EXPLORING THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF THE GOVERNMENT-REGIONAL GOVERNANCE NEXUS IN RESOURCE REGIONS: A CASE STUDY OF MORANBAH, QUEENSLAND

A Thesis submitted by

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Abstract

Australian regional resource areas have been battling a range of social problems such as housing crises, a lack of social services, male behavioural issues, relationship and marital problems, as well as a shortage of employees in the non-resources industries. These issues can be construed to be indicators of non-sustainable social outcomes. A socially sustainable community is deemed to be a capable, resilient community that maintains and builds on its own resources, and prevents and addresses problems now and in the future, as opposed to one that is dependent on social welfare. The role of the nexus between government and governance in the determination of social outcomes is largely unclear, especially in regional resource communities in Australia. This gap in the knowledge can be attributed to the lack of research on social sustainability, regional development, and the government-governance nexus.

The aim of the research is to determine what the social outcomes of this nexus are in the case study town of Moranbah, Queensland. A pilot study was conducted in 2011 on the perceived outcomes of a government intervention in Moranbah, revealing the need for further research. This qualitative PhD study builds on the issues identified during the pilot study. It focuses on the government-governance nexus, and provides a wider and more in-depth investigation of the social outcomes reported and observed by role players in the case study town.

Social sustainability, regional development and regional governance discourses informed this study. Two theories of the French Humanist-Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre, served as the philosophical underpinning of this study, namely *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*.

The main findings reveal adversarial relationships in the government-governance nexus, resulting in distrust in politics and power, an absence of governance forms in the case study town, as well as a history of state intervention for which the work of Lefebvre offers a plausible explanation. The research is significant due to its contribution to knowledge on government-governance, regional development, and social sustainability, as well as its practical application of the work of Lefebvre.

Certification of Thesis

This thesis is entirely the work of Margaretha Isabella Basson except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

During the course of the research, a research paper was published:

Grant, P. & Basson, M. (2014). Planning leadership and governance for Regional Queensland. 7th Making Cities Liveable Conference. 9-11 July 2014, Kingscliff, NSW.

Following from the Master's research project, and feeding into this study, are the following research papers:

Riley, S. & Basson, M. (2011). Stakeholder perspectives of the impact of the declaration of an Urban Development Area in Moranbah – how sustainable will the outcomes be? Queensland Planner, 53(1), 28-33.

Basson, M. & Basson, M. (2012). Mining – godsend or manmade disaster in the eyes of regional and rural communities. Paper presented at the National Congress of the Planning Institute of Australia, Adelaide.

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Glossary of terms

Case

The main subject of a study in a case study – usually a concrete entity for example a community (Yin, 2014, p. 237).

Case boundaries

The time period, social groups, organizations, geographic locations, or other conditions that fall within the case in a case study, the boundaries can be fuzzy (Yin, 2014, p. 237).

Case study research

The in-depth exploratory research of a person, an institution, or a situation, in which the context is also considered (Struwig & Stead, 2004).

Community

Community is a political entity, held together by a common public concern (Mouffe, 2000, 2005). Community is not homogenous, but consists of a variety of social, cultural and economic sub-groups, with a diversity of viewpoints and interests, acknowledging the notion of pluralism as per political philosophy**.**

Data saturation

The point in qualitative research when the issues contained in data are repetitive of those contained in data collected previously (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 322).

Descriptive case study

A case study whose purpose is to describe a phenomenon (the "case") in its real world context (Yin, 2014, p. 238).

Demographic data

Data relating to the population, such as age range, socio-economic status, and ethnicity (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 322).

Descriptive statistics

Statistics used to describe the basic features of the data in the study (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-2).

Epistemology

Is the philosophical knowledge of how you come to know (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-3).

Data collection journal

The researcher's notes resulting from doing fieldwork (Yin, 2014, p. 239).

Field/the field (field work)

Is the place in which research data are collected (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 323).

Focus group

A qualitative measurement method where input on one or more focus topics is collected from participants in a small-group setting where the discussion is structured and guided by a facilitator (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-3).

Hegemony

Is the process by which power is allocated and exercised in social groups. It often refers to the exercise of power through the control of ideas (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 324).

Heuristic

Refers to the process of discovery or problem-solving that is central to the research process. It involves informed judgement grounded in experience rather than systematic analysis of data. It is the creative, heuristic process that takes researchers beyond the data to deeper insights (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 324).

Inductive approach

Bottom-up reasoning that begins with specific observations and measures and ends up as a general conclusion or theory (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-4).

Interpretivist

Is the term given to research in the hermeneutic tradition which seeks to uncover meaning and understand the deeper implications revealed in data about people. Interpretivist is a broad category which encompasses a wide range of research approaches including ethnography and case study (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 325).

Interview

The mode of data collection involving verbal information from a case study participant (Yin, 2014, p. 239).

Local government

A term to describe the third tier of the Australian political system (federal and state being the first and second) (CPA Australia, 2005, p. 27).

Methodology

In its narrowest sense is the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken and judged to be valid. However, it can be used in a broader sense to mean the whole system of principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, pp. 325-326).

Neo-liberalism

Refers to a set of political beliefs that see deregulation and a free market as the means to ensuring economic growth and hence prosperity for all (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 326).

Non-probability sampling

Sampling that does not involve random sampling (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-5).

Normalisation of mining towns

The take-up of the operation and provision of services and facilities by local and other authorities, which had previously been provided and operated by the [mining] companies (Pilgram, 1988, p. 8)

Ontological

Refers to philosophical questions relating to the nature of being and the reality, or otherwise, of existence (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 326).

Outcomes

Is used as an alternative to ‘findings’ or ‘results’ to describe the knowledge that is generated by research. The choice of the word ‘outcome’ often indicates that epistemologically the research is not concerned with producing measurable, generalizable truths (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 326).

Participant

A person from whom case study data are collected, usually through interviews; one or more participants may later be asked to review the draft case study report (Yin, 2014, p. 240).

Pilot case study

A preliminary study aimed at developing, testing or refining the planned research questions and procedures that will later be used in the formal case study; the data from the pilot case study should not be reused in the formal case study (yin, 2014, p. 240).

Policy

Is a body of official documents, official statements, guidelines and so forth that together make up a programme for action (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 327).

Politics

Means social processes which involve manoeuvring for power; it is often referred to as 'micro-politics' in studies of institutions and organisations (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 327).

Population

All the people or phenomena under study, from whom a sample will be selected for research (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 327).

Power

A factor in all organizations and human groups, and is the means by which some have greater autonomy than others and are able to control others (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 327).

Regional community

Regional communities are "small enough in size and complexity to allow citizens informally and endogenously to make decisions about their own problems, and yet large enough to mobilise the significant voluntary capacity required to manage these problems" (Morrison, 2014, p. 103).

Research design

A plan that logically links the research questions with the evidence to be collected and analysed in a case study, ultimately circumscribing the types of findings that can emerge (Yin, 2014, p. 240).

Research question

The central issue being addressed in the study, which is typically phrased in the language of theory (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-7).

Resource

The Queensland Department of State Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning distinguish between extractive resources and 'coal, minerals, petroleum and gas resources' in its State Planning Policy (Department of State Infrastructure, 2016).

Rigorous

In qualitative research, the soundness of the methods chosen and degree to which the design has accounted for potential problems in any stage of the research (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-7).

Sample

Refers to the individuals who are included in data collection, selected from the whole population (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 328).

Single-case study

A case study organized around a single case the case might have been chosen because it was a critical, common, unusual, revelatory, or longitudinal case (Yin, 2014, p. 240).

Snowball sampling

A sampling method in which you sample participants based upon referral from prior participants (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. G-8).

Social constructionism

Is the term used to describe the world as an artefact of communal interchange (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985).

Stakeholder

Are all those people who have an interest in the outcome of an enterprise, for example in social research this would include the sponsors, future audiences for any report, and all the participants in the research field (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 329).

Triangulation

The convergence of data collected from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding (Yin, 2014, p. 241).

ULDA – Urban Land Development Authority

Now part of Economic Development Queensland (EDQ).

1. CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 presents the problem statement, the statement of purpose, the research questions, an overview of the methodology, and the rationale and significance of the study. It also succinctly explains the role of the researcher in this study, researcher assumptions, key terminology, and it concludes with the organisation of the rest of the thesis.

1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the social outcomes of the government-governance nexus in a regional resource town, by using a specific case study. The case study town, Moranbah, south west of Mackay in Central Queensland, is viewed as an extreme case (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2014) of a regional mining town that has been confronted by various challenges (Kinnear & Ogden, 2014). A master's degree research project conducted in 2010/2011 exposed the research problems investigated in this study. The current research project is a qualitative case study. Mini-focus groups, interviews and a community workshop were used to gather data relevant to the research questions flowing from the research problem.

The research focus is on the relationships between government, governance, social sustainability and those who play a role in each of these in a regional resource town. Both social sustainability and Australian regional governance remain poorly researched (Alston, 2015; Cheshire, Everingham, & Pattenden, 2011; Collits, 2012a; Hogan & Young, 2015; Lawrie, Tonts, & Plummer, 2011). In addition, current links between governance and social sustainability are unclear (Collits, 2015; Cuthill, 2010). *The State Mode of Production* and *The Social Production of Space* theories, postulated by the French Humanist-Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre, provide the philosophical backdrop for the discussion of the findings. The significance of this study is confirmed by the perceived importance of the regions in the Australian landscape (Brown, 2005b; Gross, 2015; Hogan, Cleary, Lockie, Young, & Daniell, 2015; Queensland Government, 2014b) and the numerous challenges posed to the socio-economic sustainability of these regions (Collits, 2012a; Egan, 2015; G. Thompson & Richards, 2015).

The study is also significant given the aim publicised in the Queensland Plan to double Queensland's regional population by 2044 (Queensland State Government, 2014), the recent attempts to promote an international biofuel industry in Queensland (Queensland Government, 2015) and increasing concerns about the focus of the Australian Federal Government on coal (G. Thompson & Richards, 2015). The dissemination of the findings of this study in professional forums such as conferences and workshops, and publication in academic journals, will contribute to the discourse on the topic; and to professional knowledge and practice.

1.2. Problem statement

The importance of the research topic stems from the role the regions play in the Australian context. Mining boosted Australia's post-war economy (Everingham & Franks, 2015) and the resource regions have continued to make an important contribution to Australian society and the economy, especially in Queensland and Western Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). Resource region is to be understood in this thesis to mean extractive resources, especially coal, in line with the distinction made by the Queensland Department of State Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning between extractive resources on the one hand and coal, minerals, petroleum and gas resources on the other in its State Planning Policy (Department of State Infrastructure, 2016). 'Resource regions' therefore means a region where the main economic benefit is derived from the second set of resources, which is the property of the state. Non-resource industries are those industries that do not derive their income directly from the mining of this second set of resources. The unprecedented growth in the resource industry in the previous ten years contributed to Australia's strong financial position (Everingham & Franks, 2015; C. Howlett, Seini, McCallum, & Osborne, 2011; Lawrie et al., 2011). With specific reference to the commodity sector relevant to this study, Australian coal brings in more than forty billion dollars per year from exports and the current federal government has been criticised for its strong focus on coal (G. Thompson & Richards, 2015).

However, regional mining communities have, in less than a decade, suffered the consequences of a mining boom, a resultant housing crisis and currently a downturn in mining (Everingham & Franks, 2015), with forecasts that the mining industry will not regain its strength in this decade (Egan, 2015), and more dire forecasts for the

future of coal as a commodity (G. Thompson & Richards, 2015). This volatile situation raises the issue of what government-governance models are in place to ensure the well-being of these important communities and also if the current government-governance nexus is producing desirable outcomes. Government refer to the formal institutions of the state (Stoker, 1998; Williams & Maginn, 2012) and the allocation of authority across jurisdictions (Marks, Hooghe, & Schakel, 2008). There are several definitions for governance in the literature. Common elements in these definitions or descriptions of governance are the devolution of power to a network of actors, and the political nature of the power relationship in the devolution process. The difference between government and governance is explained in detail in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.

Accusations of ad hoc and ineffective regional governance efforts and poor financial support for regional resource communities have been made against a succession of state governments (Brown, 2005b; Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Kelly, Dollery, & Grant, 2009). Regional strategy and policy have arguably become characterised by political games around government funding (Collits & Rowe, 2015). Given these accusations, the current state of the regions casts doubts on the success of regional governance efforts.

Research has confirmed a number of social issues in this resource region (KPMG, 2011; Regional Social Development Centre, 2011) that were attributed earlier to housing stress as a result of the last boom, and currently relate to the impact of transient workforces. Concern around Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) work practices resulted in both government and independent inquiries (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013; Hair, 2015; Queensland Parliament, 2015; Western Australian State Government, 2014). In Moranbah, the case study town, change requests were made by a mining company in 2011 for two 100 percent FIFO workforce mines. The Queensland State Government intervened, due to opposition to the proposal by local government and the community, and approved the change requests (The Coordinator General, 2013). This 2011 intervention followed the 2010 intervention in the provision of housing (Riley & Basson, 2011) through the then Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), as well as a previous intervention in 2005 that overturned council approval of a 350 lot residential development (Skinner, 2015). The interventions raise

questions about the right of citizens to be involved in decision-making in a democracy (Moore, 2005; Williams & Maginn, 2012) as state government intervention takes away the right of citizens to appeal decisions (Cooper & Flehr, 2006) and also impacts on local governance processes (Urban Land Development Authority, 2010a).

The focal problem in this study is the relationship between government, governance and social outcomes. Awareness of the problem partly results from the previously studied 2010 state government intervention in the supply of housing in Moranbah, where findings revealed negative expectations by the participants regarding the social sustainability of the intervention (Basson, 2011). Given that the instance studied was very time- and case-specific, the question presented itself of what the longer-term and wider social outcomes of the government-governance nexus are, and what relationship those social outcomes bear to the nexus.

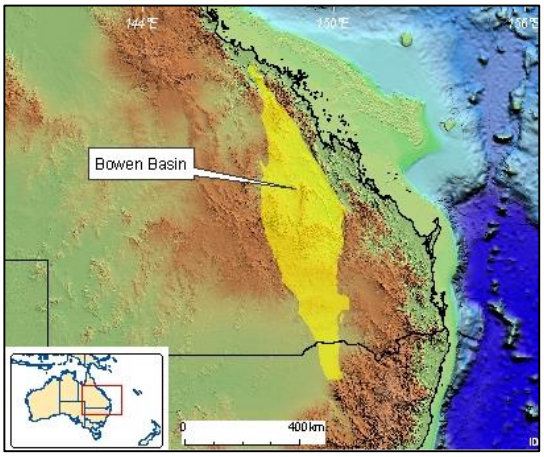
There is limited research on the relationship between the government-governance nexus and social outcomes (Collits & Rowe, 2015) and hence little knowledge on how to govern for social sustainability (Collits, 2015; Cuthill, 2010). An analysis of the research on the social impacts of Australian mining and the resources boom in recent years has confirmed this lack specifically in a resource regions context (Petrova & Marinova, 2013). Petrova and Marinova (2013) concluded that there was a significant volume of research, but most of the studies focused on pressures on service provision, infrastructure and housing, the social-economic wellbeing of resource communities, the use of non-residential workers, the links between rural communities and resource development, and issues with attracting and retaining employees by non-mining employers. The absence of research, in general, on the links between government-governance and social outcomes, and specifically, as in this study, in a regional resource context, has implications for local governments in resource regions. The disconnect between neoliberal, localism government approaches on the one hand and collaborative, communicative and engaged planning governance models on the other, magnifies the challenges local governments face in terms of governing for social sustainability, especially in a vulnerable resource town setting. A broader explanation for this disconnect is found in the work of Henri Lefebvre.

The theories of Henri Lefebvre on *The Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production* in a capitalist society are selected to frame the research problem and findings in a larger societal context. In *The Production of Space* Lefebvre (1974/1991) writes that there are three fields of space: physical (nature), mental (logical and formal abstractions) and social (the space of human interactions). His aim was to develop a theory that would grasp the unity between the three fields. Lefebvre (1974/1991, p. 26) hypothesised in *The Social Production of Space* that "(social) space is a (social) product". He clarified that " social space *per se* is at once work and product, and can be a tool for the analysis of society" (1974/1991, p. 73). *The State Mode of Production (*SMP) essentially refers to the mode of management and domination of the entire society by the state in a capitalist system (Elden, 2004). The view shared by Butler (2012) and Brenner (2008), that the neoliberal state can be understood as the emergence of the neo-liberal SMP is of particular relevance in this study. To understand the contribution that the case study town and its region makes to the Australian nation and the state of Queensland, a brief account of the broader geographical, social and historical context of the case study town is presented next.

The Bowen Basin and Moranbah - the case study town

The case study town, Moranbah, is a small regional town located in the Isaac Regional Council (IRC) area of the Bowen Basin, Central Queensland (Geoscience Australia, 2015 ; Morrison, Bell, & Wilson, 2012), illustrated in Figure 1-1. In 2012, the Bowen Basin produced all of Queensland's high grade coal and forty eight percent of the export-traded thermal coal (Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, 2015). The IRC area of the Bowen Basin is extensive, roughly the size of Tasmania, and stretches inland from the coastal strip at St. Lawrence for approximately 350 kilometres (Department of Local Government, 2012; Isaac Regional Council, 2014a), as presented in Figure 1-2. Mining is the largest industry employer in the IRC region (Isaac Regional Council, 2014a).

Figure 1-1 The Bowen Basin in Central Queensland



Note. Reproduced from *GeoScience Australia*. Copyright 2015 Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia). Retrieved from http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/energy/province-sedimentary-basin-geology/petroleum/onshore-australia/bowen-basin

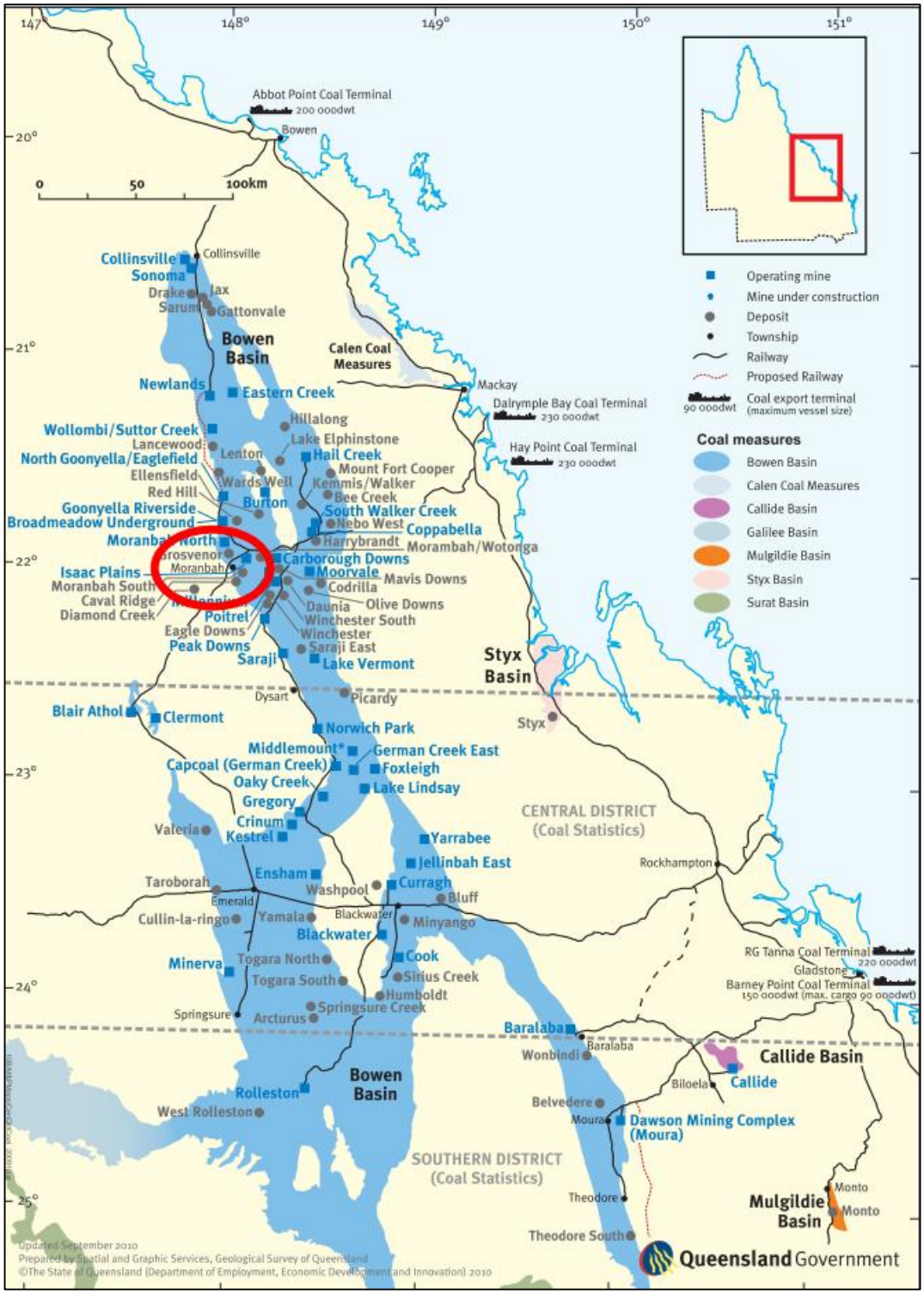
Figure 1-2 Isaac Regional Council area, hatched in red

Note. Retrieved and adapted from *Local Government Authorities*. (2012). Local Government Authorities. Retrieved from http://www.dlg.qld.gov.au/resources/map/local-government-area-boundaries.pdf.

