholesaler. On Australia Day 2016, I was awarded the Whitsunday Citizen of the Year by the Whitsunday Regional Council for my contribution to photography in my community.

My home region of the Whitsundays lies on the coast between Central and North Queensland, and is regularly exposed to extreme weather events in the form of cyclones and floods. At a personal level, this has meant that my photographic practice has regularly coincided with such events. The most recent weather crisis in the Whitsundays was Cyclone Debbie, which made landfall near Airlie Beach at 12.40pm on 28 March 2017. Taking a photograph after Cyclone Debbie, I realise the profound impact photography could have on my own emotional processing of a traumatic weather crisis (this incident is discussed in detail in Chapter 3: Research Methodology). Thus my own photographic practice and emotional response directly fed into the research for this PhD.

Taking photographs of my own regional community over a number of years, taking images in the drought-impacted communities of Longreach, and then experiencing the cyclone weather crisis and its aftermath as a photographer (as well as a resident) has given me a unique empathy for communities living through a weather crisis. It also ensures that my PhD research in the Barcaldine region is authentic. Thus my own photographic experience and practice have directly contributed to the quality of my PhD research.

1.5 Environmental Crises and Community Resilience

Individual and community resilience are crucial to the life of rural communities, particularly those under stress from environmental crises. The increasing threat of climate change and the challenges it presents to ecosystems, individuals and societies have stressed the need to optimise individual and community capacity in order to respond to those challenges. One “...pivotal concept in both the vulnerability and resilience literatures...is adaptive capacity, or adaptability; meaning the ability of a system to prepare for stresses and changes in advance or adjust and respond to the effects caused by the stresses” (Smit *et al.*, 2001, cited in Engle, 2011, p. 647). The challenges of climate change and funding uncertainties have forced regional communities to search for unique initiatives to bolster their ability to respond and adjust to these changes.

After undertaking a detailed search for other photographic projects in communities, I can state that my PhD image research project, *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), is unique. Rather than provide traditional services for mental health and relationship issues, this project provided an artistic and social solution to address these issues that was created by community, for community. For participants to be able to tell their story, and then see it re-told through this research, was therapeutic for them. It also proved therapeutic for the communities where the exhibition was shown. Chapter 4: Findings provides insight into how projects like this can provide a focal point to engage people beyond the photographers themselves, providing a cathartic process for a stressed community.

There is extensive literature around community resilience and a sense of place, as well as social identity emerging from resilience, but very little about image making and its significance to community resilience, wellbeing and capacity building during crisis events. I have been unable find other research projects in Australia that have used photography to link specifically to a weather crisis. However, after the opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition at The Globe gallery in Barcaldine (18 August 2018), and subsequent media coverage that ran for a number of months, I was made aware of a community photographic project entitled *My Backyard* (2018), undertaken in November 2018 by amateur photographers in Hughenden, which is also located in a drought-stricken part of Western Queensland approximately 500 km from Barcaldine. The project was funded by the Flinders Shire Council with drought-support funding from the Queensland Government (McKillop, 2018). Drought was also the major focus of this project; the amateur photographers looked past the destructive impact of the drought and focused on the beauty that was still present in abundance (McKillop, 2018). Although I cannot claim that my project directly caused the project in Hughenden, the extensive media coverage of both the pre-study and my PhD image exhibition in 2018 may have correlated with other regional emerging initiatives. I was recently contacted to discuss my PhD image project and the possibility of applying a similar process for a public health project in the Whitsundays. Due to time constraints, the project has been set aside for the time being, but the foundation has been laid for future consideration.

1.6 Artistic Expression and Community Resilience

My experience curating the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition showed me that photographic reification by community members provided clear opportunities for artistic expression to build individual and community resilience. This is borne out in the literature. For example, Bratchford, Giotaki and Wewiora (2018) state that social photography projects facilitate "...a sense of community by engaging people in the process of taking photographs, describing the significance of what is captured and co-creating a shared

narrative about their situation that leads to positive individual and collective action” (p. 83). They expand on this by stating that creative “...engagement increases wellbeing by enhancing individual skills, improving social cohesion and developing a shared narrative...” (Bratchford *et al.*, 2018, p. 83).

It is clear that participation in artistic expression has strong potential to build local resilience and wellbeing by fostering adaptive capacity, social networks, leadership and reflection. Yet, there is very little direct understanding of the role of artistic expression in contributing to personal and community resilience, what has been described as “...the capacity of social ecological systems to adapt or transform in response to unfamiliar or unknown shocks” (Carpenter *et al.*, 2012, p. 3249). Nor is there an extensive body of literature on the contribution of artistic expression to two key aspects of resilience: wellbeing and community capacity building.

This research was undertaken to investigate how community members’ participation in artistic expression through photographic images could affect community resilience, including wellbeing and community capacity building. The research focuses specifically on the community experience in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) photographic exhibition. Using photography as a medium to reify at the site of a drought crisis in the Barcaldine region, I sought to identify the potential for intersection between making and sharing images, resilience, wellbeing and capacity.

1.7 PhD Research Questions

The questions guiding my research were:

RQ1: How does a photographic exhibition (the pre-study) impact and influence the ongoing adaptive capacity of communities in drought?

RQ2: To what extent does participation in an image-making project foster resilience in a community?

RQ3: How might an image-making project and exhibition contribute to the resilience of the individual and community in crisis?

In order to create a structure to gauge the emergent properties of photography by amateurs in their local “crisis” environment, I chose to adopt the methods associated with Grounded Theory, a form of qualitative research. Ideally, this method involves creative problem-solving and imaginative interpretation, and builds a series of checks and refinements through an iterative process of successive analytic and data-collection phases (Charmaz, 2008, p. 156). As emergence is fundamentally a temporal concept of process and change, I felt my research needed to also include findings from the pre-study, *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition in order to establish how this influenced storytelling around drought in a community context (Charmaz, 2008).

For the design and implementation of the second exhibition, *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), I constructed a series of activities (interviews, informants, document study and personal journal entries) to inform the construction of emergent categories commensurate with Grounded Theory. The comparative and interactive nature of the stages of Grounded Theory make it an explicitly emergent method and an ideal method for determining emergent categories between an image-making project, individuals, community, wellbeing and capacity building. Taking images also allows the photographer to bring attention to personal and community issues such as “the impact of drought” without becoming too emotional and intimidating (Phillips, Evans, & Muirhead, 2015, p. 2345). More detail about Grounded Theory and its application to this project is provided in Chapter 3: Research Methodology.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis has some unique features, which, I believe, add to its contribution to scholarly research. First, it includes a significant set of appendices that display the images from the research exhibition *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), which took place before I realised the large amount of work associated

with the curation and dissemination of this exhibition. This photographic component of the research delivered a significant body of practice, to which my supervisors and I allocated a 40% equivalent word count, with 60% allocated to this thesis. Second, the unusual combination of a supervisor in creative arts and a co-supervisor in business and community resilience has inspired a unique collaboration of knowledge across those two fields. Third, while the use of creative arts / expressive arts in community capacity building projects is nothing new, I could not find other projects that had applied the added strategy of using photography, which can be an affordable mechanism for generating immediate images that respond to a weather crisis event.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Literature Review sets the theoretical foundation for my work through an exploration of similar research projects and scholarly material about resilience and wellbeing.
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology explains how the theoretical foundation outlined in Chapter 2 is applied to this research. Grounded Theory and reflective practice are used as the foundational methodologies for the methods and phases of data collection resulting in the emergence of 10 data sets.
- Chapter 4: Findings outlines the four key assertions revealed by the coding and the responses to the project's research questions. These are the key findings from the site of the research, developed using the theories discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.
- Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusions provides a Resilience Through Images (RTI) model that presents a roadmap for crisis-impacted communities to follow to strengthen and build individual and community resilience through the use of collaborative reification. This may assist all levels of government to build resilience, wellbeing and community capacity.

- Appendices: provide evidence, and archive photographic images produced for the exhibition, along with participant information, interview questions, promotional material and other material generated by the project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses relevant literature in relation to resilience and wellbeing. It is divided into sections and subsections according to the most relevant readings as they relate to the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition and my PhD image research project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018).

2.2 Understanding Resilience

The concept of resilience was conceived in the fields of psychology and psychiatry, and initially used to describe personality traits of “...individuals who came through major adverse circumstances relatively undamaged...it is now used to describe a dynamic process of personal development” (Maclean, Ross, Cuthill, & Witt, 2016, p. 3).

Maclean *et al.* focus on “...the idea of resilience as linked to personal and collective adaptive capacity to cope with particular external occurrences” (p. 4). Carl Folke (2016) identifies resilience and the thinking around resilience as a phenomenon that is highly dynamic and in continual change. He states that resilience thinking in relation to the environment has emerged as “...a lens of inquiry that serves as a platform for...dialogue and collaboration” (p. 1). Resilience is about “...cultivating the capacity...in the face of expected and surprising change” (p. 1). Folke condenses a large amount of resilience research into his substantial entry for the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science* (2016), noting that the “...continuous advancement of resilience thinking...” is related to finding ways for people to improve wellbeing as part of “...governing complex social–ecological dynamics for sustainability...” (p. 1). In other words, resilience thinking is highly complex, adaptive, persistent and transformational. My emerging notions around resilience are very much informed by Folke’s articulation that resilience is a capacity “...that persists in the face of change, to continue to change in ever changing environments” (p. 4).

Folke provides this research with key insights into the lexicon of contemporary resilience.

The exhibition work this research produced is an example of a community cultivating capacity at the site of a crisis. It was created at the site of one of the worst droughts in recorded Australian history. Rather than the images replicating what was seen every day in the drought-impacted environment, it focused on a contrast to this: its beauty. While Folke links resilience to capacity and change, there are further aspects that contribute to the formulation of my own definition of resilience for use in this research.

Béné, Newsham, Davies, Ulrichs and Wood (2014) also emphasise that the concept of resilience is constantly changing and evolving. Similarly, Davoudi *et al.* use the term “...bounce-back-ability” (2012, p. 301) to describe a view of resilience that can “...withstand and recover from adversity” (Pitt, cited in Davoudi *et al.*, 2012, p. 301). Liggy Webb, an author and international consultant specialising in life skills, describes resilience “...as the ability to bend instead of breaking under pressure, or the ability to persevere and adapt when faced with challenges” (2013, p. x). Yet another interpretation of resilience by Folke *et al.* is that it is a “...buffer capacity for preserving what we have and recovering to where we were” (cited in Davoudi *et al.*, p. 302). The theorists link resilience to a person’s ability to be flexible during recovery from a crisis event.

Resilience thinking seems to have developed in a layered approach described as “...discovery, based on observation, that living systems have multiple basins of attraction (Holling, cited in Folke, 2016, p. 3). Folke states that in the “...continuous advancement of resilience thinking there are efforts aimed at capturing resilience of social-ecological systems and finding ways for people and institutions to govern social-ecological dynamics for improved human well-being...” (Folke, 2016, p. 1). He states that the “...social-ecological systems are intertwined systems of people and nature embedded in the biosphere” (p. 3).

The layered approach to resilience discussed by Holling above aligns well with the emergent characteristics of my research and my use of Grounded Theory as my methodology of inquiry. The use of Grounded Theory for my research has encouraged resilience to emerge from the data sets, which has made me more attune to the complexity of resilience. The literature has allowed me, as the researcher, to home in on ideas that have become key: capacity, change, adaptive, transformational and wellbeing. While these ideas resonate with my research, returning to Folke has provided me with a concise idea of how encompassing resilience is both for the individual and the community.

Being resilient can be described as an individual or community having the capacity to not only persist in the face of ongoing change but to grow in an environment of continual change. Folke views resilience as a reflection of “...people, communities, societies, and cultures to live and develop with change and with ever-changing environments” (p. 8). He states that “...resilience is about persisting with change...” and the ability to “...absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function” (p. 8). The ability of individuals and communities to be able to absorb the shocks of a crisis and grow through continual change lays a foundation for leadership to build support mechanisms. Walsh-Dilley, Wolford and McCarthy (2016) believe that resilience is the best framework for thinking “...about rural development, particularly among development agencies, policy makers, and practitioners” (p. 1), in particular as this relates to rapid and ongoing climate changes. These views on resilience support my exploration of the impact of images in building resilience in the crisis-impacted communities of Barcaldine.

Folke (2016) discusses the processes of adaptability, adaption, transformability and transformation associated with resilience. Adaptability is a reference to human actions that sustain development on current pathways, a process of deliberate change in anticipation of, or in reaction to, external stimuli and stress. Transformability refers to shifting development to new pathways and the creation of new pathways, especially when ecological, economic, or social structures makes the existing system untenable. Transformation processes are

characterised by discontinuities, thresholds, or tipping points and do not generally proceed smoothly; therefore, these cycles or phases represent attempts to make sense of social-ecological systems rather than strictly defining features of transformation (Folke, 2016, p. 9). Folke states that transformation requires resilience to draw from a range of resources, including experience and knowledge, and this enables “...learning with change, turning crisis into windows of opportunity, and allowing space for, or even governing transformations for innovative pathways in tune with the resilience of the biosphere” (2016, p. 10). Transformations are more than just simply “making changes”; they are opportunities for new and innovative pathways to resilience. It would seem that key proponents of resilience in communities are able to articulate the processes discussed by Folke above. The articulation of Folke’s resilience processes is a point of reference for my investigation of the use of images in nurturing resilience in the drought-impacted communities of Barcaldine.

2.2.1 Resilience and Disaster in Regional Communities

The above definitions of resilience assist in describing the particular resilience that emerges during a drought, where locals have had their resilience tested, over time, thus affecting their individual and community wellbeing. Masten and Obradovic (2008) state that the “...mass media are saturated with stories of a possible flu pandemic and global warming, along with reports of ongoing genocide, terrorism, and natural disaster events...” and that it is imperative to understand “...what needs to be known that could inform efforts to prevent or ameliorate the consequences of disaster and promote recovery” (p. 2). Below, I will discuss communities and resilience in the context of weather disasters, combining resilience and community capacity building through the lens of community resilience during a crisis. What will emerge is the need for this research to connect capacity building to resilience, as there is literature and community experience that suggests that the two co-exist.

Resilience is both an individual and community characteristic. As Judith Rodin, the first woman to serve as the President of the Rockefeller Foundation (USA)

states, resilience is the capacity to recover from shocks and stress and to adapt and thrive from the crisis experience, developing a greater capacity to bounce back and learn from the situation, becoming more adept in recognising and maximising new opportunities as they present themselves (2014, pp. 3–4). Similarly, Patricia Deegan, a psychologist and researcher, defines individual resilience as referring to “...the capacity of people who are faced with adversity, to adapt, cope, rebound, withstand, grow, survive, and define a new sense of self...” (2005, p. 163). Liggy Web, a behavioural skills specialist, suggests that resilient people adopt a positive mental attitude and do not allow adversity to deplete their energy and their resolve; rather, they find solutions to move forward and have a strong belief that things will improve and get better (2013, p. x).

Other attributes of resilient individuals include optimism, self-esteem, social connectedness and adaptive capacity (Maybery, Pope, Hodgins, Hitchenor, & Shepard, 2009, p. 328). The Canadian Community Resilience Project Team in British Columbia suggests that a “...resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change” (Community Resilience Project Team, 1999, p. 9). Colussi and Rowcliffe (2000) also suggest that a “...resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change” (p. 9). The research on the resilience of individuals reflects similar findings to those for resilient communities, because communities are made up of individuals. This is reinforced by Cavaye (2000), who suggests “...community is the connection of individuals” (p. 10). New collaborations seeking to build and nurture resilience continue to emerge, two examples being “...the global flood resilience alliance initiated by an insurance company...” and the “...Resilience Action Initiative of several multinational enterprises” (Kupers, cited in Folke, 2016, p. 2). The *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) PhD research project was undertaken to build resilience, wellbeing and capacity in the communities of the Barcaldine region.

The concept of community is also important in considering resilience. While the definition of community is varied, it is generally referred to as “...an entity that has geographic boundaries and a shared fate. Communities are composed of built, natural, social, and economic environments that influence one another in complex ways” (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008, p. 128). Cavaye (2000) acknowledges that defining community is complex, but suggests community is the connection of individuals to each other and to their environment: a belonging. Following years of conducting community-development courses across Australia, and based on the responses of over 600 community-development practitioners, Cavaye (2000) identifies the following elements of community:

1. A commonality: shared norms, experiences, background or concerns.
2. Identity and culture: community members have a common attachment or psychological identification with their community.
3. Communication: Communication creates and maintains acquaintances and relationships that can potentially strengthen communities.
4. Care: a group of people become community when they care about issues and people beyond their own individual interest.
5. History: communities have common history that connects them together, working together and dealing with past challenges and successes.
6. Hope: communities need a sense of hope to be able to achieve their aspirations.
7. Participation: communities rely on participation in order to maintain and build on community structure.
8. Fostering community: creating an environment for communities to form and thrive.
9. Centre – a community requires a place of focus and identity.
10. Basic facilities and services: communities need a space where they can obtain basic services.
11. Continuous contact: continued contact and communication is essential to build trust and confident in communities.

12. Key people: it is essential for communities to have leaders and individuals with strong social networks, these people unify communities. (Cavaye, 2000, pp. 10–14)

I discovered that the above was evident in the communities of the Barcaldine region where the research project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) was undertaken. While conducting this research, I also observed what Cavaye (2000) calls a sub-community (a defined sub-section of the community, not the community as a whole) in action. A creative cultural sub-community – my volunteers, amateur photographers and participating school students – participated in an enabling environment by creating and sharing their artefacts with their community. Cavaye’s community elements 1, 2, 6, 7, 11 and 12 were the most pertinent and consistent during the creation of the work at the site of the drought-crisis region, and were intertwined throughout the project.

Delanty’s introduction of the impact of environment and its resources on resilience in a crisis event adds another layer to the resilience literature. Delanty presents an alternative to Cavaye’s community elements with the following four concepts. He suggests communities exist:

1. as a spatial locality, often where government agencies and other organisations see the need for disadvantaged groups to have improved opportunities
2. as the building of identity and belonging, often distinct from other groups and communities
3. as the development of political mobilisation and collective action, often opposing injustice
4. as new relationships developed through global communications and the internet (Delanty, cited in Cavaye, 2000, p. 7).

According to Delanty, the resilience of a community is intertwined with the condition of the environment and its resources, making sustainability paramount to studies of resilience (Cutter, Barnes, Berry, Burton, Evans, Tate, &

Webb, 2008). Therefore, a natural disaster's impact on the environment is important to developing strategies to ensure community resilience and capacity. This emphasises the importance of having individual and community resources available during and after a crisis event to ensure community capacity and resilience.

Community members may articulate their own experience of community resilience differently during stressful events such as natural disasters (Bhamra, Dani, & Burnard, 2011). Whatever their experience or articulation, resilience plays a key role in creating sustainable communities. Within the context of natural disasters, sustainability is defined as the ability to "...tolerate-and-overcome-damage, diminished productivity, and reduced quality of life from an extreme event without significant outside assistance" (Mileti, cited in Cutter *et al.*, 2008, p. 601). It is also defined as the link between wellbeing and collaboration as a way of social cohesion (Mills & Brown, 2004, pp. 6–67).

Community resilience related to a disaster event is discussed in detail by Imperiale and Vanclay (2016), academics and cultural geography researchers from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. They explain disaster as:

...an occurrence of an unexpected disruptive event of natural (climatic, geophysical, pandemic disease) or human (environmental degradation, large scale industrial accident, war or conflict) origin that creates serious consequences for the environment and/or local communities at socio-cultural, economic, psychological, and/or political/institutional/governance levels (p. 206).

How much ongoing challenges, such as climate change, will impact regional communities in relation to resilience and wellbeing is uncertain; however, planning interventions should focus on "...supporting regional-scale social adaptation to avoid or to mitigate some of the worst impacts of climate change" (Dale *et al.*, 2016, p. 24).

Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) suggest that “... in the natural world, systems continually evolve, not only by adapting to external disturbances, but also by modifying their internal dynamics and recombining their structures and process for transformation and change” (p. 205). Imperiale and Vanclay also state that the relevance for resilience thinking is “... in providing epistemological tools to better understand the need for innovative adaptive strategies to ensure the social survival of rural communities, increase rural communities’ wellbeing and improve the governance of rural changes” (2016, p. 205). This concurs with Folke (2016), who reiterates that community resilience is a highly dynamic phenomenon, with communities in continual change and with resilience continuing to evolve during times of change.

Community resilience also includes elements of self-actualisation. Glenn Richardson, a researcher and academic, describes this element of resilience as a “...motivational force within everyone that drives them to pursue wisdom, self-actualization” (2002, p. 309). Richardson expands to summarise resilience as a “...force within everyone that drives them to seek self-actualization, altruism, wisdom, and harmony with a spiritual source of strength. This force is resilience, and it has a variety of names depending upon the discipline” (2002, p. 313).

2.2.2 “Bouncing Back”

Community resilience includes the idea of communities of people recovering from shocks and stress. Norris *et al.* (2008, p. 131) define community resilience as a “...process linking a set of networked adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation in constituent populations after a disturbance”. Imperial and Vanclay suggest that an increasing number of natural disasters resulting in community, social and economic crises has triggered an increase in resilience dialogue in relation to regional development (2016, p. 204). How individuals and communities recover or “bounce back” and support each other during/after a disaster is described by Solmit (2016) as when “...all ordinary divides and patterns are shattered, people step up to become their brother’s keeper” (cited in Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, p. 210).

Imperiale and Vanclay believe that, during a disaster, social interaction and participation in community activities result in positive exchanges enhancing wellbeing (2016, p. 210). They find evidence of four key concepts embedded in the “community resilience” actions of people in post-disaster situations: “Equity (sharing); Public awareness of sustainability (knowing what to do); Participation (being involved in decision making and action); Social cohesion (community wellbeing)” (p. 215). These concepts were identified during my research, the emergent nature of which supported the application of the Grounded Theory approaches identified by Creswell (2007). The concepts emphasised the need to build my insights into photography’s contribution to resilience from grassroots practice.

Resilience theories are concerned firstly with understanding and assessing the capacity of a system of stakeholders to respond successfully to major stresses, disturbances or crises; and, secondly, with identifying the effectiveness of relevant policy, regulatory and planning frameworks. They consider change and instability to be normal (Walker & Salt, 2006). This capacity can be measured by using resilience concepts such as the processes of “rebound, adaptation and recovery” (Christopherson, Mitchie, & Tyler, 2010, p. 3). Clinical psychologist David Wolfe (2010) suggests the focus after crisis events should be collaboration of all stakeholders in the planning process for the implementation of change, within the constraints of their regional institutions. The pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition is an example of Wolfe’s suggested collaboration, as it engaged all levels of government and contributed to a visit to the region by the Prime Minister, Premier and Queensland Leader of the Opposition. The Queensland Government’s Member for Gregory stated that the exhibition helped secure funding for the region for drought relief and psycho-social assistance for the affected communities (see [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#)).

Resilience also involves individual capacity. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2014) concurs with the concept of resilience as the ability to “bounce back” after a crisis event. It also describes an intrinsic link between resilience

and community wellbeing, where “...every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community” (2014). The concept of resilience has been associated with the adaptive capacity of individuals (Norris *et al.*, 2008). Bonanno and Galea (2007) define adult resilience as:

...the ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances who are exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event such as the death of a close relation or life-threatening situation to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning...as well as the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions (p. 671).

Resilience naturally involves stress. According to Imperiale and Vanclay (2016), community resilience in action helps identify how community resilience actually presents itself and how it comes about. It also assists in identifying which types of social relationships and processes are activated. Research identifies that resilience does not preclude dysfunction or distress. It is now accepted in the field of disaster studies that some distress is a normal reaction to a crisis event (Norris *et al.*, 2008, p. 132). In most cases, distress is fleeting and equilibrium is achieved again. This return to functioning is not always back to the pre-disaster state but the adaption of a “new normal” is achieved (Norris *et al.*, 2008, p. 132). My decision to use reflective journaling and photographs to record the growing understanding about resilience was influenced by the literature above, and significantly impacted my understanding of Grounded Theory as a way to reveal the accumulation of evidence to provide clear “in the field” observations and actions by participants.

Interestingly, many similarities exist between the data sets I used for this research and those used by the researchers Imperiale and Vanclay (2016), who investigated community resilience after a 2009 earthquake that devastated rural villages in Italy’s Abruzzo region. Their research investigated the

reflections of the lead researcher combined with a multi-method approach that included the use of participant observations, field notes, in-depth interviews, personal experience, photo analysis and a document analysis that included print and digital media (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016). Imperiale and Vanclay find that, in the face of disaster and crisis, community members and those sent to assist felt “...an overriding sense of responsibility to help others; a strong feeling of experiencing empathy for others; the solidarity that emerged from sharing sorrow and pain...and the joy of cooperation in doing collective tasks, even in the face of tragedy” (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, p. 208).

This similarity between data outweighed the differences in timescales of the Italian earthquake and the Queensland drought. The disasters and their outcomes were similar, even though one was an earthquake that happened quickly and the other was a drought that occurred over a long period of time. The observations of the communities impacted by the earthquake and those sent to assist were a remarkable example of “bouncing back” after a crisis event.

The research findings of the 2009 earthquake in Italy were also mirrored in the findings of Thornley, Ball, Signal, Lawson-Te Aho and Rawson (2015), who examined community resilience in New Zealand after a series of earthquakes. Following devastating earthquakes in the Canterbury region in September 2010, December 2010, February 2011, June 2011 and December 2011, they state that in “...all communities, participants reported a post-earthquake increase in community connectedness, especially in the immediate aftermath when people acted selflessly and were more caring and generous than usual” (2015, p. 24).

The above was reinforced by several of those impacted by the earthquakes who reported that “...contributing and helping others felt good and enhanced their own wellbeing. This is consistent with the large body of evidence on the positive health effects of giving and volunteering” (Thornley *et al.*, 2015, p. 30). Individual and community connections were a key to resilience, and many impacted by the earthquakes “...discussed the importance of ‘opportunities to keep people coming together, talking together’” (Thornley *et al.*, 2015, p. 26).

However, it is beneficial to have a sense of community before the disaster “...because you do get that initial surge of ‘community togetherness’ in the immediate aftermath when the adrenalin is still pumping...but it can dissipate...once the going gets tough” (Thornley *et al.*, 2015, p. 26).

Imperiale and Vanclay state that disasters such as the ongoing drought crisis in the communities of the Barcaldine region “...provide dramatic situations in which affected local communities reveal extraordinary capacity to re-imagine and re-design their structures and processes to survive” (2016, p. 206).

However, they also argue that “...there should be a greater awareness of the underlying community resilience”. They suggest “...that greater attention should be given to understanding, recognizing and strengthening the capacity of local communities and the resilient social processes they put into action in order to address the negative and economic impacts they experience during crises” (2016, p. 204).

Resilience and wellbeing are the theoretical anchors that underpin the photography project as an example of community capacity building. My definition of resilience is the ability for individuals and community to “bounce back” from a crisis events, such as the drought in the Barcaldine region.

2.2.3 Developing Social Cohesion Through Relationships and Collaboration

Collaboration and relationship-building contribute to community resilience.

Simmons, Reynolds and Swinburn (2011) show that community members can work together to develop and sustain strong relationships, solve problems and make group decisions, and collaborate effectively to identify and progress goals.

This collaboration fosters capacity building and increases social cohesion.

Robert Chaskin, Professor and Deputy Dean for strategic initiatives at the University of Chicago, defines community capacity as “...the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the wellbeing of a given community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized effort” (2001, p. 295).

The relationship between resilience, wellbeing and community capacity is defined by researchers McCrea, Walton and Leonard: "...community resilience can be thought of as community processes that aim to restore, maintain, or enhance community wellbeing in the face of natural disasters or rapid change" (2016, p. 196). Mills and Brown (2004) acknowledge the link between wellbeing and collaboration as a way of increasing social cohesion with their statement "...community engagement (including collaboration and practice) is a building block for sustainability and wellbeing" (cited in McDonald, Aprill, & Mills, 2017, p. 390).

Capacity building is a key community manifestation of resilience and wellbeing. In 2006, "capacity building" was added to the World Health Organization (WHO) *Health Promotion Glossary*, which was written to facilitate the understanding of those engaged in health promotion globally. The term was considered essential to be included as it related to human resources, institutional and infrastructural capacity, networks and partnerships (Smith, Tang, & Nutbeam, 2006). In the glossary, capacity building is defined as:

...the development of knowledge, skills, commitment, structures, systems and leadership to enable effective health promotion. It involves actions to improve health at three levels: the advancement of knowledge of skills among practitioners; the expansion of support and infrastructure for health and promotion in organisations, and; the development of cohesiveness and partnerships for health in communities. (Smith *et al.*, 2006, cited in Simmons, Reynolds, & Swinburn, 2011, pp. 193–199)

The inclusion of "capacity building" in the World Health Organization glossary highlights the importance of wellbeing and resilience to healthy communities worldwide.

2.2.4 How Wellbeing Contributes to Resilience

Wellbeing is also a concept related to resilience and there are many views about the meaning of "wellbeing" across a range of disciplines (Henn, Hill, & Jorgensen, 2016, p. 2). For example, Aristotle emphasises eudemonia, rather

than hedonia, as the happiness that arises from good works, distinguishing between a good life and pleasure. His view of happiness (eudemonia) was that the greatest life was the one that was lived to its fullest potential or in accord with some internal virtue (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008, pp. 210–220). This life-journey of seeking one's fullest potential is also the focus of Carol Ryff (1989), who created a theoretical model of psychological wellbeing that encompasses six distinct dimensions of wellness:

1. *Self-acceptance*, the realistic perception of the self, including both good and bad qualities and the acceptance of this self-evaluation
2. *Positive relations with others*, the ability to form warm, caring relationships with others including the capability to develop intimacy and to show empathy with others
3. *Autonomy*, the ability to make one's own decisions without relying on, or waiting for, the approval of others following one's own belief
4. *Environmental mastery*, the ability to manage the environment and to mold environments, or to choose environments, which align with one's needs and values
5. *Purpose in life*, having goals in life and a sense that one's life has purpose and meaning; living intentionally and with clear direction
6. *Personal growth*, to continuously grow and develop as a person and work towards optimising one's full potential. (Cited in Henn *et al.*, 2016, pp. 3–12)

Each of the six dimensions described above is a theoretical assertion that points to different aspects of positive functioning (Ryff, 1989, p. 1072, cited in Ryff & Singer, 2006, p. 1105) and are important to community resilience. Ryff and Singer (2003) argue that resilient individuals are generally able to maintain their physical and psychological health and have the capacity to recover more quickly from stressful events. Fredrickson (2001) states "...there is evidence suggesting that resilience is effective in improving psychological wellbeing" (cited in Souril & Hasanirad, 2011, p. 1542).

Diener and Suh state that “...subjective well-being consists of three interrelated components: life satisfaction, pleasant affect, and unpleasant affect. Affect refers to pleasant and unpleasant moods and emotions, whereas life satisfaction refers to a cognitive sense of satisfaction with life” (cited in Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012, p. 223). However, Shah and Marks consider wellbeing to be “...more than just happiness. As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community” (cited in Dodge *et al.*, 2012, p. 225). Another interpretation of the definition of wellbeing according to Seligman is that “...the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing” (cited in Dodge *et al.*, 2012, p. 226). The connection between wellbeing and resilience is aptly described by Hendry and Saunders who state that “...each time an individual meets a challenge, the system of challenges and resources comes into a state of imbalance, as the individual is forced to adapt his or her resources to meet this particular challenge” (cited in Dodge *et al.*, 2012, p. 230). In other words, the stability of wellbeing comes into play when the individual has the psychological, social and physical resources that they need to meet the challenges thrown at them, such as in times of disaster. This draws a connection between the individual and the collective/community having access to the psychological, social and physical resources they need to overcome a state of imbalance and achieve a state of wellbeing (Dodge *et al.*, 2012).

Community capacity also is closely related to resilience. Chaskin (2001, p. 295), defines community capacity as:

...the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the wellbeing of a given community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized effort.

Chaskin views this definition through the lens of a relational model composed of several dimensions. He states that the model suggests that community capacity is exemplified by a set of core characteristics and operates through the agency of individuals, organisations and networks to perform particular functions. The model also suggests that, although conditioned, in part, by micro-level and macro-level contextual influences, community capacity may be built through strategic intervention, operating through individuals, organisations, and networks to perform particular functions which, when successful, may lead to increased community capacity and other, more targeted, community outcomes (Chaskin, 2001, p. 295). The pivotal concept in both the vulnerability and resilience literature is the notion of adaptive capacity, or adaptability, meaning the ability of a system to prepare for stresses and changes in advance or adjust and respond to the effects caused by the stresses (Smit, Burton, Klein, & Wandel, 2000). Simply put, it is the capacity to adapt, which is an important focus for all key aspects of the research questions for this project. The links between methods that can be applied to increase relational capacity and collaboration are very much part of the development of social cohesion necessary for resilience in communities: “[R]esilience is about persisting with change on the current path of development....adapting, improving and innovating on that path....it is about having capacity to continue to learn, self-organize and develop in dynamic environments faced with true uncertainty and the unexpected...” (Olsson *et al.*, cited in Folke, 2016, p.8).

The Stockholm Resilience Centre, a non-profit independent research institute specialising in sustainable development and environmental issues, suggests that a resilience approach to sustainability focuses on how to build capacity to deal with unexpected change (Colussi & Rowcliffe, 2000, pp. 3–20). This approach moves beyond viewing people as external drivers of ecosystem dynamics and rather looks at how we are part of and interact with the biosphere. It investigates the interaction between people and nature and how they manage to ensure resilience. Communities and individuals are subject to a diverse and changing natural environment. The threats that these sometimes turbulent changes pose can vary in both severity and frequency and may originate

internally or externally to an individual or community. Natural disasters such as severe droughts pose a major threat to the wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities.