In terms of regional planning, the IRC area forms part of the 2012 Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Regional Plan. A new regional plan is being drafted by the state government at the time of this study and deals mainly with conflict between mining and agriculture, in line with the new regional planning approach (P. Grant & Basson, 2014). The IRC is classified as an Urban Regional Town/City Small (URS) under the Australian Classification of Local Government. This classification applies to urban/rural developments with a population of up to 30,000 people (Department of Local Government, 2013). The IRC has 24,275 permanent residents plus 11,085 long-distance commuters who stay in temporary accommodation (Isaac Regional Council, 2014a). The full-time equivalent population is estimated to be 35,845 (Isaac Regional Council, 2014a).

Moranbah, the case study town in the IRC jurisdiction, is located 150 kilometres south-west of Mackay in the belt of coal mining towns as per Figure 1-3 (Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines, 2014) and is the main service centre for the region (Isaac Regional Council, 2014a). The town was purpose-built by the Utah Development Company in 1970 to service the Goonyella and Peak Downs Mines (Ivanova, Rolfe, Lockie, & Timmer, 2007).

Figure 1-3 Bowen Basin with Moranbah circled in red



Note. Adapted from *The Bowen Basin* by Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines (2014). Retrieved from https://mines.industry.qld.gov.au/assets/coal-pdf/cen_qld_coal_map_10.pdf. Copyright (2014) by Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

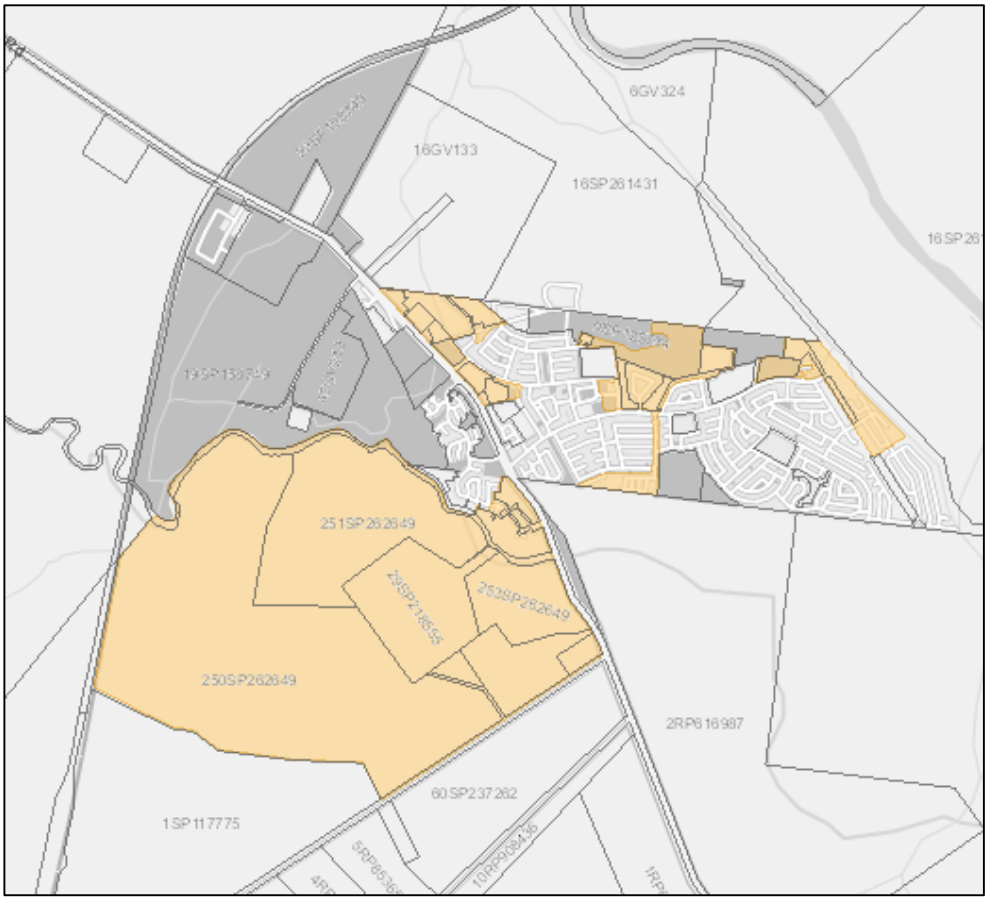
The master planned design of Moranbah can be seen in Figure 1-4 (Department of State Development, 2014a) and is typical of the master planning approach to mining towns of its era. Mining leases extend right up to the boundaries of the town just outside the dust contours, effectively land locking the town by these mining leases (Basson & Basson, 2012), and thus contributing to a shortage of land for residential development.

Figure 1-4 A satellite view of the town of Moranbah

Note. Produced using *SPP Interactive Mapping Service* by Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (2014). Retrieved from http://spp.dsdip.esriaustraliaonline.com.au/geoviewer/map/planmaking. Copyright (2015) MapData Services Pty Ltd.

Moranbah became the focus of state government intervention in 2010 due to housing stress (Gurran & Whitehead, 2011; Riley & Basson, 2011; Urban Land Development Authority, 2010b) and during the last mining boom gained the title of most expensive place in Queensland to live (Anderson, 2011). The 1218-hectare area declared as an Urban Development Area (UDA) can be seen in yellow in Figure 1-5 (Department of State Development, 2014b). It has since become known as a Priority Development Area (PDA). The area still falls under the jurisdiction of Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) into which the ULDA was absorbed, although the council was advocating for the return of powers over that area during the time of data collection.

Figure 1-5 Moranbah Priority Development Area



Note. Produced using *SPP Interactive Mapping Service* by Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (2014). Retrieved from http://spp.dsdip.esriaustraliaonline.com.au/geoviewer/map/planmaking. Copyright (2015) MapData Services Pty Ltd.

The high mean mortgage repayment in Moranbah in 2011, compared to the rest of Queensland, can be seen in Figure 1-6 (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2015b). A two-stream local economy was very evident at the time of the intervention (Basson & Basson, 2012). The mobility of the residents compared to the rest of Queensland can be seen in Figure 1-7 (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2015a), but in many cases those not employed in the mining industry were caught in a poverty trap (Basson & Basson, 2012; Lockie, Franettovich, Petkova-Timmer, Rolfe, & Ivanova, 2009). The preceding background illustrates the complexity of the context of the case study town, and the origins of the research problem, the purpose of this research and the research questions.

Figure 1-6 Median mortgage repayment ($/month), 2011

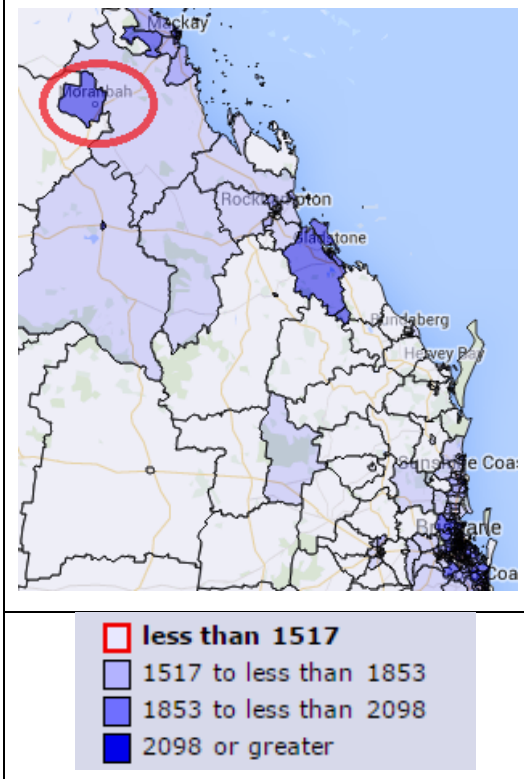
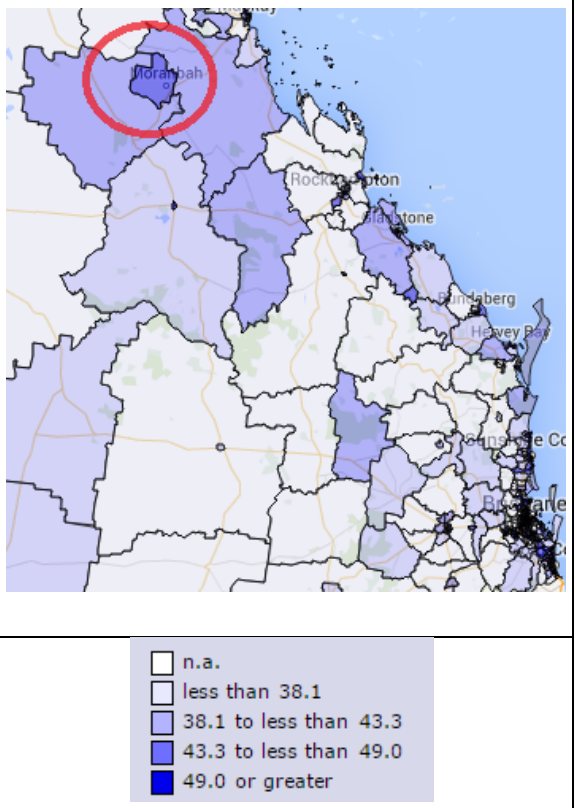


Figure 1-7 Different usual address 5 years ago (%), 2011

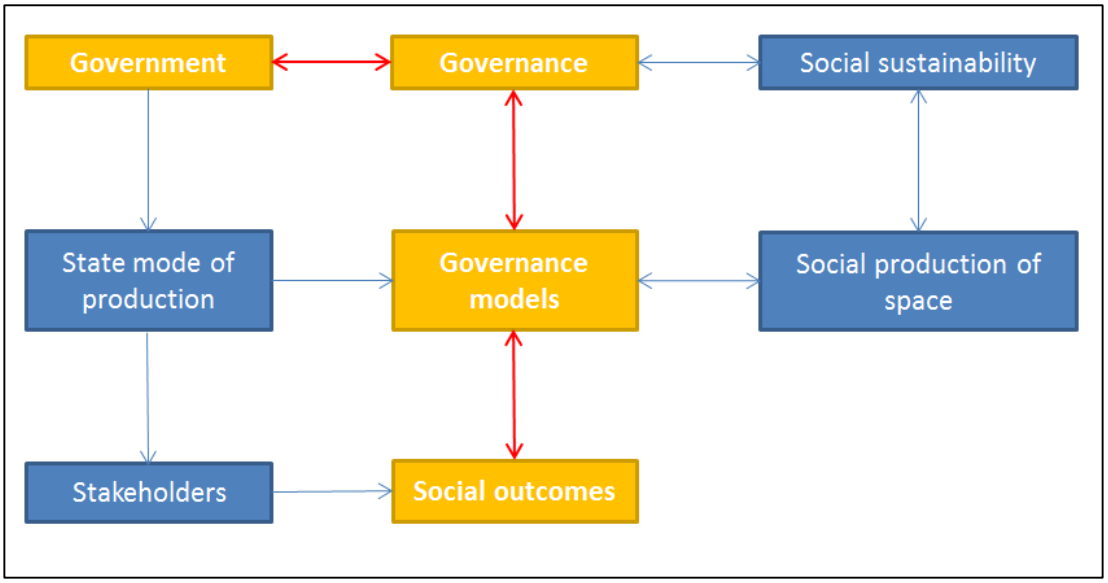


Note. Produced using *Queensland Thematic Maps* by Queensland Government Statistician's Office. Retrieved from http://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-thematic-maps. The State of Queensland (Queensland Treasury).

1.3. Statement of purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to determine and explore the social outcomes observed, experienced and reported by participants from a range of stakeholder categories in this regional resource town. The aim is to gain an understanding of the relationships reported between those outcomes and how the government-governance nexus impacts on the community in this town. These relationships, once exposed, will then be described in terms of *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production* theories as postulated by Henri Lefebvre. The basis of the conceptual framework for the study is presented in Figure 1-8, with the focus areas highlighted in yellow and the relationship between these areas indicated by red arrows.

Figure 1-8 Basic conceptual framework for this study with the focus areas highlighted in yellow



'Social outcomes' as a term was not encountered as a theoretical or conceptual definition in the literature, but as a descriptive term. The term is discussed in detail in Section 2.4.2. The emphasis here is not on the Australian Bureau of Statistics reportable social outcomes such as level of education, divorce rates, income or migration but on the more obscured, less quantifiable social outcomes (Dewson, J, Tackey, & Jackson, 2000; Hall Aitken, 2008), as it is argued that these outcomes are often as important, or more important, than the more measurable outcomes (Dewson et al., 2000). Examples of such outcomes are feelings of safety, problem solving skills, a collective sense of place and purpose, insight and ability to exercise judgement, confidence and motivation changes, feelings of well-being and satisfaction, and social cohesion (Dewson et al., 2000; Hall Aitken, 2008).

The intention is to contribute to the knowledge base that will enable regional resource communities to "have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future" (City of Vancouver, 2005, p. 3). As such, this research echoes newly emerging themes in the literature (Collits & Rowe, 2015; Sotarauta, 2014), particularly on the nexus between government-governance and social outcomes and the research questions are aligned with this focus.

The main research question is: *What are the social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus in resource regions?*

- The first secondary question asks: What are the social outcomes experienced and observed by stakeholders in the case study town?
    - This question is designed to tease out social outcomes that might be linked to the government-governance nexus.
- The second secondary question asks: Who are the role players and what roles do they assume?
    - The question is aimed at ascertaining perceptions and beliefs surrounding the different actors or role players in the governance processes and the relationships between those actors.
- The third secondary question asks: How important (desirable/relevant) are sustainable social outcomes to the regional resource community?
    - This question is formulated to obtain perceptions on the long term social sustainability of the town, in order to ascertain if people feel invested and embedded in the community or town, or if they see the community or town as intrinsically transient and unsustainable.

1.4. Overview of methodology

Exploratory research, such as this, is appropriate when investigating newly emerging social issues where the research base is slim, as it contributes to an orientation or familiarising with a topic (Henry, 2009). This qualitative, inductive study is focused on a single case, in a geographically bounded case study setting. A single case study is deemed appropriate here, as phenomena about which little is known were studied in the case study town (Maxwell, 2009). The case selected is an example of an exemplary or critical case, one of unusual, as well as general, public interest (Yin, 2014). The study design is partly based on an adapted version of the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies & Dart, 2005) to monitoring and evaluating outcomes, which is deemed to be an innovative approach (Dewson et al., 2000). The key elements in MSC are the absence of the use of indicators and the inclusion of participatory evaluation (Maughan, 2012).

The participants come from the mining and local business sectors, the residents' cohort, and local government employees, including elected representatives. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, first targeting participants who were known to be knowledge-rich on the research topic, based on past contact with those participants. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to access additional suitable participants through the initial participants. In total twenty-eight people participated, ten participants in all data collection phases. Six of the participants had participated in the master's degree study. The data collection stage consisted of four phases, made up of a preliminary mini-focus group, a series of mini-focus groups, individual interviews and a community workshop. Data was collected on site over a period of five months and overlapped with the data analysis to keep the data collection plan dynamic (Eisenhardt, 2002).

The first phase of the data collection commenced with a two hour preliminary mini-focus group (Krueger, 1998b), consisting of Isaac Regional Council (IRC) professional staff knowledgeable on government, governance and social outcomes. This mini-focus group served to confirm the boundaries of the case and the suitability of the data collection approach. The first phase was completed through a series of five mini-focus groups with two sets of residents, one set of Moranbah traders and representatives from non-governmental organisations, and two sets of mining company representatives, the second set combined with expert IRC staff. The mini-focus groups served to identify the breadth of the social issues experienced and perceived in the community. Due to the small size of the mini-focus groups and the purposive sampling of knowledgeable individuals, the mini-focus groups managed to reveal the depth of some of the issues as well. Nineteen people participated in the six mini-focus groups.

The second phase of the data collection comprised seventeen one hour long individual interviews. The main aim of the interviews was to obtain in-depth perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants as pertaining to government, governance and social outcomes in their town. Data analysis continued between interviews.

The third and last phase of the data collection was a two-hour community workshop with fifteen participants. The aim was to do an individual member check of the initial findings followed by a group discussion of the findings.

Data was analysed using a hermeneutic thematic analysis approach. Data was perused for main concepts, constructs and themes which were then used as nodes in Nvivo to enable coding of all the data collected, as well as notes from the researcher's data collection journal. Tabulation, mind mapping, spread sheeting and descriptive statistics were also used to verify the findings from the Nvivo analysis. The results are presented as narratives, quotes and graphs, tables and diagrams in *Chapter Four - Findings*.

1.5. Rationale and significance

The rationale for the study stems from the gaps observed in the literature, both during the master's degree study as well as this study. It is also informed by problems observed in practice; through experience in the local government planning field, and by contact with local government planning professionals.

The rationale behind the study is based on the argument that regional Australia is important to the Australian nation in terms of socio-economic contribution, and the sustainability of the regions is therefore important (Brown, 2005b; Gross, 2015; Hogan et al., 2015; Queensland Government, 2014b). It is further argued that the sustainability of the regions partly depends on the quality of government and the governance decisions that impact on these regions (Clark, 2012; Steiner, Kozlayova, & Bauer, 2009). There is a lack of research on the relationship between social sustainability and regional governance, as well as on the link between the government-governance nexus and social outcomes. It can thus be argued that the research and knowledge base that underpins decision-making can be improved, especially in light of the poor regional social outcomes reported (Clark, 2012), as well as global challenges faced by the regions.

Sub-national regions with political strength and capacity are seen as defences against volatile economic and social forces (Brown & Deem, 2014) but the "global

misfortune of regional Australia" is argued to have impacted severely on the perceived sustainability of regional communities (Gray & Lawrence, 2001, p. 245). More specifically, according to Kinnear and Ogden (2014, p. 42) the resource regions face:

> demographic and labour force shifts; regional governance; liveability, family and social well-being, cultural and civic aspects, housing, public health, workforce planning and education, transport and development infrastructure, water and energy, and environmental and natural resource management [and these regions pose an] important conundrum from both a government and community perspective.

There are several reasons why the resource regions pose a conundrum in terms of governance.

In a resource region, traditional policy approaches are focused on resources as a means to economic growth (Eversole & Martin, 2005d). However, the context is dynamic. There are expectations that the coal mining industry might be slow to recover, coupled with reports of divestment from coal on the global investors market in favour of more sustainable fuel sources (G. Thompson & Richards, 2015). Hence, the Queensland State Government's 2015 biofuel promotion campaign led by premier Palaszczuk (Queensland Government, 2015) in a state that has previously been accused of favouring the mining industry, cannot be ignored. Cockfield (2015) writes that the form of post-productivist industry policy currently emerging in Australia will have a significant impact on regional development in resource regions and, therefore, on governance modes. This governance context is complicated further by the Draft Queensland Plan's preliminary target for half the population to live outside south-east Queensland by 2044 (Queensland Government, 2014a).

The significance of this research lies in a number of contributions that can be made. From a humanistic viewpoint, a contribution can be made to the well-being of the community in terms of social and economic sustainability. The contribution to the discourse between academics, government and practitioners on regional governance and the social outcomes thereof, is significant given that this is deemed lacking in Australia, although prevalent in Europe (Collits, 2015). This discourse can inform

local government practices in the process of governing for social and economic sustainability. Improving local government practices can contribute to the well-being of the community through practices such as collaborative planning and engaged governance; and to governance aimed at social and economic sustainability. A contribution can be made to the gaps in the literature and to opportunities to disseminate the findings of this research. The contribution to filling the gaps in the literature is focused on the following gaps: the government-governance nexus and the link between regional governance models and social sustainable outcomes.

The study will make a contribution to the lack of knowledge about the link between regional governance models and sustainable social outcomes, a theme that has recently emerged but is ill-researched (Argent, 2011b; Carter, Pisaniello, & Burritt, 2010; Cheshire, Everingham, & Lawrence, 2014; Cheshire et al., 2011; Collits, 2012a, 2015). The contribution ties in with Cuthill's (2010, p. 366) reminder of the "pressing need to develop a stronger conceptual understanding of the social dimensions of sustainable development that links to and is grounded in real life policies and practices". The multi-disciplinary nature of urban and regional planning is a sound vehicle for convergence of the literature on regional Australia, which is fragmented across different disciplines (Collits, 2012a).

The contribution to social sustainability discourses stems from the focus on social sustainability, as opposed to a narrower focus on specific social aspects in much of the existing literature. This wider focus on sustainability was made possible by the longitudinal nature of this study and the preceding pilot project as well as the extensive community-based nature of the study, which provides a "strong "practice" perspective of what social sustainability might encompass" (Cuthill, 2010).

1.6. Role of the researcher

The researcher comes from an urban and regional planning background and the experience brought to this study was related to governance and social outcomes as encountered by the urban and regional planner and, specifically, the local government planner. This experience afforded the insight that urban and regional planning occurs in a highly political environment (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Hence, the decision was made to not approach this study from the angle of the social outcomes

of urban and regional planning approaches. Such an approach would have been reductionist, and would not have provided a comprehensive overview of a wider array of factors impacting on urban and regional planning. Instead, a trans-disciplinary approach was preferred for this study (Max-Neef, 1991). A transdisciplinary approach is defined as an approach that:

> … in an attempt to gain greater understanding, reaches beyond the fields outlined by strict disciplines. While the language of one discipline may suffice to *describe* something…, an interdisciplinary effort may be necessary to *explain* something…. By the same token, to *understand* something …requires a personal involvement that surpasses disciplinary frontiers, thus making it a transdisciplinary experience (Max-Neef, 1991, p. 15)

We are argued to be living in a period of transition where paradigm shifts are indispensable as a web of complex issues cannot be resolved through the application of reductionist disciplines (Max-Neef, 1991).

The collaborative and communicative nature of urban and regional planning impacted on the style of participant engagement and the preference for a qualitative approach. The extended time frames of this study in conjunction with the pilot project enabled the researcher to not only build on the previously established relationships with individuals and groups in the community, but also proved to stimulate an enduring interest in the social well-being of the community.

1.7. Delimitations of scope and key assumptions

In this section the term delimitations describes the characteristics of the study that are under the researcher's control. Delimitations limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study and are typically made at the start of the study. Limitations describe weaknesses in a study that are beyond the researcher's control and typically occur during the running of the study (Cone & Foster, 2006; Simon, 2011).

In terms of delimitations, the focus on the Australian governance context in this study arose from the research design, which is not intended to be a comparative analysis between the Australian and international context, but an in-depth investigation of the Australian context. As the Australian context and the in-depth

analysis were deemed more valuable, as little is known on the topic, the decision was made not to include comprehensive analyses of the international context.

The likelihood that it is impossible to prove, without doubt, the direction of causality and the actual causality between governance models and social outcomes can be ascribed to the multiplicity of factors that contribute to social outcomes and the fact that human systems are complex.

This study did not focus on FIFO and its outcomes as a phenomenon, but included FIFO as an outcome of a certain governance model. The measurable social outcomes of FIFO are receiving attention in both government and independent inquiries, as mentioned before. Other modes of non-resident employment such as Bus-In-Bus-Out (BIBO), and Drive-In-Drive-Out (DIDO) were treated like FIFO.

The following limitations, as encountered during the data collection process, apply to this study:

- Difficulty getting participation from mining employees, allegedly due to instructions from companies to not speak to researchers and the media, as conveyed by relatives of mining employees and the small number of mining company employees who participated.
- The elected representatives were not available to participate in a focus group or the community workshop despite an earlier indication of willingness to participate. Three elected representatives participated in the individual interviews.

Sourcing ex-mining employees as participants is a possible way for any future studies to overcome this limitation. The inclusion of the elected representatives in the individual interviews somewhat compensated for the absence during the focus group and community workshop phases.

1.8. Key terminology

Only the key terms are presented here: government, governance, nexus, social sustainability, social outcomes, resource region, and community. Additional

terminology is presented and defined in the later chapters in appropriate places. The glossary preceding Chapter 1provides further explanations of terminology.

Government refers to the formal institutions of the state and their legitimate coercive power (Williams & Maginn, 2012). In this study it refers to the Australian Federal Government, the Queensland State Government, the Queensland Local Government, and the agencies implementing government policies.

Governance portrays the inclusion of public policy discourses and participatory democracy in decision-making (Williams & Maginn, 2012). Governance is based on a reflexive process whereby independent actors self-organise in a complex web of interdependent relationships. The process is dependent on continuing dialogue and the sharing of resources with the aim of mutually beneficial development (Jessop, 2009). Governance is thus focused on collaborative engagement in decision-making and includes approaches or practices such as collaborative planning, communicative planning and engaged governance. These approaches are well-entrenched in urban and regional planning theory, and to a lesser extent practice, but do not per se form a focal point for this study.

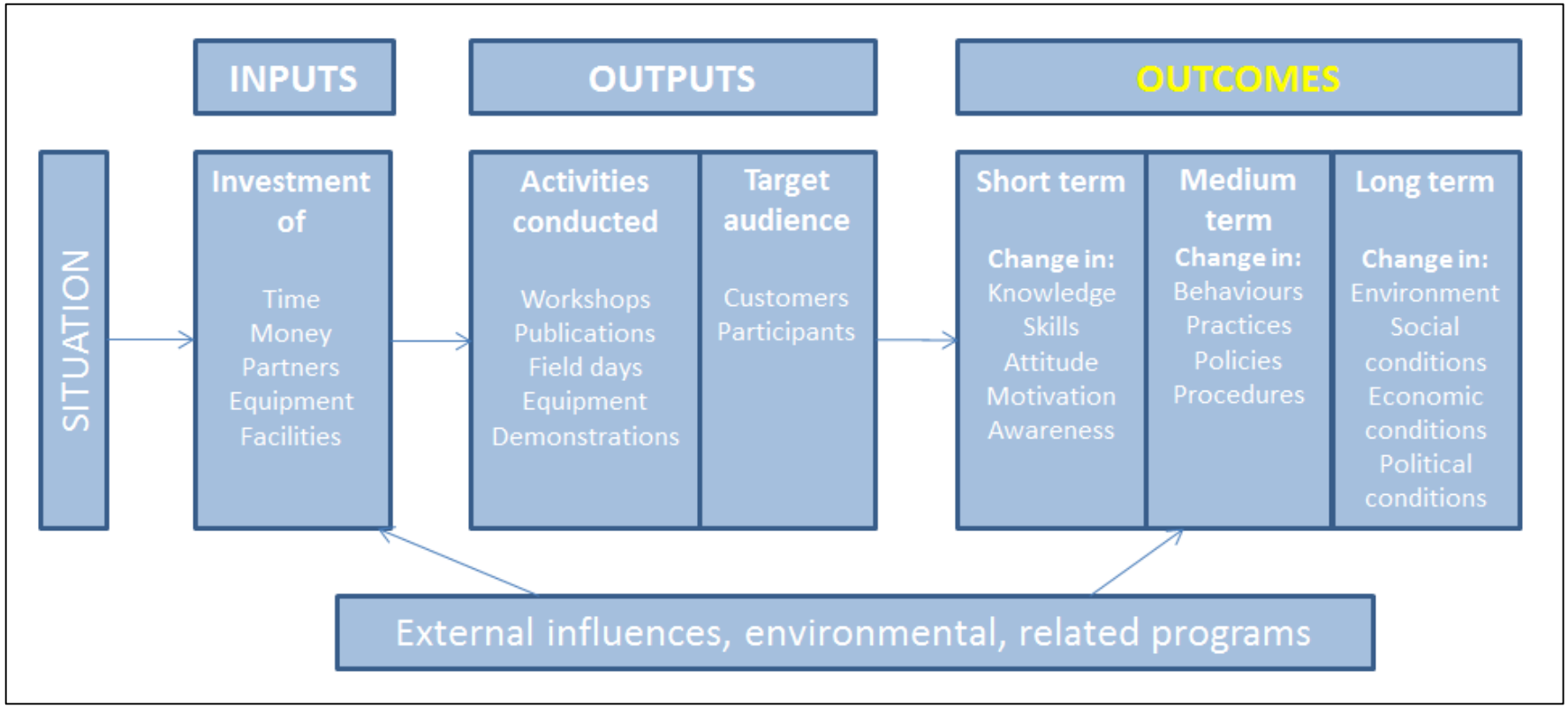
The nexus between government and governance refers to the links or the bonds between government and governance as per the commonly understood meaning of the term nexus.

As there is no agreement in the literature on a definition for social sustainability, a operational definition, presented below, has been drafted for this study based on the definitions of Stren and Polése (2000), McKenzie (2004) and the City of Vancouver (2005):

> Social sustainability is a normative approach to the maintaining of a society; it encompasses the maintaining of an environment and an economy that ensures the endurance of that society. It is evidenced in processes that acknowledge the value and importance of local context and local knowledge, and acknowledges that social sustainability as a conditional goal is a fallacy, as society and the space it inhabits are in a constant state of flux.

Outcome means consequence or result, as in systems theory; and social refers to the fact that outcomes pertain to people and notions of equity. The program logic diagram in Figure 1-9 (Maughan, 2012) explains the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes as applicable in this study: the concept outcomes are highlighted in yellow to indicate the focus area in this study.

Figure 1-9 Outcomes in a program logic model



Note. Adapted from "Monitoring and evaluating social impacts in Australia" by C. Maughan, 2012. Retrieved from http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/CW003_MonitoringandEvaluatingSocialImpactsAustralia.pdf. Originally from "Figure 1: Elements of a basic logic model" by P.F. McCawley (2010).

A region is a geographic area that is sufficiently unified to have a consciousness of its customs and ideals and a distinct sense of identity (Brown & Deem, 2014). Regional can also mean a spatial scale that is larger than a single local government but smaller than a state. In this study, region is understood to be a geographic area, but also a non-metropolitan area. A resource region in this study is a non-metropolitan region whose economic activity is dominated by the resource industry (Brown & Deem, 2014; Collits, 2012b).

Community refers to a community of place or location, i.e. individuals or groups living/working/having a business interest in an area delineated geographically. At the same time, community is political, held together by a common public concern. The community consists of a variety of social, cultural and economic sub-groups, with a diversity of viewpoints and interests, acknowledging the notion of pluralism as per political philosophy (Mouffe, 2000, 2005).

1.9. Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 1 - Introduction, so far, has introduced the study, and presented the problem statement, including the research context. A purpose statement and the research questions preceded a summary of the methodology, after which the rationale and the significance of the study were presented. The role of the researcher, the delimitations and key assumptions were presented, as was the key terminology used in the study. The outline for the rest of the thesis is presented next.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework, which has three main sections.

- The first section deals with *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production* theories of Henri Lefebvre. The theories are introduced, followed by a discussion of their characteristics and applicability to this research.
- The second section deals with government, governance and regional governance. The concepts of government and governance are defined and discussed, and the evolution and characteristics of governance are traced. The role of democracy, power and politics in governance is discussed next, followed by an analysis of the relationship between Australian federal, state

and local governments. The role and condition of Australian local government is important in this research and is therefore investigated next. Regional governance is dealt with in the subsequent section, followed by opinions on the future of governance. The section on governance is concluded with essential beliefs and perspectives on governance and regional governance, and a justification for the theoretical perspectives adopted on government, governance and regional governance in this research. Chapter 2 is concluded by the essential beliefs and perspectives on the overlapping of the three main sections, the theories of Henri Lefebvre, social sustainability, and governance, which collectively provided the conceptual framework for this research.

- The third section deals extensively with social sustainability. The concept is introduced and issues around definitions of social sustainability are discussed. Subsequently, tools for reporting social outcomes are investigated, followed by a discussion of governance, social sustainability and social capital. The essential beliefs and perspectives are presented in the conclusion, as well as the justification for the theoretical perspectives on social sustainability adopted for this research.

Chapter 3 presents the Research Design. The conceptual framework drafted for this study guided the research design. The research paradigm and the methodology are presented and justified first, followed by the exposition of the case study design. The research procedure during the planning and execution (data collection and analysis) phases are then presented and discussed. The sampling strategy is presented and the reasoning behind it explained. The on-site data collection for this case study, consisting of three phases, is described in detail, and the data analysis unit is presented. The data analysis strategy and methods are presented and justified. Finally, the criteria for judging qualitative research are discussed and the limitations acknowledged.

Chapter 4 presents the Research Findings. The findings are introduced first at the hand of basic demographic characteristics pertaining to the participants. The findings from the mini-focus groups are presented next, according to four themes, namely

themes that pertain to state government, themes that pertain to local government, community themes and mining company/industry themes. The breadth of the issues is revealed by the findings from the mini-focus group. The same four themes are then used to present the findings from the individual interviews, exposing the depth of issues. The community workshop findings are presented last, serving as verification of the initial findings pertaining to the four themes.

Chapter 5 deals with the interpretation and discussion of the Findings. The social outcomes experienced and observed by the participants are discussed with reference to the different role players and the roles they assume in regional governance. The findings pertaining to the importance attached by the participants to social sustainability for their town are presented last.

Chapter 6 presents the research Conclusion and Recommendations. Suggestions for further research are presented, followed by the conclusions regarding each research question drawn from the study. A conclusion is drawn about the research problem and claims are made and justified about the contribution made by this study to knowledge, theory as well as policy and practice.

2. CHAPTER TWO - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the theoretical framework is presented to clarify how a review of the literature on the topic has exposed gaps in the literature, and how those gaps have informed the research questions. A selection of theoretical viewpoints encountered in the literature were subsequently adopted and/or adapted into a conceptual framework for this study.

2.1. Introduction

The distinctiveness of this literature review stems from the juxtaposition of two research areas against the backdrop of the work of philosopher Henri Lefebvre. The first research area consisted of government, combined with a more detailed investigation of the literature on governance and regional governance. Regional governance, being poorly researched in Australia, is the one of the main focus areas for this study. The second main focus area is social sustainability, for which the literature revealed a significant, enduring lack of research.

The aim of the chapter is to illustrate how the perspectives in the literature were summarised, synthesised and analysed to authorise or justify the theoretical perspectives adopted for the purposes of this research. The theoretical perspectives presented are those related to sustainability, political theory, governance and regional development discourses. Insights into these discourses were gained from a comparative analysis and evaluation of seminal, recent and current literature.

The first part of this chapter presents an overview of the work of Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), a French Humanist-Marxist philosopher. His work was chosen as theoretical foundation for this study as it covers the role and nature of space, as well as the role of the state in the creation of that space, and is particularly relevant to an urban and regional planning focus. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to include his vast oeuvre. Instead, the focus is on *The Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*, which form a cornerstone in the conceptual framework drafted for this study. The second part deals with government in an introductory fashion, before focusing on governance and regional governance. The third part is a discussion of social sustainability. The chapter is concluded with a synthesis of the theoretical

perspectives and an authorisation, based on the literature, of the suitability of the conceptual framework compiled for this study. The work of Lefebvre is a logical starting point for the rest of this chapter given the overarching philosophical or societal insights it offers and it is therefore presented next.

2.2. Henri Lefebvre – *The Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*

Merrifield (2006, p. xxiv) labelled Lefebvre the "least narrow-minded Marxist who ever lived" based on Lefebvre's (1974/1991) view that Marxism should be treated as a moment in the development of theory, and not followed dogmatically. Lefebvre does appear to have embraced Marx's critique of the state, though, asserting that the state is only a fragment of society, but sets itself above society (Butler, 2012). The choice of his work as part of this study should be seen against the statement that "insights from historical narratives, political economy, and evolutionary perspectives" are needed to understand the origin of regional ails (Tonts, Argent, & Plummer, 2012, p. 300), but also because his work is still regarded to be current as will be discussed later in this section.

Lefebvre's work covered a wide variety of topics (Kipfer & Milgrom, 2008; Kipfer, Schmid, Goonewardena, & Milgrom, 2008; Kofman & Lebas, 1996), focussing after 1968 on urbanisation and the role of space in the survival of capitalism (Butler, 2003; Merrifield, 2006; Ronneberger, 2008). Kipfer, Goonewardena, Schmid, and Milgrom (2008) held that he tried to rectify the under-theorisation of space in Marxist traditions, as is exemplified in his statement that the "works of Marx do not pose the urban problem" (1996, p. 130). The wide array of topics covered by Lefebvre has impacted on scholarly opinions on his contribution to knowledge and theory.

There appeared to be no agreement in the literature on Lefebvre's greatest contribution which is not surprising given the multitude of topics addressed, but also the span of his career and the vast volume of his work. Criticism of his work has ranged from the complexity of his theories and his opaque language (Vogelpohl, 2011), to a perceived lack of academic protocol (Kipfer, Schmid, et al., 2008). The volume and the breadth of his work was argued to make it difficult to comprehend one aspect of his oeuvre in relation to others without reading wider (Butler, 2009;

Purcell, 2013, 2014; J. Wilson, 2013). Unwin (2000) argued that Lefebvre's notion of the production of space was fundamentally flawed, while Smith (2003) stated that he failed to produce a satisfactory theory of uneven development and scale. The Anglo-American interpretation and use of Lefebvre's work is criticised for largely ignoring the wider context thereof (Kipfer, Goonewardena, et al., 2008; Merrifield, 2006). The attention from geography, urban sociology and cultural studies scholars seems to have been at the expense of interest from political theorists or philosophers (Elden, 2001, 2004; Kofman & Lebas, 1996). However, these views do not reflect negatively on the current relevancy of Lefebvre's work as expressed in the literature.

2.2.1. Current relevancy of Lefebvre's work

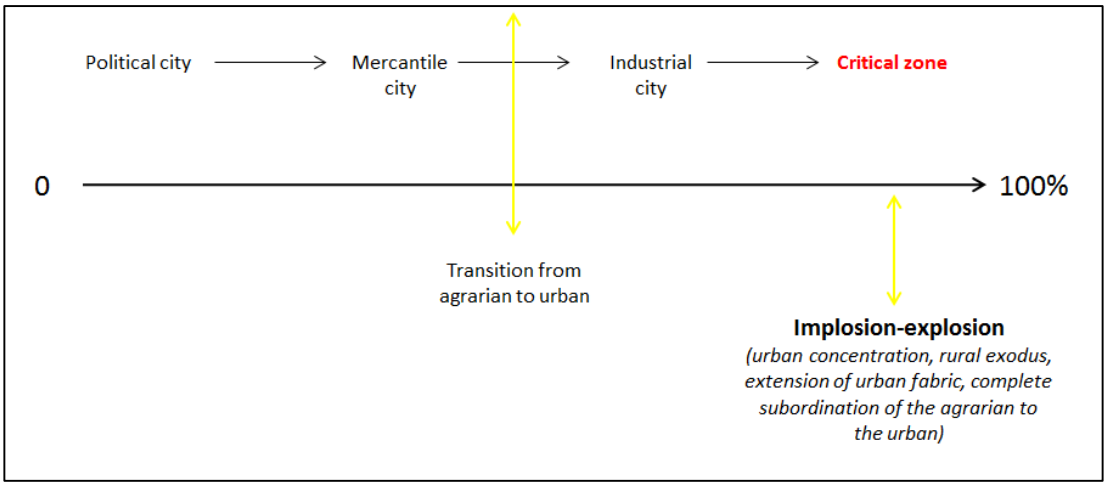
There appears to be agreement in the literature on the current relevancy of Lefebvre's work (Buser, 2012; Butler, 2012; Kipfer, Saberi, & Wieditz, 2012; Shields, 2011; Smith, 2003; Stanek, 2011; Waite, 2008). A "third wave" of Lefebvre scholarship has distanced itself from the earlier political economy and cultural studies waves (Kipfer, Goonewardena, et al., 2008, p. 3; Kipfer et al., 2012), instead interpreting Lefebvre on his own terms (J. Wilson, 2014). Relevancy statements include that his work has a "strong sense of political immediacy and contemporary relevance" (Smith, 2003, p. vii), and that it is dynamic and will remain relevant (Kofman & Lebas, 1996; Merrifield, 2006; Stanek, 2011). Butler (2003) points to widespread social-scientific interest in space as a theoretical concept, while Brenner (2008) saw particular currency in *The State Mode of Production*. The current relevancy of Lefebvre's work is also evident from the way some of his hypotheses have become realised.