Throughout the literature on wellbeing and resilience, theorists and practitioners use a similar lexicon and themes, indicating their interconnection both individually and collectively. It can be argued that, in order to be resilient, one first has to experience wellbeing, which is achieved through the existence of psychological, social or physical resources that equip the individual to be able to “bounce back”. Wellbeing will continue to be redefined due to its complexity as it refers to emotions and psychology and because “...wider structural domains impact upon psychological development and influence individuals’ active ability to cope, thrive and build resilience on the subjective level” (LaPlaca, McNaught, & Knight, 2013, p. 117). I will discuss the properties of wellbeing that are present during the making of art, in this case in the taking of photographs as part of my research.

2.2.5 Wellbeing and Arts Practice

I have previously discussed the links between wellbeing, community capacity and resilience. I now explore the connection between individual and community wellbeing and expression through arts practice. Australia’s National Arts and Health Framework recognises the role of arts in contributing to “...improving individual and community health and wellbeing” (cited in McDonald, Aprill, & Mills, 2017, p. 385). Globally, the development of the arts in the context of community health and wellbeing is relatively recent, gaining ground over the past 60 years (Clift & Camic, 2015, p. 1). Recent growth in the field is evidenced in the numbers of well-established national and regional arts for health organisations and the increased interest in the field as represented in the number of conferences now held in the health and arts (Clift & Camic, 2015, p. 1).

As explained earlier, wellbeing is the ability of an individual or community to realise their own potential and to be able to cope with the everyday stresses of

life (World Health Organization, 2014) and resilience is the ability of an individual or community to be able to bounce back after a crisis event. Both concepts can be related to arts practice. Social theorist Etienne Wenger states that “...we produce physical and conceptual artifacts – words, tools, concepts, methods, stories, documents, links to resources and other forms of reification – that reflect our shared experiences and around which we organize our participation (2010, p. 1). Although Wenger is not an arts practitioner, his interest in the adaptive strategies that can help a community develop or extend upon their identity through making “artefacts” is relevant here. Wenger states that “...artifacts without participation do not carry their own meaning, and participation without artifacts is fleeting, unanchored, and uncoordinated” (2010, p. 1). Researchers Daniel Fujiwara and Rachel Smithies note that the Australian Arts Participation Survey carried out in 2013 may have been the first of its kind to link “...engagement with the arts and wellbeing” (cited in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 386). This is reinforced in a statement made in *Arts Nation* (2015), published by the Australia Council for the Arts, that “85% of Australians agree that the arts make for a more rich and meaningful life” (also cited in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 387).

Engagement and participation are important to the impact of arts practice. Wenger indicates that engagement is “...the most immediate relation to practice – engaging in activities, and doing things, working alone or together, talking using and producing artifacts” (2010, p. 4). Wenger believes that the identity of the individual grows with participation that reifies, defined as an attempt to provide a bridge between what is abstract and what is real, at the site of the “making” (2010). McDonald *et al.* (2017) explain this process is central to Wenger’s “notion of learning through participation (to do) and reification (to make), which provides a dynamic and active engagement” (p. 389). Wenger also adds that each community is involved in its own production of “practice”, which is shaped by its social systems. He describes this as “landscapes of practice” (Wenger, 2010, p. 4). Wenger goes on to say that the landscape is “...dynamic as communities emerge, merge, split, compete, complement each other and disappear” (Wenger, 2010, p. 4). My research explores the Barcaldine

region's "landscapes of practice" and how they influence community resilience and wellbeing.

Community arts practice can enhance people's health and wellbeing and build community capacity. For example, in 1999, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) developed its *Mental Health Promotion Plan 1999–2002*, establishing a framework for the development of research and program activity focusing on three determinants of mental health: social connectedness, valuing diversity, and economic participation (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 1999). Subsequently, VicHealth established the Community Arts Development Scheme, which aimed to improve health outcomes through community arts (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2003).

At a federal level, the Australian Government also developed an Arts and Health Framework in 2013. A later report on the framework found that the strength of the community arts process is its ability to bring diverse people together around a common project and sense of purpose (Australian Government, 2019). Participants are exposed to and gain a greater understanding of others and potentially a greater sense of social connection. Friends and associates are made and opportunities for positive interactions are expanded.

Kim Dunphy, from the Cultural Development Network in Victoria, argues that the disastrous outcomes of climate change are being experienced most deeply in regional and remote areas, and that the arts can contribute significantly to local economies, and are valued and valuable for this reason (2009, pp. 9–46). Community arts projects can enhance the skills of participants, improving their ability to function at broader political, social and environmental levels. Through the artwork, these projects provide the important dual benefits of connecting socially isolated participants to the mainstream and connecting the mainstream to the socially isolated participants. The process of public acknowledgement of quality work is an important aspect of connecting individuals to the wider community (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2003, p. 8).

Arts and creativity provide people with multiple pathways for capacity building (Roberts & Townsend, 2015, p. 214), and cultural activities and participation contribute to community identity and improve quality of life. The arts can provide a powerful tool for advocacy by creating and enlarging understanding of unfamiliar people and issues, particularly in community arts projects. Public recognition through presentation of work brings a sense of pride to participants and allows the general public to appreciate the talents of people that they may otherwise never encounter and may hold fears and prejudices about (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2003, pp. 9–10). The Australia Council for the Arts (2004), in its study, *Arts and Wellbeing*, “...summarises ideas and case study materials which demonstrates the connection between community cultural development and government ‘wellbeing’ initiatives...” (cited in Mills & Brown, 2004, pp. 5–67).

The Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) of the Australia Council for the Arts has been instrumental in the development and support of community cultural development in Australia. It defines community cultural development as a collective process now acknowledged as being life-changing and delivering long-term development benefits for community (Mills & Brown, 2004, pp. 6–67). Debra Mills, a director of CCDB, and academic Paul Brown also state that the “... relationship between artist and community has become a partnership rather than ‘expert’ sharing with the ‘amateur’” (2004, pp. 6–67). Mills extended this work into the creation of *The National Arts and Health Framework*, which was adopted by all states and territories in Australia in 2013. This framework indicates a commitment to improve health and wellbeing and recognise the role of arts in this process. Through this framework, the government seeks to:

1. acknowledge the value and benefits of arts and health practices and outcomes
2. endorse collaborative relationships between arts and health sectors nationally, and within each state and territory, as well as across the spheres of government and the non-government sector

3. value professionalism, excellence and ongoing development of those working in the field
4. acknowledge the importance of continuing research into arts and health practice and outcomes and growing body of evidence about the benefits (Australian Government, 2019, p. 1).

The acknowledgement of the role of arts in improving wellbeing supports the link between art and resilience. It is relevant to investigating the use of photography as an artistic and creative practice to enhance wellbeing and increase resilience. My project exemplifies what Mills and Brown are suggesting above.

2.2.5.1 Recognition by Government

All level of governments in Australia (local, state and federal) have acknowledged the importance and value of community cultural development. For example, the Communities Unit of the New South Wales Premier's Department states that community cultural development is a well-established process for strengthening social capacity within communities (Mills & Brown, 2004). They acknowledge that the creative process can help bridge divisions within the community, inject new life into strategies for community engagement, encourage partnership and cooperation, and provide new vision, hope and a shared sense of purpose, as well as practical solutions for economic revitalisation (Mills & Brown, 2004, pp. 41–67). Mills took a leading role in working towards a goal of "...increasing and strengthening the capacity of the arts to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our society..." as indicated in the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper, *Joining the policy dots: strengthening the contribution of the arts to individual and community health and wellbeing* (2011, pp. 5–68). This recognition of the importance of the arts in improving individual and community wellbeing reinforces the importance of research on the topic.

The increasing recognition by Australian governments and other key bodies of the importance of art in relation to wellbeing and capacity building is also evidenced in the 2014–15 annual report of Arts Queensland, which states that:

Arts Queensland contributes to the Queensland Government’s objectives by increasing community access to the arts, and through the arts, helping to build better connected and more inclusive communities. Through its investments, it also makes a significant contribution to the creative economy and employment and ensures the quality of key arts infrastructure enhances the state’s cultural profile and reputation. (Arts Queensland, 2015, p. 1)

The *Arts for all Queenslanders Strategy 2014–2018* (Queensland Government, 2013) acknowledges the importance of art and its contribution to the economy by stating that art: “...communicates its value to the state’s people and the state’s economy; exemplifies business innovation and cross-sector partnerships and attracts visitors to Queensland and contributes to the tourism economy” (p. 1). My research intends to contribute to the outcome of the *Arts for all Queenslanders Strategy* because it helps to address issues in relation to “...growing and sharing value through, partnerships, community-building and community benefits” (2013, p. 3).

Success in personal pursuits while under stress is considered individual resilience. Alex Zautra, Anne Arewasikporn and Mary Davis (2010) state that individuals who “...are able to sustain their wellbeing during times of difficulty continue to pursue goals that bring a sense of meaning in life and feelings of pleasure” (p. 223). They go on to say that those “...that strive to do so and are able to succeed in their pursuits while under stress are deemed resilient” (Zautra *et al.*, 2010, p. 223). Similarly, Wenger states that it is “inspiring to discover others who share a concern and to let this joint caring become a bond of identity. This is the power of community” (2010, p. 10). The process of creating is explained by Wenger as part of the “...dual processes of meaning making...that reflect our shared experience and around which we organize our

participation” (p. 1). Participation as it is described by Wenger (2010) is about collaboration at the site of making; it is an interplay that creates a “...social history of learning” (p. 2). He notes that this learning includes both the individual and the collective (the community). The participant reification process includes a set of criteria that Wenger calls a “...regime of competence...” (p. 2), which includes:

1. understanding what matters, what the enterprise of the community is, and how it gives rise to a perspective in the world
2. being able (and allowed) to engage productively with others in the community
3. using appropriately the repertoire of resources that the community has accumulated through the history of learning (p. 2).

Over a period of time the learning process builds on itself and becomes a social structure among the participants of the reification process, creating what Wenger calls a “...community of practice” (p. 2).

Wenger’s theories are particularly relevant for the purpose of this study, as he states that the process of participation and reification engages people both independently and collectively in the world, and we continuously bring these experiences together to negotiate and renegotiate the meaning of our personal and collective experiences. He also states that the “...process is dynamic and active. It is alive” (Wenger, 2010, p. 2), and that identity:

...reflects a complex relationship between the social and personal...the focus on identity creates a tension between competence and experience. It adds a dimension of dynamism and unpredictability to the production of practice as each member struggles to find a place in community (2010, p. 3).

The process of finding one’s connection with community and understanding its importance to resilience and wellbeing is further elaborated by Wenger in a discussion of “identity in landscape”.

In relation to “identity in landscape”, he states that “...our identities come to reflect the landscape in which we live and our experience of it” (2010, p. 5), and that learning “...shapes the human world as a complex landscape of practices” (2010, p. 4). Learning all aspects of the landscape influences who we are, and our emerging identity. Learning as described by Wenger is linked to the emerging identity as it “...gives rise to a multiplicity of interrelated practices, it shapes the human world as a complex landscape of practices” (2010, p. 4). Wenger states that through “...engagement, but also imagination and alignment, our identities come to reflect the landscape in which we live and our experiences of it” (2010, p. 6). His interest in learning extends into a strategy for resilience that embodies wellbeing and also capacity building: “...the landscape shapes our experience of ourselves: practices, people, places, regimes of competence, communities, and boundaries become part of who we are” (2010, p. 6). Wenger’s emphasis on how the landscape shapes experiences is vital for this study, as the reification process happened on site in the drought-affected communities of the Barcaldine region. Investigating the impact of images taken in this landscape is the substance of my research.

Wenger, Fenton-O’Creevey, Hutchinson, Kubiak and Wenger-Trayner (2014) also emphasise the role of a system’s “convenor”, which was my role in the arts project that is the subject of this research. Convenors are essentially part of the coordination of the adaptive strategies at the site of “making” wellbeing in communities in crisis. The systems convener, as described by Wenger *et al.*, is the term used for “...people who forge new learning partnerships in complex landscapes” (2014, p. 99). System conveners coordinate specific events, collaborations and dialogue, focus on lasting change, and work with individuals and community to find “...innovative solutions to common problems” (p. 99). System conveners can serve a significant role in community, and help to foster community resilience by building bridges, forging new and diverse partnerships, and recreating a new landscape as a response to the necessity for change, particularly in a time of a crisis.

This description of the convenor role aligns closely with my role in this research. As a systems convenor, my roles as researcher and curator (as well as photographer) were uniquely combined to more effectively understand the important role of arts as a contributor to resilience and wellbeing in communities in crisis. I acted as an interface between community participants and stakeholders, and convened the reification process as genuine participation in encouraging locals to extend their view of resilience, capacity building and wellbeing using images. Clift and Camic state that the participation or connection that an individual or community may have to art, either by observing it or making it “...suggests that a concern for pleasure, enjoyment or beauty can make a contribution to wellbeing” (cited in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 97).

The use of photography as my medium of choice to interrogate its impact on individual and community resilience and wellbeing in crisis events was determined largely due to my experience in the 2014 pre-study and later my Cyclone Debbie experience. In the next section, I explore the specific role of photography in community wellbeing and resilience.

2.3 Photography as an Expressive Medium for Research

I chose photography as the expressive medium for this research because of my personal experiences and because it was an accessible way for people to participate in arts practice. As a photographer, I became personally aware of the power of images in storytelling. This awareness, my reflection on my experiences during the pre-study, and my examination of the theoretical readings led me to believe photography could be used as the expressive medium for participants living through a drought disaster. As noted above, my position in both the pre-study and my subsequent PhD research project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) aligned with the “system convenor” described by Wenger *et al.*: “...people who forge new learning partnerships in complex landscapes” (2014, p. 99). The open dialogue I observed during the pre-study exhibitions and then again after severe Cyclone Debbie impacted the communities of the Whitsundays (where I reside) reinforced my desire to

investigate the interplay of reification on resilience and wellbeing in crisis-impacted communities.

Scholars and authors Roberta Greene and Michael Wright (2007) describe three waves of resiliency inquiry. (Resilience is being discussed here again as Greene and Wright make a link between resilience and creativity.) The first wave focuses on the “resilience qualities” that people who have experienced personal hardship and crisis events possess. The second wave of resilience inquiry focuses on the “resiliency process”, identifying processes to attain “resilience qualities” (p. 308). The third wave focuses on “innate resilience”, and is a “postmodern multidisciplinary identification of motivational forces within individuals and groups and the creation of experiences that foster the activation and utilization of the forces” (2007, p. 309). This third wave relates specifically to the efficacy of creative expression, which is the focus of my research, and is further explained by Constance Corley below.

Individuals and community can be enhanced and transformed by creative practice. Corley (2010, p. 548), believes that the:

...process of creative expression has great potential to bring harmony and connection within and beyond the self and to expand sociocultural consciousness. In the dynamic interplay between self and other, community and culture, then back to enlivening inner experience, collective healing of life challenges and deepening of connections unfold.

Corley states that “...individuals, families, communities, and even societies can be linked and transformed through the creative process” (2010, p. 543). She also indicates that theorists “...have suggested that creative endeavours can help preserve a sense of self and bring meaning to otherwise incomprehensible experiences” (2010, p. 544). Her explanation of the role of the creative process as being able to bring communities together and provide meaning to incomprehensible experiences is discussed further in relation to the use of images after the 9/11 terrorist incident as a medium to tell a story during a time

of immense grief. Barbie Zelizer, a professor of communication and former journalist, states that photographs "...became the most prominent medium to mediate loss after 9/11, and 9/11 created a boom in online commemorative practices, leading to millions of hits on news sites" (cited by Ritchie, 2018, p. 169). American academic Marnie Ritchie suggests that "TIME magazine's "Beyond 9/11: Portrait of Resilience" is an "...enigmatic example of how resilience became the dominant tone and oral lesson almost immediately following the attacks" (2018, p. 168). It is unlikely that anything could tell the story of 9/11 as succinctly, emotionally and graphically as the many thousands of images that have been posted/published, creating a medium that was able to break through language and cultural barriers. The poignant images depicting the 9/11 disaster were viewed around the world, and spoke for themselves without needing translation. The ability of images to transcend age, gender, cultures and religion influenced my ideas for this research.

Images can transcend words. Authors and researchers Gary Knowles and Andra Cole believe that "...some things just need to be shown, not merely stated. Artistic images can help us access those elusive, hard-to-put-into-words aspects, knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden or are ignored" (2007, pp. 5–13). Rachel Remen, a professor of Integrative Medicine at the University of California San Francisco, highlights the connection between the artist and the viewer and the notion that the creative process has the ability to create wellbeing and resilience, noting that "...at the deepest, level, the creative process and the healing process arise from a single source. When you are an artist, you are a healer, wordless trust of the same mystery is the foundation of your work and integrity" (Remen, 1997, cited by Corley, 2010, p. 543). This is the theoretical foundation for deploying my research participants in a creative project, rather than just interviewing them. Their images also became a vital part of my research data.

Identifying the aspects of the community creative process that foster resilience, wellbeing and community capacity is the purpose of my research. Wenger discusses identity building and also the nature of the deep and rich participation

demonstrated by reification. He states that “...identities become personal reflections of the landscape and practices” (2010, p. 6). He also states that new technologies “...in particular the rise of social media, have triggered much interest in communities of practice. Indeed, these technologies are well aligned with the peer-to-peer learning processes typical of communities in practice” (2010, p. 7). The affordability, ease and broad reach of sharing images on social media was instrumental in using photographs as a medium for my research.

French theorist Roland Barthes believed that images brought the viewer into a relationship with the photographer that served to suspend time and preserve memories (1981). Haverkamp states that in:

...photography, the limits of a phenomenology of the imaginary have become translucent, and what fascinates Barthes is the return not only of the dead but of evidence, of memory not as mental imagery, but as what this imagery was about and took its attraction from, the “light” of the idea (1993, p. 267).

I have used Barthes’ work and that of the other theorists discussed above as the theoretical anchors for the use of photography as a method to encourage capacity building via resilience and wellbeing. Photography supplies agency for image-makers. As Mills and Brown note, “...artistic and creative processes play a vital role in helping people to think critically about their experiences” (cited in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 102).

Images are both individual and universal in their messaging. Barthes argues that images are different from language, which requires an individual to know the codes or signs connected to the language being used. He states that a “...photograph does not require knowledge of an intermediate code the way language does. The content of its message is relayed directly by the image” (cited in Rice, 2016, p. 35). Barthes defines two types of messages characteristic to photographs: “...denoted messages and connoted messages. The denoted message consists of the knowledge that one acquires from looking at the

photography...The denoted message is the objective side of photography, beginning and ending with what the photograph represents” (Rice, 2016, p. 3). The connoted message, in contrast, consists of the meaning that the viewer adds to the image (Rice, 2016).

Understandings of photography are sometimes contradictory. While some commentators praise the photographic medium for its ability to record the “truth”, others note its capacity to provide more abstract insights through non-realistic means. William Mitchell, an American academic summarises these contradictory assessments:

Photography’s true nature is found in its automatic realism and naturalism, or in its tendency to aestheticise and idealize by rendering things pictorial. It is praised for its incapacity for abstraction, or condemned for its fatal tendency to produce abstractions from human reality. It is declared to be independent of language, or riddled with language. Photography is a record of what we see, or a revelation of what we cannot see, a glimpse of what was previously invisible.

Photographs are things we look at, and yet, as Barthes also insists, “a photograph is always invisible, it is not what we see”. (Cited in Cobley & Haeffner, 2009, pp. 141–142)

Barthes’ articulations are significant for my work as he reflects on the unique way images portray time and space, commenting that when the shutter is released time and space are “...simultaneously immortalized and gone forever” (cited in Rice, 2016, p. 2). The key differences between the two types of messages described by Barthes are what the viewer brings to the image. Denoted messages are shared by everyone, but connoted messages are associated with subjectivity and can, therefore, be interpreted differently from one viewer to the next (Rice, 2016, p. 3). This understanding of images is significant to my research, because the viewer does not require knowledge of a particular code to understand what a photograph represents; what the viewer

does get from the images is a way to broaden their ideas about the drought, hopefully to increase empathy and understanding.

Barthes added a new term to photography: “punctum”, which is a Latin word meaning “to prick”. Barthes uses this word to describe the unexpected ability of a particular photograph to move and surprise. Barthes felt that the “punctum” was the most powerful aspect of photography as it “...moves us in ways that cannot be tempered, let alone rationalized...it is the most difficult aspect of the photograph to articulate in words” (Rice, 2016, pp. 4–5). I imagine it was this “punctum” that I experienced when taking and viewing an image of a bedraggled eagle after severe Cyclone Debbie hit the Whitsundays (discussed in Chapter 3: Research Methodology; see also [Appendix 3](#)). I experienced a sense of overwhelming wellbeing and elation. From my own experience, photography brings a deeper connection with whatever you are hoping to capture; for a moment in time, it connects the photographer with his/her subject. Consequently, taking nature images can become a healing experience for the photographer, who connects with their surroundings through a higher sense of awareness, a moment of “punctum”.

Corley states that the creative process “...has great potential to bring harmony and connection within and beyond the self and to expand sociocultural consciousness. In the dynamic interplay between self and other, community and culture, then back to enlivening the inner experience, collective healing of life challenges and deepening of connections can unfold” (2010, p. 548). Corley’s observations regarding the visual impact of images are supported by Barthes (1981), who demonstrates that artistic images have the ability to portray a situation or story in an emotionally connecting way. Barthes believed that particular images had a deeply emotional and personal impact on the viewer and that images told stories in a way that language could not. Anselm Haverkamp, a German-American Academic also supports this by stating “...that it is ‘no surprise’ that the photographic picture is the most real representation of what there is...” (1993, p. 258).

Technology has also had a role in spreading and increasing the influence of photography and its contribution to resilience. In the past decade in particular, photography has undergone rapid change, with the growth of digital technology leading to the “...greater frequency of camera use, larger volume of photographs, higher levels of discards and cheaper cost of production” (Keightly & Pickering, 2014, p. 581). Photos taken on mobile phones are now also the norm, with users increasingly curating photographic representations of their own lives through their phones. This new technology has meant that the “...use of images as a tool to make and share memories and stories has become more accessible” (Cobley & Haeffner, 2009, p. 124). Immediate uploading of images has also become commonplace on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Combined, these technological shifts have made it a vastly more affordable and equitable for amateur photographers to make a significant contribution to photographic records of major events. This is discussed further in Chapter 4: Findings.

Swan and Taylor (2008) suggest that the location in which photographs are displayed and consumed is also important to the experience of sharing images and the ways in which memory narratives are constructed. Author and photographer Hedy Bach states that images are “...a memory around which we construct and reconstruct life stories” (2001, p. 7). This became significant to this research because the volunteer amateur photographers not only shared images and stories with each other and their community but also shared their drought journey with myself and other communities who may not have experienced living through a drought crisis. The making and sharing experiences of the volunteer photographers are discussed in Chapter 4: Findings.

In summary, the practice of making art is increasingly being linked to wellbeing. McDonald, Aprill and Mills state that the “potential for improvement in quality of life and educational enhancement through the contribution of wellbeing and the arts has long been an implicit goal of many community art practitioners” (2017, p. 384). Photography is one of the art forms most accessible to the

largest and most diverse group of people, with its accessibility only increasing as technology evolves. In terms of my own experience, I have found that wellbeing “...emerges as the fine glue that links the collaborators, not through their outcomes, but through their experiences of the process of participation and reification” (McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 397). Wenger expands on this, noting that “...through engagement but also imagination and alignment, our identities come to reflect the landscape in which we live and our experience of it” (Wenger, 2010, p. 5).

2.4 Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides a lexicon to discuss the interrelated practices connected to resilience; discusses the links between resilience, wellbeing and community capacity; describes how photography can create agency for participants; and outlines my role in this project as what some writers call a “system convenor” (Wenger *et al.*, 2014).

The literature also reveals key insights that I used to analyse my data, which led to the key assertions I discuss in Chapter 4: Findings. Returning to the literature throughout my project reminded me of critical concepts and ensured they were manifested in the project. These include the following: resilience is both an individual and community characteristic; collaboration and relationship-building contribute to community resilience; collaboration fosters capacity building; and arts practice can enhance wellbeing and build community capacity.

The emergent qualities of this research at the site of making, the Barcaldine region, promoted powerful and interesting findings regarding the interplay of photographs, resilience, wellbeing and capacity, which bubbled to the surface during the project. I discuss these in detail in Chapter 4: Findings.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research project investigates whether encouraging people to express their experiences through photography might be able to increase resilience during the ongoing drought crisis in the communities of the Barcaldine region in Central Western Queensland. It investigates the connection between images, resilience and wellbeing.

This chapter explains my rationale for using Grounded Theory, a qualitative method of enquiry, to gather, code and analyse my findings. It also provides a detailed account of the methodology involved in both the pre-study exhibition *Drought...What Next?* (2014), and my formal PhD research project, *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018). The chapter concludes with detailed information on project phases and data sets.

3.2 Qualitative Enquiry Anchors

Grounded Theory was the key methodology used in the study. John Creswell, an American researcher, spent many years focusing on mixed methods research, particularly on five different approaches to qualitative inquiry, including the one I chose for my research: Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006). As Creswell notes, approaches to research are not value-free, rather the “...procedures for conducting research evolve from a researcher’s philosophical and theoretical stances” (2007, p. 2). He suggests that the constructivist nature of Grounded Theory “...places more emphasis on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions and ideologies of individuals than on the methods of Research” (2007, p. 65). I chose Grounded Theory so that I could gather a significant amount of qualitative data that could provide a holistic view of the project as it emerged. Creswell identifies a framework for Grounded Theory research and outlines nine common qualitative characteristics (listed below). As outlined below, the characteristics of my initial research design aligns consistently with the characteristics of Grounded Theory identified by Creswell:

1. Natural setting: My data was collected in the communities of the Barcaldine region where the image-making project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) was undertaken.

2. Researcher as the key instrument: As the researcher, I induced and collected all data, reviewed all material, conducted interviews, recorded interviews from key stakeholders, and developed a personal journal with a descriptive narrative of my journey. My overall contribution to the management and curation of this research project is outlined in Table 3-1 at the end of this chapter.

3. Multiple sources of data: Ten data sets were collected across the following categories of information:

- My reflective journals
- Media (press releases, newspaper articles, etc.)
- Volunteer interviews
- Photographic images and personal stories
- Key stakeholder feedback
- Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence
- Volunteer photographer feedback on my work
- Facebook feedback on the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition
- Visitors' book feedback on the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition
- Pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition.

Further details of the data sets are described in Section 9.10, Data Sets.

4. Inductive data analysis: Creswell states that the "...procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing data" (2007, p. 19). Bearing this in mind, I used Charmaz's (2008) approach to Grounded Theory as my specific methodology for

collecting and analysing data. In particular, I identified patterns and categories using a “bottom up” process until I established a comprehensive set of themes. I also interacted with participants during the project so that they could help to shape the themes that evolved from the process.

5. Participants’ meanings: During the process of this research, I focused on the participants’ experiences (chiefly through interviews, email and telephone contact) to gather data about their concerns around resilience and wellbeing in their local environment. I gathered additional participant perspectives by providing photography masterclasses during my visit to Barcaldine in August 2018, which created an opportunity to engage further with those directly affected by the drought.

6. Emergent design: Grounded Theory helped me experience the “qualitative enterprise” embedded in my research process. My research could not be tightly prescribed because many phases of the process changed and shifted during the project. For example, the project’s organic nature was evident in the challenges of recruiting volunteers to the project and the late request for school students from St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School in Barcaldine to participate in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition.

7. Theoretical lens: This research examines the impact of images through the theoretical lenses of resilience, wellbeing and community capacity building (see details in Chapter 2: Literature Review).

8. Interpretive inquiry: Throughout this research, I formed a field of inquiry through my interpretation of my personal understanding of what I observed and experienced. My interpretations were detailed in my reflective journals, which are discussed in Chapter 4: Findings.

9. Holistic account: This research describes the complex interactions between the participants, the community and the environment, with the methodology providing a holistic way of recording/observing these interactions (Creswell, 2007, pp. 37–39).

Analysis of the pre-study exhibition entitled *Drought...What Next?* (2014) is also outlined below in order to explain how this earlier project created a portal through which the second significant work (and subject of this research), *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) could be undertaken in the Barcaldine region.

Associate Professor Narelle Lemon, co-editor of *Mindfulness in the Academy* (Lemon & McDonough, 2018), states that scholarly practices can increase the capacity to transform mind and body by drawing on concepts such as "...compassion, kindness, gratitude, curiosity, self-awareness and non-judgmental stances" (Abstract, p. X). Her earlier work in *Take a photograph: teacher reflection through narrative* (2007) engages with visual storytelling and narrative inquiry to investigate personal experiences. She believes that connections are "made with photography (visual narrative) as a tool for reflective practice..." (2007, p. 177). The use of photography in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) project was a unique way to capture moments in time that indicated to me that the presence of resilience and wellbeing involves participation and reification at the site of making (Wenger, 2010, p. 1).

3.3 Research Questions

My research seeks to contribute an analysis of how the photographic image might influence cultural and community resilience and wellbeing. My research questions sought to integrate an interrogation of resilience and wellbeing into my process of engaging participant and amateur photographers in making and sharing images about their experiences of the drought.

My literature review and the pre-study exhibition underpinned the formulation of my research questions. I believe these questions (and the resulting findings) fill a gap in current research regarding the use of images to build resilience in crisis-impacted communities. The questions are:

RQ1: How does a photographic exhibition (the pre-study) impact and influence the ongoing adaptive capacity of communities in drought?

RQ2: To what extent does participation in an image-making project foster resilience in a community?

RQ3: How might an image-making project and exhibition contribute to the resilience of the individual and community in crisis?

3.4 Phases of the Project

Using a Grounded Theory approach, I envisaged the research methodology involving three phases of data collection. The phases were:

- administrative and curatorial management of the exhibition
- making the work
- coding and analysis.

Below is a basic outline of how the research process progressed from late 2017 to late 2018, falling into these three distinctive phases. The points below assert my original thinking about how the project would flow. However, the richness of the many different methods of data collected created an intersection peculiar to this project. Details of how these phases actually manifested themselves throughout this project can be found in Table 3-1 at the end of this chapter. These are analysed again in Chapter 4: Findings.

Phase 1: Administrative and Curatorial Management of the 2018 Exhibition

- a) Reflective journaling
- b) Archiving information from the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition
- c) Obtaining relevant evidence of the exchange of ideas with the Barcaldine Regional Council (BRC) and procuring amateur photographers
- d) Cataloguing and archiving communications between stakeholders (informal memo writing)
- e) Constructing a platform/s to choose, disseminate and obtain feedback

about the image-work that is created

- f) Consulting emerging literature in the fields of photography and community resilience, wellbeing and capacity building

Phase 2: Making the Work

- a) Reflective journaling (informal memo writing and coding)
- b) Curating the work, choices of work (theoretical sampling and saturation)
- c) Holding the exhibition, *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), visiting Barcaldine and conducting masterclasses on site
- d) Interviewing participants and stakeholders
- e) Conducting my own photography and reflective processes throughout the research process

Phase 3: Coding and Analysis

- a) Archiving and collating evidence
- b) Coding data sets (coding, formalised memo writing)
- c) Analysing to produce findings for this project
- d) Writing exegesis, assembling appendices and curating an online exhibition presence

These phases became a guide for containing what might otherwise have been an overwhelming and unruly process. While the eventual project phases differed from what I proposed, the application of Grounded Theory methods greatly anchored this complex undertaking and allowed me to observe patterns in the research processes and activities.

3.5 Human Ethical Clearance

Human ethical clearance for the image project, *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018), was granted on 22 November 2017 (H17REA267 v0). Ethical clearance was given to:

- (1) recruit up to 40 human participants over the age of 18 in the rural and remote setting of the Barcaldine region, and
- (2) use an existing data set *Drought...what next?* (2014) exhibition and associated data.

On the 5 March 2018 Ethical Clearance (H17REA267 v1) was amended to add the following:

- (1) participant interview questions
- (2) audio recordings of the project volunteer interviews, and
- (3) transcription of interviews by an external party.

The final amendment to my ethical clearance was granted on 8 August 2018 (H17REA267 v2) for:

- (1) the addition of a second existing data set, related to the students of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, which resulted from their participation in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition. (This data set was accessed through BRC.)

3.6 An Overview of Grounded Theory and Its Application

To fully understand the methodology used in this research, it is useful to have a more detailed understanding of Grounded Theory and how it was applied.

Grounded Theory can be distinguished from other research methodologies by its comparative and interactive nature. It was chosen for this project for three reasons:

- the qualitative nature of the data to be dealt with
- its focus on developing understanding from lived experience

- the need to draw out the complexity and inter-relationships between elements of the topic.

The original creators of Grounded Theory, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, established a systematic approach to collecting and analysing qualitative information from which theories are constructed. Their position is that “...generating grounded theory is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses...” (1967, pp. 15–284). Kathy Charmaz, who expanded more recently on their work, states that Grounded Theory is a method of “explication and emergence”, which takes a “systematic inductive, comparative and interactive approach to inquiry”. This offers several open-ended strategies for conducting emergent inquiry, the fundamental tenets of which include: “...minimizing preconceived ideas about the research problem and data, using simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform each other, remaining open to varied explanations and focusing data collection to construct middle range theories” (2008, pp. 155–156).