2.2.2. Society and space

Lefebvre developed one of the initial theories on what has become known as globalisation (Brenner, 2000; Elden, 2008; Shields, 2011). He (1974/1991) held that global space, as well as the spaces subsidiary to it, are important as no single place disappears, but rather undergoes a metamorphosis**.** A specific global phenomenon was seen to be the "urban problematic", found in both socialism and capitalism (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 166); a view described as a "provocative thesis" by Smith (2003, p. ix), and adopted for this study. The urban problematic results from economic growth and industrial production where there has been growth without social development (Lefebvre, 1996). The conversion of society to a culture of

economic consumption has prevented urban transformation (Lefebvre, 1996), as the space remains political and is remodelled by technocratic rationality (Kofman & Lebas, 1996). To change this modern society would imply an "urban revolution", which Lefebvre (1970/2003, p. 5) explained means transformation. Lefebvre (1970/2003, p. 1) made an anticipatory statement that "society has been completely urbanised" as "urbanisation is virtual today, but will become real in the future". He (1970/2003, p. 15) used a diagram to visualise his explanation that the "urban process" is both temporal and spatial, presented in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Lefebvre's urban process as both temporal and spatial



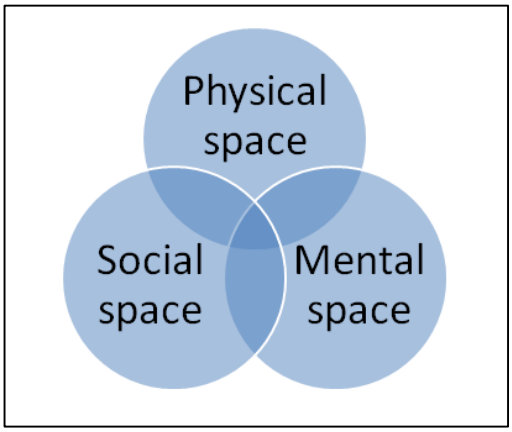
Note. Reproduced and adapted from *The Urban Revolution* (p.15) (R. Bononno, Trans.) by H. Lefebvre, 1970/2003, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Copyright 2003 by R. Bononno.

Urbanisation and urbanism are not only temporal and spatial. Lefebvre claimed that urbanism has an "institutional and ideological nature" and functions as a superstructure of the neo-capitalist society (Elden, 2004; Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 6). Urbanism is a "mask and a tool… for the state and political actions", which create political space (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 151). A complex movement is claimed to exist by which the political city desecrates the countryside, to the benefit of the expanding economic city (Lefebvre, 1996). Elements of function and structure are the functions of the city in relation to territory and the social whole; and the social structure of town-country relations (Lefebvre, 1996). Society and its territory occupy, and are encountered in, different forms of space, which Lefebvre theorised extensively.

2.2.3. Space

Lefebvre (1974/1991) aimed to develop a theory of space that would grasp the unity between the three *fields* of space: physical (nature), mental (logical and formal abstractions), and social space (the space of human interactions), as illustrated in Figure 2-2. The three fields of space are interrelated and operational at all times (Butler, 2003).

Figure 2-2 The three fields of space addressed by Lefebvre



As there are very few truly natural or physical spaces left in urbanised society (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), the majority of spaces can be argued to be the interrelated product of all three fields. This is true of the space addressed in this study, and as such the term space in essence refers to the field of social space. Any reference to space, except where specifically mentioned as mental or physical space, refers to social space but as such does not exclude the fields of mental or physical space.

Lefebvre (1974/1991, p. 3) pointed out that in the past space had a strictly geometrical meaning that had allowed it to become a commodity: divided, measured and compared (Stanek, 2011). Both retrospective and prospective knowledge of space should be the goal, and such knowledge will help us comprehend how societies produce their space and time (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), a view that was reflected in the methodology of this study. He advocated an approach that reveals the social relations embedded in space, as space itself is unable to provide form or meaning as it "never possesses existence in itself" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 73). Stanek (2008, p. 63) understood that Lefebvre sought to theorise space as the "shared aspect and outcome of all social practices". Merrifield (2006) points out that Lefebvre argued that to

change life is to change space; to change space is to change life as spaces are not things.

Spaces are abstract but also real, concrete and instrumental; they interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, pp. 86-87). Space has always been the "reservoir of resources", and the "medium in which strategies are applied", but is has also become the object of actions and struggles (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 410). These struggles prompted Lefebvre (1996, p. 99) to ask: "Since society does not function in a satisfactory manner, could there not be a pathology of space?" There appears to be no doubt in his mind that the "problematic of space" results from a growth in the forces of production, which now, with technology, allow intervention at every level of space, modifying space as a whole (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). This pathology is reflected in the statement of Brenner and Elden (2009) that within both Marxist and liberal political theory, there has been a tendency to discount the spatial aspects of political processes.

Spaces are also political products from the social field of space, and a produced space can be read through a "process of signification" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 17). The significance of space is evident from the way that subjects identify with their space and their status as actors in that space. Schmid (2008) concludes that Lefebvre saw space as a result of society but also as a precondition for society; existing in the context of a specific society and its political underpinnings. Social space, the space of human interactions, is one of the three fields of space that Lefebvre endeavoured to unify in his theory on *The Social Production of Space*.

Social space

Lefebvre (1974/1991, p. 26) hypothesised that "(social) space is a (social) product". He stated:

> (Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced, and encompass their inter-relationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 73).

The places of social space are unlike natural space as they are not simply juxtaposed (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The existence of a space cannot be properly explained through nature or the history of that space, and production does not directly cause a particular space, which means that the actions of mediations, and mediators, have to be considered (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Every space is the outcome of a multi-faceted process and of contributing streams that are "perceived and directly experienced, practical and theoretical" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 110). Social space *per se* is at once work and product, and can be a tool for the analysis of society (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Schmid (2008) understands this explanation to mean that social space includes not only a concrete materiality but a thought concept and an experience. In this social space created by a society, different types of spaces are argued to exist.

Different spaces

Lefebvre (1974/1991) identified different types of spaces. These spaces result from the production of space from the three interrelated fields of space. Table 2-1 depicts the types of produced spaces and the characteristics of each type.

Table 2-1 Characteristics of the different types of spaces produced through human interaction

Space	Characteristics
Dominated spaces	Spaces transformed and mediated by technology and practice (Lefebvre, 1974/1991)
Appropriated spaces	Appropriation is "primacy of use over exchange." (Lefebvre, 2009b, p. 192) Appropriation attempts result in "a [head-on] clash …with the state and with politics" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 387)
Diverted spaces	An existing space may outlive its raison d 'être becoming susceptible to being diverted, reappropriated and put to a different use Diversion is more important than creation during challenging periods (Lefebvre, 1974/1991)
Abstract space	"the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism…[it] depends on consensus more than any space before it" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 57) It is "the tool of domination, asphyxiates whatever is conceived within it and then strives to emerge" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 370) Results in manifestations of false consciousness and ideology (Lefebvre, 1974/1991)
Illusionary space	Is "a false consciousness of abstract space and an objective falseness of space itself" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 298)

In contrast, true space is the space of philosophy and its epistemological offshoots that "…takes form and is formulated in the head of a thinker before being projected onto social and even physical 'reality'" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 398). Absolute space refers to the original, "historical space", or the enduring fragments of nature (Merrifield, 2006, p. 48).

The characteristics assigned to the different types of spaces reveal certain problematics attached to social space. Lefebvre (1974/1991) distinguished between the problematic of social space, which is theoretical, and spatial practice which is empirically observable. Spatial practice defines places (the relations of local to global); the representation of that relationship; actions and signs; the trivialized spaces of everyday life; and, in contrast, space made special by symbolism. Spatial practice can be observed, described and analysed on a wide range of levels, for example in architecture, in urban and regional planning or urbanism (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). **S**patial practice does not create life; it has no power in itself and merely regulates life. Spatial contradictions, therefore, are "contradictions of society" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 358). These contradictions arise from the social production of space.

2.2.4. Social production of space

Lefebvre (1974/1991, pp. 30-52) hypothesised that "(social) space is a (social) product". The epistemological pillar of this theory on *The Production of Space* is the conceptual spatial triad namely spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practice, mentioned briefly before, refers to the practices and routines through which the totality of social life is reproduced through, for example, urban and regional planning (Butler, 2003). Representations of space are the work of, for example planners, in the form of objects such as maps, whilst the concept of representational spaces is linked with lived experience and the symbolism of such spaces (Butler, 2003). This spatial triad underpins the process of the production of space (Milgrom, 2008). Merrifield (2006) and Schmid (2008) concur that Lefebvre constructed the triad as a dialectical simplification, a key to

understanding the social production of space; rather than for use as a mechanical framework or typology.

The three dimensions of *The Production of Space* are fundamentally of equal value Schmid (2008). The processes in the triad are doubly determined and designated. On the one hand, they refer to the triad of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. On the other hand, they refer to perceived, conceived and lived space. This parallel series points to a twofold approach to space: one phenomeno-logical and the other linguistic or semiotic. Space is thus to be understood in an active sense as an intricate web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced. The complex nature of the relationships that produce space implies potential conflict pertaining to space.

The first implication of Lefebvre's theory on the production of space is that every society produces a space, its own space. Lefebvre explains that social space contains, as well as assigns, the social relations of reproduction, and the relations of production. The second implication is that if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production, which he explained by stating that the object of interest shifts from things in space to the actual production of space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

Lefebvre (2009b) stated that social space has become a central object of political struggle in the contemporary world, which Brenner (2008) understands as meaning that space is now a constitutive dimension in capitalism. Mendieta (2008, p. 149) interpreted Lefebvre's statement as claiming that the "extraction, production and accumulation of capital is enabled by the production of social space". This view of social space, as the object of political struggle, points to the relevance for this study of Lefebvre's theory of *The State Mode of Production*, and the concept of nationhood.

The State Mode of Production (SMP)

The SMP derives from economic growth and political power, which combine forces to produce a space, the space of the "nation state" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 112). The SMP essentially means the mode of management and domination of the entire

society by the state; and state capitalism and state socialism are part of the SMP (Elden, 2004). The space of the nation state or nationhood implies the existence of a market that subordinates local or regional markets to the national one. The nation state also implies political power, which controls and exploits the market to maintain and further its rule (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

In the SMP, the state has an increasingly direct role in the promotion and management of capitalist industrial growth (Brenner, 2008). As the state strives for global competitiveness, it withdraws from social redistribution. Brenner and Elden (2009) argue that the SMP strategy of targeting particular scales or places in state developmental strategies can in fact be seen as concealed efforts to promote those spaces as sites for state capital accumulation. They further argue that the states play an instrumental role in managing and maintaining capitalist growth on all spatial scales, from the local to the global in the current SMP. The neoliberal state can be understood as the emergence of the neo-liberal SMP, resulting in an unprecedented commodification of its territory (Brenner, 2000; Butler, 2012). Brenner (2008) and Butler (2012) disagree on whether or not the SMP closes off the possibility to challenge the power of the state, with Butler (2012) proposing that it does not. Ensuring the continuance of capitalism has certain implications.

Capitalism has been argued to result in a certain constitution of state, space and territory, but state, space and territory at the same time serve as media of capitalism (Brenner & Elden, 2009). Lefebvre (1974/1991, p. 10) saw capitalism as “the hegemony of one class” with capitalist strategies of growth relying on the strengths of large-scale enterprise and large cities. In these strategies the cities are the centres of production and of political power (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The consequences of accelerating economic growth, regardless of the costs in pursuit of competition, prestige or power, are unequal development between the city and the regions; and the “abandonment of whole regions and sectors of the population” which in this capitalist system are deemed negligible (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 55). Kipfer, Schmid, et al. (2008) argue that Lefebvre did not propose a theory of political economy but a critique of political economy, hence offering alternatives. A different strategy is founded on “small and medium-sized business and on towns of a size compatible with that emphasis. It would seek to carry the whole territory and the

whole population forward together in a process which would not separate growth from development" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 55). Instead, the state was seen to operate to preserve the status of capitalism (Butler, 2003).

In an ever-expanding capitalism, boundaries between economic, political and private life are observed to be dissolving (Merrifield, 2006), which in turn is seen as proof that capitalism is resilient, flexible and adaptable (Elden, 2004). Spatial constraints to capitalist accumulation are addressed by intensive and extensive interventions of the state in economic and social life (Butler, 2009). Hence, state interventions in space cannot be regarded as neutral forms of social control, but are deemed to be control of places. Brenner (2008) identifies three key aspects of state spatial intervention. The state first mobilises space as a productive force (through infrastructure investment, spatial planning, industrial policy and financial regulation). Second, it serves as the institutional mediator of uneven geographical development. Third, it uses strategies to force a hierarchy of social relations upon different geographical scales. Butler (2003) has reminded us that less intervention is supposed to occur in neoliberal forms of governance, where neoliberalism is seen as "a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights" (Thorsen & Lie, 2009, p. 14). This limited role of the state stands in direct contrast to the role of the state assumed in the State Mode of Production.

The State Mode of Production (SMP)

The state tends to maintain "the division between the governed and the governing, and possibly between town and country" which strengthens decision-making centres and changes the urban core into a "citadel of power" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 78). The establishment of "centres of decision" by the state produces conflict between local powers and central powers; and between countryside, city and society (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 78). The lack of questioning promotes these urban centres to elitist and authoritarian structures (Lefebvre, 1970/2003).

Purcell (2013) cautions that we have to understand the true nature of democracy to understand Lefebvre's visions: democracy is oligarchy whereby a small group of

people have control of a country or organization. The state and politicians were regarded as “reductive by their very nature and frequently on the offensive” (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 78), but Lefebvre argued that until a new order is established “social practice will belong to politicians who will control it through institutions and systems” (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 143). The power of the state, and the politicians who hold this power, is associated with an ideology reflected in a political strategy(Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 78). Brenner and Elden (2009, p. 354) view Lefebvre’s spatial views on state power as pioneering, saying that it provides a perspective on the “state’s tendency, through its territorial form, to naturalize its own transformative, intensely patterning effects upon socio-spatial relations”, or what they call the “territory effect”.

Each new form of state or political power introduces its own mode of partitioning and classifying space, and the objects and people in space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). This “state management of space” implies a “logic of stability that is both destructive and self-destructive” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 387). The logic of stability is embedded in the role of the state on the global markets. Elden (2004) states that the state is now one of the key players in a global market, where it promotes national growth and the national economic interest on the world stage. The implication is that the state, in this role, has to manage space, and enable corporate enterprise and private investments as part of its pursuit of capital. As a result of this shifted focus, communities and voluntary organisations have to address issues of redistributive justice themselves due to the state’s withdrawal (Merrifield, 2006).

Lefebvre (1996) suggested that statesmen, experts and specialists should not be given control of decision-making, but criticised society’s avoidance of questioning the centre and centrality. For politicians, the people who control the nation, the government level is the most important, since that is where the power is held and bureaucratic are decisions made (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). Lefebvre (1974/1991) observed that the state and its bureaucratic and political apparatuses intervene continually in space, but that planners have no control as they are not the decision-makers (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). He argued that planning can only be read though confrontation with political strategies, and that the planner should be able to distinguish between healthy and diseased spaces (Lefebvre, 1996). Planning is an

essential aspect of the socialisation of society, with mature planning projects being without a "concern for their current feasibility or their utopian aspect" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 155). "The realization of urban society calls for a planning oriented towards social needs, those of urban society; a planning oriented towards democratic control of the State and self-management; a permanent cultural revolution" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 178; 180). He saw state involvement in three types of planning, namely material, and financial accounting, and spatial planning (Elden, 2004). This involvement has enabled the neo-liberal SMP to generate a new environment for spatial planning that tends towards the reproduction of abstract space and the reinvention of previous forms of state spatial intervention (Butler, 2009). At the same time, the shift away from geometric thinking in planning is seen to have resulted in an interest in non-traditional governance arrangements (Buser, 2012), which can be argued to be underpinned by the inherently ideological nature of planning (Gunder, 2010). This ideological nature of planning is echoed in Merrifield's (2006, p. 129) question: "Will the modern state manage to stifle social life entirely under the crushing weight of politics?" This question has implications for society and is reflected in concepts of the everyday, alienation, the right to the city, and autogestion which are all included in Lefebvre's work.

Society: the everyday, alienation, the right to the city, and autogestion (self-management)

Lefebvre held that society, in the second half of the twentieth century, had become a "bureaucratic society of controlled consumption" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, pp. 163-164). Marx's concept of an "upside-down world" was adopted when judging the outcomes of this bureaucratic society: the intermediary replaces the producer (worker) and enriches himself at their expense; the state sets itself above society; bureaucracy develops its own interests, plus the means to serve those; and effects appear as causes, and the end becomes the means, and the means the end (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 101). Butler (2012) interprets the everyday as critically theorising the way of life under contemporary capitalism.

Alienation, for Lefebvre, was the loss of the "feeling that there is an ability to achieve the possible" (Kofman & Lebas, 1996, p. 21). The loss is economic, social, political, ideological and philosophical (Elden, 2004). State power is a symptom of

alienation, and alienation can be transcended but only under practical conditions in everyday life (Elden, 2004). Wilson (2014) argues that a dis-alienated spatial practice depends on the capacity to collectively appropriate, create, and transform reality.

Lefebvre voiced his concern about the strong and worldwide trend of the "extraordinary passivity of the people most directly involved, those who are affected by projects, influenced by strategies" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 181; 1974/1991). He asked if bureaucracy has "already achieved such power that no political force can successfully resist it" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 51). He saw political reasons for this passivity, which need to be taken seriously, but reminds us that there are sociological reasons as well, as we have a long history of delegating our interests to our representatives (Kofman & Lebas, 1996; Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 185; 187). In practice, participation enables the inclusion of interested and concerned people but after what he regarded as pretence, these people return to passivity. He asked if it is not clear that true participation already has a name, self-management (Lefebvre, 1996). To Lefebvre (1974/1991, pp. 419-420) the real gauge of democracy is the "possibility of working on counter-projects, discussing them with the authorities and forcing those authorities to take them into account". Butler (2012, p. 92) concurs that Lefebvre's account of the politics of space remains open to self-management or autogestion to "reimagine political and institutional alternatives to the neoliberal state", a suggestion that the SMP can be opposed and transcended (Brenner, 2008), but such opposition implies participation.

The right to the city outlines a demand for a participatory role in decision-making. The right is focused on social space to resist the control of space by the state (Butler, 2009) and neoliberal capital's drawbacks of devolution, privatisation, retrenchment, fragmentation and, currently, austerity (Purcell, 2013). The "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 158) includes the countryside in terms of the highest form of rights: "liberty, individualisation, in socialization, environs and way of living" (Kofman & Lebas, 1996, p. 19). It is argued that the right to the city exposes an alternative approach to urban governance: recognition of local power (Purcell, 2013, 2014). The right to the city is thus seen as revolutionary. It can be argued that Purcell's interpretation ties in with the notions of autogestion and self-management. In the words of Lefebvre, it is essential that society no longer aims for

> … economic growth for its own sake, and economistic ideology which entails … super-profit and capitalist over-exploitation, the control of the economic to the advantage of the State. …growth must be guided to ensure well-being for all. To direct growth towards development, therefore towards urban society, means firstly to prospect new needs, knowing that such needs are discovered in the course of their emergence (Lefebvre, 1996, pp. 164-165).