The site of this research project was the Barcaldine region, where I had already established professional relationships with BRC and key Queensland Government employees during the pre-study exhibition. I established ongoing communication between volunteers, key stakeholders and me from the start of the subsequent research project to ensure authentic feedback and ongoing input from participants. The rich data that came from this process provided insights from the grassroots community experience which benefited from the emergent characteristics of Grounded Theory, through the “...systematic, inductive approach to collecting and analyzing data to develop theoretical analyses” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 155).

The emergent methods of Grounded Theory were beneficial to this research because they involve creative problem-solving and imaginative interpretation (Charmaz, 2006). Importantly, this method builds a series of checks and refinements through an iterative process of successive analytic and data-collection phases of research, each informed by the other (Charmaz, 2008,

p. 156). I applied the four strategies created by Chamaz – coding, memo writing, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation concepts – to shape and inform the course of inquiry of my research regarding the impact of images in promoting resilience and wellbeing (2008, pp. 155–170). These strategies were applied across multiple data sets that created a complex emergent picture at the research site. Further details of how these were applied can be found in Table 3-1 below.

Emergence is fundamentally a temporal concept of process and change, particularly suited for this research project. The relationships I made in Central Western Queensland communities during the *Drought...What Next?* (2014) project were maintained over subsequent years, resulting in an invitation by the Mayor of BRC to undertake a further project in his region because his communities continued to be impacted by the drought crisis. Consequently, in 2018, I curated the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition and a parallel research project. I was responsible for setting the brief, the procurement and selection of works, the curation of how the works were literally and metaphorically “framed” for actual and online visitors, and for collecting and analysing data.

Simultaneous data collection and analysis is common practice in qualitative research, and can serve a useful purpose in refining researchers’ ideas. Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose that early data analysis can focus researchers’ future data collection, which can subsequently help to focus the researchers’ further data collection to inform the construction of emergent categories (Charmaz, 2008, p. 162). Charmaz states that the effective use of Grounded Theory depends on the application of a number of Glaser and Strauss’s guidelines: adopting comparative, interactive analytical strategies in coding, memo writing, theoretical sampling, sorting and integrating the analysis, and that “...researchers must also entertain a range of theoretical possibilities...” (2008, p. 163). This method was beneficial for my research because it fostered openness for me as curator and the participant amateur photographers during the project.

The comparative and interactive nature of the stages of Grounded Theory made it an explicitly emergent and critical method for determining categories and understanding the interfaces between an image-producing project, individuals, community, resilience wellbeing and capacity building. It was also a method that captured and drew on the stories of its participants, including my own. As Lemon states: “[N]arrative enquiry generates what careful observation cannot – a way of understanding by being open to the stories individuals tell and how they themselves construct their stories and thus themselves” (2007, p. 178). The *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition applied the Grounded Theory practice of reflective journaling and memo writing to encourage Lemon’s notion of understanding self “through constructing...stories”. The data was generated from my specific use of reflective journaling, which captured emergent qualities of the work through my reflections over time.

Another theorist relevant to my research methodology is Donald Schön. Schön is not a grounded theorist, yet his notions on reflection articulate a relationship between knowledge and action that he describes in his book *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983). Schön was a social scientist who examined how professionals strategise to solve problems and was among the first to write about reflective practice in his exploration of interaction and reflection. His concept of “knowing-in-action” resonated through my reflective journaling practices, as it aided my own emerging understanding of the complexity of “practice developed in interaction” and not through “wrestling with problems in solitude” (Laws, 2011, p. 599).

As my project progressed, the reflective component increasingly revealed the deeply relational, complex interactions that occurred when I was able to help the amateur photographers “...manifest a feel for their material...” (Laws, 2011, p. 599). These intimate interactions between me as researcher and those participating in the project provided richer data than would otherwise have been available. This approach is supported by the literature. For example, a collection of essays discussing Schön’s (2010) concept of “reflection-in-action”,

published in the journal *Planning Theory and Practice*, suggests that his theories around exploring solutions were tied to close interactions with those involved (Bertolini *et al.*, 2010, p. 597). According to Schön, engaging in a “...reflective conversation with the situation...” is precisely what the ample data sets are designed to evidence (Bertolini *et al.*, 2010, p. 597). In describing the complexity of Grounded Theory as an emergent and critical method of research, Schön uses a metaphor of the “...high ground of theory and the lowly swamp of practice” and says that research “...bridging the great divide must be proven valid on the high ground and at the same time valuable in the swamp” (Bertolini *et al.*, 2010, p. 612). The investigation of the complex interactions throughout my research is aptly explained by Schön as “...the work in the swamp, including the use of knowledge: drawing from an extensive and varied repertoire through an intuitive and creative process of reflection-in-action” (Bertolini *et al.*, 2010, p. 612).

Thus, my methodology took advantage of emergent and narrative-based approaches to elicit rich qualitative data that would have been otherwise unavailable, while at the same time adopting a systematic approach to record-keeping and analysis to ensure my findings have a valid base. The data sets collected for this research explain in meticulous detail my interactions with all stakeholders, summarised in Table 3-1 at the end of this chapter.

3.7 Data Sets

This section provides further details on the final data sets that emerged from the application of Grounded Theoretical methodology. The following data sets were developed from the original list above to guide the data-gathering process.

1. Reflective Journal: I kept a personal journal on processes, reflections and experiences throughout the drought image project journey. The journal entries informed and supported the coding process and were a timeline of key milestones and my personal observations of the projects progress. This is consistent with a Grounded Theory approach, where

personal journaling and art making are considered to be the intermediate stage between data collection and writing of a draft paper (Charmaz, 2008, p. 166). I formed a cumulative record of responses, building and consolidating my understanding of the data and representing emerging ideas that took shape in relation to image making and sharing in terms of resilience, wellbeing and community/cultural capacity building.

2. Media: Media interest commenced relatively early in the project and escalated as the project progressed, particularly in August 2018 prior to the opening of the exhibition. During July and August 2018, the media spotlight was on the drought crisis in New South Wales, with very little focus on Queensland. However, from July to September 2018, the media was focused on the drought crisis in Queensland, particularly in communities such as those in the Barcaldine region, which were experiencing their seventh/eighth year of drought. This helped to generate increased interest in the project.

3. Volunteer Interviews: Interviews were conducted with each of the volunteer photographers, who were asked the following questions, which were generated from the research questions.

- Tier 1

The following questions are general questions in relation to images.

1. What are your thoughts about the role/purpose of images?
2. How does viewing images that depict the drought make you feel?
3. How do images that reflect the impact of drought connect you to others in your community and why do you think this happens?

- Tier 2

These are questions that relate to the participants' own experience in relation to the image-making process.

1. Why do you take images?
2. How does taking images make you feel?
3. How do you think images tell a story?

4. How are you influenced by these images (in regard to Tier 1 questions, and of your own making)?

I conducted three telephone interviews with each volunteer photographer: a first interview on commencement of the project; a second interview after the volunteer's images and stories had been uploaded onto the dedicated *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Facebook page, and a final interview after the opening of the exhibition.

4. Images and stories:

Volunteers generated an array of images and stories throughout the project. The volunteer images and stories can be found on the *Our Strength During The Drought* Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>) and in [Appendix 16](#).

Students from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Barcaldine also generated images, stories and feedback. The students provided images and stories regarding their drought journey, and feedback on participating in the exhibition. This data was provided to the BRC and then forwarded to me (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).

5. Key stakeholder feedback: As knowledge of context is a key aspect in collecting data, I collaborated with stakeholders as reference points and liaisons to guide the artwork and evolving ideas around images, resilience, wellbeing, capacity, community and culture. The Mayor, CEO and Coordinator of the BRC, the state Member for Gregory, and other key stakeholders provided emails and interviews and participated in teleconferences.

6. Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence: Documents from the CEO of Centacare in relation to the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition. (While the pre-study was not a research project, a great deal of documented information in relation to this project was available.) Documents from the BRC exhibition coordinator pertaining to media coordination, administration of the project and feedback on the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) image research project.

7. Volunteer photographer feedback on my work: During the two masterclasses held in the BRC region prior to the exhibition on 18 August 2018, I created three images as part of my mentoring of the volunteer photographers. These images were donated to the BRC and are being used to market the region. These images were also emailed to the local volunteer participant photographers for their critique, which was coded for the purpose of this research.

8. *Our Strength During The Drought (2018)* exhibition: I coordinated, critiqued and coded the images and participants' stories about their images during the curatorial process and after the exhibition's completion.

9. *Our Strength During The Drought (2018)* exhibition visitors' book and Facebook feedback: I reviewed and coded all feedback from visitors provided at The Globe gallery in Barcaldine during the exhibition. I also reviewed and coded all data and information in relation to the BRC Facebook page dedicated to the exhibition

(<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).

10. Pre-study *Drought...What Next? (2014)* exhibition: I reviewed and coded all informal information related to the *Drought...what next? (2014)* exhibition, including correspondence, emails, visitors' book feedback, online feedback and media. The pre-study exhibition is documented on my website (<http://annesusesmith.com/drought.php>).

Details of how these data sets work together with the phases outlined above can be found in Table 3-1 at the end of this chapter. These are analysed again in more detail in Chapter 4: Findings, which also includes a model of the phases that visually captures the relationships between key elements of the data.

3.8 Pre-Study: *Drought...What Next? (2014)* Exhibition

The pre-study exhibition combined my emerging photography skills with my strategic partnering obligation to Centacare Central Queensland, which arose as a result of my role as Drought Facilitator at Centacare. As outlined in Chapter 1: Introduction, the pre-study exhibition went on to become a profound conduit

for discussion and action. My suggestion that Centacare raise awareness about the drought through my images in the exhibition *Drought... What Next?* (2014) directly amplified the concerns of the local communities in the Longreach region. The funding for my contribution and for the exhibition itself came from a federal government assistance package to support drought-affected farmers. This \$320 million package was one of the largest-ever federal contributions to drought-related initiatives (ABC News, 2014).

The pre-study exhibition ran in Longreach from 11 December 2014 to 30 January 2015 and also produced a 2015 calendar that was made available to all members of Queensland Parliament through the Member for Gregory. Subsequently, these artefacts made their way to the Queensland Premier's office and the Prime Minister's office in Canberra, resulting in further funding for drought relief in Central Western Queensland. This is evidenced in a letter of support from the Queensland Member for Gregory stating the "...impact was resounding and I received letters and emails of solidarity from politicians on both sides". In terms of direct impact on the local community, these photos helped the Member for Gregory to secure further funding for "drought relief and psycho-social assistance for the affected communities" (see [Appendix 1](#)). Genuine impact was generated from the pre-study exhibition *Drought...What Next?* (2014), which assisted in laying the foundation for the PhD project.

This first exhibition was not a formal research project; however, in raising awareness, it encouraged further direct action that had a major impact on the drought narrative in Queensland. I observed the exhibition building community resilience and felt that this required further focused exploration. It became an important foundation as a pre-study that informed the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition, which is the main subject of this doctoral project.

3.8.1 Impact on Community

The *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition toured to:

- Central Highlands – 2 February 2015
- Fraser Coast – 8 May 2015

- Brisbane – 8 August 2015
- Whitsundays – 11 September 2015
- Barcaldine – 29 October 2015.

The exhibition was nominated for the Resilience Australia Awards (2015) by Centacare and regional mayors who hosted the exhibitions. Further evidence of its impact in regional towns can be found in the comments in the travelling exhibition visitors' book and in media coverage (<http://annesusesmith.com/drought.php>). Typical comments from the visitors' book include: "very moving, glad it is being shared" (Travelling visitors book, December 2014, p. 3) and "inspiring" (Travelling visitors book, February 2015, p. 9).

As the travelling exhibition *Drought...What Next?* (2014) made its way through various regional communities, it became clear to me that drought-affected landholders wanted to share stories about their personal hardships. In some cases, farmers were faced with losing their livelihoods and, as in the case of one participant in the exhibition, losing their lives; these experiences brought people together. It seemed that displaying images from the Longreach region not only had benefits for those in the original community where the images were taken, but also for those experiencing similar hardships in other communities where the images were exhibited. Drought issues and experiences related to mental health, wellbeing, relationships and more were discussed at the galleries that hosted the exhibition, which functioned as safe, supported community spaces. Attending each exhibition site, I saw firsthand many intimate and honest conversations regarding the drought's impact on depression and mental illness.

As discussed above, one of the landholders on whose property many of the images were taken sadly took his life just prior to the opening of the pre-study exhibition in Longreach. The sadness around the loss of this gentleman was palpable in conversations at the exhibition opening, which were remarkably

open, frank and supportive, with intimate stories being shared between friends and strangers alike.

The images seemed to be a conduit for open thoughtful discussion about topics that are generally very private, and it was critical that appropriate follow-up support be provided where necessary in relation to these conversations. Centacare provided information, support, referral options and counsellors for individuals and families in relation to the issues affecting specific communities at each exhibition location. Each mayor also talked to their communities about the need for resilience and encouraged their communities, especially their menfolk, to “look out for each other” and “reach out” for support.

During my visits to the travelling exhibition locations, it occurred to me that there was great potential for another project to capture the interactions and relationships that are created when locals make their own images, rather than viewing photographs taken by others (in this case, my images in the pre-study exhibition). A question began to emerge for me from the experience of the first exhibition: to what extent might *participation* in an image-producing project foster resilience?

Although the first exhibition was not a formal research process, documentation was gathered that allowed the *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition to be retrospectively evaluated and reflected upon as a pre-study. When I began to code and analyse the data I had formally collected for the doctoral research (2018), I also returned to the 2014 pre-study and recorded my thoughts in my reflective journals. While the insights from this pre-study were not formal findings, they still provided valuable information for my research. They are referred to in Chapter 2: Literature Review and Chapter 4: Findings. As well as providing a base of information that formed a starting point for the formal research, the pre-study exhibition study gave me vital links to and an authentic rapport with government, industry and extensive networks and support that proved invaluable to the formal research project.

3.8.2 Impact on the Photographer's Response to Environmental Crises

In addition to providing insights about the impact of drought on affected communities, the pre-study exhibition also revealed to me that taking images had a profound impact on my own emotional response to environmental crisis situations.

Queensland has experienced a number of natural disasters in recent years. On 28 March 2017, severe tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed the coast over Airlie Beach. Two days later, I began to take post-cyclone images that had a profound impact on my sense of wellbeing. After driving home from Airlie Beach two days after Cyclone Debbie crossed the coast, my husband and I came across a huge wedge-tailed eagle eating roadkill. The bird looked exhausted and flew away into a nearby tree, but stayed watching while I took my images. This behaviour was extremely unusual, as these eagles are usually very shy. I assumed that the bird was traumatized, as it had obviously survived the cyclone. As the eagle and I eyed each other, I felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility to capture this moment through photography in order record this example of resilience and survival. Feeling elated because this eagle's survival had given me hope, on returning home I posted the image and my story on the Whitsunday Facebook page *Whitsunday Chat* (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WhitsundaysChat/>). This prompted others in my community to share similar images of hope and survival on the page. This experience of the interactive nature of sharing the images and stories of Cyclone Debbie's impact on the communities of the Whitsundays influenced my choice of Grounded Theory as my chief research methodology. The wedge-tailed eagle "image of hope" was published in the local paper one week later (see [Appendix 3](#)).

The challenges of ongoing Queensland weather events have had significant impacts on the state's regional communities and individuals. These events are anticipated to become more frequent and severe due to climate changes. My research on the use of photographic images can help to build resilience and wellbeing that could give regional communities a model to use when faced with future challenges. The encounter with this bird motivated my photographic

“eye” and elicited a positive emotional response; I realised that this experience could be transferable to communities in crisis. It intensified my empathy for communities in crisis and highlighted to me the importance of investigating this phenomenon in my PhD research project.



Photograph 0-1: Wedge-Tailed Eagle (April 2017). *Photographer: Anne Suse Smith*

3.9 Research Context

3.9.1 *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Project*

With my new personal understanding of how image-taking could boost resilience in times of environmental crisis in my home region of the

Whitsundays, I returned to my emerging question: to what extent does *participation* in an image-making project foster resilience?

Recruiting local amateur photographers to investigate the impact of taking images on resilience in drought-affected communities became the cornerstone of my interrogation for this doctoral project. In order to manage and administer this project situated and immersed in its local community, I approached BRC to become the centre of operations for the emerging project.

3.9.2 Recruitment of Volunteer Amateur Photographers

Community members of the Barcaldine region were invited to participate in the drought image project through an expression of interest posted on the BRC website and publicised through via email and Facebook in early February 2018. While the aim was to attract up to 40 volunteers, the project only attracted six volunteers, consisting of three men and three women aged 25–65.²

The name of the exhibition *Our Strength During The Drought* emerged as a way to diminish the misery of the drought and to help focus the work to be produced by the volunteers. Although this did not increase the interest from volunteers, it gave the six people who did participate a much clearer understanding of how to approach their creation of images. They understood that the images needed capture more than just the horror of an environment in crisis.

Details of the data sets appear below, but they are not always explicit about the relational quality of the images that emerged from the participants (i.e. the meanings ascribed to the images portraying external events and their impact in relation to perceptions of behaviours and attitudes between the photographer

² While I would have welcomed the involvement of Indigenous people as amateur photographers in the project, the BRC invitation to volunteer did not specifically call for Indigenous participants. No participants explicitly identified themselves as Indigenous during the project. Indigenous elders and their families accepted invitations to attend and participate in the opening night of the exhibition in Barcaldine. I was able to converse informally with them about the relevance of the project on their country, and I believe there may be potential for a similar future project targeting Indigenous communities in the region.

and others viewing them). I worked alongside these amateur photographers throughout the project, mostly in an online capacity. I was able to conduct two days of intensive masterclasses with them onsite in their local surrounds (17–18 August 2018). In this time, and through the use of my reflective journaling practice, I was able to use the emerging images produced by the participants as “baseline” data to compare my notions of impact and theirs. This was essential in ensuring that the emergent properties of Grounded Theory were consistently embedded and were regularly examined. I continually interrogated the data by “...probing beneath the surface: comparing data checking hunches, refining emerging ideas and constructing abstract categories...” (Charmaz, 2008). I also conducted three separate interviews with each volunteer photographer over a period of four months, with the interviews increasing in length from the first to the third (from 8 minutes to 25 minutes) as the volunteers’ enthusiasm and trust increased. The development of trust nurtured the emergent evidence that contributes to my assertions in Chapter 4: Findings.

3.9.2.1 Briefing and Support for Volunteers

Immediately after they were recruited, I emailed each of the six volunteers to provide briefing information in the form of a participant information sheet, interview questions, interview consent form and photography tool kit (see [Appendix 7](#), [Appendix 8](#), [Appendix 9](#) and [Appendix 10](#)).

I was acutely aware that the project might cause emotional distress to some participants, along with potential emotional benefits. Accordingly, the participant information sheet included information about how to access counselling and support should any participant feel the need. I also spoke with each volunteer by phone and asked them to inform me immediately if they were starting to feel overwhelmed at any time. Throughout the project, I regularly contacted each volunteer by phone and email to check on their progress and emotional wellbeing. Regular interviews provided a more formal measure of their emotional wellbeing and an opportunity to refer them for support if necessary.

3.9.2.2 BRC Administrative Support for Project

From the start of the project, I worked alongside the BRC-appointed coordinator of this project to determine the nature of the administrative support that could be provided by BRC. BRC administrative support for the project included:

- issuing the call for expressions of interest in the project
- collating and archiving information about the project to be loaded onto the BRC webpage
- setting out guidelines and protocols for the administration of the BRC Facebook page dedicated to the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) image project
- loading all volunteer images and stories onto the Facebook page
- loading all St Joseph's Catholic Primary School students' images and stories onto the Facebook page
- coordinating the selection, printing and framing of all images for the *Our Strength During The Drought* exhibition
- collaborating in the coordination of all aspects of the opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* exhibition (18 August 2018)
- working with me to coordinate the provision of images to media outlets and government stakeholders
- working with me to capture quotes from volunteer participants to enrich further promotion and media releases about the project.

3.9.2.3 BRC Funding Support for Project

The BRC:

- provided funding for printing and framing of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition images
- coordinated and provided funding for the use of the exhibition venue, the Globe gallery, Barcaldine

- provided catering, invitations, program and personnel for the inaugural opening (18 August 2018)
- covered other miscellaneous expenses associated with the project in Barcaldine.

3.9.2.4 My Emerging Role as Curator

Curatorial work was essential to mount the collaborative exhibition at the centre of this research project. The coordination involved in preparing the photographs for a public viewing at The Globe gallery, as well online, was more important than I had first imagined. Again, as Grounded Theory emphasises, this emerging theme gave me insights on the project as a whole, and my research was enhanced by my reflection on my role as curator.

Key to this curatorial role was my decision to share the selection of photographs for the exhibition with BRC staff members. One image from each of the six volunteer photographers was chosen and BRC staff then chose another three images from the remaining images created by each volunteer. These images were then printed and framed by BRC for the exhibition. Relatively late in the process (11 July 2018) the BRC exhibition coordinator took a request from a local school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, for their students to also express their drought journey through photographs as part of the same exhibition. As most of these students had not experienced rain in their lifetime, I was curious to include their images as a way to balance the representation of the entire community. I classify this below as a secondary data set because it was not part of my original planning around data collection. I received approval from USQ Human Ethics to include the artwork and the narratives written by students, but did not interview the students as I did the other volunteer photographers.

There was steady media interest in this exhibition approximately a month before the opening (which was on 18 August 2018). This increased immediately before and after the exhibition opened, with the volunteer photographer images being promoted by various media outlets for their

editorials. This media coverage became a key data set to analyse the impact of this exhibition in the community and state-wide. My role in promoting the volunteers' work was also a critical aspect of being the curator, who is described by Wenger *et al.* as a social convener who "...attempt[s] to reconfigure the landscape: unlocking unexplored spaces, forging promising partnerships, building bridges, resetting boundaries..." (2014, p. 100). Although I was not embedded in the Barcaldine region for most of this project, it became a daily task to ensure that as many media outlets as possible were provided with information, images and key stakeholder contacts in order to increase the focus of drought communities in the Barcaldine region.

The *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition is now an asset for BRC to use to continue the story of drought in their region. The exhibition also remains as a key curatorial asset for this research and provides a credible, authentic and valuable outcome for the community. The digital presence of this work allows easy re-dissemination in order to increase audience and volunteer participation in the project.

The findings from the project are described in Chapter 4: Findings, and a transferable mode of practice is offered for further consideration by community arts workers in Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations.

3.10 Detailed Phases and Data Sets

The table below provides a concise summary of the methods used to gather data for the research project *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018). It is a comprehensive description of the timing and application of data sets as they emerged during the research phases. It shows that phases did not occur sequentially and each phase influenced or produced several data sets. The descriptions of the processes undertaken throughout the project relate to Grounded Theory methods and outcomes.

Please note, this is not an analysis of the data collected. Rather, it is a way to easily present methodological aspects of the research as they occurred. Because

of the complexity of this research project and the emergent nature of the data-collection methods, this table presents an overview of the entire research project.

Table 3-1: Data-Collection Schedule

DATA-COLLECTION SCHEDULE			
PHASE #	DATA SET Grounded Theory Applications	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Pre-Phase 1	<u>Secondary Data Set</u> <i>10. Drought...what next? (2014)</i> exhibition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Reflective Journals • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<u>Pre-study</u> Inaugural opening of the <i>Drought...What Next? (2014)</i> exhibition <u>Outcome</u> The exhibition became the pre-study for the <i>Our Strength During The Drought (2018)</i> image research project - National awareness of the impact of the drought throughout Central Western Queensland was achieved due to the media coverage this exhibition attracted	December 2014
		<u>Commenced PhD</u> - Leave of absence approved from mid-2015 until August 2017	Semester 1, 2015

		- PhD recommenced August 2017	
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 5. Key stakeholder feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	Discussion with the Mayor of BRC and the Queensland Member for Gregory, key stakeholders of the <i>Drought...What Next</i> (2014) exhibition, regarding this PhD research project and the possibility of carrying out my research in the Barcaldine region. The Mayor explained that the region continued to be impacted by the drought crisis I photographed in 2014 and that it was their seventh year of drought <u>Outcome</u> - The BRC region was suggested as the location for my PhD image research project due to the ongoing crippling drought	2017
		<u>Confirmation of Candidature</u> <u>Outcome</u> Resulted in a re-think of my entire method of collecting data to include a practical project using local amateur photographers in the Barcaldine region	3 October 2017
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 5. Key stakeholder feedback	Teleconference with BRC's Mayor, Deputy Mayor, CEO & Councillors: - Presentation of an overview of my image research project - Discussion regarding timeline for project milestones and required	14 February 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>resources for the project</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- It was agreed in principle (full council approval was required) that the council would host an exhibition of images taken by local volunteers as part of my image research project. Discussion regarding possible date for an inaugural opening, with early August noted as a possible date.</p>	
Phase 1, 2 & 3	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding data • Memo writing 	<p>Reflective journal writing (informal memo writing)</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>Narrative of experiences and reflections throughout my PhD Drought Image Project</p>	<p>14 February – November 2018</p>
Phase 1 & 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>5. Key stakeholder feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>Ongoing communication with BRC</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Council advertised via Facebook, website, newsletter, email and council media release for expressions of interest from volunteer amateur photographers (see Appendix 4)</p> <p>- Council was provided with a document outlining an overview of the project requirements for the PhD image project volunteers (see</p>	<p>February 2018</p>

		Appendix 5) https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/regional-events/strength-drought-photo-exhibition	
Phase 2	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 6. Miscellaneous emails and correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	Volunteer amateur photographer interview questions finalised <u>Outcome</u> - Volunteer amateur photographer interview questions finalised and forwarded to the USQ Human Ethics Committee for final approval - Amendment made to the initial Ethics approval documentation to include audio interview recordings.	5 March 2018
Phase 1		Photography tool kit made available on BRC image research project IT platform	8 March 2018
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 6. Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	BRC letter of approval to host and support in the coordination of the research image project <u>Outcome</u> - Project approved and supported by BRC to proceed (see Appendix 6) - Administrative and coordination assistance approved	3 April 2018
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 5. Key stakeholder feedback	- Ongoing collaboration with BRC coordinator to ensure scheduled activities were on track - PhD image project named <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018)	9 April 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 		
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 6. Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	Image project flyer and expression of interest forms loaded onto BRC website and emailed throughout BRC's distribution list <u>Outcome</u> - Awareness of the image project throughout the communities of the Barcaldine region via Facebook, website, newsletter, email and council media release https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/regional-events/strength-drought-photo-exhibition	13 April 2018
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 5. Key stakeholder feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	First volunteer amateur photographers identified - Contacted volunteers to introduce myself and to provide overview of project - Emailed all volunteers a participant information sheet*, interview questions, interview consent form and photography tool kit (see Appendix 7 , Appendix 8 , Appendix 9 and Appendix 10) - Commenced scheduling first interviews <small>*The participant information sheet included contacts for counselling and emotional support should participants require them.</small>	15 June 2018
Phase 1	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals	Commenced discussion with key stakeholders (BRC Mayor, CEO, Councillors and Coordinator)	15 June 2018

	<p>5. Key stakeholder feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>regarding low volunteer numbers; this discussion continued throughout June 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BRC Mayor and Councillors promoted project throughout their communities and networks 	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>3. Volunteer interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<p><u>Interview 1</u></p> <p>Telephone interviews with volunteer amateur photographers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three men and three women - Aged 25–65. - Interviews were approximately 8 minutes in length - First interviews were to get to know project volunteers and gather data through answers to the interview question & informal telephone discussion - Connecting with the stories that the volunteers shared during their interviews 	<p>All 1st Interviews from 18 June – 27 July 2018</p>
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding 	<p><i>Catholic Leader</i> magazine featured image project and volunteer photographers</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer images showcased in media - Raised awareness of impact of 	<p>9 July 2018</p>

	<p>data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>drought on communities of Barcaldine region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised awareness of research image project - Gave communities in Barcaldine region a voice <p>http://catholicleader.com.au/news/powerful-drought-photos-in-social-media-project-show-farmers-strength-during-tough-times</p>	
Phase 1	<p><u>Secondary (Existing) Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>4. Images and stories</p> <p>5. Key stakeholder feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>BRC was approached by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School requesting the opportunity for its students to participate in the exhibition</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School students able to participate in the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition by invitation of BRC - Students were not able to participate fully in the research project (e.g. be interviewed like other volunteer photographers); however, an amendment to Ethical Clearance (H17REA267 (v2) was granted to access the students' data from BRC as an existing data set 	<p>11 July 2018</p>
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>4. Images and stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating • Coding 	<p>Volunteer images and stories submitted to BRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of my curating process I selected an image from each of the volunteers for inclusion in the <i>Our</i> 	<p>16 – 26 July 2018</p>

	<p>data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p><i>Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition</p>	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>3. Volunteer interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical Sampling • Theoretical Saturation 	<p><u>Interview 2</u></p> <p>Telephone interviews with volunteer amateur photographers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three men and three women - Aged 25–65. - Interviews were approximately 8 minutes in length <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deeper connection with the volunteer photographers through their storytelling - Data collection 	<p>All 2nd interviews from 6–29 July 2018</p>
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data 	<p>Radio interview with ABC</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised awareness of image research project - Raised awareness of the opening of the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition 	<p>20 July</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 		
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>8. <i>Our Strength During The Drought (2018)</i> exhibition and Facebook feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<p>Facebook page <i>Our Strength During The Drought (2018)</i> went live</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Raising awareness of the impact of the drought on the communities of the Barcaldine region</p> <p>- Data collection</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrough/</p>	<p>23 July 2018</p>
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>6. Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>Exhibition invitation (see Appendix 11) completed, emailed and posted out:</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Community unity</p> <p>- Raising awareness of the impact of the drought</p>	<p>24 July 2018</p>

Phase 2	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 4. Images and stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	Council finalised selection of volunteer images and sent all image files to print in preparation for the exhibition including my selections and all images submitted by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School <u>Outcome</u> - Created excitement for the upcoming exhibition - Media excitement https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queen-sland/life-goes-on-central-queensland-community-resilient-in-face-of-record-drought-20180826-p4zzvu.html https://www.usq.edu.au/news/2018/08/drought-photo-exhibition-18	26 July 2018
Phase 2	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals 2. Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	I emailed the <i>Catholic Leader</i> story to all volunteers, BRC, the Member for Gregory, <i>A Current Affair</i> , CNN, media outlets and other key stakeholders <u>Outcome</u> - Member for Gregory's office requested permission to use one of the volunteer images for a postcard to send to members of parliament to lobby support for drought-affected communities http://catholicleader.com.au/news/powerful-drought-photos-in-social-media-project-show-farmers-strength-during-tough-times	10 August 2018
Phase 2	<u>Primary Data Set</u> 1. Reflective Journals	I contacted Queensland Weekly <u>Outcome:</u> - Two stories spread over two	13 & 21 August 2018

	<p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing 	<p>weeks, one being a feature editorial</p> <p>https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/rural-weekly/our-strength-during-the-drought-images-speak-of-dry-times/news-story/c83b4b22cc8b3e86a4511926159a5930</p> <p>https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/rural-weekly/barcaldine-community-arts-project-speaks-of-drought/news-story/9a72d19dad05d557e40a7646d43eacaa</p>	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>I contacted the <i>Today Tonight</i> team to discuss the image project and connect them to the Mayor of BRC</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- <i>Today Tonight</i> team travelled to Barcaldine and featured the community's drought journey and the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) image project in their Queensland Drought Special.</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/7NewsBrisbane/videos/queensland-drought-appeal-troy-cassar-daley-and-laurel-edwards-join-sharyn-ghide/419583218568063/</p> <p>https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/news/article/10/queensland-drought-appeal</p>	13 August 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating 	<p>I coordinated volunteer images and contacts for interviews conducted by various media outlets</p> <p>https://www.usq.edu.au/news/2018/08/drought-photo-exhibition-18</p> <p>http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-18/outback-residents-capture-resilience-in-the-drought/10129558</p>	August 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding data • Memo writing 		
Phase 2	1. Reflective Journals	<p>I travelled to Barcaldine with my supervisor and another photographer for the opening of the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion with my supervisor regarding the project - We visually experienced the impact of the drought on the landscape as we drove to Barcaldine 	16 August 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>6. Miscellaneous emails and other correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentoring and capacity building with volunteer amateur photographers commencing with breakfast and culminating in a road trip to Longreach to photograph some of the local attractions - Ongoing coordination of information, images and contacts for media outlets <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group bonding - Opportunity to discuss the project with the volunteers and listen to their experiences - Daily awareness-raising with media about the impact of the 	17 August 2018

		<p>drought and the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer images used in all media - Students had their images showcased by the media nationally (see Appendix 12) 	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>Masterclass evening shoot with volunteers at the Barcaldine Tree of Knowledge</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group bonding - Increased skills in night photography - Great images, some of which were used by the media 	17 August 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>2. Media</p> <p>5. Key stakeholder feedback</p> <p>8. <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition and Facebook feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating 	<p>Masterclass with volunteers, Sculpture Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with the Mayor, BRC, Member for Gregory and my supervisor discussing progress of the image project, media and raising ongoing awareness of the impact of the drought - Opening of <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community attended to support the volunteer photographers - <i>Today Tonight</i> filmed the opening of the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition and 	18 August 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding data • Memo writing 	<p>interviewed the volunteers</p> <p>- <i>Today Tonight</i> travelled to film one of the St Joseph's school students at her parents' property</p> <p>- <i>Today Tonight</i> featured stories from the Barcaldine region on their drought special, raising awareness</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/7NewsBrisbane/videos/queensland-drought-appeal-troy-cassar-daley-and-laurel-edwards-join-sharyn-ghide/419583218568063/</p> <p>https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/news/article/10/queensland-drought-appeal</p>	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p>Returned home, conducting more media coordination on the trip</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Continued raising awareness</p>	19 August 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing 	<p>Media</p> <p>- USQ media coverage and radio interview</p>	21 August 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>3. Volunteer interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting 	<p><u>Interview 3</u></p> <p>Telephone interviews with volunteer photographers:</p> <p>- Three men and three women</p> <p>- Aged 25–65.</p> <p>- Interviews were approximately 20 minutes in length</p>	All 3 rd interviews from 23 July – 14 September 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers became connected and supportive of each other - Data collection 	
Phase 2	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>2. Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	<p><i>Today Tonight</i> aired drought special (Queensland Drought Appeal)</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer images featured at the opening of the appeal - Raised awareness of drought crisis in Central Western Queensland <p>https://www.facebook.com/7NewsBrisbane/videos/queensland-drought-appeal-troy-cassar-daley-and-laurel-edwards-join-sharyn-ghide/419583218568063/</p> <p>https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/news/article/10/queensland-drought-appeal</p>	1 September 2018
Phase 2	<p><u>Secondary (Existing) Date Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>4. Images and stories</p> <p>8. <i>Our Strength</i></p>	<p>I received an email from BRC with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written feedback from students at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School • Visitor feedback from the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) exhibition • Facebook feedback from the 	12 September 2018

	<p><i>During The Drought (2018)</i> exhibition and Facebook feedback</p> <p>9. Exhibition visitors' book feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<p><i>Our Strength During The Drought (2018)</i></p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Insight into the impact of the drought and participation of the students in the <i>Our Strength During The Drought (2018)</i> exhibition</p>	
<p>Phase 2 & Phase 3</p>	<p><u>Primary Data Set</u></p> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <p>7. Feedback on my work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating • Coding data • Memo 	<p>Volunteer photographers critiqued three images that I took during the masterclasses; these images were donated to BRC</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>- Images used for marketing the Barcaldine region as a tourist destination</p>	<p>14 September 2018</p>

	writing		
Phase 3	<u>Data Sets 1-10</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting • Collating • Coding data • Memo writing • Theoretical sampling • Theoretical saturation 	<u>Coding and Analysis</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coding data sets - Archiving and collating evidence - Formalised memo writing - Analysis to produce findings for this project - Writing exegesis 	22 August 2018 – March 2019
Phase 2	<u>Primary Data Set</u> <p>1. Reflective Journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo writing 	Design and production of the <i>Our Strength During The Drought</i> (2018) photo book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Books presented to the Member for Gregory, BRC, BRC coordinator, St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School and volunteer participants https://share.asovx.com/prod-assets/app/photobook/index.html?initGuid=HH17pv9J9X0%3D&timestamp=1546056153589&isPreview=true	October – November 2018

3.11 Conclusion

This project applied a Grounded Theory methodology, and displays all the key features associated with Grounded Theory in the literature. In particular, the methodology combined an open approach to the gathering of data from participants with a rigorous process for recording and analysing this data to identify the most relevant categories and themes. In doing so, it struck a balance between a flexible and agile methodology (designed to draw on

participants' stories and the researcher's reflections on those) and a robust and documented research approach.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The severe drought that is a focus of this research project has been one of the longest in Australia's European history. The drought has not only devastated the land on which people have built their lives but has changed entire communities forever. The *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) PhD research project investigates the opportunity for individuals to influence resilience, wellbeing and capacity building through the creative construction of images, within the communities of the Barcaldine region.