2.2.5. Lefebvre: his main points and their relevance to this thesis

The main points from Lefebvre's work on *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production (SMP),* as they pertain to this study, are summarised in the following paragraphs. Thereafter, the main opinions of Lefebvrean scholars are presented, including the need for further research into the application of Lefebvre's theories. The section is concluded by the statement of the Lefebvrean principles adopted for this study and a schematic representation of those principles.

Lefebvre (1974/1991) aimed to develop a theory that would grasp the unity between the three *fields* of space: physical (nature), mental (logical and formal abstractions) and social space (the space of human interactions). He reminded us that (social) space is not a thing among other things, or a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 73). The epistemological pillar of *The Production of Space* is the spatial triad: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. He (1974/1991) distinguished between the problematic of space, which is theoretical, and spatial practice, which is empirically observable in, for example, city planning or urbanism (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). One of the postulations that have become observable is globalisation.

Lefebvre developed one of the initial theories on what became known as globalisation (Brenner, 2000; Elden, 2008; Shields, 2011) and made an anticipatory statement that "society has been completely urbanised" as "urbanisation is virtual today, but will become real in the future" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 1). In this urbanised world the political city uses the countryside to the benefit of the city (Lefebvre, 1996), which is reflected in spatial inequities.

Lefebvre (1996) asked if the dysfunction of society could not be a symptom of a pathology of space. The "problematic of space" is ascribed to a growth in the forces of production which allow intervention at every level of space, modifying space as a whole (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). This intervention links space with *The State Mode of Production* (SMP).

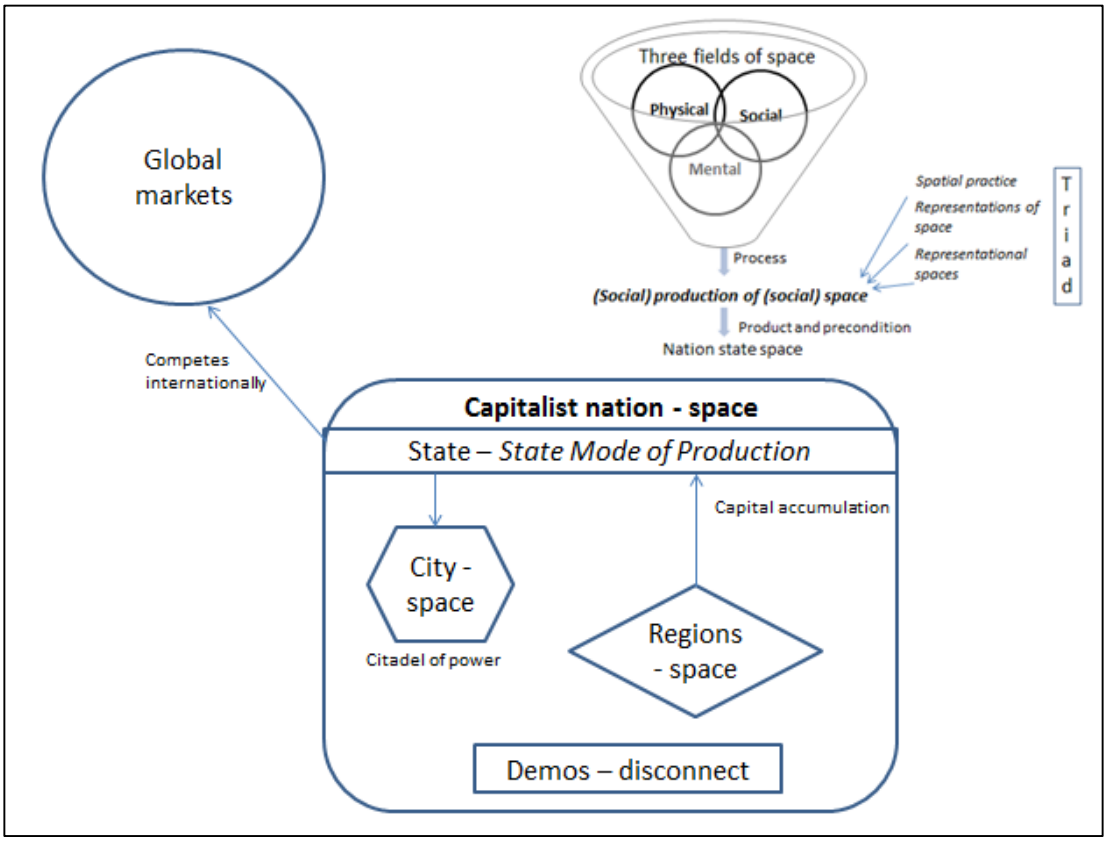
In the SMP, economic growth and political power combine forces to produce the space of the "nation state" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 112). For politicians, the government level is the most important, since that is where the power is held and bureaucratic decisions made (Lefebvre, 1970/2003) and "politicians … control [space] through institutions and systems" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 143). Capitalist strategies rely on cities being the centres of production and of political power (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) and the state maintains "the division between the governed and the governing, and possibly between town and country" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 78). This produces conflict between local powers and central powers; and between countryside, city and society (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 78). Space has become a central object of political struggle in the contemporary world (Lefebvre, 2009b). Part of the political struggle results from the attempts by the state to preserve capitalism.

The state intervenes continually in space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) in an effort to safeguard the SMP, but planners have no control as they are not the decision-makers (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). Planning necessitates confrontation with political strategies, and the planner has to distinguish between healthy and diseased spaces (Lefebvre, 1996). "…planning [should be] oriented towards social needs… towards democratic control of the State and self-management" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 178; 180). Democracy implies participation by the demos, which he saw as problematic.

Lefebvre objected to the "extraordinary passivity of the people most directly involved, those who are affected by projects, influenced by strategies" (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 181; 1974/1991); and asked if bureaucracy had "already achieved such power that no political force can successfully resist it" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 51).

These points present the main ideas from this section on Lefebvre's work in the context of this study. The warnings from scholars is heeded to not disregard the total worldview of Lefebvre, and this summary of main points does not negate the importance of the rest of the theory contained in this section, as suggested by several scholars. The relationship between Lefebvre's theories on *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production* (SMP) is illustrated in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3 The relationship between the Social Production of Space and the SMP



Several scholars have referred to Lefebvre's work as pioneering. This includes for example, his contributions to socio-spatial theory (Brenner & Elden, 2009, p. 354), his seminal contribution to debates on autogestion (self-management) (Kipfer et al., 2012), his introduction of his own new topics such as the everyday, social space and the SMP (Elden, 2004), and his work on alienation (Butler, 2003, 2009). Lefebvrean scholars do not agree on his greatest contribution and this can possibly be ascribed to the volume of his work and the number of topics he covered. The agreement on the current relevancy of the work of Lefebvre (Buser, 2012; Butler, 2012; Kipfer et al., 2012; Shields, 2011; Stanek, 2011) supports the choice to include the work of Lefebvre as part of the theoretical perspectives in this study. There appears to be

little disagreement in the literature on points raised by Lefebvre, with most of the criticism centred on the appropriations of his work by scholars from certain disciplines (Kipfer, Goonewardena, et al., 2008; Merrifield, 2006) at the expense of interest from others (Elden, 2001, 2004; Kofman & Lebas, 1996).

Given the exposé on the work of Lefebvre and the scholarly interpretations and opinions considered, several points were deemed relevant to this study and these were adopted. These include reading beyond one Lefebvrean oeuvre (Butler, 2012; Purcell, 2013; J. Wilson, 2013), which resulted in the juxta-positioning of his work in *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*, which could be seen as an innovative characteristic of this literature review and, in fact, the whole study. This study has also heeded the calls for further research on space and a practical application of Lefebvre's theories (Schmid, 2008; Stanek, 2011; Waite, 2008). The pressure for further research on space and for the practical application of Lefebvre's theories, were deemed to confirm a research gap (Schmid, 2008; Stanek, 2011; Waite, 2008), which has been addressed in this study.

The appropriations of Lefebvre by Butler and Buser (Buser, 2012; Butler, 2003, 2009, 2012) are of particular relevance to this study. Butler (2009, p. 313) argues that Lefebvre's ideas are directly relevant to the "renewal of critical approaches to the structures and form of planning law and regimes of urban governance" whilst Buser (2012, p. 279) notes that "it is this ability to engage with the dynamism of social change and the relationships between spaces which makes Lefebvre's spatial theory immensely valuable for the study of emerging and shifting structures of governance". Butler's (2003, p. 188) viewpoint that there is a gap in the Australian urban literature on the state's contribution to the production space was expanded here to include regional settlements as an urban form.

With specific reference to urban and regional planning, Butler (2003) holds that the role of planning in the production of space is important; however, the political and strategic dimensions of planning are not well appreciated. He adds that Lefebvre's theories can help to explain the significance of legal and regulatory regimes in the process of spatial production; and he highlights that "one clear gap in the literature on Australian suburbia [and arguably regional settlements] is the lack of a fully

developed account of the state's contribution to the production space" (Butler, 2003, p. 188). The importance of space, from an urban and regional planning perspective, is evident.

From the work of Lefebvre, it is clear that government and governance play a major role in the remit of the urban and regional planner, namely with regards to space, and hence the next section deals extensively with government and governance and the nexus between them.

2.3. Government and governance

In this section, government and governance are presented. Subsequently, regional governance is discussed, followed by the governance of regional mining towns. The section is concluded with a justification of the theoretical perspectives on government and governance adopted for this study.

2.3.1. Introduction

Given the focus on the government-governance nexus in this study, a clear understanding of both concepts was required. The focus in this thesis is on regional governance and the discussion of government and governance in general serves to paint the background to regional governance.

To introduce this section, the basic difference between government and governance is highlighted, followed by a more comprehensive analysis. Government refers to the formal institutions of the state and their legitimate coercive power (Stoker, 1998; Williams & Maginn, 2012). As Stoker (1998, p. 17) expanded, "government is characterised by its ability to make decisions and its capacity to enforce them." The structure of government is reflected in the allocation of authority across jurisdictions (Marks et al., 2008). Previously, governance was used as a synonym for government (Stoker, 1998), but a redirection of its use was seminally reported by Rhodes (1996, pp. 652-653) who stated that it is "a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed." Governance in general entails participatory democracy in decision-making and thus includes public policy discourses (Williams & Maginn, 2012). The term governance is not defined exactly in the literature, but the delegation of power from the state government to other stakeholders plays an important part in governance, so government is discussed next.

2.3.2. Government

Given that government has been seen to refer to the formal institutions of the state (Stoker, 1998; Williams & Maginn, 2012) and the allocation of authority across jurisdictions (Marks et al., 2008), in this study the Australian federal, state and local governments, and government agencies constitute government. State government and local government do not operate in isolation from each other, and the interaction between these two levels was investigated in more detail. In particular, state

government intervention in local government planning affairs was relevant, and flows from the master's degree pilot study.

State government, local government and intervention

The nature of local government in Australia is argued to have partly resulted from the fact that the Australian Constitution does not formally recognise local government. In spite of attempts in 1974 and 1988 to change that status, the perceived lack of status of local government remains part of an ongoing debate (B. Grant & Dollery, 2012; Megarrity, 2011b; Planning Institute of Australia, N.d.).

Australian state governments determine their own local government and, of particular interest in this study, planning systems (Planning Institute of Australia, 2012). State planning systems across Australia are fairly similar with development applications (DAs) assessed against local plans or planning schemes by local government, and opportunity for public involvement (Cooper & Flehr, 2006). At the time of this study, the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) set out the development assessment processes in Queensland. The planning minister has the powers to call in development applications typically assessed by local government when, in the opinion of the minister, those applications are deemed to be of state significance (Williams & Maginn, 2012). It can be argued that this state intervention is legitimate, as land use and development control is a responsibility of state government; and local government a creation of the state (Williams, 1997). There is disagreement in the literature on whether or not state government intervention in local government planning affairs is justified.

Opposing arguments encountered in the literature state that government intervention in the local government planning, and thus the markets, goes against the philosophy of neoliberalism (Collits, 2015; C. Howlett et al., 2011). The state's desire for capital accumulation is cited as the reason for 'manipulating' the planning system (Cooper & Flehr, 2006; Megarrity, 2011b; Williams, 1997). An example is held to be the mining regions where the state benefits from mining royalties and large multi-national companies appear to exert influence over the state in an effort to get the state to manipulate the planning system. Cheshire et al. (2011) raise the point that intervention decisions often occur against the wishes of local government and the

local community who have no right of appeal. The lacking acknowledgement of local desires has led to the slogan *fukoku hinmin* (enrich the country, impoverish the people) in Japan (Cooper & Flehr, 2006), which can be argued to be applicable in Australia as well. State intervention may have benefits, such as addressing the greater good, boosting the economy or concentrating planning expertise (Cooper & Flehr, 2006), but it does not foster a community-oriented approach to development, nor does it contribute to stronger local government (Cooper & Flehr, 2006; Gurran, Austin, & Whitehead, 2014; S. Jones & Wiltshire, 2011). Government intervention is presented as justifiable under certain circumstances.

One such circumstance would be where the government intervenes to address housing crises. Cooper and Flehr (2006) state that housing stress justifies state government intervention. Gurran and Whitehead (2011) agree that poorer households need intervention where there are strong land constraints and the income distribution is uneven, a situation that existed in the case study town during the height of the last mining boom when a two-stream economy was clearly evident (Riley & Basson, 2011).

Concerns are not only raised about the outcomes and justification of government intervention, but also about the condition of local government and its ability to fulfil its role in more decentralised models such as localism, where local communities are expected to identify and utilise their own resources as a competitive advantage and the state government plays a less supportive role (Brown, 2007; Collits & Rowe, 2015; Kelly et al., 2009).

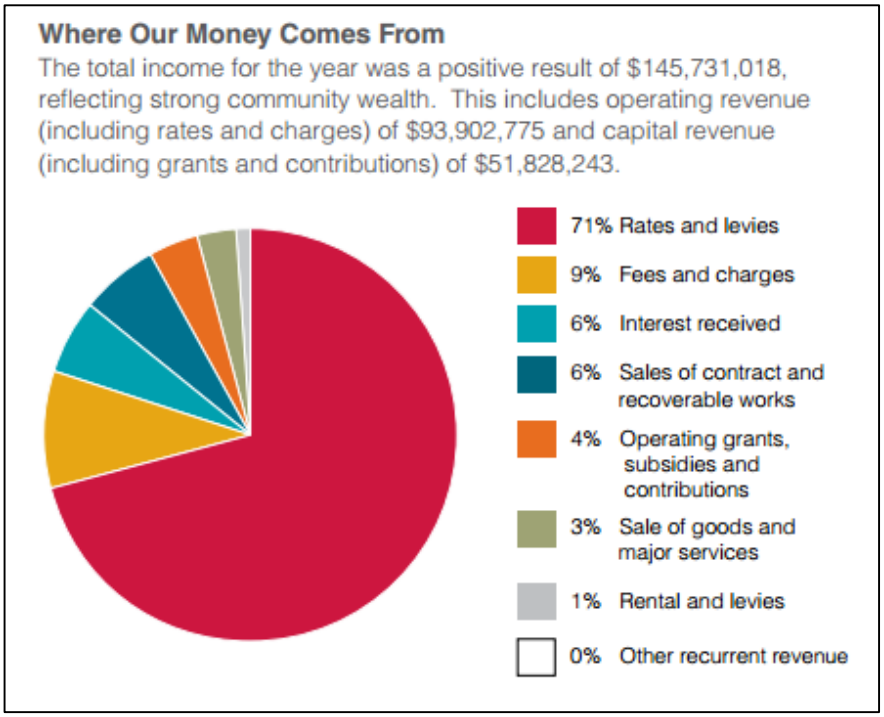
The role and condition of local government

As an institution, local government is seen as the cornerstone of Australia's democratic system (CPA Australia, 2005; Duniam & Eversole, 2013b; B. Grant & Dollery, 2012). Australian local governments are responsible for the well-being of their communities, but also accountable to state government (Argent, 2011b; Barnett, 2011). Local government reform over the last twenty years has changed local government functions (Cheshire et al., 2014). However, local governments are still labelled administrative units with limited functions (Brown, 2007; Collits, 2012a; B. Grant & Dollery, 2012; Gurran & Whitehead, 2011); and as politically oppressed by

state governments who resist the development of strong local governments (Brown, 2007; Collits, 2012b). This oppression is seen to occur in spite of the fact that local government has become increasingly important functionally, and that local governments often have greater credibility in communities than state government (Brown, 2007; Riley & Basson, 2011). However, Megarrity (2011a), disagrees, arguing that local councils do have a level of autonomy, but are nevertheless vulnerable to state directions, including financial support for local government, which in Australia is deemed lacking.

Australian local government is regarded as poorer than local government in comparable countries (Brown, 2007; Collits, 2012a; C. Howlett et al., 2011). Local government in the USA spends slightly more money than state government, and this figure is slightly less in Canada, but in Australia local government spends only one seventh of what state government spends (Brown, 2007). The 2002 Hawker Inquiry confirmed cost-shifting from state to local government, leading to an agreement to limit cost-shifting (Comrie, 2013b). However, local governments have reported ongoing cost-shifting (Cheshire et al., 2014; Collits, 2012b), and no fiscal mechanisms to raise additional funding, thus providing services in a financially restricted environment (Brown, 2007; Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a; Comrie, 2013a; B. Grant & Dollery, 2012, p. 399). The impact on local governments with large geographic bases and small populations has been even more severe (Comrie, 2013b), and applies to the Isaac Regional Council in this study. Local government revenue comes from three main sources: taxation, user charges as well as federal and state/territory government grants (Megarrity, 2011a). The small tax base makes local government dependent on state and Commonwealth subsidies, and even more so in regional areas, as can be seen in Figure 2-4 which reflects the income of the Isaac Regional Council (Isaac Regional Council, 2014b).

Figure 2-4 Example of local government income



Note. Reproduced from *Isaac Regional Council Annual Report 2013-2014* (p. 25), 2014, Isaac Regional Council: Moranbah, Australia. Copyright 2014 by Isaac Regional Council.

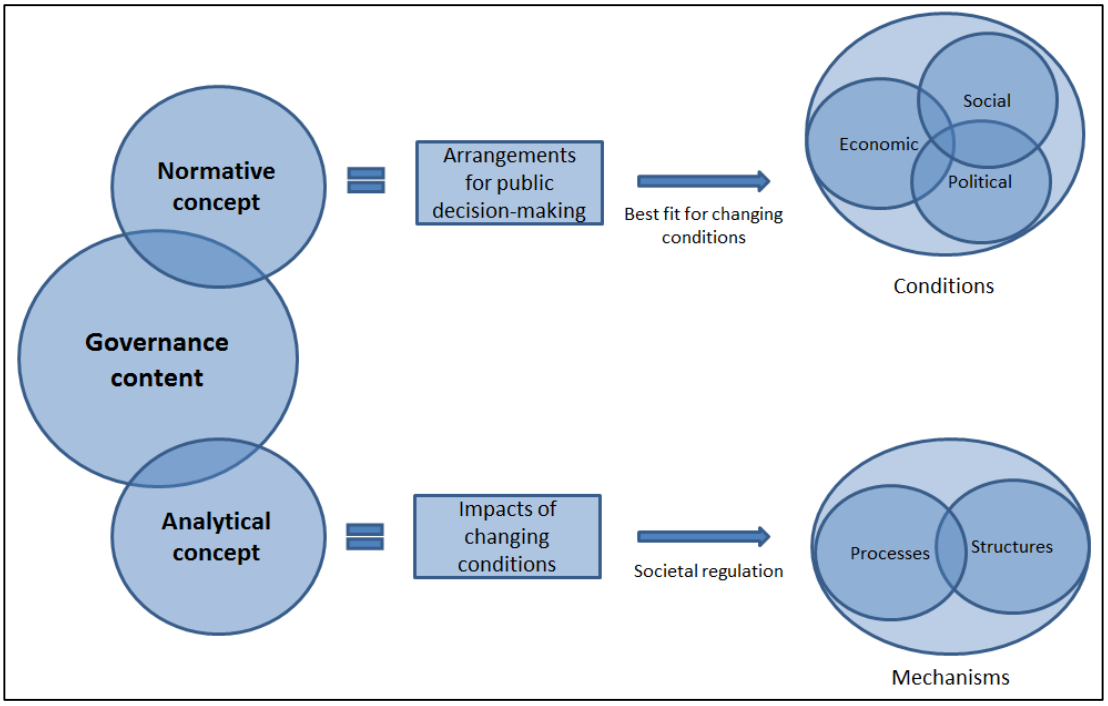
Regional areas have been subject to demographic, economic and political decline resulting from fifty years of Australian urbanisation, presenting regional local governments with significant challenges. These societal changes have impacted on all levels of the Australian government, but have also brought changes to the relation between government and governance (Duniam & Eversole, 2013a). The emergence and definition of governance is expanded in the next section, followed by a discussion of the notion of democracy and good governance.