As Wolin and Wolin state, "...creativity can be seen as a resilient response to adversity, promoting healing and growth" (1993, p. 173, cited in Corley, 2010, p. 543). The findings in this chapter echo the sentiments of this quote. I set out to link creativity to resilience as a response to adversity, and my project findings suggests that health and growth were shaped by experiences shared in this chapter.

The project was underpinned by resilience thinking that arose from initial questions I identified during my reflection on the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition. These earlier questions were formative and related to the ability of communities to deal with disasters by developing resilience, wellbeing and capacity. The overall key questions were consolidated during the coding of the data for my PhD project, and connections are made in this chapter to my literature review, revealing the extent to which I used resilience as a theoretical anchor for my research. The findings contained here particularly relate to the "third wave" of resilience inquiry, which focuses on the use of creative expression (Richardson, 2002). This chapter discusses the coding and analysis of data from my project, the findings that emerged from that process, and my four key assertions based on those findings.

Central to this chapter is the process undertaken to create, investigate and share the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) images, and how this affected individual participants and the community. As explained in Chapter 3: Research

Methodology, the use of Grounded Theory to gather, code and analyse my findings was essential in affording me the ability to slowly accumulate the data over time, and allow the findings to “bubble up” from the site of making the images in Barcaldine. A wide variety of data-collection methods assisted in chronicling the volunteer amateur photography. That is, the making of the images became integral to the data gathering, as well as producing the visual experience and outcome of the 2018 exhibition.

The qualitative nature of the research helped to showcase the personal and community issues associated with individual experiences of the drought. As Lemon states, “[I]mages present life or learning as it happens” (2007, p. 183), and, in this study, images became the foundational motivation for consolidating my research questions. Using Grounded Theory reduced any imposition of my own wants onto the project: the participant group organically selected and photographed images that resonated and “spoke” to them, which emerged from their own sites of making and an intimate knowledge of their own drought context. The emergent qualities of Grounded Theory are at the core of this research; they provided freedom for the amateur photographers to express themselves and promoted powerful revelations regarding the interplay of photographs, resilience, wellbeing and individual and community capacity. This developed richness in the work that will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

4.2 Analysis of Data Sets: Key Processes and Insights

During the coding of the 10 data sets for this research, the findings that emerged not only indicated increases in resilience and wellbeing through the creative photography practice, but also provided insights into how the data sets worked together in an intersectional way. The accumulation of the data over time manifested an organic exchange of rich language that contributed directly to my sense of how to curate the major exhibition. Intersectionality was a key theme to emerge from the process of data collection (outlined in Chapter 3: Research Methodology), and is discussed in more detail below to reveal how the in-depth processes undertaken in each phase scaffolded the key assertions revealed in the data.

4.2.1 Coding to Analyse Emergent Themes

When I first engaged Charmaz's methods for applying Grounded Theory, I did not fully understand the importance of the coding phase. This phase was essential in order to analyse the many data sets generated by this research. The coding helped me to see the patterns of words and ideas emerging from the data, which I then rendered as a visual model of the project phases (see Figure 4-1 below). This helped to reveal and emphasise the interconnectedness of all phases. Coding also revealed the emphasis placed on my reflective journals; these became the major source from which I could generate memos regarding the revelation of my key assertions. I engaged in reflective journaling from the commencement of the research through to its completion, and coding my reflective journal data greatly assisted in identifying emergent patterns in data sets, phases and language.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 3: Research Methodology, Chamaz's Grounded Theory approach involves three phases of data collection. The phases I initially created were:

- Phase 1. Administrative and Curatorial Management of the 2018 Exhibition (Blue)
- Phase 2. Making the Work (Green)
- Phase 3. Coding and Analysis (Orange).

The colours allocated to each phase appear below in Figure 4-1.

As explained in Chapter 3, I needed to begin gathering data before I could fully frame an effective set of research questions. While the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) was not a research project, the documentation it generated was coded as a pre-existing data set, and embryonic questions emerged from this reflection coupled with readings undertaken for the literature review. The Phase Intersections Model outlined in Figure 4-1 below identifies this data set as Pre-Phase 1, and its importance is highlighted by the fact that the other three phases are essentially anchored inside Pre-Phase 1. It is important, therefore, to revisit the research questions that came out of the

pre-phase (which were later consolidated during the Coding and Analysis Phase):

RQ1: How does a photographic exhibition (through the pre-study) impact and influence the ongoing adaptive capacity of communities in drought?

RQ2: To what extent does participation in an image-making project foster resilience in a community?

RQ3: How might an image-making project and exhibition contribute to the resilience of the individual and community in crisis?

My reflections on the pre-study experience (through coding) and the literature led to the emergence of the research questions. The above questions were the lenses through which the priori codes were applied to the data collected during this research. I applied Charmaz's emergent methods of Grounded Theory in order to identify the priori and emergent codes related to my data sets.

Priori codes are "created beforehand and applied to the text", while emergent codes are "drawn from the text" (Blair, 2015, p. 16). Priori codes "bubble up" from what Blair calls "open coding", which is an inductive process (Blair, 2015). In my case, these priori codes were determined from the pre-study and the literature to link with my research framework and to enable analysis of my data to address my research questions. Charmaz states that this "...phase of coding moves grounded theorists' attention from the research field to the analysis of the data, as they engage in simultaneous data collection and analysis" (2008, p. 163). Further reflection on the pre-study through the literature review revealed the three priori codes initially identified (resilience, capacity building, and wellbeing) as encompassing notions of community that are embedded in creative activity (such as image making) to articulate or alleviate emotions of stress. The emergent findings bubbled up while coding the 10 data sets, generating a list of commonly used words, ideas and concepts, patterns which then connected to my key assertions (Table 4-1).

Over time, evidence that illuminated the research questions began to emerge from the data generated at the research site in Barcaldine. I adapted Charmaz's layered approach to coding as a way to manage the substantial amount of data generated by this research. Using this layered approach allowed me to revisit the data at least three times so I could check and re-check the emerging patterns to provide validity and authenticity to the process. The following is an overview of the three layers I applied in this process.

4.2.1.1 First Layer of Coding

The first layer of coding was based on my reflective journaling (Data Set 1), as this was the only data set that recorded insights over the entire project (i.e. it was the only data set present in all three phases of this research). I undertook my reflective journaling on a daily basis from August 2017 to November 2018.

I used my reflective journal to record processes, reflections and experiences about more intricate aspects of the research project. This data set was relatively informal, yet it captured my early thinking about patterns, themes and language. My reflective journal was then coded and my findings noted in my memos. The process of reflective journaling became a vital part of the coding process and this became more apparent later when I created the Phase Intersections Model (Figure 4-1, purple section). This is discussed in more detail below.

4.2.1.2 Second Layer of Coding

The second layer of coding applied Charmaz's priori codes (identified from the pre-study, literature review and initial research questions) to all the data sets, in order to generate project-specific emergent codes. The codes emerged from the first reading of all of the gathered data sets from the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition and the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) PhD research project.

Coding of the pre-study provided a baseline of emerging language that suggested the presence of key themes, with keywords emerging that expanded

with the correlation of coding from the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) PhD research project. This second layer of coding generated the memos that collated the priori codes to produce a clearer idea of language and themes “bubbling up” from the evidence. The addition of the reflective journaling process allowed me to expand on this information via the memos.

4.2.1.3 Third Layer of Coding

The third layer of coding involved the refinement and consolidation of my memos, which Charmaz describes as the “...intermediate stage between data collection and writing of a paper or chapter” (2008, p. 166). My memos housed the language, themes and patterns identified during the coding process applied to the 10 data sets. These are related to and generated from the use of my reflective journal and provided in-depth details of all the phases and data sets. The memos emerged concurrently from the coding and were essential in generating my four key assertions from this research, discussed in detail below.

I created Table 4-1 to provide a visual display of the indicators that were generated from the first coding layer of data sets. As the language evolved, I began to explore comparisons and then concepts that also emerged from the memo-making layers (2 and 3). I had an inkling of what they might be during the first and second coding layers, but the third layer of coding conclusively revealed the repetition of key ideas across the priori codes. This, in turn, consolidated my final research questions.

4.3 Results from Layered Coding

The words in Table 4-1 started to emerge from the first layer of coding, describing the complexity of resilience that encompasses wellbeing and capacity building. The same words emerged repeatedly across all three priori categories: resilience, capacity building and wellbeing. They become a lexicon or language for the overall research. I believe that this was a consequence of the emerging interconnection of the three concepts. These words were later confirmed by the second and third layers of coding because the patterns of words suggested a definite language emerging from the data. They were also confirmed through a

review of the literature in Chapter 2, and this consolidated my final research questions.

Table 4-1 is colour coded to reflect the Grounded Theory process. Priori codes are in red, emergent codes in blue and subsequent language in black. As previously stated, the three key concepts identified during reflection on the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* 2014 exhibition and the literature were resilience, capacity building and wellbeing. These then became priori codes and were applied to the text to indicate the presence of these concepts. The following words and concepts emerged: shared community experience, raising awareness, image viewing, image sharing, storytelling, connection, support, empathy, strength, opportunity, focus, and appreciation. The frequency of the words in the data confirmed my hunches about the interconnectivity between wellbeing, capacity building and resilience.

Table 4-1: Results Emerging from Priori and Emergent Coding

RESILIENCE	CAPACITY BUILDING	WELLBEING
Priori Code	Priori Code	Priori Code
Community (Priori Code)	Community (Priori Code)	Community (Priori Code)
Shared community experience (Emergent)	Shared community experience	Shared community experience
Raising awareness (Emergent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Insight • Reflection • Change 	Raising awareness (Emergent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Insight • Reflection • Change 	Raising awareness (Emergent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Insight • Reflection • Change
Image making / producing (Priori Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Snapshot • Memories • Moments • Editing • Technical • Reproduce/copy ideas & Styles • Outlet • Creative • Fun • Enjoyment • Passion • Learning • Education • Sanity • Love • Relaxation • Pleasure • Achievement 	Image making / producing (Priori Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Snapshot • Memories • Moments • Editing • Technical • Reproduce/copy ideas & Styles • Outlet • Creative • Fun • Enjoyment • Passion • Learning • Education • Sanity • Love • Relaxation • Pleasure • Achievement 	Image making / producing (Priori Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Snapshot • Memories • Moments • Editing • Technical • Reproduce/copy ideas & Styles • Outlet • Creative • Fun • Enjoyment • Passion • Learning • Education • Sanity • Love • Relaxation • Pleasure • Achievement
Image viewing (Emergent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation 	Image viewing (Emergent) Interpretation	Image viewing (Emergent) Interpretation
Image Sharing (Emergent)	Image Sharing (Emergent)	Image Sharing (Emergent)
Storytelling (Emergent)	Storytelling (Emergent)	Storytelling (Emergent)
Connection (Emergent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Team • Sharing 	Connection (Emergent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Team • Sharing 	Connection (Emergent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Team • Sharing
Opportunity (Emergent)	Opportunity (Emergent)	Opportunity (Emergent)

Appreciation (Emergent)	Appreciation (Emergent)	Appreciation (Emergent)
Support (Emergent)	Support (Emergent)	Support (Emergent)
Empathy (Emergent)	Empathy (Emergent)	Empathy (Emergent)
Focus (Emergent)	Focus ((Emergent))	Focus (Emergent)
Emotions (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love • Enthusiasm • Excitement • Empowerment • Pride • Happiness • Positiveness • Hope • Resolution • Acceptance • Frustration • Relief • Struggle • Tension 	Emotions (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love • Enthusiasm • Excitement • Empowerment • Pride • Happiness • Positiveness • Hope • Resolution • Acceptance • Frustration • Relief • Struggle • Tension 	Emotions (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love • Enthusiasm • Excitement • Empowerment • Pride • Happiness • Positiveness • Hope • Resolution • Acceptance • Frustration • Relief • Struggle • Tension
Stress (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Devastation • Horrified • Appalled • Depressing 	Stress (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Devastation • Horrified • Appalled • Depressing 	Stress (Prior Code) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Devastation • Horrified • Appalled • Depressing

Further to my initial hunches, what emerged from creating this table was evidence that wellbeing and capacity building are not just connected to, but specifically and intricately linked to, resilience. The repetition of similar language and contexts indicated that resilience cannot manifest itself unless it is through acts of wellbeing that help communities strengthen their abilities to build capacity. This is a key understanding from this coding process that emerged from my overall analysis of the table/coding/layering phase. The following points summarise these emerging findings (the italics are my summary and analysis of the priori and emergent codes featured in the table):

- *Resilience, capacity building and wellbeing are interconnected.* This revelation was implicit in the literature, but emerged through the image-making practice at the site of the making of images (Barcaldine)
- In this project, *capacity was very much related to or subsumed by resilience and wellbeing*

- *Raising awareness* through images creates understanding, insight, reflection and change
- *Image making / producing* creates memories, emotional outlets, fun, enjoyment, passion, education, learning, sanity, relaxation and achievement
- *Connection* resulted in friendship, team-building and sharing
- *Emotions* were the dominant descriptive language identified during the coding of the data sets, expressed in the data as love, enthusiasm, empowerment, pride, happiness, acceptance, hope as well as exhaustion, struggle and tension.

These points set the scene for the creation of my four key assertions from this project. It was clear that the *Our Strength During The Drought (2018)* project was a shared community experience and that creating, viewing and sharing images was an interpretive storytelling process that provided opportunity, appreciation, support, empathy and focus for individuals and community. This language was repeated over and over again in the data collected during this research. However, it was not static and expanded during the image making and sharing processes due to the recruitment of volunteer photographers from the Barcaldine region. The bullet points attest to this research project being an emotional and personal journey for the volunteer photographers, the community, the exhibition audiences, and me as curator.

4.4 Phase Intersections Model: the Rise of Intersectional Data

The phases identified in Chapter 3: Research Methodology became complex due to the large number of data sets and, although I initially assumed that they would be created chronologically, they actually emerged as they needed to from the “ground up”, so a chronological method quickly became redundant. The intense period of three-layered coding also illuminated the complexity of the phases, which I had not previously considered. The strong intersections emerging from the data, already evidenced in Table 4-1 above, were replicated in the phases. Figure 4-1 below shows how the activities in each phase may have increased the intersectionality and interconnectedness of the evidence.

The Phase Intersections Model became an important tool, particularly during Phase 3. Like the photographs taken as part of this research, the model shows how complex data sets affect one another. Phases are identified by colour (blue, green and orange), and numbers within the phases identify the 10 data sets associated with this research. This shows the cumulative effect of phase intersections, which were not sequential, emphasising the emergent quality of the evidence and providing an example of the efficacious use of Grounded Theory. The figure also emphasises the organic nature of this research, which allowed participants, as well as me, to grow, particularly when I was able to help the amateur photographers to “...manifest their feel for their material...” (Laws, 2010, p. 599).

As previously discussed, reflective journaling (the dark-purple centre in the figure) was essential to applying Grounded Theory and generating memos. This became clear when I developed the Phase Intersections Model, which revealed that data collection intersected through the reflective journal. The reflective journal allowed me to pull complex ideas together in conjunction with Table 4-1, enabling me to write, think, link, pursue theoretical “hunches” and make connections. This was vital to articulating my key assertions as a result of applying Schön’s “knowing-in-action” in my reflective journaling practice. My role as curator of the project’s knowledge and evidence occurred inside the reflective journal in the same way I curated the images for the exhibition (Laws, 2010). Overall, the patterns, language and ideas generated by coding and by the interconnectedness emphasised in the phases became the foundation on which I based my key assertions and my overall findings, discussed in more detail in the following sections.

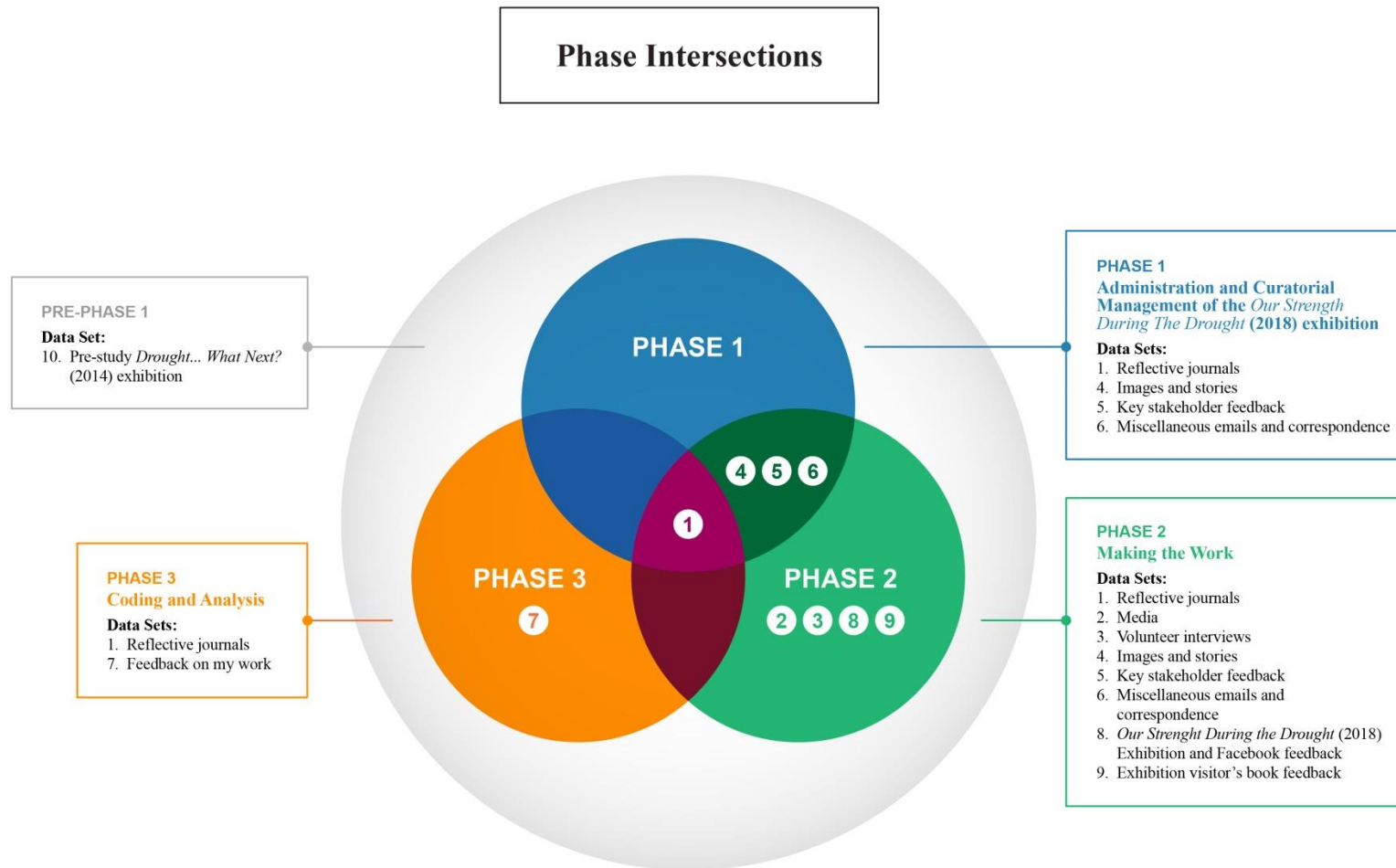


Figure 4-1: Phase Intersections Model

4.5 Key Assertions

4.5.1 Overview

The detailed process above allowed me to approach the emergent data as a whole, using the three phases and research questions to capture and identify the key words of this research. I have detailed this process above for future researchers who may wish to apply emergent methods of data collection for community projects. The insights that emerged regarding the interconnectivity of data-collection phases, as well the three layers of coding the data, determined my four key assertions. In brief, these are:

1. Wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience. I observed this on the ground working with the volunteer photographers. They demonstrated where the reification of wellbeing and resilience took place through making images by participants in real time as the research progressed. My observations were later evidenced in the coding of the data sets.

2. Photography can effectively express experiences of drought to promote wellbeing. This was evidenced as my research progressed and the volunteer photographers' images were drawn upon by various media outlets and other key stakeholders to tell the story of the drought in Central Western Queensland and on the Barcaldine region.

3. Reification is a practice for resilience. This assertion intersects with the two assertions above and was also evidenced throughout my research, commencing from the ground up: from the reification of images through making and curating processes to sharing images with the community and the media, culminating in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition.

4. The project is a model of emergent community capacity building. The investigation of the data and the research outcomes provide evidence that this research project is a model of community capacity building that relies on the presence of resilience in communities.

These assertions help to fill a gap in the literature, where published examples of processes like this research are hard to find. I surmise this is not because they do not occur; rather, the dissemination of outcomes from such processes is rare. This study provides a much-needed additional model to suggest how the arts might work alongside business and community capacity building to increase wellbeing. The four assertions constitute four categories of findings and are detailed below.

I have included a number of photographs in the following sections because they are a vital part of the data collected throughout the research. Some appeared in the final exhibition *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) and remain on the Barcaldine Regional Council website (<https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/regional-events/strength-drought-photo-exhibition>). I have chosen the photographs included in this chapter to illustrate points I make regarding each of the key assertions.

4.5.1 Assertion 1: Wellbeing is Relational and Vital to Resilience

During the project, volunteer photographers participated in three interviews with me, each using identical questions. The first interview was carried out prior to the image-making process. The second (three weeks later) occurred after the image-making process. The final interview took place a month later, after the opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition on 18 August 2018.



Photograph 4-1: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. *Photographer: Volunteer*

The volunteer who took Photograph 4-1 was a participant in this research. The image was taken at the Lansborough Flock Ewe show in Muttaborra, a town in the Barcardine region. The show demonstrates the Muttaborra community's desire to celebrate its local industries and provide a social event despite the ongoing drought. The photograph juxtaposes a clown, happily making balloon animals, with his dusty surroundings, suggesting the tenacity of wellbeing in the local community. I chose this image because it represents relational aspects vital to resilience. It shows a community continuing to support and celebrate local industries during an unprecedented eight-year drought. It also illustrates that the photographer's "eye" was seeking a positive image during their own

drought journey. This can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing. As one student participant said:

Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel enthusiastic and very proud that I was helping the community. I felt over the moon and I had more energy when they told us. Now that the images are in the gallery I feel like I am helping Barcaldine in this 7 years of drought. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student R, 2018, p. 1)

This quote is not from one of the research project volunteer photographers. Rather, it is from a school student at St Joseph's Catholic School in Barcaldine. Students from St Joseph's were not formal project participants but, after their school asked late in the project if they could be involved, 13 students took photographs that appeared in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition. Their images, stories and feedback (Data Set 4) then were coded and analysed. The student quoted above uses words that suggest wellbeing, a sentiment mirrored in comments from all 13 students (grades 3–6) involved.

Similar emotions were expressed by the research volunteer photographers in my interviews with them. Their language became progressively more enthusiastic during the interview series, especially after they participated in the exhibition itself. The comment below is typical of their expressions of wellbeing. It was made a month before the exhibition opening:

It makes me feel good. Yeah, like I said, I like doing it. It's calming for me as well as, I like to put nice photos up around my house...I take pictures of flowers and things like that and then there's photos of my family that are memories that I've caught, make me feel happy. (Interview 2, Data Set 3, Volunteer 6, 2018, p. 1)

The language identified here is similar to that shared in the student comments and feedback, which are shared equally throughout the priori codes emerging from resilience, capacity building and wellbeing. The following is an example of

the language in the interviews and used in relation to the images taken by the volunteer photographers; this language is also noted in the priori and emerging codes in Table 4-1 above, relating directly to memories; moments; and positive, shared community experiences and emotions.

The volunteer photographer who made the comment above took the image of brolgas in Photograph 4-2. It is a good example of a photographer focusing on something other than the devastation of drought. As she noted, taking images such as these made her feel happy.

This particular volunteer initially had very little confidence at the commencement of the research project but her feedback indicates a substantial change in her wellbeing after she produced images for the exhibition. For example: “I was not expecting so many people to comment on my photos...it took me by surprise...it made me feel good” (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 6, p. 3).

Her positive experience of participating in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition was mirrored in the feedback of all the participants. Their language became increasingly positive as we moved through three sequential interviews conducted during the project.

Similarly, feedback from the students of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School was couched in language that was equally distributed across the priori codes emerging from resilience, capacity building and wellbeing. Students used a variety of words to demonstrate the positive emotions emerging from the project despite the crisis in their community, including words such as pride, happiness, hope, excitement, and connection with others.



Photograph 4-2: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. *Photographer:* Volunteer

I did not have the opportunity to mentor the St Joseph' students; in fact, I met them for the first time on the opening night of the exhibition in Barcaldine. Yet they articulated their awareness of the power of their images in storytelling and sharing with others in their community, and the possible influence their images might have in raising awareness and support. As one student said:

Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel happy and proud of myself to be in something that is helping the community and I can help raise awareness. Hopefully our photos being seen can save the drought. Now that your images are in the gallery and being seen around the community and shopkeepers open and stay open forever. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student E, 2018, p. 1)

Photograph 4-3 below, taken by one of the students at St Joseph's, focuses on one of the few remaining patches of green during the drought, and some water. This image is another example of an emerging photographer trying to express something other than devastation about the drought, by focusing on the rare sight of green grass and water.



Photograph 4-3: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. *Photographer: Volunteer*

Mills and Brown (2004) identify a link between wellbeing, collaboration and creative practice “...as a way of social cohesion...as a building block for sustainability and well-being” (cited in McDonald & Mills, 2017, p. 390). Wenger states that the experience of making artefacts at the site of engagement “...constitutes a state of well-being in participants” (McDonald & Mills, 2017, p. 389). Wenger also believes that through “...engagement, but also imagination and alignment, our identities come to reflect the landscape in which we live and our experience of it” (2010, p. 5). This image-making project created a rich and deep engagement with the environment that helped participants to “see”; the camera sharpened their own understanding of drought and their place within it. One of the volunteer photographers expressed how taking photos in a drought-impacted environment helped them to “see” things differently: “It dulls the brain in some respects and sharpens it in others by making you look for

something that's not there or outside the box" (Interview 1, Data Set 3, Volunteer 4, July 2018).

The creative collaboration that Mills and Brown (2004) identify also resulted in the volunteer photographers starting to feel part of a team. For example, one participant commented after the exhibition:

Just the group that took the photos, you sort of become, we sort of became a team. The learning from that is that we could do more projects, you know, pick the theme, get a group. You know we could see the same sort of experience. (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 2, 2018, pp. 7–8)

The volunteer photographers built a connection and relationship with each other, demonstrating the relational power of their shared interest in photography as a way to express their sense of place, a vital manifestation of resilience. I also found that my role of curator afforded me greater connectivity and investment in the volunteer photographers so that I felt genuine pride in their achievements:

It was amazing watching the confidence levels of the volunteers blossoming over the past two days and their pride in the fact that their images were telling their community's story, it was so evident and happened in front of our eyes. It was so obvious that Norma, Janet and I all observed the changes in their demeanour. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, August 2018, p. 18)

As the project progressed, the community also celebrated the volunteer photographers and the participating students through a large opening-night celebration of the exhibition. This greatly boosted their confidence and pride in their participation, but also demonstrated the relational quality that extended beyond them as an amateur photography group into their community. As one participant commented after the exhibition opening:

It becomes a talking point. People are talking about their experiences because they have viewed the images. We're all, you know, we're all having similar experiences, we are feeling the same emotions. It's connecting us as a community. It is connecting us all. (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 5, 2018, p. 9)

The pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition first highlighted how an image project could unite communities impacted by a drought crisis, and raise awareness of their drought journey. As noted above, my coding of data from the pre-study provided a baseline of emerging language that suggested the presence of three key themes: resilience, wellbeing and capacity building. The priori codes manifested particular behaviours associated with these themes, such as raising awareness, support, shared community experience, storytelling, connections, empathy, understanding, appreciation, struggle, sadness, resilience, emotions, and image sharing. The themes and words identified from the pre-study were then mirrored in the comments of the volunteer photographers and students. This supports my assertion that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience. This idea was also articulated in an informal email to me from the CEO of Centacare CQ (my employer), which I documented in my reflective journal. Here, she emphasises the importance of the pre-study images in relation to my assertion that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience:

The images were created in collaboration with drought-affected landholders in Central Western Queensland, who wanted to share their stories with the wider community and keep the ongoing issue of the drought in the minds of townspeople and politicians...[R]esilience is a psychological concept that...positively enhances psychological wellness in community members and at the individual level is a key to managing significant stressors present in rural communities. The collection of images captures the importance of recognising the dynamic interactive nature of resilience and the interplay between an individual and their

broader environment. (CEO, CentacareCQ, Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 2018, p. 15)

The comment was made in relation to images that I captured and curated for the pre-study exhibition. Photograph 4-4 was one of the 19 images I took and selected for that exhibition. While taken to raise awareness of the drought crisis in the Longreach region, the images were often described as “beautiful” by attendees at the *Drought What Next* exhibition. One of many similar comments left in the visitors’ book for the 2014 pre-study exhibition shows the complexity of the images, and the emotional responses to them: “Beautiful photos, but so sad as well” (Pre-study visitors’ book, p. 2).



Photograph 4-4: *Drought...What Next?* (2014) Exhibition. Photographer: Anne Suse Smith

Likewise, some of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) images were described as “beautiful”. This similarity of language across both exhibitions was evidenced, as many of the codes which were identified for the pre-study were replicated and expanded in data generated from the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition. The expansion in language and themes was specifically due to the participation of local amateur photographers in the

project. The expression of “beauty” that was shared is also a demonstration of the relational quality of the images and the work that emerged.

The following volunteer response is an example of the expanded language due to the participation of volunteer photographers in this research project. The interview response from another volunteer photographer identifies why they took images, and supports the notion that engaging with the environment through a creative practice helped this volunteer to “see” differently: “Because it, it still makes me feel relief; it’s a form of relaxation” (Interview 2, Data Set 3, Volunteer 4, p. 4).

Other volunteer photographers commented similarly: “I take images because I enjoy taking images and the technical aspect of getting things right”; “I take them for relaxation”; “I take images as basically a stress reliever and it makes me feel good” (Memos 2018, p. 31).