2.3.3. Governance

The distinction between governance and government emerged in political discourse in the 1980s (José, 2008; Pillora, 2011; Rhodes, 1996; Stoker, 1998). Although José (2008) reports a neoliberal paradigm as the root of the current iteration of governance, various interpretations of governance can be found in the literature. For Nuissl and Heinrichs (2011a), governance consists of arrangements for public decision-making aimed at finding the best fit between political, social and economic conditions; whilst analytically it addresses how much changing conditions impact on societal regulation, as illustrated in Figure 2-5. This distinction between the

normative and analytical elements of governance is also evident in other definitions and explanations, from the earlier discourses to current opinions.

Figure 2-5 Normative and analytical facets of governance



Note. Compiled from *Fresh wind or hot air - does the governance discourse have something to offer spatial planning?* by H. Nuissl, and D. Heinrichs D, 2011, Journal of Planning Education and Research, 31(1), 47-59. Copyright 2011 by Sage Publishing.

Rhodes (1996, p. 652) defines governance as "'self-organising inter-organisational networks' [that] complement markets and hierarchies as governing structures for authoritatively allocating resources and exercising control and coordination". Different forms of governance are cited by different scholars (Cuthill & Fien, 2005; Haufler, 2003; Pillora & McKinley, 2011; Treib, Bähr, & Falkner, 2005), and governance models are impacted by various factors (Pillora & McKinley, 2011), including geographical scale (Agnew, 2013, p. 1). A main focus of this section of the literature review is regional governance, which will be discussed in more detail in a following section.

Governance is also characterised by interdependence, interaction and resource exchange, trust, and significant autonomy from the state. M. Howlett, Rayner, and Tollefson (2009) likewise describe what governance is and how it occurs: it is the mode of government coordination employed by state actors, and the type of

relationship established between governmental and non-governmental actors in the governing process. The autonomy granted from the state in a governance model is thus highlighted in their definition, as is the placement of any governance model on a spectrum of governing arrangements, which includes the institutional, political and regulatory dimensions of governance (M. Howlett et al., 2009). The outputs of governance are not different, but the process differs (Stoker, 1998). Nuissl and Heinrichs (2011b, p. 52) state that it is "the regulation of and decision making on publicly relevant affairs at the interface between the state, the private sector, and civil society" which implies joint government-civil society responsibility (Magis & Shinn, 2009; Morrison, 2014). The existence of collaborative "self-organising, inter-organisational networks" in governance is mentioned by several scholars (Bevir, 2011; Cheshire et al., 2011; José, 2008, p. 469; Pillora & McKinley, 2011; Stoker, 1998).

Critiquing the term, Pollit and Hupe (2011) label it an elite term used by academics, politicians and public officials. Other scholars conclude that governance lacks meaning and has become an umbrella term for any activity that does not fit under the formal institutional arrangements of government (Colebatch, 2009; Duit, Galaz, Eckerberg, & Ebbeson, 2010; Rhodes, 1997). José (2008) concedes that the meaning might be contested, but still argues that its position of influence is valid.

The discrepancy between these views may be indicative of the fact that governance has not been well-theorised, as claimed by Colebatch (2009), but it may also be due to the flexibility in governance models evidenced across the globe (Pillora, 2011). The following two themes were found to be common elements in the definitions or descriptions of governance though: the devolution of power to a network of actors, and the political nature of the power relationship in the devolution process. Devolution of power raises the issues of democracy and good governance, representation, and accountability, which are discussed next.

Democracy means 'rule by the people' emphasising that "anyone who has the potential to be harmed by a proposal should be part of the demos" (Moore, 2005, p. 127). Citizens are deemed entitled and able to govern themselves, and hence have to be included in governance processes (Carp, 2004; Karlsson & Nilholm, 2006). It is

argued that governance should direct economic development, protect from international market extremes, enforce accountability, and ensure that growth is sustainable and equitable (Magis & Shinn, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000). The notion of participatory democracy gave rise to the communicative and collaborative turn in planning that has dominated theoretical planning discourses since the 1970s (Allmendinger & Tewdr-Jones, 2002, p. 7; Healy, 2010). If a collaborative or communicative planning paradigm had been selected for this study, the focus of the study would have shifted and it is doubtful that the complexities and the depth of issues would have been exposed to the extent that it is here, by using the work of Lefebvre and a regional governance context. Lefebvre's work, spanning sixty years and a variety of topics, provides a coherent and comprehensive social, spatial, economic and political commentary that is highly relevant to this complex context. The historical context, which is viewed in this thesis to be crucial to understanding the phenomena encountered in the case study town, might have been overlooked if another paradigm had been chosen. Lefebvre does include participation in democratic processes in his theories, which raises the issue of how the quality of a governance model and processes can be ensured.

Good governance is the steering of society (Pollitt & Hupe, 2011) through broad stakeholder input and information sharing (Eversole & Martin, 2005c). The preceding opinions are echoed in the United Nations Development Program principles for good governance (Institute on Governance, 2015), which include:

- Legitimacy and voice entailing broad participation and consensus
- Direction; meaning strategic vision by both leaders and public, but also understanding of historical, cultural and social context
- Performance based on responsiveness in institutions and processes, effectiveness and efficiency
- Accountability of the decision-makers, transparency and free flow of information
- Fairness based on equity and rule of law.

The achievement of good governance principles is influenced by the governance type or mode, which impacts on the inclusivity, influence and the degree of formality of governance models (Eversole & Martin, 2005a; Williams & Maginn, 2012). Keim, Jähnke, Kühn, and Liebmann (2003) identified four governance modes, namely

intervention, negotiation, participation and auto-poetic, whilst Duit et al. (2010) referred to rigid, flexible, fragile or robust governance. It is clear from these classifications that different types or modes of governance exist and that notions of good governance will differ between, for example, intervention and participation. Duit and Galaz (2008) focus on the problem-solving capacity of existing multi-level governance systems in the face of change, rather than on good governance principles. They identify elements of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) which are linked to thresholds or tipping points where changes are irreversible (Duit & Galaz, 2008) and in this context, the problem-solving capacity of governance systems become more important than principles of good governance. The existence of the notion of 'good governance' implies a counter state of just 'governance'.

Attempts at good governance can be derailed, as devolution of power can threaten attachment to wealth, privilege and centralised power, and the process has the potential to become dominated by elite stakeholders (Stoker, 1998). Elite stakeholders are not the only stakeholders or actors that may impact on the quality of governance outcomes. Nyseth (2008) sees governance role-players as just as important as the arrangements, but cautions that private sector actors, including those from the voluntary and community sectors, are not democratically elected, and not accountable to elected representatives (Bevir, 2011; T. Jones & Ormston, 2014). Some good governance principles are adhered to through the inclusion of these stakeholders, but others such as accountability and performance might be impacted negatively. The nature of stakeholders is not the only force that may have a detrimental effect on governance.

Neoliberalism, as defined in section 2.2, is an enduring and powerful force in Australian governance, and will continue to present challenges to governance, for instance in the form of deregulation and state government intervention in local affairs (C. Howlett et al., 2011; S. Thompson & Maginn, 2012). In addition, the evolution of hybrid governance forms is argued to have resulted in an illusionary institutional form and an emergent institutional void, partly because of a lack of government activity and capacity (Morrison et al., 2012). Evans (2012, p. 112) adds an observed integrity paradox in Australian governance which currently prevents good enough governance, but also observes evolving frameworks that may become good enough

governance. Examples cited of frameworks to ensure good governance include Adaptive Governance, a framework for building resilience to cope with global change (Simonsen, 2010), and Multi-level Governance (MLG) models, employed in Canada (Hogan et al., 2015).

Governance that fosters resilience against global change is salient for a resource region, as global commodity prices fluctuate. How government and other role players position themselves to govern towards adaptability or sustainability is encompassed not only in government structures and directions, but also in the nature of regional governance. As briefly stated before, governance occurs at different geographical scales, and the scale of particular relevance in this study was a regional scale, with where the meaning of region follows the definitions introduced in Chapter 1, namely a non-metropolitan geographic area with a distinct sense of identity (Brown & Deem, 2014), and a spatial scale larger than a single local government, but smaller than a state (Brown & Deem, 2014; Collits, 2012b).

2.3.4. Regional governance

Regional governance was relevant to this study as the case study town is located in a distinct regional area of Queensland. In this section regional governance is introduced, followed by an overview on regional governance and regional development policy in Australia and localism as a regional governance approach.

Introduction to regional governance

The notion of a region, and hence regional governance, has particular significance beyond this study. 'Region' has gained importance in public policy over the last twenty years due to an international quest for regional identity, agency and autonomy, which in turn result from global impacts and threats to regional well-being (Brown, 2005b; Mayere & Donehue, 2013; Morrison et al., 2012). However, the multitude of social sciences fields across which 'region' is used obscures the clarity on what region, and hence regional governance, entail (Brown, 2005b; Buultjens, Ambrosoli, & Dollery, 2012; Rodríguez-Pose, 2013) resulting in attempts to define regional governance.

Morrison (2014, p. 102) defines regional governance as

> diverse but networked policy-making and implementation arrangements over time and scale, a view which is necessary because it includes both the self-organised and centrally-steered coordination of diverse institutional actors and instruments, and therefore an integrated focus on complex sets of relationships and instruments over space, level and time within a region.

Brown (2005b, p. 19) sees "regional governance [as] the combination of institutions, processes and relationships that govern economic, social and environmental decision-making at the regional scale." In essence, we are thus dealing with the way that government enables or hampers multi-level and multi-actor governance, as regional development policies are the government instruments used to guide development (Collits & Rowe, 2015), and specifically in this study an Australian region.

Regional governance and regional development policy in Australia

The strong international interest, since about 1990, in the impact of governance has not included scrutiny of the governance of regional Australia (Beer & Maude, 2005; Eversole & Martin, 2005c) or the social outcomes of regional governance models (Collits, 2015). Brown (2005b) sees this lack of interest as a reason for concern given that regional identity, agency and autonomy have been directly related to regional economic success in Europe and North America. In contrast, Australia has ongoing, unresolved regional governance issues (Brown, 2005b, 2007; Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Gross, 2015), many of which have a historical underpinning.

Tonts et al. (2012, p. 300) remind us that "insights from historical narratives, political economy, and evolutionary perspectives" are needed to understand the origin of regional ails. Their work on paths dependence sheds light on how historical events, whether political or evolutionary can dictate the future path of a region or community. Outcomes in a path dependence situation evolve as a consequence of a situation or case's own history. A historical perspective reveals that regional policy and governance have been part of Australian political history since 1788, but that the fit between regional and broader public policy structures has been poor (Brown, 2005b; Cockfield, 2015). Cockfield (2015) and Kelly et al. (2009) identify regional

policy layers with amended emphases, but without previous approaches being extinguished: approaches evolving from producer settlement and retention, to services equity, to decentralisation, and finally to self-sufficiency and adjustment. Four categories of problems have been identified from the literature as being the results of previous regional governance policy directions: lack of role clarity in government levels, lack of policy continuity, the nature of policy, and lack of regional governance structures.

The lack of role clarity in regional governance has been prevalent and has resulted in blame-shifting between the different levels of government (Collits, 2012b, 2015). Cockfield (2015) concurs, but reminds us that the states act as the central government tier in regional development, with national government coordinating the economic, industry and regional development policy and taxation. No provision is claimed to have been made in policy for acknowledging, or managing, the drivers for regional success, which vary and are often beyond the control of government, according to Collits (2015). The lack of continuity in regional development policy presents the second problem (Cockfield, 2015), which is ascribed to programs being abandoned during political change-overs (Kelly et al., 2009). The nature of regional development policy has been an issue as it has been focused on place prosperity rather than people prosperity, claimed Collits (2015). The fourth concern is the lack of a regional governance structure (Argent, 2011a, 2011b; Collits, 2012a, 2012b; Hogan et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2009). Explanations for the existence of these problems have also been offered in the literature.

A weak regional planning tradition was one of the most important shortcomings, which is ascribed by Buultjens et al. (2012) and Buxton (2013) to the urbanised nature of Australian society. The poor state of regional planning is of particular relevance in this study, as it impacts on the government-governance nexus as well as its social outcomes. The urbanised nature of Australia is elevated to a national identity by Tonts et al. (2012, p. 300) who claim that “Metropolitan Australia is mainstream Australia.”. This statement carries important implications for regional policy directions and initiatives. Regional problems can also be explained in terms of economic and social restructuring, which have undermined previous assumptions about the character of the regions, according to Morrison (2014). Collits and Rowe

(2015) see this restructuring in the context of ever-changing current realities, where unsuccessful government attempts at managing regional processes and outcomes have exposed fundamentally misconceived regional policy and strategy. They argue that regions have erroneously been regarded as fixed assets needing government support, resulting in regional strategy and policy becoming a political game around government funding. This politicking has included funding of regional institutions.

Regional institutions are not just formal government bodies, but exist across the public, private and voluntary spheres, and they include forms such as the local planning and environment courts, a regional land-use plan, and the local government (Morrison, 2014). Regional institutions have been seen to play a major role in regional development, and the responsibility of the state to enable bottom-up adoption of regional strategies (Eversole & Martin, 2005a; Morrison, 2014). Despite international recognition of the need for devolution of resources and power to enduring regional institutions, there has been an ongoing lack of regional institutional capacity and a legitimacy problem in Australia (Brown, 2005b). Without genuine transfer of power and resources these institutional arrangements have simply become another form of cost-shifting (Eversole & Martin, 2005a), as evidenced with the Australian Government Regional Development Australia (RDA) initiative, established in 2011. Alternatives to current regional development approaches have also been discussed in the literature.

The desirability of constitutional reform to allow removal of state and local government and to replace them with a regional governance structure has been debated (Argent, 2011a, 2011b; Collits, 2012b; Hogan et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2009; Riley & Basson, 2011). Local government is argued to be a logical building block for regional governance, especially because it has a state mandate for local democratic governance (Beer, 2011; Collits, 2012b). Devolution is a preferred option, but is unlikely, as Australian federalism is viewed to be geared against true devolution (Cockfield, 2015). Collits and Rowe (2015) prefer the application of the theory of relational regions in regional policy, as it considers porous regional borders and has been argued to enhance the effectiveness of policy interventions. This theory favours policies and strategies that strengthen nodes and connections, and it recognises functional economic areas. It thus aligns with Eversole and Martin's (2005b) belief

that the way local issues are linked within and between regions, and to larger contexts, affects regional development outcomes. How these preferences are aligned with expectations of future regional governance models has also been debated.

Brown (2005b) does not expect a return to an approach where total spending in the economy strongly influences economic output. The reason stated for this is widespread dissatisfaction with the free-market approach of the government, which has left regional development vulnerable to market forces. Cockfield (2015) concludes that decentralisation will remain a discussion point, with large expenditure on infra-structure to deal with shallow regional labour markets. Discussion about direct funding to the regions is also expected to continue, but with no serious devolution of finances and responsibility from state government to local government. The numerous regional issues in Australia have prompted Collits (2012a) to pragmatically ask whose responsibility regional well-being and development is; what government policies can do about the drivers in regional area; what has worked in the past and at what cost; what instances should trigger government intervention and to what extent; and if there are geographical areas in which government should intervene. In many cases, it appears as if this responsibility is placed at the door of local communities, which can be seen as a specific result of a localism policy approach to regional development.

Regional governance and localism

Localism is centred on the self-sufficiency of regional communities who have to competitively mobilise local assets and resources (Argent, 2011a; Brown, 2005b; Hogan et al., 2015; C. Howlett et al., 2011). The current western iteration of localism emphasises the devolution of power to the community level (T. Jones & Ormston, 2014), enabling participative regional governance (Hogan et al., 2015).

Australia has adopted localism from Europe, and has developed it into a place-centred localism policy focused on regional Australia (Eversole & Martin, 2005c; Hogan et al., 2015), moving Australian regional policy from a centralist model to "New Regionalism" (Eversole & Martin, 2005c, p. 2). Where in the past the focus was on sub-regions as "engines of economic growth", the conceptual focus is now on residents and on more pluralistic regional development approaches with more local

control (Eversole & Martin, 2005c, pp. 1-2). Borrowing localism policy was necessitated by what Gray and Lawrence (2001, p. 245) have called the "global misfortune of regional Australia", where regional communities are subject to disadvantaging global economic and political processes putting them in constrained economic situations. State governments saw localism as a mechanism to avoid supporting these regional communities from the state budget, as a surplus budget has become a measure of good governance (Cockfield, 2015). The result has been that the Australian government has been perceived to be unsympathetic to regional ails, although some of the drivers behind a localism agenda could be deemed to simply be the limits of state intervention (Cockfield, 2015; Eversole & Martin, 2005e). Given that localism shifts responsibility for economic well-being to the local communities, it also has an impact on local government as a local stakeholder or actor.

The role of Australian local government has been changed by the localism approach from service provision to economic development (Gurran et al., 2014). As such, localism puts pressure on local government resulting in capacity issues (T. Jones & Ormston, 2014). Australian local government was already formally, financially and politically weaker by comparable international standards (Brown, 2007; Collits, 2015; Riley & Basson, 2011), and hence has been deemed to be constrained in its ability to adopt a strong role in a localism framework. On the other hand, in a localism model local government is argued to not be the sole agent of place, thus dictating the creation of new local governance approaches (Duniam & Eversole, 2013b). The role of different stakeholders has also been reported to be a positively contributing factor in localism, subject to certain conditions being met.

Five provisos for successful localism have been encountered in the literature: first, a "multi-actor and multi-level governance environment" (Hogan et al., 2015; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008, p. 68); second, governance processes, as markets do not guarantee the welfare of communities but are accountable to shareholders (Hogan & Young, 2015); third, mitigation of negative impacts on local government from localism (T. Jones & Ormston, 2014); fourth, a multi-pronged approach as the success of a purely 'localist' strategy is unlikely (Eversole & Martin, 2005b; Hogan et al., 2015); and last, the creation or presence of regional industries as they can generate an economic foundation for communities (Hogan et al., 2015). In spite of these provisos aimed at

greater success for localism, other forms of critique have been encountered in the literature.

Criticism against localism includes policy borrowing, government inability, breaching of social contracts, development guarantees, and community capacity. The effectiveness of policy borrowing is questioned by Gurran, et al. (2014) who view original localism policy to be authentic, but borrowed policy rhetorical. Brown (2005b) accuses government of trying to make a virtue of their own inability; retreating and shifting responsibilities to local communities without revenue-raising capacity (Hogan et al., 2015). Individuals, producers and communities are expected to be self-sufficient, which is reported as a breach of the social contract between country and city (Cockfield, 2015; Hogan & Young, 2015). Hogan et al. (2015) warn that access to economic resources does not guarantee regional development. Localist policy assumes community access and capacity to utilise local assets (Hogan et al., 2015). Small communities do not typically have the capacity to exploit resources, but rely on external parties to do so, meaning that generated wealth largely leaks from the region (Hogan et al., 2015).

The duality in the arguments for and against localism is summed up by Beer, Clower, Haughtow, and Maude (2005, p. 54) who observe that regional development in Australia has been subjected to pressures for "less intervention in regional economies and local demand for more assistance". This statement is particularly true for the government and governance models encountered in a regional mining community where there is both demand for more assistance and less intervention (Riley & Basson, 2011).

2.3.5. Government-governance and regional mining towns

Federal government is deemed unsuccessful in advancing regional priorities, apart from exposing the need to federally address the impacts of the mining sector to ensure a "sustainable legacy for regional Australia from this inherently time-bound industry" (Everingham & Franks, 2015, p. 295). The federal coordination efforts are seen to have been hampered by the states' ownership of resources and their administrative powers (Everingham & Franks, 2015) as mining companies in Australia have legislative rights outside of traditional land-use arrangements.

The governance of mining activities falls under Federal resource legislations, such as the *Mineral Resource Act 1989 and Petroleum and Gas Act 2004*, but not under standard state government land use and land development legislation, such as the Queensland *Sustainable Planning Act2009* (Mayere & Donehue, 2013). In Queensland, the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* was added to the raft of planning instruments to deal specifically with land use conflicts between agricultural and resources sectors (Queensland State Government, 2014). Although the states have legislative responsibility over mining matters, no clear roles have been assigned in regional frameworks for resource regions (Everingham & Franks, 2015). This lack of role clarity allegedly leads to mining interests capturing the regional development agenda, with state government agreements favouring mining companies (Everingham & Franks, 2015; Morrison et al., 2012). Local government is impacted by these legislative arrangements pertaining to mining, as they impact on land use.

The existence of a parallel system of land-use governance, with the capacity to override existing local government planning schemes, is argued to fundamentally undermine local government (Mayere & Donehue, 2013). Queensland regional councils have a limited say in mining-related activities, instead typically attempting to manage the impacts of mining activities (Cheshire et al., 2011; Moffat & Zhang, 2014). A lack of financial power hampers their ability to provide infrastructure and services to their communities (Argent, 2011b), including to transient workers who are not counted as residents in the Estimated Resident Population in the Commonwealth and state funding models (Morrison et al., 2012). The financial constraints are exacerbated by the appropriation of land-rent revenues and royalties from extractive industries by the state and federal governments (Mayere & Donehue, 2013). The existing governance structures in regional communities are argued to be weak, necessitating involvement from the mining companies in governance (Cheshire et al., 2011).

In addition to the parallel planning system for the mining sector as land use, there have also been instances of government intervention in land use and development in regional mining towns in Queensland that have been described as interventionist or at least an example of a parallel planning process (S. Jones & Wiltshire, 2011;

Nicholls, 2012). Alleviating housing stress was the intention of the then Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) intervention in Moranbah in 2010 (Riley & Basson, 2011). The creation of agencies like the ULDA is deemed proof that existing planning systems are ineffective (Nicholls, 2012). Unlike the UK, Australian success by authorities such as the ULDA has been limited, arguably pointing to the need to enable local authority involvement in the provision of affordable housing (Gurran & Whitehead, 2011), which aligns with international arguments for more decentralised governance modes (Khan, 2008).

There appears to be limited research on the growing governance role of the Australian mining industry (Cheshire et al., 2011; Morrison et al., 2012). North-American and Canadian research has revealed that resource companies' involvement in governance has resulted in multi-scalar, diverse governance arrangements (Lawrie et al., 2011). Certain parallels can be drawn with the Australian context (Polèse, 2013). In many Australian regions, multi-national mining companies have been operating for extended periods and are regarded as having become part of the local social fabric (Cheshire et al., 2011; Storey, 2001). Local governance arrangements that include mining companies vary from partnerships to corporate patronage (Cheshire et al., 2011) but are underpinned by common reasons. First, the 2004-2013 boom (also referred to as the last boom in this thesis) resulted in an increased demand for mining-related infrastructure and allegedly necessitated mining company involvement. The second reason is the mining industry's acknowledgment of social responsibilities (Cheshire et al., 2011; Morrison et al., 2012) as well as social licence, the ongoing acceptance and approval of a mining companies' activities by local stakeholders (Moffat & Zhang, 2014). The third reason refers to the changed priorities of the state, and the expectation that non-state stakeholders will participate in governance to attain policy objectives (Cheshire et al., 2011). Not only is there participation in governance by the mining companies, but also fear of domination by the mining companies.

The popular concern that mining dominates the Australian society, economy and political system persists, according to Everingham and Franks (2015). Regions are reported to have missed out on mining-related benefits with the people claiming that their interests are not protected by federal and state government (Everingham &

Franks, 2015; Gross, 2015). There is a fly-over effect of the economic benefits derived from mining, where local communities are excluded from the benefits, but subjected to the negative impacts (Storey, 2001). Hugo (2011) adds that mining is not a good basis for permanent settlement. Mining-dependent regional communities are exposed to national and global impacts (Maclean, Cuthill, & Ross, 2013) which implies that the benefits that accrue as a result of mining activities do not necessarily result in enduring communities. In an era of constant change, communities in many regional areas are facing an uncertain future (Gross, 2015). It is argued that mining companies should help prepare communities for the post-mining times, through a system of local governance based on partnerships with the state, community groups and other relevant stakeholders (Cheshire et al., 2011).

2.3.6. Where to from here: government, governance and regional governance

Although the literature does not reveal a generally agreed upon definition for governance, it is evident that the concept is deemed to hold value, especially the position of influence or value of governance (Stoker, 1998). As to the value of governance, three viewpoints can be observed in the literature: first, those who see it as lacking meaning (Colebatch, 2009; Rhodes, 1997); second those who regard it as being elitist (Pollitt & Hupe, 2011); and third those who stress the importance of governance (Bevir, 2011; Cheshire et al., 2014; Cheshire et al., 2011; José, 2008; Pillora & McKinley, 2011; Stoker, 1998). In the last group, one of the main positions shows a focus on the importance of governance networks.

Governance can manifest in different modes (Eversole & Martin, 2005e; Keim et al., 2003). There appears to be consensus on transfer of power to actors, or networks of actors from non-governmental sectors (Bevir, 2011; Cheshire et al., 2011; José, 2008; Stoker, 1998) with the danger of handing over power to the elite being raised (Nyseth, 2008; Pollitt & Hupe, 2011). The economic focus of state government is a common thread, particularly as it pertains to Queensland (P. Grant & Basson, 2014; Steele & Dodson, 2014).

There appears to be no consensus on the acceptability, or the likelihood of success, of a localism agenda. Those who ascribed value to localism did so with the inclusion

of provisos (Brown, 2005b; Cockfield, 2015; Gurran et al., 2014; Gurran & Whitehead, 2011; Hogan et al., 2015). Whilst authors such as Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) see successful implementation of a localism agenda as determined by multi-actor and multi-level governance, Hogan et al. (2015) place a stronger focus on self-determination as a prerequisite for success, even to the extent that a community can come to the conclusion that there is in fact no viable future for that community. The pressure localism policy places on local government and the need to strengthen local government is discussed by several authors (Argent, 2011b; Brown, 2005b; Collits, 2012a; Megarrity, 2011b; Riley & Basson, 2011).

Several gaps are reported in the literature. Several scholars have confirmed a lack of research on the social outcomes of regional governance models, including localism (Collits, 2012a, 2015; Eversole & Martin, 2005a; 2012; Hogan et al., 2015). Given the reported vulnerability of regional communities to national and global impacts (Maclean et al., 2013), it stands to reason that more research on the success, or otherwise, of government attempts at regional development and well-being is warranted. Localism is a policy direction that places a significant responsibility on these vulnerable communities (T. Jones & Ormston, 2014) and knowledge on its impact is argued to be essential. Grant and Dollery (2012) report a lack of research on the autonomy of regional local governments, which may result from the lack of research on the political complexity of regional governance arrangements (Ruming & Gurran, 2014; W. Wilson & Basson, 2012). Given the burden placed on local government in a localism policy agenda, it can be argued that more autonomous regional local governments would be better positioned to respond to the market, and that a lack of research on this aspect would be detrimental both to local government practice and state government decision-making in terms of policy directions.

For this study, the viewpoint was adopted that local government is constrained financially and functionally, and therefore vulnerable to state government policy directions (Brown, 2005a, 2007; Cheshire et al., 2014; Cheshire et al., 2011; Collits, 2012b, 2015; Collits & Rowe, 2015; P. Grant & Basson, 2014). This constraint is acknowledged in recommendations flowing from the study. The construct of regions with porous borders (Collits, 2015; Collits & Rowe, 2015) is accepted, as well as the notion of the important role of local government in regional planning (P. Grant &

Basson, 2014; Gurran et al., 2014; Ruming & Gurran, 2014; Ruming, Gurran, Maginn, & Goodman, 2014).

The view that state government intervention in local government planning affairs undermines the demos of citizens was accepted for this study. This viewpoint is based on the notion that anyone who can be impacted by decisions should be part of the demos (Cooper & Flehr, 2006; Drew, Kortt, & Dollery, 2014; S. Jones & Wiltshire, 2011; Moore, 2005; Nicholls, 2012).

This study argues that local government plays an important role in community-initiated and community-led development (Gurran et al., 2014; Gurran & Whitehead, 2011; Ruming & Gurran, 2014; Ruming et al., 2014). It also veers away from Eversole and Martin's (2005a) opinion that the state view of the regions as engines of economic growth is something of the past; and holds that it is still evident.

The study builds on the work of Duit et al. (2010) who advocate for the adoption of a new focus in governance discourse, away from the character of governance, to its problems-solving capacity during change.

This review of the government and governance literature has directed this research in the following four main areas. First, it confirms a lack of research on the social outcomes of regional governance models. For this study the lack of research means that the role of the different actors or stakeholders was not clear. This in turn necessitated the inclusion in the study of all possible local groups of governance stakeholders, including the mining companies. Second, it confirms the importance of the concept of governance, and specifically regional governance, as a focal point for this study, despite a lack of an agreed upon definition for governance. This means that the point of departure of this study is that governance is important in a democracy and so are representation, participation and accountability of those in power. This importance of these constructs is reflected in the research questions and the research design. Third, the poor regional planning tradition in Australia was observed to be one of the major components impacting on the condition of the regions and ties in with the urban and regional planning, or land use and development focus of this study. It has assisted in the delineation of the boundaries

of the research problem and the research design, focusing on land development in and urban and regional planning context. Fourth, the discrepancies between a state government localism approach and state government intervention in local government planning highlights the need to investigate the outcomes of both the localism approach and state government intervention in practice.

The first main point above, derived from the literature on government and governance, mentions social outcomes. Social outcomes are embedded in social sustainability discourses and are addressed in detail in the next section.

2.4. Social sustainability

Differing viewpoints on defining sustainability are discussed. The relevance of social sustainability to this study is explained against the background of the enduring lack of social sustainability research. How to determine and report on social outcomes, with or without the use of indicators and frameworks is investigated briefly. Perspectives on the relationship between governance and social sustainability are presented. In the concluding remarks, the social sustainability principles adopted for this research are justified.

2.4.1. Introduction - defining (social) sustainability

Social sustainability is by default included in the debate on the fundamentality of sustainability (Centre for Urban Policy Studies & Department of Town and Regional Planning, 2008; Hanberger, 2011; Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008), and there is an overlap between sustainability and social sustainability in this section which deals with how sustainability and social sustainability are defined.

Apart from the *1987 Brundtland Report* definition of sustainable development as development that "meet[s] the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1999, p. 1), there has been no generally agreed upon definition of sustainability. Sustainable development is one of the aims of urban and regional planning, and land development, and it is important to identify and understand the outcomes of development (Campbell, 1996). The reason for this importance is that knowledge on outcomes informs best practice and guides sustainability, be it economic, environmental, or the focus area in this study, social. The concept of sustainable development originated in the 1960s from systems theory wherein environment, society and economy were deemed to be interrelated elements of a larger system (Magis & Shinn, 2009). The lack of a common definition is not lamented by all scholars.

Fien (2010) argues that it is unnecessary to have an exact definition of sustainability, as it encompasses dynamic processes and specific contexts rather than a destination. Others view the dynamic nature of change as the reason why there are no agreed steps towards a sustainable future (Centre for Urban Policy Studies & Department of

Town and Regional Planning, 2008; Hanberger, 2011), whilst the nature of sustainability has been put forward as a reason for the lack of a common definition.

McKenzie (2004, p. 21) states that the absence of a common definition is "a natural part of the sustainability agenda". Sustainability is described as a normative principle that can be applied using a working definition for social sustainability such as "social sustainability is: a life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition." (McKenzie, 2004, p. 12). The emphasis in this definition is on a process to achieve sustainability, and McKenzie provides a series of indicators that describe the condition of sustainability, including a warning against focusing on sustainability as a condition. Two common elements are encountered in social sustainability definitions: social sustainability as a current or desired condition; and as an asset associated with the notion of social capital.

Other scholars do not subscribe to this normative approach, instead trying to improve existing definitions. Hutchins and Sutherland (2008, p. 1688) define sustainability as the

> design and operation of human and industrial systems to ensure that humankind's use of natural resources and cycles do not lead to diminished quality of life due to either losses in future economic opportunities or to adverse impacts on social conditions, human health and the environment.

This definition refers to elements of social sustainability but here it is *intertwined* with economic and environmental sustainability.

Stren and Polése (2000, p. 15) provide a more comprehensive definition of social sustainability as

> Development (and/or growth) that is compatible with harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvements in the quality of life for all segments of the population.

The City of Vancouver (CoV) (2005) definition reveals the notion of building blocks, with certain criteria for social sustainability being prerequisites for others, for example, housing is a prerequisite for capacity building.

> A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future.
>
> (i) Basic needs such as housing and sufficient income that must be met before capacity can develop
>
> (ii) Individual or human capacity or opportunity for learning or self-development
>
> (iii) Social or community capacity for the development of community organisations, networks that foster interaction.
>
> Guiding principles
>
> (i) Equity
>
> (ii) Social inclusion and interaction
>
> (iii) Economic security
>
> (iv) Adaptability (City of Vancouver, 2005, p. 3).

The CoV definition is seen as more than a definition. Colantonio (2010) regards the definition as a pioneering social sustainability framework; one where a confined geographic scale (reminiscent of Stren and Polése's (2000) physical context) is tied in with social inclusion and interaction. The combination of context and local knowledge is also evident in the work of Magis (2010) and Ames (2006), both highlighting the importance of local and traditional knowledge. Ames adds the capacity of communities to deal with change (termed adaptability in the VoC guiding principles (Ames, 2006). In Magis'(2010) framework, a range of responses, from adaptation to transformation, can be measured. Maclean et al. (2013) add the importance of communities' adaption in terms of government policy and management responses. It was accepted for this study that both local context and knowledge are important (McKenzie, 2004; Stren & Polése, 2000).

The presentation of the preceding definitions is not an attempt to cover the complete range of definitions, but they have been included to underline McKenzie's (2004)

and Sutton's (2000) opinion that context is more important than wording. A range of contexts mentioned in the literature has been identified, including disciplinary (Colantonio, 2010; Murphy, 2012), local geographical (McKenzie, 2004); local policy (Stren & Polése, 2000); and substantive and procedural (Boström, 2012a). Sutton (2000) also holds that sustainability is about sustaining something, revealed as the focus of concern (M. Davidson, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000; Sutton, 2000). Given the nature of social sustainability as presented in the literature, the next point to consider is why and how social sustainability is important to this study.

The importance ascribed to social sustainability extends from scholarly views that social sustainability is as important as economic or environmental sustainability, a notion attributed to the resurfacing of a neoliberal ideology (M. Davidson, 2009). Cuthill (2010) deems environmental problems to be social problems, and economics as meant to serve the people; a view in line with *Principle 1 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Magis & Shinn, 2009). The significance of social sustainability is echoed in McKenzie's (2004) statement that at least a basic level of sustainability should be achieved simultaneously in all three pillars. Magis and Shinn (2009, p. 1) add a normative view, stating that "the necessity of maintaining society confers Social Sustainability with intrinsic value". This status assigned to social sustainability does not necessarily reflect reality, as can be seen from the following viewpoints.

Concern about the continuing lack of research on social sustainability is evident (Boström, 2012a; Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009), arguably resulting in a lack of theoretical conception (Colantonio, 2010; Cuthill, 2010; K. Davidson, 2010; M. Davidson, 2009; Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008). Another concern revealed in the literature is the ongoing focus on social aspects rather than social sustainability (Colantonio, 2010), despite the existence of a mature body of social well-being research that could have been extended into social sustainability research (Boström, 2012a). This well-being research comprises three traditions: Human Centred Development, Sustainability and Community Well-being (Magis & Shinn, 2009); and four universal principles, namely human well-being, equity, democratic government and democratic civil society, which Magis and Shinn (2009) saw as central constituents of social sustainability. A third concern reported is that the "low

profile" of social sustainability applies also to bureaucrats and governance processes (Boström, 2012a; Cuthill, 2010, p. 364; O' Riordan, 2012) which is of particular relevance in this study as it deals with governance and government. The poor profile is ascribed to the likelihood that the term social sustainability has been so "abused that it no longer has political meaning" (O' Riordan, 2012, p. 1), in addition to being difficult to operationalize (Boström, 2012a). The lack of status of social sustainability has also been linked to living in an age of austerity, which compounds the tendency of politicians and bureaucrats to focus on economic development (O' Riordan, 2012). Such a focus ignores the planetary boundaries and the social floor above which it is safe to operate, resulting in social injustices (Raworth, 2011). This study attempts to contribute to that lack of knowledge and effort to address the low status of social sustainability, here focusing more specifically on social outcomes.

Social sustainability and social outcomes are linked in the main research question for this study: the social outcomes of the government-governance nexus in resource regions. Social outcomes are embedded in the wider social sustainability context: 'outcome' means result, while 'social' means that such results pertain to people and notions of equity. The notion of social outcomes is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.4.2. Understanding social outcomes

Outcomes are changes that result from actions or programs and are not always visible. In addition to problems measuring outcomes, it can be a challenge to distinguish between outputs, which are specific, intermediate steps; and outcomes, which are more vaguely defined changes. Wong (2011) also explains that a series of outputs could, over time or in large geographical areas, form or contribute to an outcome.

The social outcomes of programs, actions or development are reported using social reporting, a term used to describe a wide range of approaches used for reporting (Maughan, 2012) in order to provide a basis for informed understanding (Cuthill et al., 2008). Social reporting literature has evolved since the 1960s, shifting from the original emphasis on conventional measures as reporting tools to social reporting frameworks (Boström, 2012a; Ross, Cuthill, Maclean, Jansen, & Witt, 2010).

Understanding outcomes has shed light on factors that contribute to positive social outcomes.

One example that appears to result in positive social outcomes is greater social capital. This viewpoint has led Cuthill (2010) to view social capital as a theoretical starting point for social sustainability. Magis (2010) describes social capital as the ability and willingness of community members to participate in actions directed at community objectives.

Given the aim of this study it was necessary to investigate what social outcomes are, as opposed to outputs and impacts, and also how they are reported. Clarifying the concept of social outcomes and its characteristics has served as guidance during the thematic analysis of the data. The focus in this study is on less measurable social outcomes as reported qualitatively by the participants, rather than more measurable social outcomes such as divorce rates, income, and suicides that are used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The focus is not on the use of indicators and indicator frameworks, as indicators are deemed to be not as effective in ascertaining less tangible outcomes (Centre for Urban Policy Studies & Department of Town and Regional Planning, 2008; Wong, 2011) but on key themes (Murphy, 2012). No attempt has been made at measuring outcomes, as this study is exploratory and descriptive.