Photograph 4-5 is another example of a photographer finding beauty despite the drought conditions.



Photograph 4-5: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer*

These emotions are a real-life example of the phenomenon identified by Corley, who believes that being involved in the creative process can create harmony in individuals and the community; in fact, she believes that all participants can be transformed through the creative process (2010, p. 543). On this project, there was an observable transformation in the community leading up to the exhibition, with both the volunteers and community upbeat and excited for the first time in many months. My reflective journal entry from the day of the exhibition reflects on this excitement:

...it seems like the spotlight was well and truly over the Barcaldine Regional Council footprint. The community which included its youth was sharing its journey through the drought with their images and words. The exhibition was attended by visitors to the region who also wanted to help get the word out for the community and who appeared excited to share this part of their journey. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 18 August 2018, p. 18)

Raising awareness of their place and themselves in a time of crisis was important to the volunteers and the community. Accordingly, their responses support Assertion 1, that wellbeing comes about from the relational capacity to connect with others, which is vital to resilience. Concepts around raising awareness and storytelling were coded consistently across all data sets, and this comment from one of the volunteer photographers identifies the realisation of both after the exhibition:

Oh, it definitely got people talking. I really do think that, especially Channel 7, they embraced it...The timing of it all was really amazing because just as you were ringing me up, within ten days of you ringing me, all of a sudden the media realised there was a big fat drought out there and they better do something about it, and it sort of ran from there... (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 1, p. 21)

When asked how they felt about participating in the exhibition, one St Joseph's student identified emotions of wellbeing because people were interested in what young people had to say about their drought journey and students felt able to raise awareness of the drought's impact on Barcaldine communities:

Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel enthusiastic and very proud that I was helping the community. I felt over the moon and I had more energy when they told us. Now that the images are in the gallery I feel like I am helping Barcaldine in this 7 years of drought. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student R, 2018, p. 1)

I observed distinct increases in the language of wellbeing when the media started to use the participants' images to raise awareness of the Barcaldine region's drought journey, and later when the photographers were celebrated at the exhibition opening. The change in language supports the claim that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience, and that wellbeing, here, was a consequence of active participation in collaborative practice between the volunteer photographers. This demonstrates the accumulation of knowledge as it emerged over time, captured in the Grounded Theory methods of coding.

The following language was identified in the last interviews with participants: education, understanding, raising awareness, emotions, empathy, support, storytelling, connection, image sharing, sadness, excitement, learning, image viewing, image sharing, and shared community experience (Table 4-1) . There is a common thread in the coding that resembles the identification of Wenger's (2010) "participation and reification", which was observed throughout emerging collaborative practice undertaken in the preparation of the exhibition (highlighted in Assertion 3).

The collaborative practice was a relational experience not only for the volunteer photographers but also for me as the curator. The following is an entry in my reflective journal after the second masterclass, where I provided photography coaching to the volunteer photographers: "To be able to witness the volunteer

photographers' confidence grow right in front of our eyes and to see how excited and exhilarated their family, friends and community were was amazing" (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 18 August 2018, p. 19).

These increases in wellbeing were also observed by my PhD supervisor and a fellow photographer and friend of mine, both of whom joined me in Barcaldine for the exhibition opening.

The project also encouraged other kinds of relational activity that generated a sense of connection and wellbeing. For example, one volunteer photographer commented that:

If I was going to talk to people about the drought, I should probably have a good idea of what it means to other people. Ah, so I spent a good week-and-a-half or two weeks actually going out of my way to talk to primary producers and sit down and find out what it means to those guys and how it affects them, financially and emotionally and that sort of thing. Part of the project in taking the photos really made that process easier to talk to other people about what they were going through. (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 1, 2018, pp. 6-7)

This volunteer used the research project as an opportunity to speak with primary producers in the local community, raising awareness of the project and increasing his connections to members of the community he had not met through previous channels. His emotions about this were clearly positive. This supports my assertion that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience.

Photograph 4-6 is another example of a volunteer photographer viewing a drought-impacted landscape with a positive lens when making an image. While the photograph may not initially appear positive (especially to a viewer unfamiliar with Queensland's outback landscape), it actually captures some messages of hope.



Photograph 4-6: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer

Photograph 4-6 shows cattle looking for food, and clearly reveals the impact of the drought on the land and the cattle. On the other hand, the photographer chose an image that is in some ways quite positive: the cattle look relatively good and could be much worse, as many farmers were having to kill their stock in the communities serviced by the BRC at the same time as the exhibition in 2018.

This research project also had a positive impact on my own wellbeing and resilience. After curating the pre-study *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition, experiencing Cyclone Debbie as it crossed the coast in the Whitsundays in April 2017, and curating the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) project, I observed wellbeing and resilience in participating individuals and their communities and found that these experiences were personally life-changing and life-affirming for me. Corley explains how this happens: "...[through] the dynamic interplay between self and other, community and culture, then back to enlivening the inner experience, collective healing of life challenges and deepening connection can unfold" (2010, p. 548).

However, like many emotional journeys, this one included fear and apprehension along the way. The experience of curating the final exhibition in

2018 was an emotional journey for me, due to my heightened experience in the pre-study, which included the death of a landholder on whose property I had taken many of the *Drought...What Next?* (2014) images. I was concerned because the volunteer photographers were living through a severe drought crisis and I wanted to ensure that their participation in my research did not create an extra burden for them. However, by the second interview, my concern eased, as I observed the photographers' emerging confidence and enthusiasm as their work on the project progressed. Once a multitude of media outlets began to showcase their images as part of the greater attention to the drought across Queensland, they became excited about the upcoming exhibition when their work would be viewed by their community.

On the night of the opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition, I was very proud of the volunteer amateur photographers and the St Joseph's school students who supported their community by raising awareness of the drought crisis with their images. It was personally exhilarating for me as the curator and also for the local community; the atmosphere at the exhibition seemed electric, with the community excited, proud and extremely supportive of the photographers and each other. The event brought together the photographers, community, local and state government representatives, key stakeholders and the media, who presented the Barcaldine region's drought story throughout the country. The following is my reflective journal entry recorded directly after the formal opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition:

This experience is hard for me to put into words. I felt such pride for my volunteers and of course for the students and the community. We had very little time physically together but we felt a profound connection. Making these images for the project and sharing them in the exhibition with the community, visitors and the media I am sure will stay with all of us forever. Janet and Norma also felt the buzz, it was like electricity in the air. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 18 August 2018, p. 19)

My supervisor along with a fellow photographer and friend Norma Jackson travelled to Barcaldine to attend the masterclasses and the exhibition opening. We shared the emotions of wellbeing along with the volunteers and the communities of Barcaldine. Our time together in Barcaldine was also an extremely happy event for us, and I realised again that I was experiencing wellbeing through relationships developed during this project:

What a wonderful experience to share with the volunteer photographers and the community. We have been made welcome and felt connected with each other and the community. It has been such an uplifting experience. It was extremely sad saying goodbye to my supervisor as we had an amazing four days and created a lasting friendship. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 20 August 2019)

While happiness is a key part of wellbeing, Shar and Marks suggest that wellbeing also "...means developing as a person, feeling fulfilled, and making a contribution to community" (cited in Dodge *et al.*, 2012, p. 225). Fredrickson (2003) states that resilience is effective in improving psychological wellbeing (cited in Dodge *et al.*, 2012, p. 225). The data taken from the participants strongly suggests that they developed as individuals, felt emotions of fulfilment (particularly after the exhibition) and made a contribution to their community by raising awareness of their drought journey and directing the spotlight onto the Barcaldine region.

The findings to date address my three research questions and indicate that resilience, capacity building and wellbeing all blend together. Figure 4-1, the Phase Intersections Model, clearly shows that the data is interconnected, resulting in my focus shifting from looking at resilience and wellbeing as separate ideas to my key assertions that all of these elements are interconnected.

4.5.2 Assertion 2: Photography Can Effectively Express Experiences of Drought to Promote Wellbeing

A volunteer photographer took Photograph 4-7 to draw attention to cattle being fed molasses to supplement their diet and keep them alive during the drought. Beef production is a major industry in the Barcaldine region and the drought has impacted numerous properties, many of which have had to destock their properties. Others have had to supplement the diet of remaining stock to ensure that breeding stock survived. Images like this promoted wellbeing by creating a shared visual language to help encourage a community conversation about the drought and its effects.



Photograph 4-7: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer

In the following comment, for example, a volunteer photographer suggests that the images encouraged dialogue between fellow volunteer photographers and their community: “I think it gets us talking, it opens it up that people don’t bottle it up and keep it to themselves, they know that there is help out there, there’s people like us that are supporting them” (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 3, 2018, p. 9).

Viewing the volunteers’ images and reading their stories had a profound impact on me. I was anxious for them during the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) project in relation to additional time commitment in their busy lives, and

the distress they might feel as their emotions were “opened up” by their arts practice. To my great relief, I observed that the volunteers seemed increasingly excited and connected to the project as it progressed, particularly once their images were being shared.

In my role as curator of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition, I was tasked with choosing one image from each of the volunteer amateur photographers to include in the exhibition. The BRC chose the remaining images for the exhibition (<https://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/regional-events/strength-drought-photo-exhibition>). On viewing each of the participant’s images, I came to the realisation that they, in most instances, were not capturing negative or depressing images but rather focusing on images that looked for hope (that the drought would break) and opportunity (to create something new e.g. tourism opportunities).

As curator, I realised that photography created a language that can transcend words to portray “...hard-to-put-into-words aspects, knowledge that might otherwise be hidden” (Knowles & Cole, 2007, pp. 5–13). As Barthes argues, images are different from language (discourse) because the “...content of its message is relayed directly by the image” (cited in Rice, 2016, p. 35), that is, without discursive language. When choosing from the collection of images presented by each volunteer photographer, I focused on the image I connected with most; the one that radiated a “visual language”. Over time, I found I also was viewing the images with a more positive lens, looking for hope and possibility:

I have chosen this image [Photograph 4-8] which shows a trough full of water. In the image the sun is bouncing light off the water which looks crystal clear making it look very inviting. This image to me represents the hope of everyone in the Barcaldine Regional footprint who are hoping for a break in these 8 years of drought. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, July 2018, p. 12)

The image of the water is an example of the volunteer looking at a drought-impacted landscape with a new lens, a lens that sees past the devastation to focus on the hope for a break in the drought.



Photograph 4-8: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer*

Similarly, the comment below from a journal acknowledges how photography can express experiences of drought to promote wellbeing through an emerging expressive identity:

I think it is a showcase, a showcase for different personalities and people in the community to show what they feel drought or dry conditions are about...it really brought it to the fore in town, the country or the region that has actually been in drought for eight or nine years. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, Volunteer 4, 1 December 2018)

Identity in community is a common theme identified in the volunteer stories (Data Set 4) because my research project focused on the photographer as a “...social participant, as a meaning making entity for whom the social world is a resource for constituting identity” (Wenger in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 389). The interview response below revealed one volunteer photographer’s journey of discovery in relation to his “identity in landscape”. Wenger explains this concept as follows: “...our identities come to reflect the landscape within which we live and our experience of it” (2010, p. 5).

Owning a business in town, I feel like I am slightly removed from the direct consequences of the drought although I do see the flow-on effect through the town. I recently photographed a wedding on a local property just outside of town and was struck by the stark difference between vegetation in town and outside of town. Inspired by the newlyweds, I decided to explore the theme that Life and Love still exist and find a way despite environmental effects. (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 1, p. 30)

This photographer realised that he was slightly removed from the consequences of the drought and wanted to explore his understanding of his environment. One of the images resulting from his exploration is the image I chose for the exhibition (Photograph 4-9), because it showed the stark contrast between the white wedding dress and the scorched, cracked earth. The image tells a story of the continuation of life’s special events in spite of the drought crisis. The image is an example of Assertion 2, that photography can effectively express experiences of drought to promote wellbeing and the renewal of identity.

This image was used extensively by the media to raise awareness of the drought crisis in the Barcaldine region. A story published online by ABC Western Queensland suggested that the image indicates “...life still goes on in spite of the ongoing drought and hardship experienced by people living on the land” (Bhole, 2018) (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-18/outback-residents-capture-resilience-in-the-drought/10129558>).



Photograph 4-9: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer*

The same photographer deliberated further on the cracked earth that foregrounded the wedding image, as his new photographer’s “eye” began to help him to identify the subtle beauty of the drought. Photograph 4-10 reveals a tiny green plant poking through the otherwise lifeless cracks. The photographer identified this image as “Life in the cracks of Drought – A single plant managing to grow in a field of dry, cracked mud” (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, Volunteer 1, July 2018).



Photograph 4-10: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. *Photographer: Volunteer*

His taking of these images suggests a personal engagement with finding his own resilience in the subject, navigated by his discriminating “eye” as the maker of the image. Interviewed by the ABC, he commented that:

There were a lot of photos of dying animals that come from drought coverage and I wanted to show a different side to the situation. Those images are very graphic and yes they really hit home, but I like to think about how life goes on even through tough times. (Quoted in Bhole, 2018) (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-18/outback-residents-capture-resilience-in-the-drought/10129558>)

There is no doubt that the images produced by the volunteer photographer above “...can assist in engendering debate, making knowledge, illuminating divergence, and highlighting consensus around shared meaning, purpose and values” (Mills & Brown, 2004, p. 9). The action of not only creating the image but, firstly, seeing its potential as an image to resonate with an audience is a key aspect of Assertion 2. The images express what is not seen, often missed, by a

community who are overwhelmed by the constant horror of the drought. In other words, the images capture the drought's presence in daily lives, but might also help the community to express and celebrate their defiance of the drought.

This is potentially a very powerful act of resistance to the drought crisis, creating a more positive sense of resilience and wellbeing in a community. This defiance is accompanied by a sense of responsibility to help others in the community who are suffering. This has also been documented in other communities experiencing disasters. For example, in describing how community members felt after the 2009 earthquake crisis in Italy's Abruzzo region, Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) state that they felt "...an overwhelming sense of responsibility to help others: a strong feeling of experiencing empathy for others: the solidarity that emerged from sharing sorrow and pain...and the joy of cooperation in doing collective tasks..." (p. 208). This was reinforced by many who were affected by the earthquake, with many noting that "...contributing and helping others felt good and enhanced their own wellbeing" (Thornley *et al.*, 2015, p. 30).

Another of the volunteer photographers on my project lived on the land, rather than in town, and took a photograph of her father's hands, still working and skilful despite the challenges of the drought. Experiencing the impact of the drought on a daily basis, her reification consistently manifested itself in memories of the past. The use of images gave this volunteer a medium to manifest a deep sense of connection to family, community and the land. Her story about her father's hands is an example of how images can tell the drought story in a way that words cannot:

"All which these hands have built" – I chose because it is meaningful to me on a personal level when considering the effects of drought. These are my father's hands. They have callouses, lines and scars. They are often covered in grease, dust and abrasions. Together with my mother's, these hands have endured bruises, scrapes and cuts (some to the bone), all for the investment and improvement of the place which – for them, my brothers and I – is

HOME. We children may have grown and moved into homes of our own, but the family property will always be that place in our souls which will always be HOME; our place of belonging and of love. As a daughter, to see this picture of my father's burly hands, a pair which along with those of my mother, have for my entire life embodied strength, resilience and love – and to now know the struggles and hardship that the drought has brought to them, really upsets me. It distresses me more knowing that there is so little I can do to help. (Volunteer Story, Data Set 4, Volunteer 6, July 2018)



Photograph 4-11: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer

While this volunteer photographer expressed her distress here at feeling unable to help her family, she used her photography to work through this, and gained confidence and friendships as the project progressed. When her images were used to raise awareness of her community's drought journey (e.g. on a postcard produced by the local MP – see [Appendix 13](#)), she felt proud and empowered that she could help.

During my curation of the exhibition, the volunteer photographers increased the details they were willing to reveal with regard to their personal drought

journey, through their use of images, and these echoed the experiences of many others within the Barcaldine region. Wenger believes that the “...combined community is greater than the sum of its parts” (2010, p. 3). Their identity as community members seemed to become more focused as the images amplified the “shared” content.

Barthes’ term “punctum”, a Latin word meaning “to prick”, describes the unexpected ability of a particular photograph to move and surprise. Barthes argued that the “punctum” is the most powerful aspect of photography as it “...moves us in ways that cannot be tempered, let alone rationalized...it is the most difficult aspect of the photograph to articulate in words” (cited in Rice, 2016, pp. 4–5). Out of all the images submitted by the volunteer photographers, Photograph 4-12 below was, for me, the image that had the strongest punctum. The potential of this image is an effective representation of Assertion 2.

I discussed the image with the volunteer photographer and wrote how I felt about it in my reflective journal:

My choice of this volunteer’s images is her image of her pet goat Darryl. The pet goat is one of the few animals left. I feel this emphasises the personal connection this family has to Darryl as part of the family unit. The volunteer photographer indicated that all their stock had been let go except the horses, which are currently in agistment, she told me that they too will be let go at the end of the year if the drought does not break. Looking at this image of Darryl eating what little food is left gives me conflicting emotions. I feel a heaviness and concern about Darryl’s future and concern for the pain no doubt caused by the decisions this family and others have to make during this shocking drought crisis. Paradoxically I also feel uplifted that the family was able to keep Darryl. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, September 2018, p. 13)



Photograph 4-12: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. *Photographer:* Volunteer

The same volunteer photographer provided a story with her images where she reflected on the pain of losing livestock and the struggle keeping pets alive:

Watching animals that you love and value suffer leaves you feeling helpless. Years of generic breeding are lost and animals both native and domestic suffer. You have to find a way to turn off your brain to see only the good things that are left.

Everyone knows how hard it is for those who live on the land but there are the forgotten people of rural towns who have an interest in the rural lifestyle. They often depend on the land for work and during droughts

like this one the work is also another thing that dries up. People in towns also own livestock. The town common gets closed, animals have to be sold or shot because there is nowhere for them to go. Hand-feeding becomes a necessity to keep family pets alive even though it costs more than they are worth. The resilience required by everyone is never ending.

I felt very apprehensive about going to take photos as I knew that things in the bush were pretty bad. While taking the photos I felt very sad and a little depressed. It was hard to see how badly the countryside had deteriorated over the past 6 ½ years. I personally like taking photos after it has rained as it makes things look so much cleaner and fresher and taking photos during drought is not a happy experience. (Volunteer 5 Story, Data Set 4, July 2018, p. 15)

[\(https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/\)](https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/)

Taking the images gave the volunteer photographer the opportunity to express her emotions, both good and bad, and share them with the other volunteer photographers and her community. As the project progressed, she worked through her more negative emotions and, by Interview 2, her comments indicated an improvement in her mood. Her responses to Interview 3 indicated the positive outcomes of her engaging with photography through the project. When asked how taking images made her feel, she replied: “It’s a personal thing; it gives me pleasure”. (Interview 3, Data Set 4, Volunteer 5, p. 3)

Through interaction and sharing, the volunteer photographers enhanced their wellbeing. As Imperiale and Vanclay note: “...during a disaster, social interaction and participation in community activities result in positive exchanges enhancing wellbeing” (2016, p. 210).

Assertion 2 reveals that resilience and wellbeing are interconnected where there are individuals living in communities that are in crisis. The act of expressing what one “sees” and sharing this with other community members

(and beyond) assists in learning, which is a strategy for resilience that embodies wellbeing and also capacity building: "...the landscape shapes our experience of ourself: practices, people, places, regimes of competence, communities, and boundaries become part of who we are" (Wenger, 2010, p. 6).

I chose another volunteer's image for the exhibition because of how she focused on the dying light of the day, the golden hour. I was drawn to this image because of the beautiful light around a homestead that also revealed a large group of kangaroos. It reveals the increased desperation of the hungry kangaroos, searching closer to civilisation for food as the drought worsened. This image was an oasis in the exhibition, bringing together white settlement and animals through their shared experience of the drought. I noted the volunteer photographer's accompanying story in my reflective journal (19 July 2018):

How heartbreaking it is to see the evidence of this prolonged terrible drought. Many graziers have not been able to recover from the previous drought before this one set in. The drought does not only affect the livestock & graziers but it also has an adverse effect on our native flora & fauna. Loss of habitat leads to a loss of our precious natives.

The sadness and despair I feel when I see dead or starving stock despite the best efforts of their owners. How must the graziers feel? The sight of empty waterways and loss of natives in my favourite bird-watching spot brings sadness to myself & others.

How wonderful to find an awesome tree in town with long grass and fifty or so kangaroos finding food. (Volunteer 5 Story, Data Set 4, p. 13)



Photograph 4-13: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer

Volunteers captured moments in time both when they were looking for images and also when they came across powerful images by chance, for example, when they “just happened to be driving past” and their “eye” was engaged so they felt compelled to stop and take the image, in the midst of their daily tasks and chores. The images captured both positive and negative emotions inspired by the drought, as one volunteer noted:

These images represent the highs and lows experienced by all concerned in drought conditions. The hope that rises with wisps of cloud, the despair felt from watching a baby lamb cry out to a tree and a native bird calling from a drying waterhole. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, Volunteer 4, p. 14)

The image I chose from this volunteer for the exhibition (Photograph 4-14) showed heavy clouds looming over a parched paddock. My reason for selecting this was that the heavy clouds building up over the landscape also gave me hope that the innocent sheep in the image would soon have relief bought on by the much-needed rain.

My selection of volunteer images and the following observations on why this volunteer took images became a revelation for me. This evidence goes some way to answering one of the key research questions of this study: to what extent

might participation in an image-making project foster resilience? This volunteer noted that taking photographs had surprising benefits for them in a range of areas: “In a way, the use of the camera and photos I took were an outlet that I used every day to cope emotionally/mentally and physically with the pressures that come with a long dry period” (Interview 2, Data Set 3, Volunteer 4, p. 2).

The volunteer photographer’s comment above is an example of how individuals can be enhanced and transformed by creative practice. Corley (2010) believes that the:

...process of creative expression has great potential to bring harmony and connection within and beyond the self and to expand sociocultural consciousness. In the dynamic interplay between self and other, community and culture, then back to enlivening inner experience, collective healing of life challenges and deepening of connections unfold (p. 548).



Photograph 4-14: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer

As a photographer and the curator of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) research project, I started to notice that the volunteer images I was selecting for inclusion into the exhibition could all be interpreted as having some hopeful aspect. The volunteer photographers were advised to take any image they wanted that reflected their drought journey. Without any coaching to look for positive images, they did so organically as a way to articulate

something other than the negative. One of my key findings as the curator is that, in a time of crisis, the volunteer photographers looked deeper to find a new lens to view the drought through, a lens that is often conducive to emotions of wellbeing. This is also evidenced in the volunteer photographer's comment above.

In my reflective journal, I noted that:

On reflection of my choice of volunteer images for inclusion in the exhibition I became aware that the images were all positive reflections of the volunteers' drought journey. The volunteers had also discussed that they often searched for the wonderful beautiful things that were still to be seen in a drought impact environment. These images while not as horrifying as they could have been still depicted the impact the drought was having on their communities. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, 2018, p. 14)

As curator I also began to focus on the drought with a different lens, looking beyond the many shocking and distressing vistas to observe the positive aspects of the Barcaldine region's drought journey. The shift in focus made me more resilient during this deeply emotional and impacting journey. This provided a clear assertion that using photography to express experiences of crisis (drought) provides visual mechanisms to increase drought discussion among individuals as well as communities, and promote a sense of wellbeing in trying to find positive ways to express experiences of the drought.

4.5.3 Assertion 3: Reification is a Practice for Resilience

Wenger uses the word “reification” in his writings to suggest an in-depth demonstration of participation (2010, p. 2). To participate in a project is one process, but to make something from the participation is reification. This project revealed many examples of reification as a deeply participatory act. Mills and Brown (2004) acknowledge the link between wellbeing and collaboration as a way of increasing social cohesion with their statement “...community engagement (including collaboration and practice) is a building block for sustainability and wellbeing” (cited in McDonald, Aprill, & Mills, 2017, p. 390). Reification is also about inducing something meaningful from participation: making a manifestation of what occurred through the participation. This is often a lasting artefact that captures the project, process and connections. Reification, therefore, is a practice of resilience through collaboration, relationships and sharing the reified “product”, in this case, the images.



Photograph 4-15: Masterclass, Tree of Knowledge (Barcaldine, August 2018). *Photographer: Volunteer*

Photograph 4-15 above was not selected for the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition, but was taken by one of the volunteer photographers at the Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine during my first

photography masterclass on 17 August 2018. I ran several masterclasses as a way to provide support and engage with the volunteers leading up to the opening night of the exhibition on the 18 August. This is the only image featuring the volunteer photographers, my supervisor, a fellow photographer and friend from the Whitsundays and me, all of whom attended the masterclasses I conducted. The following comment from one of the volunteer photographers sums up how their practice gave them greater insight about the drought: “It has also helped us to look at the drought through the eyes of others and to see the beauty where we thought there was none” (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 5, p. 1).

As the curator of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition and through my own reification at the site of the drought, I also made new friendships. I was delighted at the connection we all felt at the masterclasses and subsequent exhibition opening, which affirmed that the reflective component of reification increasingly revealed the deeply relational, complex interactions that occurred when I was able to help the amateur photographers “...manifest a feel for their material...” (Laws, 2010, p. 599). I noted a substantial increase in the levels of confidence of the volunteer amateur photographers during these master classes, and witnessed their pride that their images were telling their own and their community’s drought story. My reflective journal entry reflected their pride and excitement:

I spoke with the volunteers regarding how they felt that the media would use their images, they were all extremely excited that their images were going to tell Barcaldine’s story. I observed that they appeared to be so happy and proud that their images were helping their community. Their confidence levels appeared to have increased exponentially and they were so happy. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, August 2018, p. 18)

The language identified within the data for this research supports the assertion that reification is a practice for resilience. The language used by the volunteer photographers, school students, media, visitors and other key stakeholders was

similar and shared equally throughout the priori codes emerging from resilience, capacity building and wellbeing. The following language was used in relation to the images taken by the volunteer photographers, relating to: memories, moments, shared community experience, raising awareness, image sharing, storytelling, support, empathy and emotions (Table 4-1).

At the opening of the exhibition, the volunteer photographers were beaming, and their families were excited sharing and celebrating their achievements. The Barcaldine community appeared excited about the media focus, with the spotlight well and truly on the Barcaldine region. The community were sharing their journey through the volunteer photographers' and students' drought images. The exhibition was attended by visitors to the region who also wanted to assist in raising awareness for the community and who appeared excited to share their story. I was excited to witness the volunteer photographers' confidence growing and to see how excited and exhilarated their family, friends and community were. Wenger speaks of engagement and participation being important to the impact of arts practice and that the identity of the individual grows with participation that reifies at the site of "making" (Wenger, 2010, p. 4). It is was one thing for the photographers to reify their experiences of the drought in the exhibition, but the sharing of these images with the community also creates a space for the audience to engage and participate with the images so that they too make new meanings about their place in the drought: "Such an uplifting and inspiring way to address the devastation brought by drought. To lead with a forward outlook is commendable" (Facebook Comment, Data Set 8, July 2018) (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).

The fact that I did not take images for inclusion in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition and did not curate any of my own images into the exhibition attests to my initial sense of critical and detached agency for this project. And yet, once I met with the volunteers in Barcaldine, I was compelled to take images, because their interest was infectious and my participation required my own reification in concert with demonstrating and mentoring amateur artists. The experience of reification at this site was bonding for me

and the volunteers. Mills and Brown (2004) acknowledge the link between wellbeing and collaboration as a way of social cohesion, as also identified in Assertion 1. As mentioned earlier, Wenger also believes that the identity of the individual grows with participation through reification: it can transform the way a participant understands themselves in their communities. The comments below made by a volunteer photographer were echoed by the student photographers, and also anchored to the literature in relation to engagement, participation, collaboration, reification, wellbeing, and identity:

The connection is felt just because everyone in the community does feel it. It doesn't matter whether it's from someone in town in their own little house out to the graziers on the land. It is drought, affects all people. (Interview 2, Data Set 3, Volunteer 4, 2018, p. 3)

An observation I noted in my reflective journal after reading the quote above was that:

Viewing the volunteer images and reading their stories had a profound impact on me, it took me back to the *Drought...What Next?* (2014) exhibition. I felt anxious for the volunteer amateur photographers during most of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) project...to my great relief I observed that, in fact, the volunteers seemed increasingly excited and connected to the project as it progressed. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, September 2018, p. 5)

Assertion 1 and Assertion 3 interconnect; part of the relational activity was activated by and interwoven into reifying images that were then shared in the community (either online or in the exhibition). I seek to demonstrate this further by discussing further evidence of reification that resonated out of the exhibition images.

4.5.3.1 The Impact of Student and Curator/Researcher Reification

In order to demonstrate the interconnectivity of Assertion 1 and Assertion 3, and to link relational and reifying practice to resilience, it is prudent to also analyse the impact of reification on participants outside of the original data sets, because they also emerged as important inclusions in the research.

Assertion 3 also encompasses the participation of students from St Joseph's Catholic School in Barcaldine, who participated in the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition. The work provided by these students was not considered in the early planning of this project, and so their ultimate inclusion was directly related to the emergent quality of the Grounded Theory methods in place. Their particular input became central to the substantiation of Assertion 3, because these students actively reified their engagement with the exhibition to produce highly expressive images. The participating students were mostly from Grade 3 and, while they did not directly participate in my PhD research, I still sought ethical clearance to use the data generated from their participation in the exhibition as a secondary data set. The students were each asked to take one image with a brief description of the image; this process was determined by the BRC and was in line with the process the adult volunteer photographers were following. After the opening of the exhibition, the students also gave feedback regarding their participation in the exhibition, which was provided to their principal, who forwarded it to the BRC.

I have included anonymised feedback from all students who participated in the exhibition in [Appendix 14](#). Given the unique perspectives of such young members of a community impacted by a severe drought crisis, I have also included their images, stories and exhibition feedback in this appendix.

By way of an overview of some key images and thoughts, the following is a selection of images and comments that the students provided for the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>). Their images predominantly depicted the impact of the drought on the environment and animals.



Photograph 4-16: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Student*

The comment provided with this image was: “This guy didn’t stand a chance” (Student Story, Data Set 4) (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).

The overwhelming empathy expressed for the environment by such young children was not what I expected. I believed their images might be either overly naive or cynical about the subject. But this was not the case. The comment associated with the following image was: “Drought – even at its worst, this drought will never kill Barcaldine’s natural beauty” (Student Story, Data Set 4) (<https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).



Photograph 4-17: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Student*

As I viewed all the images and story, I was continually struck by the overwhelming empathy for animals that the students used as their chief mode of expression. For example, a photograph of a dog was accompanied by this comment: “All the animals can get hurt from the dead grass with all the prickles” (Student Story, Data Set 4) <https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>.



Photograph 4-18: *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Student

Many of these children have never experienced rain because they, their families and the Barcaldine region had been impacted by this drought crisis for eight years. Yet they understood how harsh the current conditions were compared to the “normal” climate they had never experienced. Their overwhelming empathy for the animals and environment impacted by the drought was a surprise to me and many attendees at the exhibition. They clearly felt a connection to both and had not become desensitised to the devastation around them.



Photograph 4-19: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition.* Photographer: Student

Writing about this image, the student said: “With no food out of town, kangaroos have invaded our school grounds and this means we cannot go out to play. Our grass is so much sweeter compared to the dust out of town” (Student Story, Data Set 4) <https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>).

The image of the kangaroo in the school grounds is an example of many student images showing the impact the drought is having on wildlife and, therefore, the students’ daily routine. The student indicates no resentment regarding how they could no longer go out to play in the playground and, in fact, empathised with the plight of the kangaroos looking for food. Their students’ contribution to the exhibition was profound because of the empathy they displayed and their conviction not to become hardened to the constant horror of the drought around them.

The students’ responses also focused on emotions, and they often indicated their sadness in regards to the drought crisis. However, the student feedback after the image-sharing process of the exhibition increasingly focused on the emotional benefits they experienced:

Taking the photos for the exhibition made me feel:

Like I was making a difference to the community, that I was important and that people actually wanted to see the opinion of children. I felt as though I was helping the community in an interesting way. It makes me feel important because I didn't realise 7 news wanted to come to, film at our house and put OUR photos in newspapers and on QLD drought appeal. I was absolutely thunderstruck that politicians wanted to see kids' photos. I was flabbergasted when the kangaroos intruded into our school. Living on a property helps me to relate to the Kangaroos...I really understand how important our opinions are. They are important because it's not just the farmers but the whole community – even the whole country. That is why the photo exhibition was shocking to me. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student E, August 2018, p. 1)

The students indicated pride, happiness, hope, excitement, connection with others, awareness that their community was one of many struggling through the drought crisis, an awareness of the power of their images in storytelling and sharing with others their community's drought journey, and, the possible influence their images had in raising awareness and thus support:

Taking the images made me feel excited people know we are in a massive drought in QLD. People and animals have died from the drought. Taking the images made me feel positive and excited we are making a difference. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student E, August 2018, p. 1)

In general, the students' comments took on a more positive tone after the image-making process, when the images were shared with others and the media started to pick up on the story:

The experience of taking the photos for the exhibition made me feel like I had a chance to change people's mind about drought. I know that drought can be a distressing, heartbreaking, gloomy and upsetting but I realised that drought can be quite a beautiful thing. At the exhibition,

most locals captured photos that show how we get on. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student A, 2018, p. 1)

The student's images, story and feedback provided a particular insight into how they view the world around them. Informal discussion with the school principal indicated that the students enjoyed learning about photography through the project and that it gave them a space to think about how the drought-affected families in the region.

As the curator, I observed that when the student's images were showcased in the exhibition and selected by the media to raise awareness of the drought crisis in the Barcaldine region, it was like a "heavy cloud was lifting" (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, September 2018, p. 21). The reification from their participation in the exhibition clearly conveys the students' sense of empowerment, which related to sharing their images and making an impact for their community by raising awareness of its drought journey. The images show the drought's reality and the feedback conveys the transformative power of the project in attacking their sense of helplessness, further evidence of the existence of Assertion 3.

One of the most profound impacts of genuinely understanding the power of reification to transform understanding and increase resilience came from how my own photography experience was extended upon during this project. Rather than simply being an outside observer and curator for the project, I also found myself investing my own "eye" in the capturing of the images throughout the masterclasses held in Barcaldine.

The volunteer photographers were asked to give feedback on the following three images, which I took during the two masterclasses I held in Barcaldine for volunteers (17–18 August 2018).

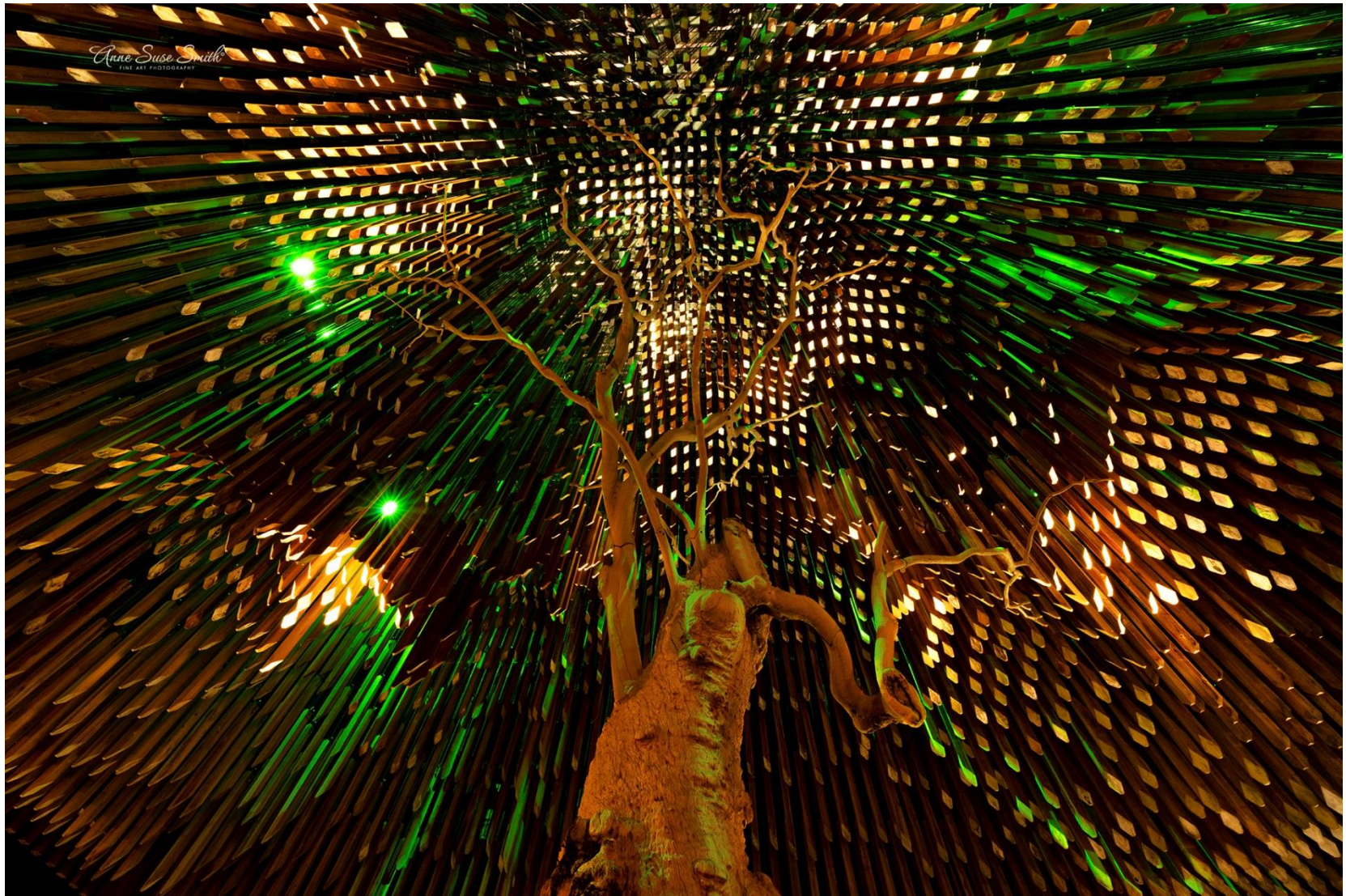


Photograph 4-20: Little Eagle (2018). *Photographer: Anne Suse Smith*



Photograph 4-21: Lake Dunn Sculpture Trail, Barcaldine (2018). *Photographer: Anne Suse Smith*

(See [Appendix 15](#) for more information on the sculpture trail.)



Photograph 4-22: Tree of Knowledge, Barcaldine (2018). *Photographer: Anne Suse Smith*

The volunteer comments noted in my reflective journal were that the images: “lifted people’s spirits making them feel more resilient” (Data Set 1, 23 September 2018), and “they were beautiful images that remind us that nature is beautiful even in droughts” (Data Set 1, 23 September 2018). Another comment on my images was:

The image of the sculpture indicates a stark unrelenting red bluff showcasing hardship, then flows to the colourful lights at night with the tree of knowledge creating a feeling of wistfulness/wonder and joy. Last but not least the joy of life and flight shown through the eyes of the raptor. (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, Volunteer 4, September 2018, p. 1)

I observed that the volunteers were using more positive language following their image-making experience. There appeared to be a greater awareness and focus on community, sharing, friendships and storytelling, expressing predominantly positive experiences. During the curating process of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) research project, I was asked to participate in the *Landscape and Memory* (2018) exhibition hosted by the Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery. This group exhibition involved contemporary arts practitioners responding to official war photographer Frank Hurley's iconic images taken on the Western Front and in the Middle East in 1917 and 1918. My experiences during the curating process of my research had a profound impact on my image-making process for *Landscape and Memory*.

The importance of Wenger’s “identity in landscape” became clear to me and that “...learning all aspects of the landscape influences who we are, our emerging identity” (Wenger, 2010, p. 4). The following overview of my image-making process at the site, the Whitsundays, is an example of my discovery of Wenger’s “identity in landscape”.

The image I created, entitled *Lest We Forget* (2018), was based on my response to a Frank Hurley image from WW1, *The Silent Cities of the Dead*, which was

taken in a Belgian village known as Vlamertinghe, where many hospitals and dressing stations were located during the war (Kerby & McDonald, 2018, pp. 10–11). The landscapes captured “...by Frank Hurley were brutal expressions of war which, over time, began to hide evidence of its past...‘Lest we forget’ becomes less the expression of a determination to remember, but a fear of forgetting” (Kerby & McDonald, 2018, p. 2).

My image-making journey led me to the realisation that the enduring impact of war is the camaraderie and brotherhood between servicemen and servicewomen, which is connected to the fallen soldiers indicated in Frank Hurley’s image. I had a strong sense of focusing on the fallen soldiers to indicate they were not forgotten but rather continued to be integral part of the Australian landscape.

The impact of making this image was profound for me as a photographer: reflecting on those who had been lost but also giving me a means to connect with the community of veterans in my Whitsunday location. Meeting with two local veterans, Ian (Vietnam) and George (WWII) (featured with dog and grandchild in the image), helped me to feel that I had a greater responsibility to appropriately honour the veterans. Ultimately I felt that, as the photographer, I became the conduit for my two veteran subjects to tell their story, which resulted in their service being acknowledged, commencing with the inaugural opening of *Landscape and Memory* (2018) in Toowoomba on 5 August 2018 and continuing for weeks after with media interviews and stories (<https://annesusesmith.com.au/landscape-in-memory-exhibition/>). One of my veteran subjects indicated many times that participation in this project ‘gave him a new lease of life’ and emotions of ‘wellbeing’ and ‘changed his outlook on life’.

This project was an example of collaboration and relationship-building contributing to resilience, confirming that reification helps to transform what people “see” in times of crisis and clearly linking this project to Assertion 3, that reification is a practice for resilience.



Photograph 4-23: *Lest We Forget: Landscape and Memory* (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Anne Suse Smith

4.5.4 Assertion 4: The Project Demonstrates Strategies for Emergent Community Capacity Building

The image below was used by the Member for Gregory on a postcard ([Appendix 13](#)) that his office distributed to the Queensland and Australian governments and other key stakeholders with the hope of raising awareness and securing support for the drought-impacted communities of Central Western Queensland. The Member for Gregory was a key stakeholder in the pre-study exhibition and also supportive of the research.



Photograph 4-24: *Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Exhibition. Photographer: Volunteer*

After the exhibition, his offices contacted me and asked if they could use one of the *Our Strength During The Drought (2018)* images. I recommended that he

choose an image from the dedicated Facebook page. His promotion of this image bolstered the confidence of the volunteer who captured the image; she later shared with me that it had also created pride and excitement within her family. This is an example of an individual's ability to directly build and strengthen their community through their reification. Wenger states that it is "inspiring to discover others who share a concern and to let this joint caring become a bond of identity. This is the power of community" (2010, p. 10). I believe this was strongly represented in the data sets taken for this research.

The process of finding one's connection with community and understanding its importance to resilience and wellbeing are elaborated on by Wenger in a discussion of "identity in landscape". He states that "...our identities come to reflect the landscape in which we live and our experience of it" (2010, p. 5). In other words, learning all aspects of the environment influences who we are and our emerging identity. The use of the image for the postcards is an example of Assertion 4 that the project demonstrates strategies for capacity building. "[A]rts and creativity provide people with multiple pathways for capacity building" (Roberts & Townsend, 2015, p. 214). This also relates to Assertion 1, that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience because they are all interconnected, identical to the data sets and the coding of this research.

The same volunteer photographer described the above image in her drought journey story in July 2018 as:

"Quietus" & "Relics" depict what is the distressing and final outcome of perpetual drought – perished livestock and abandoned property. A century of history lays in disuse and disrepair, truly becoming a relic of a bygone era. The remains of a beast that finally gave up enduring and succumbed to the "release from life" that is death, lies bleak and sun bleached. (Volunteer 6 Story, Data Set 4, July 2018

[\(https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/\)](https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/)

While her emotions here are far from positive, following the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition, this same volunteer photographer enrolled in a Diploma of Photography to further her understanding of image making. The project, I believe, stimulated her motivation to do more and “see” more in her community.

The language identified within the coding of the data supports the assertion that the project is a model of emergent community capacity building by connecting and strengthening community. These extracts from media coverage from August 2018 show how volunteers and student photographers were able to help build capacity in their community through reification, linking to Assertion 4:

Images and social media are playing an important role in bringing awareness of the drought to non-rural Australia. (Kirili Lamb, *Rural Weekly*, 13 August 2018)

A University of Southern Queensland (USQ) student is working with the community in one of Queensland’s hardest hit drought regions on a project showcasing resilience in hard times. (*USQ News*, 17 August 2018)

This is a real opportunity for young people to express their emotions in crisis events. (Kirili Lamb, *Rural Weekly*, 21 August 2018)

Life goes on: Queensland community resilient in face of record drought. (Tony Crockford, *Brisbane Times*, 26 August 2018)

and:

Councillor Chandler said that people across Queensland, and in fact right across rural Australia, know how to handle droughts, floods and famine but this is the “worst on record” in some places.

"So, it’s just amazing how people can go year after year with below average rainfall and still be kicking in the end," he said.

He said the images would provide personal stories behind the community's experience with drought. (Bhole, 2018)

Volunteer photographers also indicated that the project bolstered the community: "Pride in one's community encourages participation in local events and encourages good community friendships, which is good for every individual" (Reflective Journal, Data Set 1, Volunteer 6, September 2018, p. 1).

The students' participation in the exhibition was also an example of an individual's ability to build and strengthen their community by their collaboration, which fosters capacity building and increases social cohesion. Mills and Brown describe "...community engagement (including collaboration and practice) as a building block for sustainability and wellbeing" (cited in McDonald *et al.*, 2017, p. 390). The volunteer photographers reified through photography, building capacity and generating dialogue around the drought, moving from the individual photographers outward into the community:

Like I was making a difference to the community, that I was important and that people actually wanted to see the opinion of children. I felt as though I was helping the community in an interesting way. It makes me feel important. (Feedback, Data Set 4, Student E, p. 1)

The feedback that the volunteer photographers made in relation to the images I made is also indicative of community capacity building: "...they inspire and build community pride in our local attractions, which helps to bolster the community and inspire new ideas for further additions and improvements" (Feedback, Data Set 7, Volunteer 6, September 2018, p. 1).

The comment below was made by the Barcaldine Mayor, also focusing on a positive future:

I think the photos have a real way of creating affinity within the hearts of city people for people in the bush; images and social media are playing an important role in bringing awareness of the drought to non-rural Australia, it is a creative outlet and images speak louder than words. I think it's good to have people express themselves that way. It's powerful, we have a whole community taking images and sharing their stories, even school kids, this is the voice of Barcaldine through images, taking images makes them feel better. Projects like this help us focus on a bright future, to build social connectivity and hoping the uploaded photos and the collected comments will tell the plight of the Barcaldine region and help to lobby state and federal politicians for greater support. (Mayor BRC, telephone interview, 9 November 2018)

The comment above was made in November 2018 after the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition. The BRC Mayor identified the research project as a model for capacity building through "identity in landscape" and through the collaboration and emerging identity of the volunteer photographers whose images raised awareness of drought crisis in the Barcaldine region. The Mayor identified that taking the images made the photographers "feel better". He also states that projects such as this research help the community to focus on a "bright future" by building social connectivity. Wenger's interest in adaptive strategies that can help a community develop or extend upon their identity through making "artefacts" is relevant here (2010, p. 1).

The comment below from one of the volunteer photographers is an example of how the "artefacts" made through collaborative reification were shared with large numbers of tourists: "Four to five hundred visitors have gone to look at the exhibition this week...They're very impressed that it's local content by local

people, very impressed by that” (Interview 3, Data Set 3, Volunteer 3, 2018, p. 29).

Analysing the data through the coding process, linking it back to the research questions and literature, identified that the media had a substantial impact on community resilience, wellbeing and capacity building. The attendance of the Channel 7 Brisbane (*Today Tonight*) team at the opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition was enthusiastically welcomed by the communities of the Barcaldine region. The *Today Tonight* team filmed the official opening of the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition at The Globe gallery in Barcaldine on the 18 August 2018. They also arranged to visit one student photographer’s family farm and spoke to the family about their drought experience.

The attendance of the *Today Tonight* team was initiated and coordinated by myself, using networks I had established during the pre-study. I was involved in extensive ongoing communication with the team for approximately a week prior to the exhibition to assist in the coordination of their visit to the Barcaldine region and the opening of the exhibition. I coordinated key stakeholders for the team to interview prior to the opening of the exhibition and kept in constant communication on the day of the opening. The *Today Tonight* team did an interview with me at the opening of the event to discuss the research project. This was a demonstration of my collaboration and partnering with the media in order to assist the community to share their story with others outside their community. I realised the role of the curator was also to liaise between the artists and the community and the greater “outside” community via the media, and that this role, although undertaken pro bono as the researcher, is significant for dissemination of the work to draw the attention of politicians and other key stakeholders.

Once the media was committed to reporting on the Barcaldine region’s drought journey, I stepped back to allow the Mayor and the volunteer photographers to have their time in front of the camera and tell their stories about the images and

their drought journey. There was a great deal of excitement generated by the media's filming of the opening of the exhibition. Through the media's involvement, the image project definitely put the spotlight on the Barcaldine region. It raised awareness of the drought crisis that the communities of the Barcaldine region had been struggling through for eight years. The exhibition featured in the opening segment of a Channel 7 Queensland *Drought Special* that used the footage from the *Today Tonight* visit (1 September 2018). The role of the media in fostering aspects of resilience was vital, linking to Assertion 4 that the project demonstrates strategies for emergent community capacity building.

4.6 Conclusion

The four assertions are extremely important to this study as they present the emergent quality of the project to increase capacity building of the Barcaldine region's drought journey. An unanticipated benefit was the national media attention, which shared aspects of the project with more people than I had initially envisioned. In addition to Channel 7, media outlets such as the ABC News, *Brisbane Times*, *Rural Weekly*, and other print and electronic media ran stories on the Barcaldine region's drought journey and the PhD research project (for links to media coverage, see [Appendix 12](#)). The story of the photographers was confirmed as being worthy and valuable, and their images spoke "from the ground" and were therefore authentic to the crisis.

The capacity building demonstrated in this project is linked to the critical agency of the participants, who used photography to build their identity, then shared their images with the community and thus revealed how relational (Assertion 1) and reificatory (Assertion 3) activities help to transform what people "see" in times of crisis (Assertion 2), and how a community might benefit from sharing images widely to build capacity (Assertion 4).

I am confident that the assertions are interconnected, which justifies my initial hunch that wellbeing, capacity building and resilience are also interconnected and inter-penetrating through practice and sharing of images. Imperiale and Vanclay believe that, during a disaster, social interactions and participation in

community activities result in positive exchanges, enhancing wellbeing (2016, p. 210). How individuals and communities recover or “bounce back” and support each other during/after a disaster is described by Somit (2016) as when “...all ordinary divides and patterns are shattered, people step up to become their brother’s keeper” (cited in Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, p. 210). This was also one of my key observations and it speaks to Assertion 3 that reification is a practice for resilience.

My analysis of the assertions suggested the need for a model that renders the key aspects of the findings and provides a model for use by other communities that might wish to deploy a similar project to encourage resilience, wellbeing and capacity building. The details of this model, including practical recommendations for communities seeking to use it, are explained in Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

While undertaking this research project, I was approached by local governments who were interested in how the project's processes might be transferred to other communities facing environmental crises. Upon discussing my emerging findings and reviewing the methods I used to create the exhibitions, I discovered that the four assertions that emerged from my project could be used to generate six interlinking steps that other communities could follow. This six-step process can be used by communities during environmental crises to develop expressive or image-making practices by locals that can enhance and manifest resilience. I have named this the Resilience Through Images Model (RTI), which can be used to structure other expressive projects in regional communities.

The four assertions in Chapter 4 effectively and significantly indicate that resilience is a discrete outcome of relationships, reification, and emergence through "making a mark" using images. As stated in Chapter 2, taking photographs is an affordable, mobile, digital and easily shared way to engage communities in conversations about their context: particularly where there are adverse weather or environmental crises. Painting or other art-making processes such as audio projects or films could also be effective. The key is in the nature of the reification: it must be a specific outcome created through the engaged participation of people in the project. In times of crisis, creative projects can become all the more enthusiastically embraced by community members. Even a handful of community members who make images or expressive products can create a way to share their experiences for the benefit of other locals.

With this in mind, Figure 5-1 below presents a workflow for how a project of this kind might develop in a community.

5.2 Resilience Through Images (RTI) Model

This model is a major outcome of my PhD research and focuses on providing crisis-impacted communities with a set of strategies to help build resilience based on relationships and collaboration through reification and artefacts (images or expressive material). This research project confirmed that image making can provide a powerful tool for the advocacy and agency of community members by sharing and amplifying social responses to adverse issues.

In order to create my model, I researched the work of Peter Abbs, an educational philosopher from the field of the arts who developed what he calls the 5-Phases of Art Making (1989, p. 204). Abbs initially created a circular model for what he states are the five essential processes of making art: expressive impulse, working within the medium (moving from immediate self-expression to representative embodiment), realisation of final form, presentation and performance, and response and evaluation (1989, p. 204).

Abbs' model aims to generate a sense of the circular nature of the art-making process, which allows for expressive work to emerge as it is being made. He says we must: "...see the five phases of art making as working within an endless dialectic between inherited form and emergent process" (Abbs, 1989, p. 204). While there is a logical, cumulative process articulated in Abbs' circular structure, I chose to use an infinity symbol in my model to best represent the dynamic relationships and interconnectedness of the themes that emerged during the coding of the emergent data. This shape allows for the inevitable twists that emerge from practice in this field. As occurred on my project, communities using this model could regularly reflect on a practice as it is being undertaken (e.g. through reflective journals, Facebook, vlogs or blogs). In this way, archiving also becomes an important outcome, and local governments (who may drive the project) can promote further engagement on their websites and other digital portals.

Resilience Through Images (RTI)

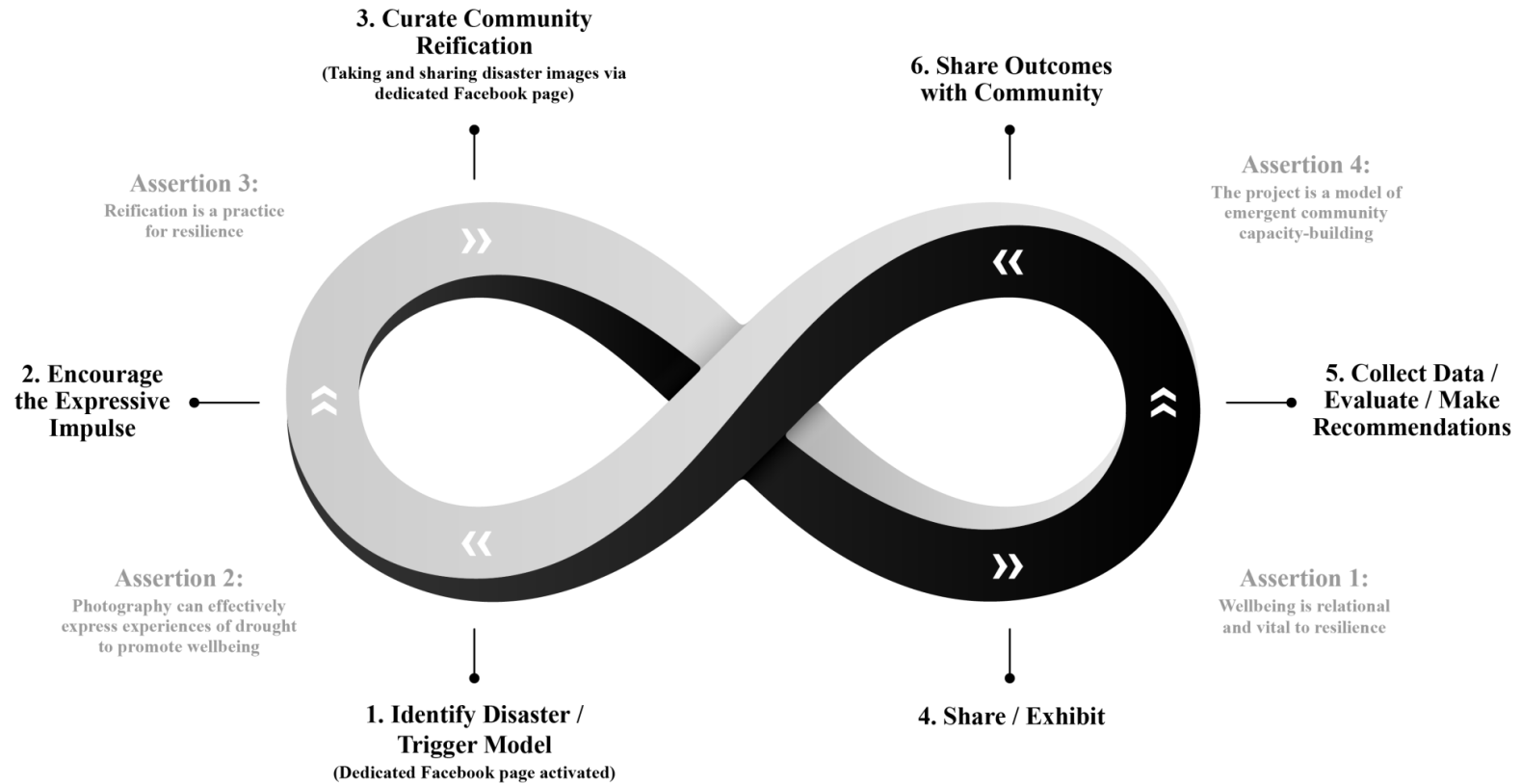


Figure 5-1: Resilience Through Images Model

5.3 Activating the Model Processes

5.3.1 Use During Crisis Events

While the model may be implemented at any time to enhance community resilience, wellbeing and capacity building, I believe it is most beneficial during crisis events. Further to this, I recommend that the model is embedded into and activated simultaneously with community and local government disaster management plans. The model can help in the preparation of mitigation measures to maintain and grow community resilience and wellbeing during and after a crisis event, enhancing community capacity building.

5.3.2 Process Flow

The numbered processes are discussed in detail below and, while they are separated here for convenience, the intention is that they flow together to make a cohesive whole. The model is emergent, grounded in the practice of making something that is unique to the community that can be shared and archived. There is no definitive way to make images, this can be negotiated at the site of the making; however, the model tries to capture the flow between processes, and it is important to note that Step 6 flows directly back into Step 1 so that further art-making opportunities can be activated. I have also added my four assertions into the model to emphasise the connection between the suggested process and my findings as outlined in Chapter 4. However, the assertions are ghosted to suggest that communities might have their own assertions or goals that they want to achieve.

5.3.3 Step 1: Identify Disaster/Trigger Model

Once a disaster is identified (drought, flood, cyclone), the model should be triggered by the opening of a dedicated Facebook page. Local governments could embed the model into their disaster management plans, so that it is triggered at the same time as the disaster management plan is activated. The Facebook page requires ongoing monitoring throughout the crisis and/or while the disaster management plan is active. As articulated in Chapter 4: Findings, a curator or other liaison person may need to be in place to manage the Facebook page, which should be “authored” by the local government if possible. In this way, the project aims to be a cohesive process between

the community and government, and a dedicated curator becomes the conduit for managing the processes. More detail on the curator's role is contained in Step 3 below.

I have positioned Assertion 2 (ghosted) between Step 1 and Step 2 in the model, because Assertion 2 identifies the medium used to express experiences of the identified crisis (see details in Chapter 4: Findings).

5.3.4 Step 2: Encourage the Expressive Impulse

Via the mechanisms available to the local government, the community can be asked to share their images and narrative of their shared experiences during the crisis on a dedicated Facebook page.

Abbs refers to the expressive impulse as vital to the art-making process, a "...natural activity, an astonishing outgrowth of instinct, its blossom may open out in consciousness but its roots are deep down in effective impulse" (Abbs, 1989, pp. 199–200). As occurred on my research project, the community could be asked to respond to an expression of interest to participate in an artmaking project. In the event that there are few or no volunteers, further enticements to participation, such as providing masterclasses or other training, could be provided. For this reason, the community should consider engaging an artist to prepare for the practice as part of the expressive impulse (they may also perform the role of curator). The choice of the artist might vary for each project, so that different projects might employ the skills, for example, of a photographer, a painter, a printmaker or a creative writer. The local government might engage with members of community arts groups and peak bodies to help procure the most effective artist for the project.

5.3.5 Step 3: Curate Community Reification

As previously stated, the model requires a curator (which was my role during this research project) or someone enlisted to liaise with local government and the project volunteers. The recruitment/identification of the curator is essential to the success of a project, as they ensure the coordination of all aspects of the project, including establishing timelines, responding to issues as they develop, ensuring volunteers are supported, involving key stakeholders, and liaising with media outlets.

Also critical is the practice of digitising images through using Facebook, or a dedicated website, to “exhibit” the work and encourage responses from the community. It is also a low-cost option for sharing the collaborative reification, especially during crisis events.

This process of collective reification is extremely powerful, as it is a deeply participatory act. Mills and Brown (2004) acknowledge the link between wellbeing and collaboration as a way of increasing social cohesion with their statement “...community engagement (including collaboration and practice) is a building block for sustainability and wellbeing” (cited in McDonald, Aprill, & Mills, 2017, p. 390). As the process of collective reification is such a powerful tool to enhance sustainability and reification, it does not necessarily require a crisis for a community to benefit from the process; however, I believe it is of most benefit during a crisis event.

I have positioned Assertion 3 (ghosted) between Step 2 and Step 3 in the model, as this assertion was evidenced throughout my research, commencing from the ground up. This assertion also intersects with Assertion 1 and Assertion 2 as discussed in Chapter 4: Findings.

5.3.6 Step 4: Share/Exhibit

The digital collation of images should be underpinned by providing opportunities for “live” interactions between all stakeholders in order to increase the relational aspects of the project (as discussed in Assertion 1 in Chapter 4: Findings). At a suitable time, decided by the drivers of the project, images can be selected for a live community exhibition or showing. This event provides the community with a specific opportunity to share their crisis experiences with one another and also celebrate their resilience. Non-artists should also be invited to share their stories both locally and more broadly (including local and national media, local schools, etc.).

I have positioned Assertion 4 (ghosted) between Step 4 and Step 5 in the model, because the investigation of my data provided evidence that my project is a model for community capacity building from the ground up.

5.3.7 Step 5: Collect Data/Evaluate/Make Recommendations

A dedicated Facebook page is a rich source of visual and narrative data. This data can be collected and analysed, then documented in a report with recommendations if necessary. A set of curated books could also be designed and self-published using images and narratives that represent the community's journey through the crisis event. These can then become a portable archive of the project, available for purchase at a visitor's centre or other community outlets. The curator might also oversee the ongoing collation of feedback about the project provided through media outlets and visitor and community comments/responses.

If the model is embedded into a local government disaster management plan and triggered when the plan is activated, the dedicated Facebook page would become a rich source of visual and narrative data to analyse and inform future disaster planning for the region. The data could identify strengths and weaknesses in the planning process at minimal cost. Overall, the evaluation process is one that can be applied during all processes of the model in order to capture the authentic "voice" of the community and promote resilience strategies.

I have positioned Assertion 1 (ghosted) between Step 5 and Step 6 of the model, because this assertion identifies that wellbeing is relational and vital to resilience, which I observed in my own reflective journals where reification took place in the Barcaldine region. This assertion was evidenced in the coding of the data sets generated by this research project.

5.3.8 Step 6: Share Outcomes With Community

The final step in the model is to share the findings from the analysis of images and data with the community. This could be through further celebratory community events to launch the archival material (such as the commemorative book discussed above). Importantly, this can become a form of debrief in collaboration with the community that promotes further learning through participation that produces reification for resilience (Assertion 3).

5.4 Benefits of the RTI Model

5.4.1 Increases in Community Connection

There are many benefits of the RTI model for crisis-impacted communities. One of the greatest is an increased sense of community connection. By sharing images and stories during a crisis event, individuals can feel more connected to each other, which enhances the opportunity to support others in the community and reduce loneliness/despair. Another benefit for individuals is that they become more “seen” through the project, and this increases their agency as an advocate for their community.

5.4.2 Increases in Emotional Investment and Empowered Advocacy

The model increases emotional investment from a wider group of community members. The model should not be “hijacked” by any one interest group, but, rather, “owned” by people “at the coalface” of the issue, who then regularly share their images/insights in both live and digital platforms. Live expressions include talks and developmental planning groups who can gather, present and discuss project data. As suggested earlier, all these instances can be leveraged to increase agency and advocacy of communities to government.

5.4.3 Storymaking of Crises

Another benefit of the model is that it can provide a chronological and emergent history of a crisis as it unfolds, particularly if that crisis is spread over a lengthy period (e.g. a long drought or a crisis that may require long-term recovery). The chronological story of a community’s journey can be expressed in real time during and after a crisis through images and narratives made at the site of the crisis. Following the crisis event, the data can be collated with images and stories identified for an exhibition, inviting community to attend, sharing their experiences and their resilience. This collective sharing nurtures and builds community resilience, wellbeing and capacity and is a final celebration of the community’s collective journey onto the other side of the crisis.

5.4.5 Data for Disaster Management

The key benefit of the model to government is access to unfolding conditions on the ground during and after times of crisis. If the model is embedded into disaster

management plans, it could be used to help adjust and improve those plans as time goes by. Real-time information from individuals directly impacted by the crisis would ensure that crisis responses and support can be tailored to the needs of the community and provide the opportunity to identify and respond to emergency situations as they unfold.

The analysis of data (images and narrative) from a dedicated Facebook page may provide all levels of government with information to help efficiently allocate future crisis funding and improve disaster management planning. This evidence might also provide all levels of government with greater confidence that crisis relief funding is delivered more effectively to initiatives that will enhance community resilience, wellbeing and capacity. The model also provides governments with regional data in images and narrative and the opportunity to include community representatives in a crisis debrief using the data generated by the model.

5.5 Conclusion

This model can be implemented by all levels of government both in Australia and internationally. It can be implemented in the event of extreme weather events to support communities during and after crisis events. It is designed to help build resilience, wellbeing and community capacity by developing social cohesion through relationships and collaboration based on reification and producing artefacts (images).

Addendum

Following the completion of my thesis, the Barcaldine and Central Highlands Regional Councils partnered to raise awareness of the drought crisis in Central Western Queensland by showcasing and sharing the *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition at the Central Highlands Regional gallery, with an official opening on 1 November 2019 (see [Appendix 17](#) for details of the opening). While living through their eighth year of drought, the PhD volunteer photographers, students and other Barcaldine community members travelled to Emerald to support the Central Highlands Region, which was fully drought declared in June 2019.

Central Highlands Mayor Kerry Hayes said that:

...the exhibition would hit close to home for many Central Highlanders also struggling with the ongoing effects of the drought. We are no strangers to drought here as many of our landholders grapple with prevailing dry conditions.

In June, the Central Highlands local government area was fully drought declared. While that provides some financial reprieve to our residents, the social and mental impacts still run deep.

I think this exhibition is a wonderful conversation starter and an opportunity for all parts of the community to visualise what is happening as a result of the drought.

It is a chance for us to reflect on our own drought story – the losses, the triumphs and the in-between but it also opens up discussion about solutions for the future. (Kara Paradies, 2019, p. 1, see [Appendix 17](#))

I would like finish this addendum with the words of the Mayor of the Barcaldine Regional Council, Rob Chandler, in relation to the eight years of drought that the region continues to struggle through. He explains that the drought it is:

...the worst in the history of European settlement. Our landholders, small business, even our young people and whole of community have almost had

enough. The reality is financial stress, domestic violence, poor health – especially mental anguish and chronic disease.

People need to find strength; that can come from initiatives such as this exhibition titled *Our Strength During The Drought*. A story of drought captured through the lenses of amateur photographers. It brings people together, talking, a natural medicine.

It might also help in getting the message out that things are not too good in the bush. (Centacare, 2019, see [Appendix 17](#))

and Mayor Chandler's final message:

I trust that this exhibition strengthens the city's affinity with the bush and is the catalyst that keeps our governments on notice. (Kara Paradies, 2019, p. 1, see [Appendix 17](#))

In finishing I would again like to acknowledge all those currently battling drought and other natural disasters, and those who support them. I hope my research contributes to our understanding of resilience, and how photography can play a positive role in building the capacity of affected communities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of Support, Member for Gregory



Resilient Australia Awards 2015,
Level 23,
121 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000

LETTER OF SUPPORT

I write to strongly recommend this submission by Anne Smith to the Resilient Australia Awards for her photographic exhibition on the drought in Central Queensland. These photographs were all taken in my electorate of Gregory where we are suffering one of the worst droughts in 100 years.

With an El Nino looking almost certain to take hold, many graziers are facing up to a fourth year without income. So bad is the devastation that I fear for the future of historic pastoral holdings, towns and settlements across the Central West.

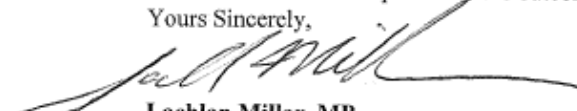
Drought is a creeping phenomenon. As Queenslanders, when we read in the media of a Category 4 or Category 5 cyclone, we all know we are facing a natural disaster. Drought is different. It is never classified as a "Natural Disaster" so assistance for its victims is hard-won.

At the moment some 80 per cent of Queensland is drought-declared, but the drought began in the Central West and is most severe here. As the State Member, I faced an enormous challenge in trying to publicise the crisis we were facing. I needed to educate my fellow state members and the media as to what we were truly facing and the potential long-term consequences. Anne's exhibition came at a pivotal moment and, as every picture speaks a thousand words, I presented a copy of the colour calendar of the exhibition to every member of the Queensland Parliament.

The impact was resounding and I received letters and emails of solidarity from politicians on both sides. I believe these photos helped lead to visits by the Prime Minister, Premier and Queensland Leader of the Opposition, together with accompanying journalists. In turn, this has helped me secure funding for drought relief and psycho-social assistance for the affected communities. From these efforts has grown the community-driven Western Queensland Drought Committee which is operating a community drought appeal to support all the victims of drought in the region, be they graziers, business-people or even children who can no longer play sport.

I sincerely believe Anne Smith's photographs were a major assistance in achieving these outcomes and that she epitomises the outcomes sought by the Resilient Australia Awards.

Yours Sincerely,



Lachlan Millar, MP
Member for Gregory

Longreach Office
Shop 2, Studio Exclusive Arcade, 120A Eagle Street, Longreach QLD 4730
PO Box 180, Longreach QLD 4730
P 07 4521 5700 F 07 4521 5709 E gregory@parliament.qld.gov.au

Emerald Office
Shop 1, 93 Clermont Street, Emerald QLD 4720
PO Box 444, Emerald QLD 4720
P 07 4913 1000 F 07 4913 1009 E gregory@parliament.qld.gov.au

f Lachlan Millar MP @Lachlan_Millar W www.lachlanmillarmp.com

Appendix 2: Exhibition Statement, Brisbane Lord Mayor



Drought...what next? Is a stunning series of photographs that brought the stark reality of drought to life for us at City Hall. It was a pleasure to host the exhibition in the heart of Brisbane, and to see the photographs touch the many residents and visitors who attended.

The images are eye-opening and tell a behind the scenes story about what the farmers and their families are experiencing. It is saddening to hear and see the devastation this drought has caused. As such, the exhibition presented an opportunity for us to offer support to those most in need.

Photographs have the unique ability to capture experiences and share them with a large audience. It is important that we, as city neighbours, support our country neighbours and raise awareness of the hardships that are currently being experienced by those in drought around the State.

Maintaining and strengthening links between rural and urban communities is integral to the continued success of our nation. For Brisbane, *Drought...what next?* reminds us that we rely on the success of our country communities and must work together to create a better future.

Cr Graham Quirk
Lord Mayor

Brisbane City Council

Reader's photo

Local photographer Anne Suse Smith captured this image of a beautiful Wedge-tailed Eagle that she and her husband Des came across on their way home from Cannonvale after Cyclone Debbie.

Anne said she and Des were in two vehicles and were among the first vehicles to go North from Cannonvale after the road had been opened.

"I stopped when I saw the eagle eating road kill," she said.

"The eagle flew off into the tree across the road, which is very unusual as they normally fly away.

"The poor thing was really wet and looked like he had been through the mill. He/she didn't want to leave his/her dinner.

"After going through the cyclone and seeing so much devastation it was uplifting to see this majestic bird had survived."



Appendix 4: Barcaldine Regional Council Expression of Interest Flyer

our strength during
the drought

PHOTO EXHIBITION



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Barcaldine Regional Council is calling for expressions of interest from community members to participate in taking images that reflect the drought and its impact.

You will be required to:

- take 6-8 images.
- write one 200 word explanation to accompany the images to explain your experience and what the images represent.

Throughout the project, Anne Smith, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba will be communicating with you and conducting telephone interviews on your experience and images.

Volunteer photographers are required to be over the age of 18.
Expressions of interest close at 12.00pm on Thursday 7 June 2018.

For more information, please contact Angela Waugh, Events and Tourism Officer
T: 07 4651 5612 | E: events@barc.qld.gov.au | W: www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au

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Appendix 5: Project Overview

Anne Smith: Photographer

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba

Preamble

My name is Anne Smith and I was appointed to the position of Drought Facilitator by Centacare as part of the Federal Government's drought funding project in 2014. I travelled to drought impacted properties in Central Western Queensland and produced a collection of images called the 'Drought...what next?' exhibition <http://annesusesmith.com/drought.php> which travelled throughout Queensland raising awareness of the drought crisis. I will be curating the exhibition from this project which features both an online gallery and touring exhibition.

Image Project Overview: Resilience and Wellbeing through Photography

The project will call for expressions of interest from the Barcaldine regional community to participate in taking images that reflect on the drought and its impact. A selection of images will be posted onto an online gallery and one image from each participant will be printed as part of a travelling exhibition.

This project is in response to the increasing number of significant challenges faced by regional communities as evidenced by the ongoing crippling drought impacting the Barcaldine Regional Council footprint, thus the questions:

- To what extent does participation in an image-producing project foster resilience?
- How might images influence community capacity building during drought conditions?
- Do people gain resilience by viewing or by making images?

Project Guidelines:

Community members in the Barcaldine Regional council footprint are invited to participate in an image making/sharing project, using the following guidelines:

- We will be asking up to 25 volunteer participants to take 6-8 images and write one 200 words explanation to accompany the images to explain their experience and what the images represent.
- Barcaldine Regional Council will select five volunteer photographers from each of their five communities.
- Throughout the project I will be communicating with the participants and conducting telephone interviews on their experience and their images.
- Four images will be selected from the 6-8 provided to me by each participant and these four images will be uploaded onto a dedicated Barcaldine Regional Council IT platform plus a summarized version of the 200 word overview provided by the volunteer photographers. The photographers will NOT be identified in the online gallery.
- Community members will be invited to make comments in regards to the images and how they impact on their own experiences during the drought crisis.
- Barcaldine Regional Council will select one image from each of the participants to be printed and framed. I will curate these images for the Inaugural Exhibition at the

Globe Gallery in Barcaldine. Photographers will be identified and acknowledged during the travelling exhibition process.

- It is hoped that this collection of images travel to other galleries to raise awareness of impact of the drought.

The contribution from this project will provide community and individuals with a mechanism for capturing and sharing images that relate to resilience, wellbeing and capacity building. This project also hopes to illuminate the importance of community cultural development in strengthening community resilience in the face of drought or other crisis events.

Community can submit their expression of interest to the Barcaldine Regional council.

Proposed Timeline

- March 2018 – Council meeting
- March/April 2018 – Expression of interest called for volunteer photographers
- April 2018 – Volunteer photographers identified, contacted and given all relevant information
- May 2018 – All participant images and stories emailed to me
- May 2018 – IT Platform available for loading images and stories
- May 2018 – Selection of four images and one story per participant and uploaded onto IT platform by myself
- May/June 2018 – Images identified for travelling exhibition
- 15th June 2018 – Printing and framing for images identified for travelling exhibition
- July 2018 – Installation of images into Globe Gallery
- 23rd July – 27th August 2018 – Barcaldine Globe Gallery Booked
- 4th August 2018 – Inaugural Opening

Appendix 6: Barcaldine Regional Council Letter of Approval for Project



All correspondence to be
addressed to the
Chief Executive Officer
PO Box 191
BARCALDINE QLD 4725
www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au
ABN: 36 154 302 599

BW : AW

3 April 2018

Ms Anne Smith
Email: annesusesmith@gmail.com

Dear Anne,

Drought Exhibition

I wish to advise your request for Council to coordinate and host the Drought Exhibition in Barcaldine has been successful.

Council will liaise with you regarding the delivery of the project and is responsible for the delivery for the following:

1. Issuing the call for volunteers and selecting the participants.
2. Website platform.
3. Selecting the 25 images to be part of the exhibition and printing and framing of images including shipping.
4. Opening night of the exhibition including but not limited to, invitations, catering, program creation and printing.
5. Opening the exhibition for a minimum of two weeks.
6. Schedule and shipping of exhibition to other locations (if required).

The Galilee Gallery has been booked for Monday 23 July 2018 to Monday 27 August 2018. The opening has been scheduled for Saturday 4 August 2018.

If you have any further questions or queries regarding this matter, please contact Angela Waugh, Events and Tourism Officer, on 07 4651 5612.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B D Walsh".

B D Walsh
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet



University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Drought Image Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project: Drought Image Project
Human Research
Ethics Approval
Number: HXXREAXXX

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Name: Mrs Anne Smith
Email: Anne.Smith@usqu.edu.au
Mobile: 0419 709 897

Supervisor Details

Associate Professor Janet McDonald
Email: Janet.McDonald@usq.edu.au
Telephone: (07) 4631 1232
Mobile: 0417 773 956

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project and is in response to the increasing number of significant challenges faced by regional communities as evidenced by the ongoing crippling drought in Central Western Queensland. It intends to interrogate how taking, editing and sharing images in exhibitions and social media enables resilience in the drought impacted communities of the Barcaldine Regional Council footprint.

Participation

Your participation will involve an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes of your time.

The interview will be undertaken by teleconference at a date and time that is convenient to you.

Questions will include;

1. Do you think sharing images brings community together?
2. If yes, how does this happen?

You may also be selected to provide 8 images portraying 'life in drought' and a 200 word overview of the uploaded images.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you. The benefits to participants of this research is that it is expected to provide individuals with an understanding of what influence images have in relation to resilience, wellbeing and capacity building and provide them with a proven model to use in future crisis events. However, this research could also enrich the theoretical foundations of the subject and illuminate the importance of community cultural development in strengthening community resilience in the face of drought.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. The biggest risk of participation in this research project could potentially be the inconvenience and discomfort uploading images, which is part of the general frustration of digital technology. Discomfort could also potentially come from the fact that you can be identified during the image sharing process, should this occur you may request to be removed from the project at any time without penalty.

Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised in the interview can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support. Additionally CentacareCQ it is a social services organisation offering professional and confidential counselling to people of all ages and walks of life, they can be contacted on 1300 523 985.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix 8: Interview Questions

Anne Smith – Q9122423

Image Project – Interview Questions

These questions are specifically designed to illuminate aspects of my key research questions developed for this study:

RQ2: To what extent does participation in an image-producing project foster resilience?

RQ3a: Do people gain resilience by watching and observing or by making their own images?

Tier 1

The following Questions are general questions in relation to images.

1. What are your thoughts about the role/purpose of images?
2. How does viewing images that depict the drought make you feel?
3. How do images that reflect the impact of drought connect you to others in your community and why do you think this happens?

Tier 2

These are questions that relate to the participants own experience in relation to the image making process.

5. Why do you take images?
6. How does taking images make you feel?
7. How do you think images tell a story?
8. How are you influenced by these images (in regard to Tier 1 questions, and of your own making)?

If the participants haven't done so already done so I will ask them to link the two tiers at the end of their interview.

Appendix 9: Consent Form



University of Southern Queensland

Consent Form

Drought Image Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project: Drought Image Project
Human Research Ethics Approval Number: HXXREAXXX

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Name: Mrs Anne Smith
Email: Anne.Smith@usq.edu.au
Mobile: 0419 709 897

Supervisor Details

Associate Professor Janet McDonald
Email: Janet.McDonald@usq.edu.au
Telephone: (07) 4631 1232
Mobile: 0417 773 956

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that I will be provided with a copy of the transcript of the interview for my perusal and endorsement prior to inclusion of this data in the project. Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- That you agree to have your images associated with this research displayed on the selected social media platform and give permission for your image/s (if selected) participate in a travelling exhibition and used for promotion or anything else associated with this research.
- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are over 18 years of age.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.

Appendix 10: Photography Tool Kit

PHOTOGRAPHY

Please find below a number of links to a selection of photography tips. The information provided are guides only, therefore, I encourage you to google the headings and review other links to get a broader approach from a larger sample of photographers. Most importantly enjoy your photographic journey.

General Photography Tips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZPuc3HV508>
<https://petapixel.com/2014/01/24/40-tips-take-better-photos/>

Smart Phone Photography Tips

<https://www.livingthedreamrtw.com/2016/11/smartphone-photography.html>
<https://iso.500px.com/35-mobile-photography-tips-thatll-help-you-take-incredible-smartphone-shots/>
<https://iphonephotographyschool.com/natural-light/>

Composition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxGwNVNrB64>
<https://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/10-top-photography-composition-rules>
<https://petapixel.com/2016/09/14/20-composition-techniques-will-improve-photos/>

Lighting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjEjCC-6aTQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTYoj62KT2M>

ISO, Aperture, Shutter Speed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8T94sdiNjc>
<https://www.techradar.com/how-to/photography-video-capture/cameras/the-exposure-triangle-aperture-shutter-speed-and-iso-explained-1320830>

Appendix 11: Exhibition Invitation

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE OPENING OF

our strength during
the drought
**PHOTO
EXHIBITION**



Local photographers of the Barcaldine Region have captured images in participation of a PhD project researching the potential impact of images in building resilience, wellbeing and capacity during the ongoing drought.

SATURDAY 18 AUGUST 2018

FROM 6.30PM

THE GALILEE GALLERY | THE GLOBE |
149 OAK STREET | BARCALDINE QUEENSLAND

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

We welcome your comments or thoughts on your own experiences and on the images as they potentially connect and strengthen your community. To comment on any of the images, please go to the Facebook page, /ourstrengthduringthedrought

Please RSVP to Angela Waugh, Events and Tourism Officer,
by 12.00pm on Wednesday 15 August 2018.
Telephone: 07 4651 5612 | Email: events@barc.qld.gov.au

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Appendix 12: Media Coverage Links

Media on *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) PhD Drought Image Project

1. <http://www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au/our-strength-during-the-drought-photo-exhibition>
2. <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/rural-weekly/our-strength-during-the-drought-images-speak-of-dry-times/news-story/c83b4b22cc8b3e86a4511926159a5930>
3. <https://www.facebook.com/ourstrengthduringthedrought/>
4. <https://www.facebook.com/BarcaldineRegionalCouncil/photos/a.336427149841423/1102638956553568/?type=1&theater>
5. <https://www.usq.edu.au/news/2018/08/drought-photo-exhibition-18>
6. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-18/outback-residents-capture-resilience-in-the-drought/10129558>
7. <http://catholicleader.com.au/news/powerful-drought-photos-in-social-media-project-show-farmers-strength-during-tough-times>
8. <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/life-goes-on-central-queensland-community-resilient-in-face-of-record-drought-20180826-p4zzvu.html>
9. <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/rural-weekly/barcaldine-community-arts-project-speaks-of-drought/news-story/9a72d19dad05d557e40a7646d43eacaa>

Appendix 13: Postcard, Member for Gregory



Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of many farmers and graziers throughout Western Queensland, I would like to thank you for your support of the numerous drought appeals occurring.

Western Queensland has been ravished by drought for the past 7 years, having an impact on people's agriculture enterprises, families, small businesses and local communities.

In times like these, cash is king for local communities. It is vital that drought appeals support local businesses, who have been struggling just as much as the graziers they support.

If you are looking for an appeal to support, or have enquiries, please inform them of the good work the Western Queensland Drought Appeal has done, including handing out over \$1 million in pre-paid debit cards to farmers and graziers throughout 18 Western Queensland shires.

For more information, please contact Ingrid from the Western Queensland Drought Appeal on 0467 566 728.

Lachlan Millar MP
State Member for Gregory



Appendix 14: Images and Feedback from Students of St Joseph's Catholic School

St Joseph's Catholic School, Barcaldine
Our Strength During The Drought (2018) Images and Narrative



Everywhere I look, it's all the same. Nowhere to ride my bike or play.



When I walk along the path, I don't see any animals around the trees anymore – everything is dead!



Even the animals are suffering during the drought.



When I walk along the path, all I see is dead trees and brown dirt.



It is so sad that this is happening. It is so sad for the farmers. There is no water. Trees are falling and bush fires start easily.



With this heat and no rain, all the animals are dying.



I don't want to see our plants die.



All the animals can get hurt from the dead grass with all the prickles.



This guy didn't stand a chance.



Drought – Even at its worst, this drought will never kill Barcaldine's natural beauty.



With no food out of town, kangaroos have invaded our school grounds and this means we cannot go out to play. Our grass is so much sweeter compared to the dust out of town.



The kangaroos now come into our school grounds and eat the vegetables and plants we have growing in our garden. They really are a pest – but where else can they get food and water?



Our teachers tell us we cannot go and play while the kangaroos are on our playground. The big buck gets angry so we have to stay away from them, which means we cannot play on the oval.

Student Feedback – Participating in the exhibition

1. Student A – The experience of taking the photos for the exhibition made me feel like I had a chance to change people’s mind about drought. I know that drought can be a distressing, heartbreaking, gloomy and upsetting but I realized that drought can be quite a beautiful thing. At the exhibition, most locals captured photos that show how we get on (2018, p.1).

When we as a class set out to Lagoon Creek, cameras were snapping like sharks to a fish...IMMEDIATELY! For me though, it wasn't so swift. When I looked along the shattered path with mounds of dead grass alongside it, I was infuriated. Images flashed through my mind. The livestock struggling to survive, the stores closing, beautiful Barcy becoming a ghost town. I wanted to get a good, exquisite image but it still showed what drought can do (2018, p.1).

I went for morning runs, after-school walks all to find the image I have today. Now, that my image is being seen over our picturesque land I feel twitchy, chuffed, thunderstruck and delighted all at the same time. But most of all, I am thrilled that I am making a difference (2018, p.1).

2. Student B – Taking the images made me feel excited people know who we are in a massive drought in QLD. People and animals have died from the drought. Taking the images made me feel positive and excited we are making a difference (2018, p.1).

3. Student C – When I was taking the images for the art exhibition I felt surprised because when I looked at Lagoon Creek it was dry and desperate and now I've realised it's not just us in the drought.

Now my photo is travelling around the country, I feel super excited as I didn't know it was going to go that far but I'm glad it is (2018, p.1).

4. Student E – Taking the images made me feel excited people know who we are in a massive drought in QLD. People and animals have died from the drought. Taking the images made me feel positive and excited we are making a difference.

Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel happy and proud of myself to be in sum thing that is helping the community and I can help raise awareness. Hopefully our photos being seen can save the drought. Now that your images are in the gallery and being seen around the community and shopkeepers open and stay open forever (2018, p.1).

5. Student E2 – Taking the photos for the exhibition made me feel:

Like I was making a difference to the community, that I was important and that people actually wanted to see the opinion of children. I felt as though I was helping the community in an interesting way. It makes me feel important because I didn't realise 7 news wanted to come to, film at our house and put OUR photos in newspapers and on QLD drought appeal. I was absolutely thunderstruck that politicians wanted to see kids photos. I was flabbergasted when the kangaroos intruded into our school. Living on a property helps me to relate to the Kangaroos and I knew that that was my image. Now that our images are going to Canberra, I really understand how important our opinions are. They are important because it's not just the farmers but the whole community – even the whole country. That is why the photo exhibition was shocking to me (2018, p.1).

6. Student E3 – The day we went to the lagoon creek to take photo's I felt extremely wretched that everything was dead. I didn't understand why we were taking photo's or why we were sending them all to canberra. Now i'm soooo happy that it could send a message to thousand of people around Australia who aren't in drought to help all of these little town's around the world if you choose to help u out i would absolutely frisk (2018, p.1).

7. Student R – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel proud to learn something important For the community and help people in drought. I didn't realize that when I was taking the photo, how my photo could impact others.

I could see two kangaroos in the photo that seemed so sad with no food and water.

I feel excited that my photo is in the gallery and everyone around the country can see my photo as we are trying to get the ultimate outcome fundraising for the community and drought In Queensland (2018, p.1).

8. Student R2 – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel proud because it will save lives. If it will work farms wod be saved. Lagoon creek is in Drawt. We need water. Queensland is in trouble. More than 50% of Queensland is in Drought. It

even affects me. Animals are dying people are leaving their homes. We need Water (2018, p. 1).

9. Student R – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel enthusiastic and very proud that I was helping the community .
I felt over the moon and I had more energy when they told us . Now that the images are in the gallery I feel like I am helping Barcaldine in this 7 years of drought .

When we went to take the photos I realised the level of pain this drought is causing. I was anxious that this drought would get worse . I didn't realise that this situation needed so much attention and help.

I have realised it is not just us suffering . 57% of Queensland is in drought. I hope that we get rain soon and everyone else in Queensland does too.

Walking home from school all I see is dead grass and and everything is dry.

I really appreciate you letting our school St Joseph's Barcaldine enter in the exhibition. It has taught me alot about drought affected regions and Barcaldine (2018, p.1).

10. Student R2 – Walking down to Lagoon Creek made me realize that it wasn't a normal class assignment. Suddenly everyone's cameras were going crazy! All we could see was dead grass broken footpaths and no water, but we pushed through that and saw through our photos that many people were affected. I realised it wasn't just us anymore.

I didn't get a chance to go to the exhibition on the night, but we did go during school and boy so many people cared. I was caught unaware that so many towns were affected. It is unbelievable that our pictures are going to Canberra!

Now our Images are on display I feel so lucky that we got the chance to shape the future and maybe, just think, when are we ever going to do that again?

How long will this drought last (2018, p.1)?

11. Student R3 – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel sad because Lagoon creek is so dry and barren and we haven't had rain for a long time.

I think we need more rain so it can save animals and plants from dying. I remember a lot of green grass and a lot of green trees but now plants are dying and it's not good at all.

Now my image is in the gallery I am kind of Happy but plants and animals are still dying from the drought that Barcaldine has. I don't Want Barcaldine shutting down (2018, p.1).

12. Student S – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel upset because this land used to be beautiful and green. Now there is just dead animals and grass.

I could also feel some fear because what if my photo didn't change anything? I was ready though to take on this challenge and hopefully raise awareness for not just our community but also other communities in drought.

We walked down to Lagoon Creek and all I could see was barren land. The only animal I could see was a couple of Kangaroo herds or groups. At that moment I realized that my photo was going to tell people about the communities suffering in the drought. I took millions of photos but there was one that stood out to me. It was one of a dog sitting down. It was to tell people that it's not just people suffering the animals are too. They could step on something sharp or run into something at any moment.

I didn't end up going to the exhibition but on the next Thursday I went with the school. I couldn't believe how many photos there were I was in a place where I knew I wasn't alone. I knew that other people were suffering as well. I was walking around the room and I saw mine I decided that I was not the only one. I realized that there was so many more people suffering from the drought (2018, p.1).

13. Student S2 – Taking the images for the exhibition made me feel happy to explore Lagoon Creek using a real camera.

I realised the drought was bad and everything was dead.

Now that my images are in the gallery, it makes me feel proud because they are taking them to Canberra (2018, p.1).

Appendix 15: Lake Dunn Sculpture Trail Brochure

Suggestions to make your trip the greatest

- Pack plenty of food and drink and enjoy a picnic snack, lunch and afternoon tea.
- Check your fuel tank before you leave Aramac.
- Take your time – this is a leisurely drive with plenty to see. It takes approximately five hours to complete the loop.
- Don't forget to stop at the Healing Circle, Lake Dunn, Horseshill's Gorge and Gray Rock.
- Lake Dunn is hot very and a great place to stop for lunch. From Friday to Monday during April to September you can purchase drinks and snacks while you are there.
- Conventional caravans are not recommended.
- Check the road conditions before setting off by calling 07 4652 9999 for the latest report.
- Pull off the road when stopping.
- There are toilet facilities at Lake Dunn. Aramac arrangements need to be considered for the rest of the drive trail.
- Please take any rubbish with you.

Gray Rock: Gray Rock is a massive outcrop that was a stopping point for Cobb and Co in the 1870s. The site originally had a hotel which was a charging point for the coach horses. The visiting public and some locals have carved their names on the sandstone rock bearing a history and interesting history of the travellers to the region. A small amount of sculpted art can be found on the rock. There is a private property called Gray Rock, please refer to the historical sign for the turn off point for the historical site. Healing Circle: The stone healing circles are interesting stopping point on your journey to Lake Dunn. It is an ancient sacred healing circle which is connected to six others in the world. The others are located in Japan, Tibet, Madagascar, Peru, Turkey and the United States of America. When you step into the centre – the sign of God – you are connected to the energies of all seven circles. The circles is used for prayer, meditation and healing of the mind, body and soul. It is located on private property so please be considerate when visiting. Horseshill's Gorge: Horseshill's Gorge was once used as a camping spot by grovers. The site of the gorge form a natural barrier that kept their horses from wandering at night. The Gorge and surrounding area contain remnants of classic Western Queensland desert and range country. Some of the trees in the area have been identified with marking signs to help visitors learn more about the local vegetation. Lake Dunn: Known locally as 'The Lake', the freshwater lake (6km north-east of Aramac) is a popular camping, bird watching and water sports location. The drive to the lake encompasses a range of terrain including part of the Aramac Range. Follow the signs to 'The Lake' from Lake Dunn to the camping area. Camping facilities available at the Lake include toilets, power, hot and cold showers. Washroom cabins can also be reserved for an overnight stay. Charges do apply.

Sculptures

Big red roo	Moose-like monster
Rabbit-like with gears and kangaroo	Thirsty Cockatoo
Henry Forded driver	Deer
Johnathan Thurston	Possum in Gum
Pat of Peats Turkeys	Frog and Dingo-like
Sting Fish (different artist)	Muzzling dog on a rock
Jaburus	Reverend Soldier
Parabow Sapernt	Eagle and nest of chicks
Echidna	Evangel
Emu and chicks	Where's Wally
Coydell	

OTHER SCULPTURES IN THE REGION

Belongeey horse rider	Jericho
Quang horse cowgirl	Thurston
Wooly drooper pilot	Beracaldine
Bush Sailer	Sitting drooner
Gearns in Gum	Variety of animals at the Barcardine Hospital
Plane	Multaburra
Koola in a tree	Mussabun Barb
Sakelaw Bob mee	(MUTTABURRA)
Dingo on a stump	Frog
Pig	Fish
Kooskurna	
White Cockatoo	
Bingo tree	
Eagle and Snake	

NOTE: These animals and items being added into the trail. They are open to the discretion but it is able to feature or portray, but if you see any other works are created on a community.

Visitor Information Centres in our region

Alpha Tourist Information Centre 140 Oak Street Aramac Ph: 07 4651 1274 Email: tourism@alpha.qld.gov.au	Aramac Information Centre Barcardine Regional Council Office 35 Oodloo Street Aramac Ph: 07 4652 9999	Multaburra Information Centre 16 Sward Street Aramac Ph: 07 4653 7147
Jericho Tourist Information Centre Jericho Post Office 8 Dewitt Street Jericho Ph: 07 4651 4199	Barcardine Visitor Information Centre 140 Oak Street Aramac Ph: 07 4651 1274 Email: tourism@alpha.qld.gov.au	

THE LAKE DUNN SCULPTURE TRAIL

Aramac Country

Where every moment becomes a memory

Over 35 Sculptures await...

A wonderful way to spend a day in the Barcardine Region is to take a drive around the Lake Dunn Sculpture Trail.

ALPHA JERICHO BARCARDINE ARAMAC MUTTABURRA

COMMUNITIES OF THE BARCARDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Appendix 16: Complete Collection of Images Taken by Volunteer Photographers











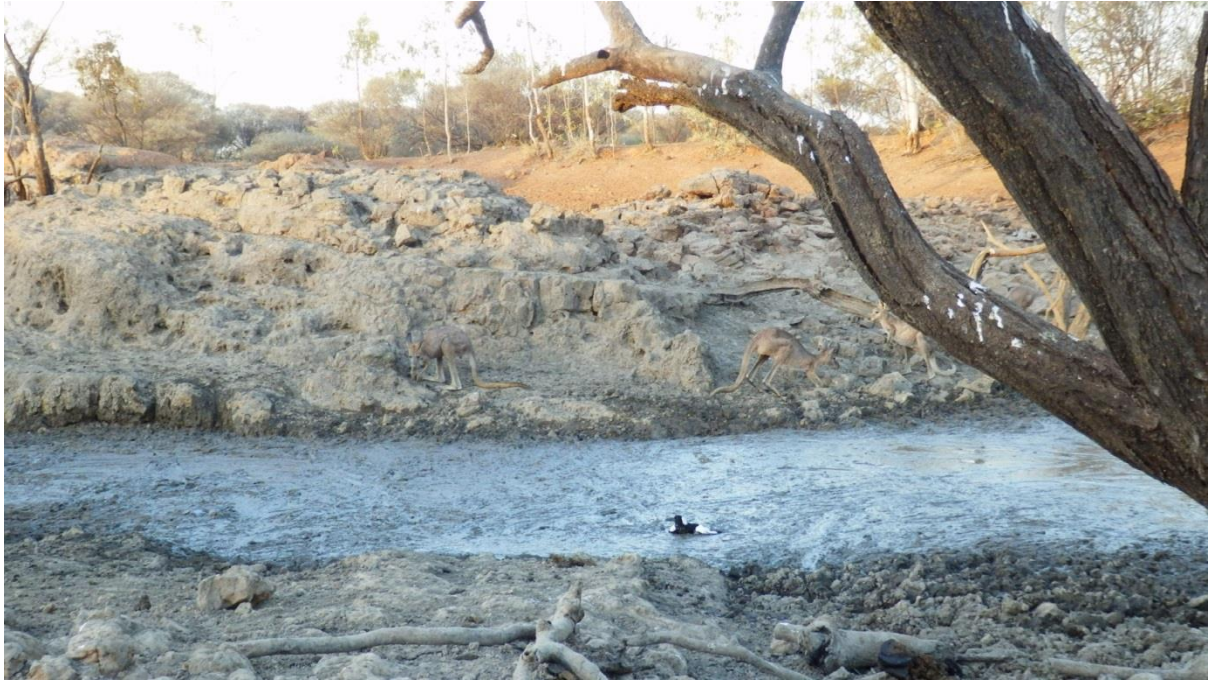


















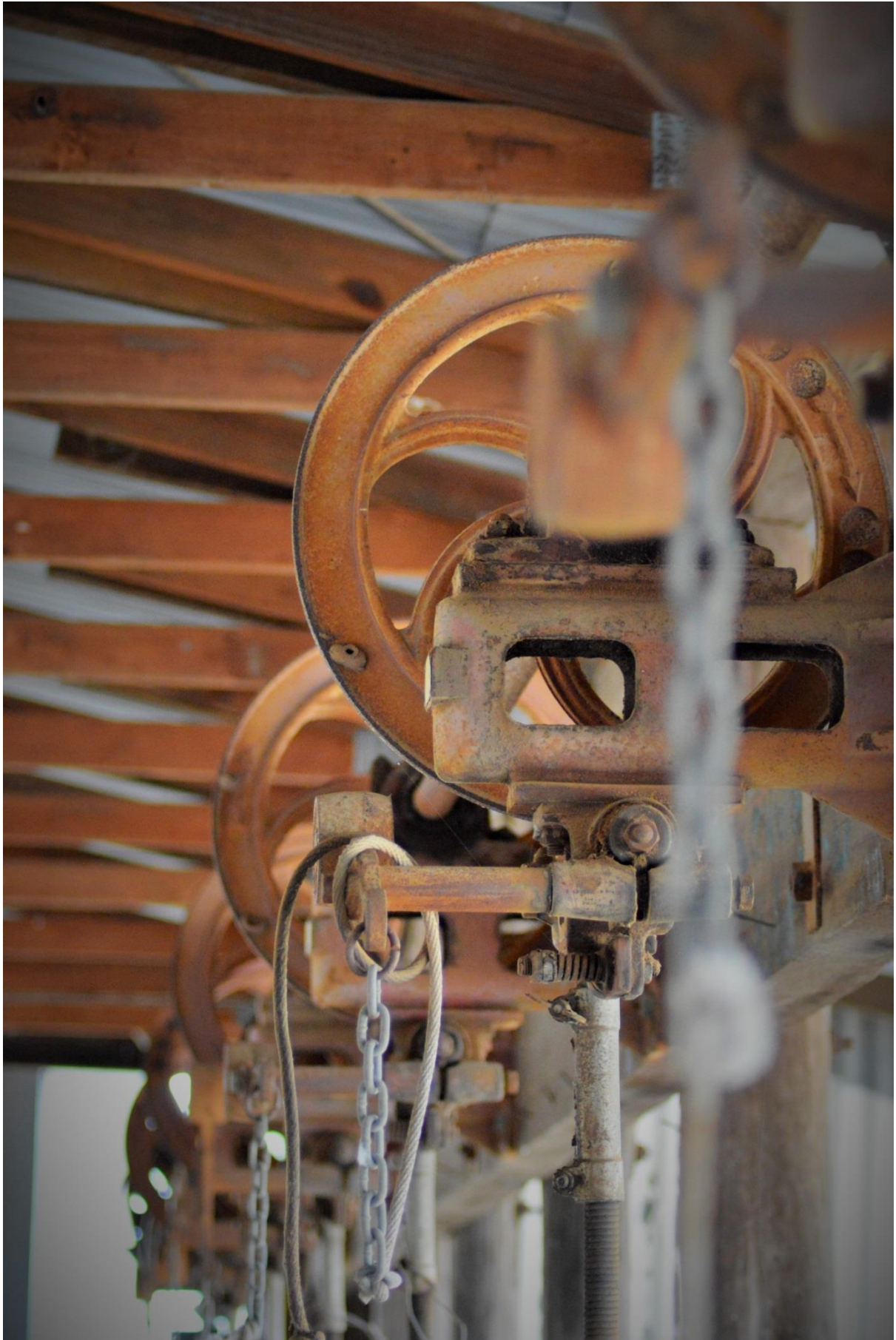






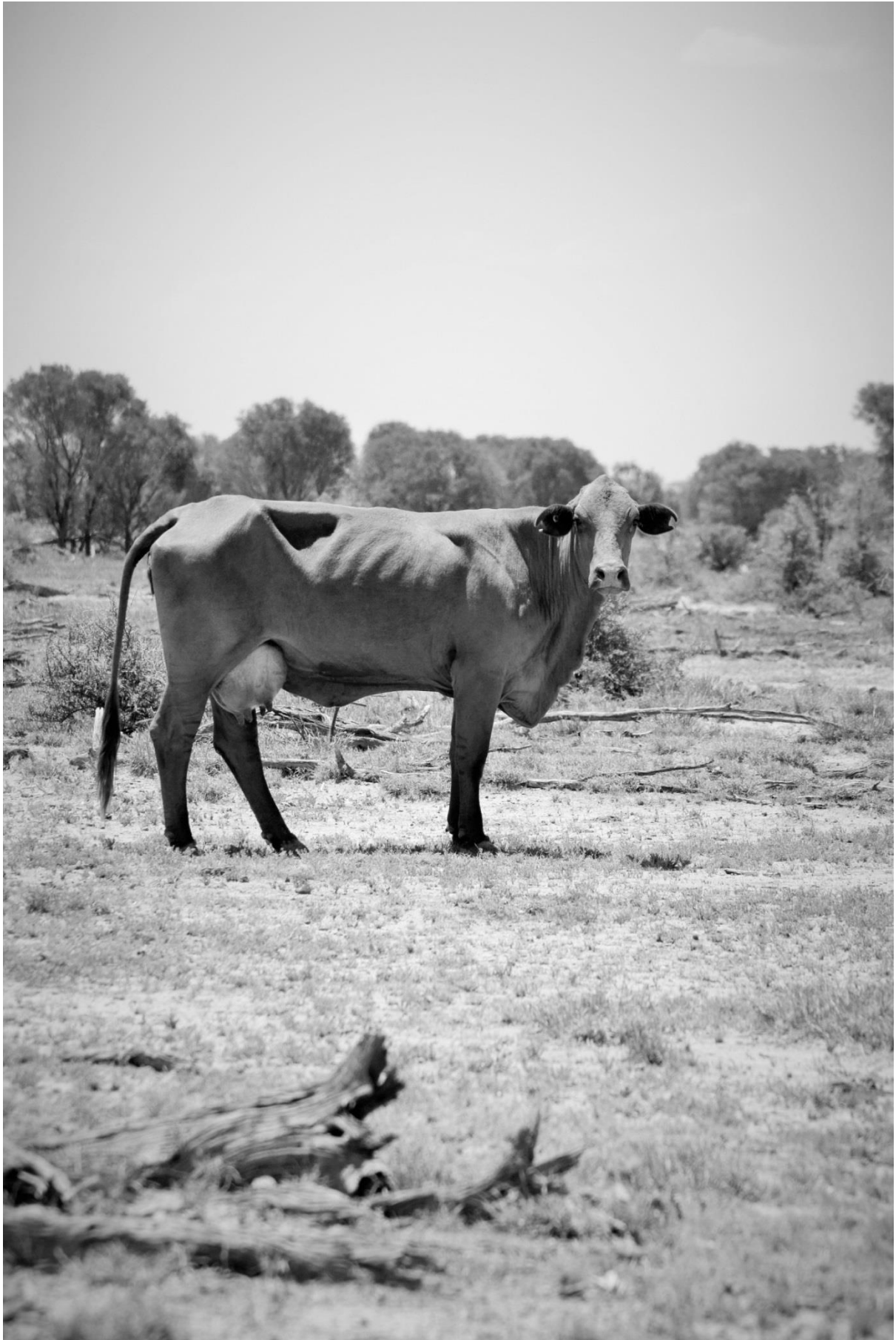






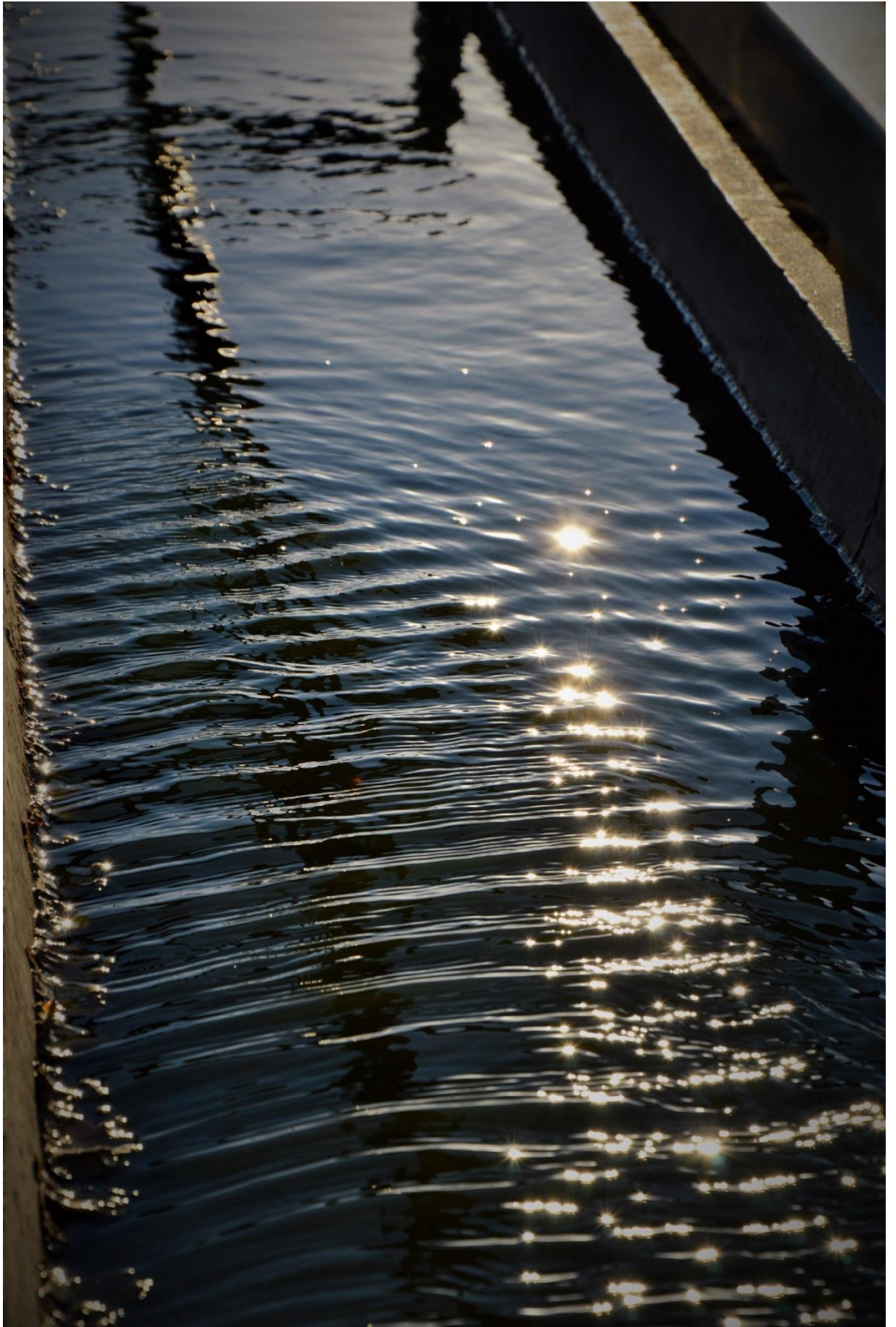














Appendix 17: Documentation from Emerald Exhibition, November 2019



PHOTO EXHIBITION
Our strength during the drought

OFFICIAL OPENING

1 November 2019 | 11.30 am to 1.30 pm
 Emerald Art Gallery, 65 Egerton Street

RSVP to Leisa Shuttleworth via
 lshuttleworth@chrc.qld.gov.au or 1300 242 686
 by noon 31 October 2019.



PHOTO EXHIBITION

Our strength during the drought

@Emerald
 Art Gallery



EXHIBITION OPEN
 1 - 29 November
 2019

Local photographers from the Barcaldine region captured images in participation of a PhD project researching the potential impact of images in building resilience, wellbeing and capacity during the ongoing drought.

centralhighlands.qld.gov.au





MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Thursday, 24 October 2019

Contact Officer: Kara Paradies Ph: (07) 4986 8497 E: kparadies@chrc.qld.gov.au

Release: Immediate Thursday, 24 October 2019

Photo exhibition highlighting drought experience comes to Emerald

From the cracked earth to the cracked hands of a farmer, a special photographic exhibition coming to Emerald next month shares compelling stories of drought and human resilience from western Queensland.

The *Our Strength During The Drought* (2018) exhibition was a research project conducted by University of Southern Queensland PhD student Anne Smith in collaboration with the Barcaldine Regional Council.

The powerful images were captured by volunteer local photographers and students from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School as they tried to highlight the personal impact of the Barcaldine region's record-breaking drought.

Ms Smith, a professional photographer and strategic partnering specialist, said the exhibition evolved from a similar photographic project, named *Drought What Next* (2014).

'The *Drought What Next* (2014) exhibition became the prototype for my PhD research, which investigated if images can build resilience, wellbeing and capacity in crisis impacted communities,' she said.

'Sharing these beautiful but often heart-breaking images can potentially connect and strengthen the community.'

Barcaldine Mayor Rob Chandler said he was excited for the Barcaldine Regional Council to bring the exhibition to the Emerald Art Gallery in partnership with the Central Highlands Regional Council.

'The exhibition of photographs tells the story through the lenses of the young and old, seven years into the worst drought in western Queensland history,' Mayor Chandler said.

'The images, strangely enough, depict the beauty of our landscape and in doing so hide the brutal reality behind the scenes.'

'Barcaldine Regional Council is pleased to partner with Central Highlands Regional Council to collectively keep this simple message front and centre. This dry has not gone away and it will linger long after the grey clouds bring rain.'

'I trust this exhibition strengthens the city's affinity with the bush and is the catalyst that keeps our governments on notice.'

Central Highlands Mayor Kerry Hayes said the exhibition would hit close to home for many Central Highlanders also struggling with the ongoing effects of drought.

'We are no strangers to drought here as many of our landholders grapple with prevailing dry conditions,' he said.

'In June, the Central Highlands local government area was fully drought declared. While that provides some financial reprieve to our residents, the social and mental impacts still run deep.

'I think this exhibition is a wonderful conversation starter and an opportunity for all parts of the community to visualise what is happening as a result of the drought.

'It is a chance for us to reflect on our own drought story – the losses, the triumphs and the in-between – but it also opens up discussions about solutions for the future.

'Just like our western neighbour, we are a strong, passionate and resilient community.'

Mayor Hayes encouraged residents to visit the exhibition, which will be on display from 1 – 29 November 2019.

The official opening will be held from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm on 1 November 2019 at the gallery.

For more information visit council's website www.centralhighlands.qld.gov.au or call 1300 242 686.

ENDS

Image supplied: Yes No

Image caption: A lone lamb looks for relief from the drought.

Image credit: John Fisher
Volunteer photographer

Further information:

The background of the entire page is a photograph of parched, cracked earth. The cracks are deep and dark, forming a complex, irregular pattern across the surface. In the center of the image, a small, vibrant green plant with several leaves is growing out of a crack, providing a stark contrast to the dark, dry soil.

Our Strength

during the drought

Exhibition booklet sponsored by CentacareCO

The power of photography

Five years ago, CentacareCQ worked with central western Queensland residents on a project titled "Drought...what next?". The project was a visual narrative, a tribute to life in drought on the land of our central western Queensland communities.

The project involved photographer Anne Suse Smith and CentacareCQ representative accompanying landholders to witness what was happening on the land through photographs, and to collect the stories that accompany the photos. The photographs went on to be exhibited in galleries across Queensland, raising awareness of the drought and its impact.

This first exhibition was the prototype for what evolved into a PhD research project and exhibition entitled *Our Strength During The Drought*, which was undertaken in the Barcaldine region and provides a more personal perspective, with the photographers drawn from amongst those living with drought.

This project helps people to express what they feel when they see their community in its current condition.

Along with the pictures of what can only be termed a natural disaster, we see expressions of hope, of resilience, of strength and love.

CentacareCQ feels privileged to support the central western Queensland community to exhibit their photographs and their stories.

Robert Sims
CentacareCQ Director



Photo courtesy of Anne Suse Smith



"These are my father's hands. They have callouses, lines and scars.....together with my mother's, these hands have endured bruises, scrapes and cuts....all for the investment and improvement of the place which – for them, my brothers and I – is HOME"



With this heat and no rain, all the animals are dying.

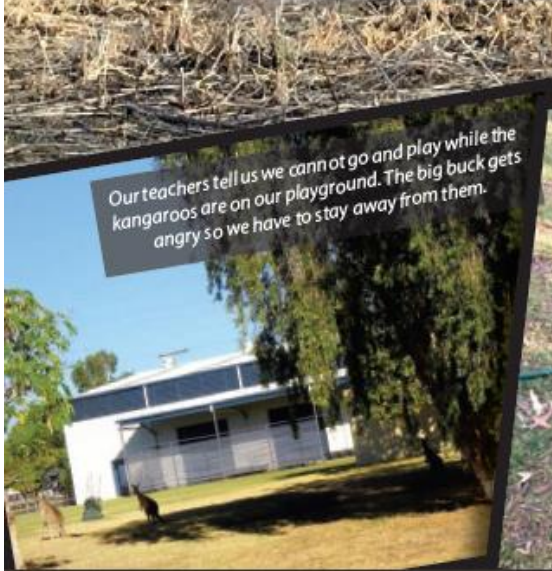


The kangaroos now come into our school grounds and eat the vegetables and plants we have growing in our garden. They are a pest - but where else can they go?



Everywhere I look, it's all the same. Nowhere to ride my bike or play.

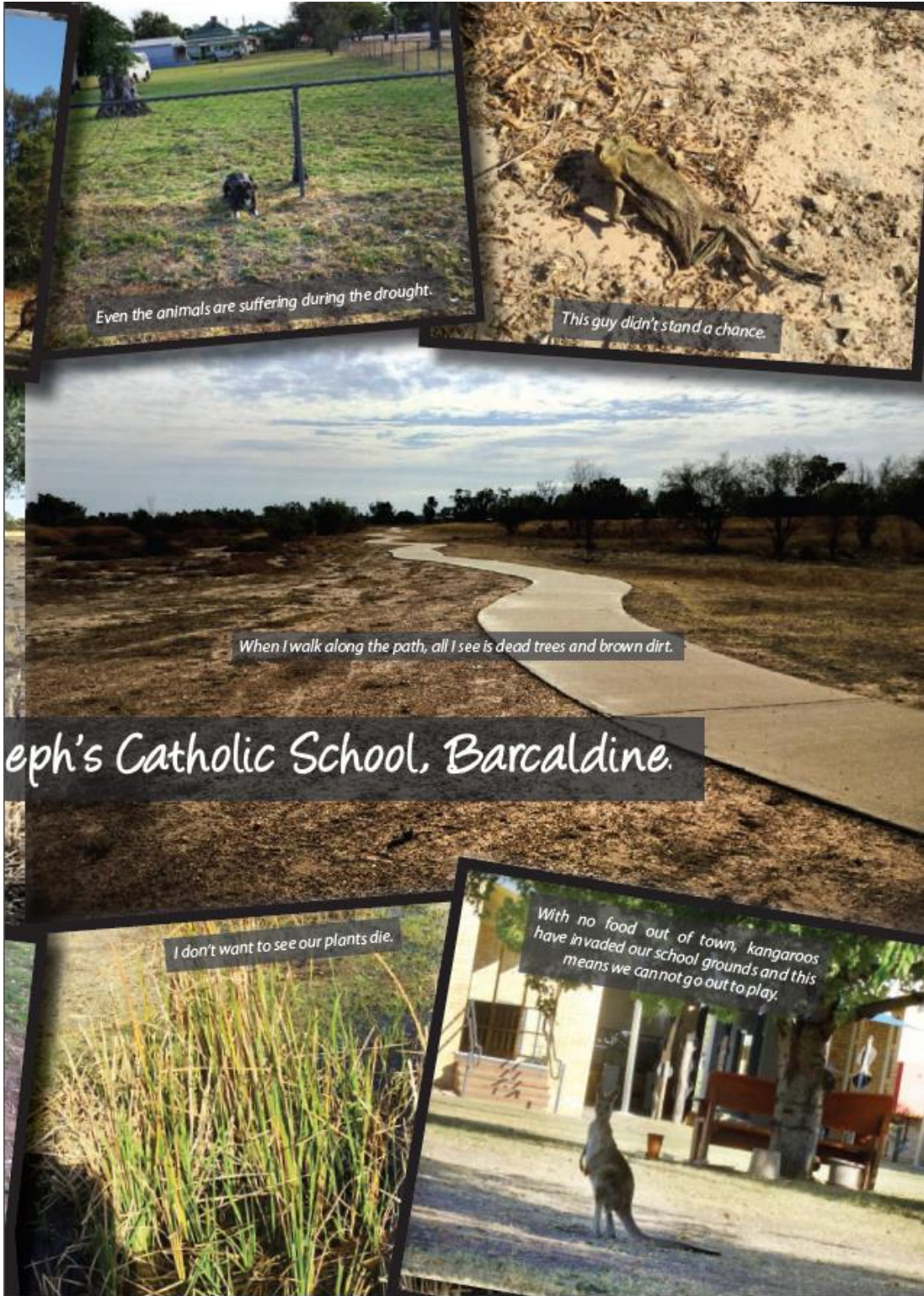
Photos by students from St Joseph



Our teachers tell us we cannot go and play while the kangaroos are on our playground. The big buck gets angry so we have to stay away from them.



All the animals can get hurt from the dead grass with all the prickles.



Even the animals are suffering during the drought.

This guy didn't stand a chance.

When I walk along the path, all I see is dead trees and brown dirt.

St. Joseph's Catholic School, Barcaldine.

I don't want to see our plants die.

With no food out of town, kangaroos have invaded our school grounds and this means we cannot go out to play.



"Love finds a way. Life still goes on in spite of the ongoing drought and hardship experienced by people living on the land."

A land of floods & fire, rains & drought

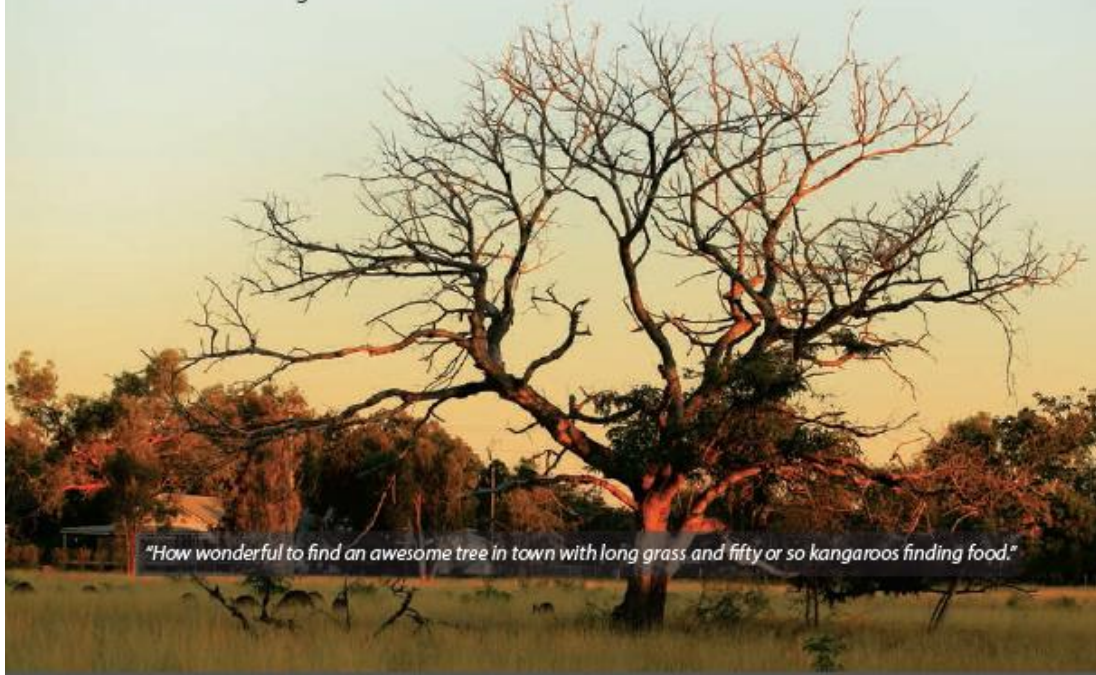
In 2014, Professor John Cole OAM (University of Southern Queensland) provided the following commentary on the drought in Western Queensland. The commentary was in response to the "Drought... what next?" project.

“ So aptly described by Dorothea Mackellar as our “sun-burnt county”, Australia is a land of floods and fire, rains and drought. We live on the most climate variable of all the continents and across this vast land, many of our rural communities have built an internationally competitive industry in some of the most unpredictable climatic regions on Earth... It is on the farms and properties and in the regional towns that serve our rural industries where drought has its harshest impact.

Farmers and their families are the ones that best describe what it is like to go through drought – their desperate, sometimes vain attempts to keep things going as the heat and dry relentlessly turns pastureland and crops to dust and creeks and dams to empty hollows...But all that said, our farmers and regional communities are a pretty hardy lot, possessing the resilience necessary to come back from adversity and re-build when the rains come and the grass grows again.

”

In 2019, Professor Cole comments that the one thing to really change over the past half decade is the extent of the drought. It is now encompassing of most of eastern Australia impacting even more regional communities. It is the existential challenge for many Australians dependent for their livelihoods on what can grow on the land when it rains.



“How wonderful to find an awesome tree in town with long grass and fifty or so kangaroos finding food.”

Message from the Mayors



My little patch of Queensland, where I live, is quite special. There is a watershed between Alpha and Tambo that catches the first water for the Fitzroy, Murray, Burdekin and Lake Eyre river systems. Incredible basins that spew their flooded waters into the sea at Rockhampton, Townsville, South Australia and into Lake Eyre in the South Australian desert.

I remember the 74/83/90/2010 and 2011 floods and others in between, well. They were the good years followed by at least one good season maybe two. Sadly those days have deserted us to a point in Central West Queensland that has seen a rolling 8 year drought. The worst in the history of European settlement. Our landholders, small businesses, even our young people and whole of the community have almost had enough. The reality is financial stress, domestic violence, poor health especially mental anguish and chronic disease.

People need to find strength. That can come with initiatives such as this exhibition titled, *Our strength during the drought*. A story of the drought captured through the lenses of amateur photographers. It brings people together, talking, a natural medicine. Why did they take those particular shots?

I commend Anne Smith for instigating this project. For her tireless work to see it through and I sincerely believe if this whole show makes one person feel just that bit better, then this exhibition can be hailed a success. It just might also help in getting the message out that things are not too good in the bush. We need to hear the drumming of an army and the steady soaking rain.

Mayor Rob Chandler
Barcardine Regional Council



Drought has a new meaning... Never before have seasonal conditions in regional Australia so confounded our nation. Never before has the extent and severity of dry seasons, low rainfall and diminishing water supply been so severe. And the consequences are unprecedented and are challenging our most resilient communities.

Historically, droughts are generally gradational, allowing the necessary adjustments and management of livestock and feed supplies as the seasons deteriorate. And it is endured always with the great eternal optimism of a "break" in the season or at least an improvement.

The current drought has been greater than ever imagined and in many cases exceeded that hope that our farming and grazing families believed was possible. It has exposed a new resilience in many but has sadly and tragically overwhelmed others. It weighs heavily on a nation that for the most part is geographically removed from its clutches.

The disparity between urban and rural Australia has never been so exposed in our attempts to provide relief and support and it is critically important that governments get this right. That purposeful structural change is the solution rather than the reactive symbolism of a "bale of hay".

Agriculture, its complex network, and its people are responsible for the second largest industry in the nation. Its communities small and large need to be invested in and nurtured. For the good times and the bad. It is these people that Australia was built on. Its time to lift their load in their time of need.

Mayor Kerry Hayes
Central Highlands Regional Council

PHOTOGRAPHY

Personal images of

Our Strength During the Drought project heads east to Emerald

KIRILI LAMB
kiri.lamb@ruralweekly.com.au

THE lived experience of long-term drought can be a challenge to talk about.

There is heartache and death, and there is grit-teethed determination and survival.

But sharing stories and experiences creatively can be an important part of the coping process.

In 2018, Barcaldine Regional Council supported a community photographic project that encouraged the people of the town to take photos, around the theme of *Our Strength During the Drought*.

Barcaldine Mayor Rob Chandler said the project had built upon an earlier documentary photography project *Drought... What's Next?*

"This photographic collection showed the drought, now in its seventh year in some places, and told that story through the lenses of those stuck in the rut," Cr Chandler said.

"It also shows the thoughts of our young people and how they perceive what's going on."

The Mayor has had a connection to the project, recalling the experience of one grazier involved in the project.

"There is a photo of a cow watching the camera as her photo was taken. The farmer, Peter, was very emotional when he told me he had to shoot her a week later," he said.

While Barcaldine's neighbouring region, the Central Highlands has enjoyed some rainy showers in recent weeks,

"I GREW UP ON A PROPERTY, AND MY PARENTS ARE STILL OUT THERE, SO IT INCLUDED BEING ABLE TO GIVE THAT A VOICE."

LEAH NEWTON, BARCALDINE

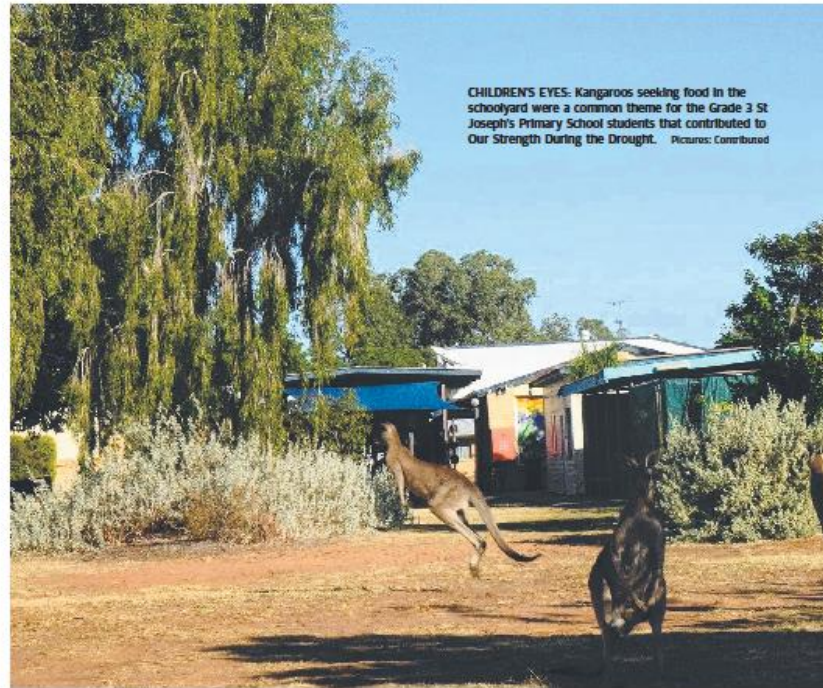
it too is still in the thick of drought. The exhibition will be on show at Emerald Art Gallery, opening on November 1 and running across the month.

"The Central Highlands showing increases the awareness of the magnitude of this natural disaster and how local governments are working together to make sure our small businesses, communities and landholders are not forgotten," Cr Chandler said.

Writing for the exhibition Central Highlands Regional Mayor Kerry Hayes said:

"Drought has a new meaning. Never before have seasonal conditions in regional Australia so confounded our nation. Never before has the extent and severity of dry seasons, low rainfall and diminishing water supply been so severe. And the consequences are unprecedented and are challenging our most resilient communities."

Our Strength drew in six adult participants, and also Grade 3 students from St Joseph's Primary School, with images presented through an exhibition held at Barcaldine's Galilee Gallery, but also offered connection with the



CHILDREN'S EYES: Kangaroos seeking food in the schoolyard were a common theme for the Grade 3 St Joseph's Primary School students that contributed to *Our Strength During the Drought*. Pictures: Contributed

broader community through Facebook. Project facilitator Anne Smith said responses came from all across Australia and overseas.

The community project has been a case study in Ms Smith's PhD project that explores use of images and the immediacy of social media in communicating clearly and creatively about disaster situa-

tions to facilitate resilience and recovery.

Our Strength has had a roll-on effect for some of the participants, with one developing a videography business, and another, pharmacy assistant Leah Newton, now studying photography to refine her skills, which she mixes between thoughtful art shots and capturing life's moments for

friends and family.

"It was exciting to do this project. I have always liked photography. I do post a few things on Instagram and Facebook, but I've never taken myself seriously with it. I don't think I ever will," Leah said.

"But it was interesting to see that other people appreciated the art of photography. It was nice to have people see the

photography and comment, and to show what was kind of a personal experience involved in the drought."

Leah captured evocative images for the project, largely from her family property, Maranda, towards Aramac. While still a grazing operation, the family has de-stocked its sheep flock as a strategy to deal with drought.

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drought go further



Coming together at the Our Strength During the Drought exhibition opening held at The Globe's Galilee Gallery, Barcaldine, in 2018 were (from left) project volunteer Aaron Skinn, project coordinator Anne Smith, Associate Professor Janet McDonald (USQ), volunteers Leah Newton and Jane Whitfield, with guest Norma Jackson.



Shed by Kylie Owens, showing livestock sheds fallen still and dusty with de-stocking



One is the loneliest number by John Fisher captured the starkness of drought landscape.

All which these hands have built by Leah Newton captures the practical tenacity of her grazer father in facing hard times.

"I grew up on a property, and my parents are still out there, so it included being able to give that a voice." Her family has owned the station since 1991, but has had a far longer connection to it. "My Pop worked there as a station hand when he was younger, and he was actually born out on that property," she said.

Leah's image, All which these hands have built, caught an image of her father's hands working at a task in the shed. "The words (of the title) explain what the hardship of drought is for me," she said. "All my life, essentially, we've been on that property and Mum and Dad put everything into what will always be home to us."

The exhibition had stimulated community discussion about the "nitty gritty" of farming in drought. "A few people talked to my dad at the opening about what exactly he does during a drought. When you have livestock to feed, it's not as easy as just going and buying hay. There's no supermarket. "Where did Dad get all that

knowledge, to mix feed supplements and all that? You don't go to uni for it. It's just him over the years learning from his father, from neighbours, looking it up in newspapers or books. When people think of drought, they don't think of all that a farmer does to keep livestock alive. Getting the hay - I think my mum and dad drove to Surat to get hay once. That's

an eight hour drive one-way." She said her work in the pharmacy gave a different insight into the drought experience of her community. "You notice that people are prioritising what they buy. There's less sales in make-up than there would be." Leah said she was glad the exhibition was getting a second showing. She hoped it

might inspire people of the Central Highlands region to perhaps undertake a similar project. "I hope they realise they can have their own voice too. This is an outlet if you are struggling to find the words to say it to somebody, say it with a picture. It can help to share a photo, because it lets people know they aren't alone."

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Less RANGER 500 Minimum Trade-In
Less GST
Less Asset Depreciation Deduction**
Cost after BAS Input Credit

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