Instead, Most Significant Change (MSC), a monitoring and reporting technique described by Maughan (2012), was adapted. It uses participatory evaluation to collect significant change stories (here using the individual interviews and the individual timelines) from people engaged in programs, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by selected panels (here a thematic analysis followed by member checks during the community workshop). MSC does not use pre-defined indicators and was deemed more suited to a type of monitoring that focuses on learning rather than on financial accountability (Davies & Dart, 2005) as was the case in this exploratory study. It was also described as an appropriate tool when organisations (or researchers) are interested in the effect of an intervention on people's lives. MSC provide information about impact and outcomes that can be

used to help assess the performance of a program as a whole (governance models for regions) (Davies & Dart, 2005). MSC works well when programs are

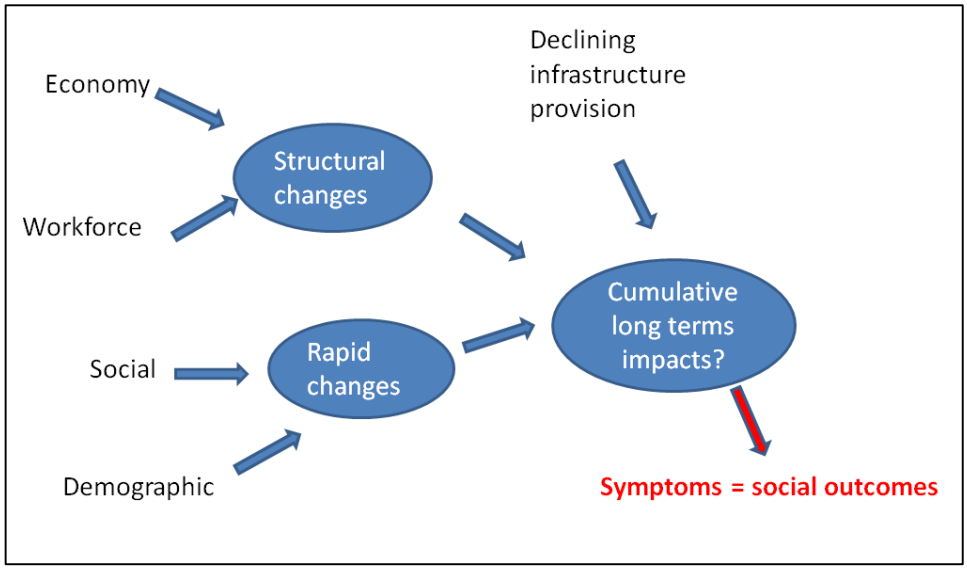
- Complex and produce diverse and divergent outcomes
- Large with numerous organisational layers
- Focused on social change
- Participatory in ethos
- Designed with repeated contact between field staff and participants
- Struggling with conventional monitoring systems

If social sustainability is desired, questions arise about how actions are focused and organised around that goal, even if the goal is viewed more as a process than as a condition. Part of the answer on how to achieve social sustainability appears to lie in the links between social sustainability and governance.

2.4.3. Social sustainability and governance

The link between social sustainability and governance basically entails how attaining social sustainability is managed and by whom (Boström, 2012a). This link is not static over time. Cuthill (2010) has analysed ongoing trends in sustainability over thirty years, showing how societal and technological changes have impacted on social sustainability. Economic and workforce changes have brought about structural changes to society, and rapid social and demographic changes. At the same time, there has been declining provision of social infrastructure, which, together with the structural and rapid changes, results in certain symptoms, as can be seen in red in Figure 2-6. This lack of attention to social infrastructure is argued to have resulted in negative social, economic and local governance outcomes; and it raises questions on the links between governance and social sustainability.

Figure 2-6 Social outcomes



Note. Compiled from *Strengthening the 'Social' in Sustainable Development: Developing a Conceptual Framework for Social Sustainability in a Rapid Urban Growth Region in Australia* by M. Cuthill, 2010, *Sustainable Development*, 18, 362-373. Copyright 2010 by The Canadian Centre of Science and Education.

When the Brundtland Report definition of sustainable development was publicised, it had a global focus (UNECE, 2015). Since then, sustainability has become part of the mainstream political debate and urban policy discourses (Cuthill, 2010; M. Davidson, 2009). According to Scoones (2010), sustainability refers to an area where science and politics overlap, and it is in this contested boundary area where policy making occurs, impacting on the emergence of governance models. There are arguments in the literature that sustainability has become political and normative because of the question of what it is that communities want to sustain, which once again implies links between social sustainability and governance (M. Davidson, 2009; Munda, 2006; Stren & Polése, 2000). Not all scholars subscribe to the view of governing for social sustainability as being something recent.

Layard (2002) disagrees that social sustainability is a recent aim, stating that governments have been striving to ensure objectives such as happiness since the Enlightenment, but that measuring and sustaining these objectives are more recent activities. Holman (2009), for example, questions on how governance have been incorporated into indicator research. Colantonio (2010) expands this argument, stating that the current debate is about the role of governments and policymakers in the delivery of social sustainability objectives. This role of government includes

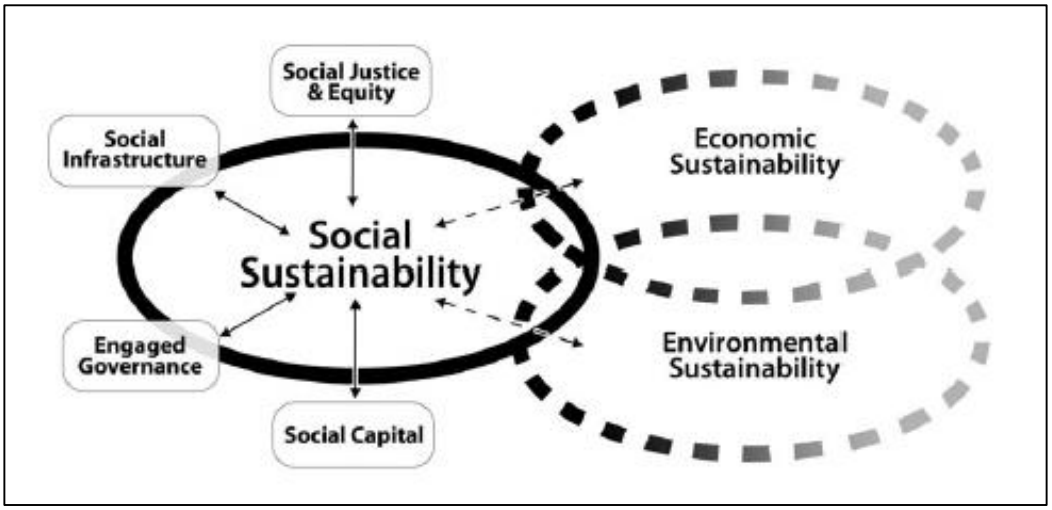
governance models and the delegation of power it allows in its quest to achieve social outcomes.

These changes in views on social sustainability, and the role of governance in striving towards such social sustainability, are reflected in the challenges faced by governance sectors that Boström (2012a) highlights:

1) High expectations
2) Vague and subjective ideological framing
3) Historical roots that enable better framing of environmental rather than social issues
4) Missing institutional linkages
5) Global capitalism
6) Relationship between the procedural and substantive dimensions of social sustainability (Boström, 2012a, p. 12).

One shortcoming of this list is that it does not include plurality of individuals or societies, a point taken into consideration by other scholars (M. Davidson, 2009; Munda, 2006; Stren & Polése, 2000). One form of governance that is argued to make provision for plurality is engaged governance. From a methodological perspective, Cuthill (2003) argues that social infrastructure, capital, and justice and equity rely heavily on engaged governance processes. At a regional level, engaged governance revolves around collaborative or shared leadership approaches to regional decision-making (Horlings & Padt, 2013; Maclean et al., 2013). Engaged governance thus becomes a foundation for social sustainability, together with social infrastructure, social justice and equity, and social capital (Cuthill, 2010) as illustrated in Figure 2-7.

Figure 2-7 Conceptual framework for social sustainability showing the role of engaged governance



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In this framework, social justice and equity represent the ethical imperative for striving towards social sustainability. The provision, or lack thereof, represents the operational perspective. Engaged governance is proposed as an inclusive approach towards the work done to attain social sustainability, whilst social capital is the theoretical starting point for the process. Engaged governance implies the involvement of government in the attainment of social sustainability, but government is not the only role player.

The increased impact of private business enterprises on communities through new forms of governance illuminates the notion of corporate social sustainability. Given the prominent role occupied by the business sector in the case study community, this was particularly relevant. Companies can be "institutional mainstays within communities, supporting discretionary activities such as philanthropic donations, healthcare, childcare, and educational opportunities" (Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008, p. 1689). Hutchins and Sutherland (2008), as well as Kleine and Von Hauff (2009) state that the limited literature on corporate sector social sustainability focuses on legislative health and safety issues, rather than normative outcomes. Székely and Knirsch (2005) conclude that corporate social sustainability efforts are limited to philanthropic initiatives and labour practices, raising questions about the expectations society has of the private sector's contribution towards a sustainable

society. Gond et al. (2011) focus on the governance aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), where it is associated with innovative opportunities for business involvement in governance as well as opportunities for government to use CRS for governance purposes.

2.4.4. Conclusion to social sustainability

There appears to be a general consensus in the literature that social sustainability has been neglected in governance, with limited attention paid to social aspects rather than social sustainability (Boström, 2012a; Colantonio, 2010; Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009). Recent arguments in terms of the importance, and the normative and political nature, of the concept appears to be consistent (Centre for Urban Policy Studies & Department of Town and Regional Planning, 2008; Cuthill, 2010; M. Davidson, 2009; Hanberger, 2011; Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008; Layard, 2002; O' Riordan, 2012; Scoones, 2010). O'Riordan's (2012) statement that the term has lost political meaning due to a lack of theoretical clarity is deemed to be significant, considering the arguments that there is an obligation on government to govern for social sustainability (Cuthill, 2010; Holman, 2009). Yet, there is evidence of the emergence of a body of literature on the role of non-governmental actors in governance (Boström, 2012a; Colantonio, 2010; Holman, 2009; O' Riordan, 2012). These arguments point to a need for research on the links between governance and social sustainability, particularly focusing on the role of a wider variety of role players in governance, as the role of non-governmental role players has mainly received attention in the literature.

Areas of inconsistency in the literature firstly relate to causality between the lack of research and theoretical clarity. The dearth of research was considered to be the result of a lack of clear theoretical direction (Colantonio, 2010; M. Davidson, 2009; Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008), but also of difficulties in measuring social outcomes (Sutton, 2000). It can be argued that an approach not focused on measuring outcomes, such as this study, can thus make a significant contribution to the research that is lacking.

A second area of inconsistency was the need and desirability for a general definition. It was evident that a blanket definition would not capture the uniqueness of political

and geographical contexts (Fien, 2010; McKenzie, 2004; Sutton, 2000). Stren and Polése (2000) attempt to bring greater conceptual clarity, whilst McKenzie (2004) argued for a working definition for each context to provide contextual clarity. Scholars who prefer not to use a definition for social sustainability at all, typically advocated the use of indicator frameworks (Becker, 2007; Colantonio, 2010). In this case, as no use was made of indicators or indicator frameworks, preference was given to the use of a working definition that acknowledges the unique local and political context. The definition is presented later in this conclusion.

Third, there seemed to be no consensus on the nature of social sustainability as a condition (or asset), a process or both. Fourthly, disagreement on measuring and reporting social outcomes was evident with Munda (2006) and McKenzie (2004) arguing that human systems are too complex and pluralistic to measure but other scholars applauding the use of indicators as a measuring tool (Becker, 2007; Colantonio, 2010).

Certain conclusions were debatable, for example the statement by McKenzie (2004) that a desired level of achievement should be attained in all three pillars of sustainability. This statement calls up the normative nature of the concept and the plurality of society (Boström, 2012a; Cuthill, 2010), as well as the issue of whose version of basic needs would be adhered to as a prerequisite for social sustainability. The second questionable conclusion was that sustainability can be a condition. The question can be asked how an ultimate state can be achieved in a context (local, national or global) that is dynamic.

Common and enduring views emphasised the importance of social sustainability and the need to address ongoing neglect (Boström, 2012a; M. Davidson, 2009; Magis & Shinn, 2009), as well as the need by advocates of indicators to find quantifiable indicators for both hard and soft social outcomes (Becker, 2007; Colantonio, 2010).

More significant than the contradictions in the literature are the apparent maturation of views, which are especially evident in a more human- or society-centred approach to social sustainability (M. Davidson, 2009; Magis & Shinn, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000), as well as the statements that all forms of sustainability are in fact social

sustainability (Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000). Maturation is also evident in the view that the use of purely economic indicators has become less acceptable, with a greater focus on indicator frameworks designed specifically for social sustainability (Becker, 2007; City of Vancouver, 2005; Colantonio, 2010). The increasing acknowledgement of local context and knowledge is clear from attempts to use local context and knowledge in governance processes (Ames, 2006; City of Vancouver, 2005; Cuthill, 2010). An emerging acknowledgement of time and change is also evident; from those who regard resilience as an indicator of social sustainability (Kulig, Edge, & Joyce, 2008; Magis, 2010), to Boström's (2012a) notion of the longitudinal nature of social sustainability, to coping with change in the CoV (2005).

For this study specifically, the fundamentality of social sustainability has been adopted from Cuthill (2010). This ties in with McKenzie's (2004) view of sustainability as a normative concept. Social sustainability is thus more than simply less dependence on social welfare, in accordance with the City of Vancouver's (CoV) (2005) views. The CoV guiding principles (equity, social inclusion and interaction, economic security and adaptability) were espoused due to the process focus. Given the constantly changing nature of the case study community, the focus should be on the processes involved in striving towards social sustainability. This corresponds with the work of McKenzie (2004) who expresses opposition against focusing on social sustainability as a condition.

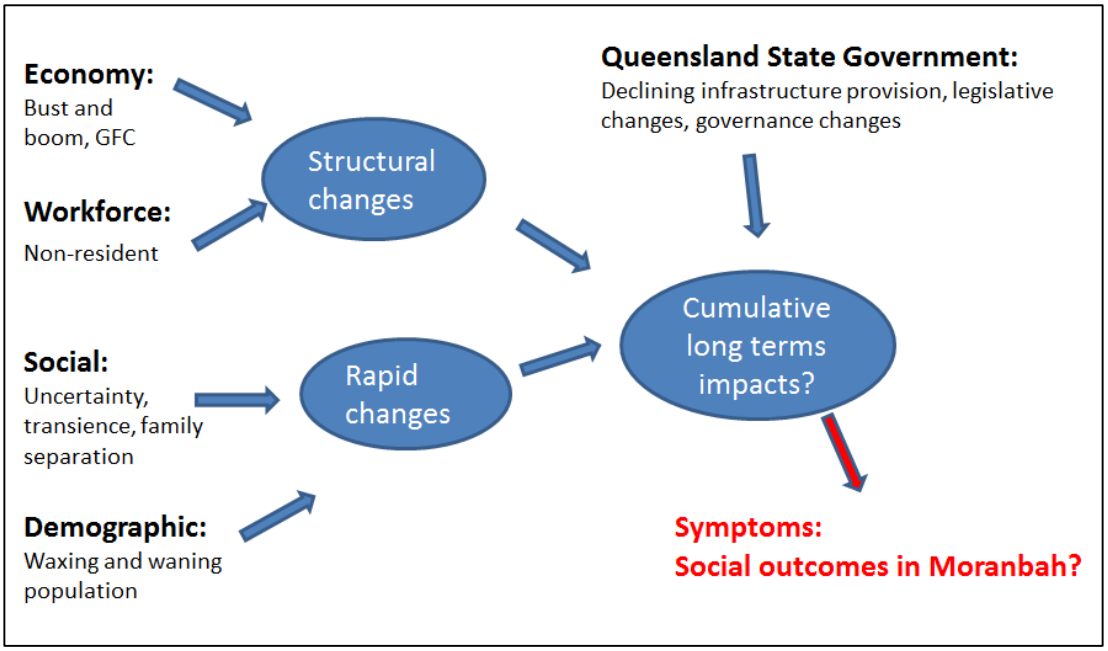
There has been no attempt at creating a definition for this research context, but instead an operational definition has been developed in this study based on the work of Colantonio, Cuthill and the City of Vancouver:

> Social sustainability is a normative approach to the maintaining of a desirable society; it encompasses the maintaining of an environment and an economy that ensures the endurance of that society. It is evidenced in processes that acknowledge the value and importance of local geographical and political context and local knowledge, and acknowledges that social sustainability as a conditional goal is a fallacy, as society and the space it inhabits are in a constant state of flux.

This non-defining approach departs from McKenzie's (2004) opinion that social sustainability should be defined for each context, and Stren and Polése's view (2000) that social sustainability should be defined for each local policy context. Not defining social sustainability for this context is more in line with the work of Colantonio (2010) who builds on the earlier CoV (2005) work. The desirability of a process focused working definition to ensure conceptual and contextual clarity is based on the principle that guidance, or a guiding framework, is required when studying social sustainability. The view adopted for this study was that social sustainability is not a condition, but a process and as such a process focused-definition is deemed the most appropriate. Such a working definition can be used in later studies as guidance for researchers interested in measurement of outcomes and the development of indictors.

This study aims to contribute to knowledge about the links between social sustainability and the dynamics of governance (Holman, 2009; O' Riordan, 2012). At the same time, it follows the work of Boström (2012a) on the 'what' of social sustainability (the social outcomes) as well as the 'how' of social sustainability (the current and emerging forms of governance, the governance processes and the government-governance nexus). Determining the social outcomes has enabled the drafting of links between the reported absence of social sustainability in bureaucracy, the introduction of corporate participation in governance, changing demographic conditions, changing economic conditions against local policy, and local knowledge context. These links can be seen in Figure 2-8, compiled from the work of Cuthill (2010) and adapted to the specific context.

Figure 2-8 Adaptation of the social outcomes framework for the research context



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The importance attached to the role of multinational corporate stakeholders in this study extends from the work of Gond et al. (2011), as well as Hutchins and Sutherland (2008). The importance of local context and local knowledge, and engaged governance as espoused by Cuthill (2010), was adopted, impacting on the case study methodology, specifically the sampling strategy. No predefined indicators have been used, but rather emerging domains or key themes of social sustainability, which is an extension of the work of Murphy (2012). The research also acknowledges the impact of disciplinary context as identified by Colantonio (2010) and Boström (2012a), as evidenced in the focus on urban and regional planning contexts in this study.

2.5. Conclusion to Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework

This review of theoretical perspectives on the sub-topics or elements embedded in the research topic has been presented in three sections: the first section dealt with Henri Lefebvre and his theories on *The Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*. The second section covered government and governance to highlight the nexus between the two in a regional governance context. The third, and last, section dealt with social sustainability as embedded in the wider sustainability discourse. All three sections were concluded with the essential beliefs in the literature on each sub-topic and they also presented the theoretical perspectives adopted for this research. This conclusion to the chapter only deals with the combined theoretical perspectives pertaining to the social outcomes flowing from the government-governance nexus.

The material reviewed to compile this chapter has presented theoretical perspectives as well as the methodological approaches of other scholars in the corpuses of governance, social sustainability, political theory and regional development. Primary, secondary and supporting sources were perused to ensure the inclusion of major epistemological contributions, but also the application of those ideas by other scholars. Secondary sources were included to shed light on the critique of bodies of work by others in the field. It has also provided the intellectual boundaries for this research. Comprehensive coverage of the different discourses and critiques of the established positions has enabled the creation of a literature review focus that is unique and aims to contribute knowledge to social sustainability and regional governance discourses. The theoretical framework that underpins this study was based on the comprehensive review of seminal, recent and current literature, the comparison of different viewpoints presented in the literature, the analysis of those viewpoints and an evaluation of the values of disparate viewpoints. The literature review process has enabled the researcher to align the constructed theoretical standpoints not only with strong evidence-based viewpoints in the literature, but also with the conceptual framework adopted for this research.

Neither social sustainability nor governance has a generally agreed upon definition and there is no agreement on the actual value of these concepts. The second similarity is that both topics are poorly researched, especially regional governance in

an Australian context and the social outcomes of governance models in general. The review of seminal, current and emerging literature has thus enabled the identification of gaps in the current literature and provided justification for the claims that the research outcomes would make a contribution to knowledge.

From the preceding theoretical frameworks, a conceptual framework was drafted for this study, which is presented in Figure 2-9. A conceptual framework is a "system of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the research" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 222). The use of the term conceptual framework refers to a set of philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we understand it (epistemology) and thus presents a unique framework not sourced from existing literature (Maxwell, 2009). The conceptual framework thus provides a paradigm that informs appropriate techniques and topics for inquiry into a research topic (Punch, 2006), including the identification of the research questions (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). The conceptual framework highlights the main focal points of the study, government-governance, and social outcomes against the work of Lefebvre and it investigates the case study town of Moranbah in terms of those points over time. This is done against the background of a capitalist nation state that competes on the global market. The different role players and their relationships are depicted to indicate governance relationships and the delegation of power.

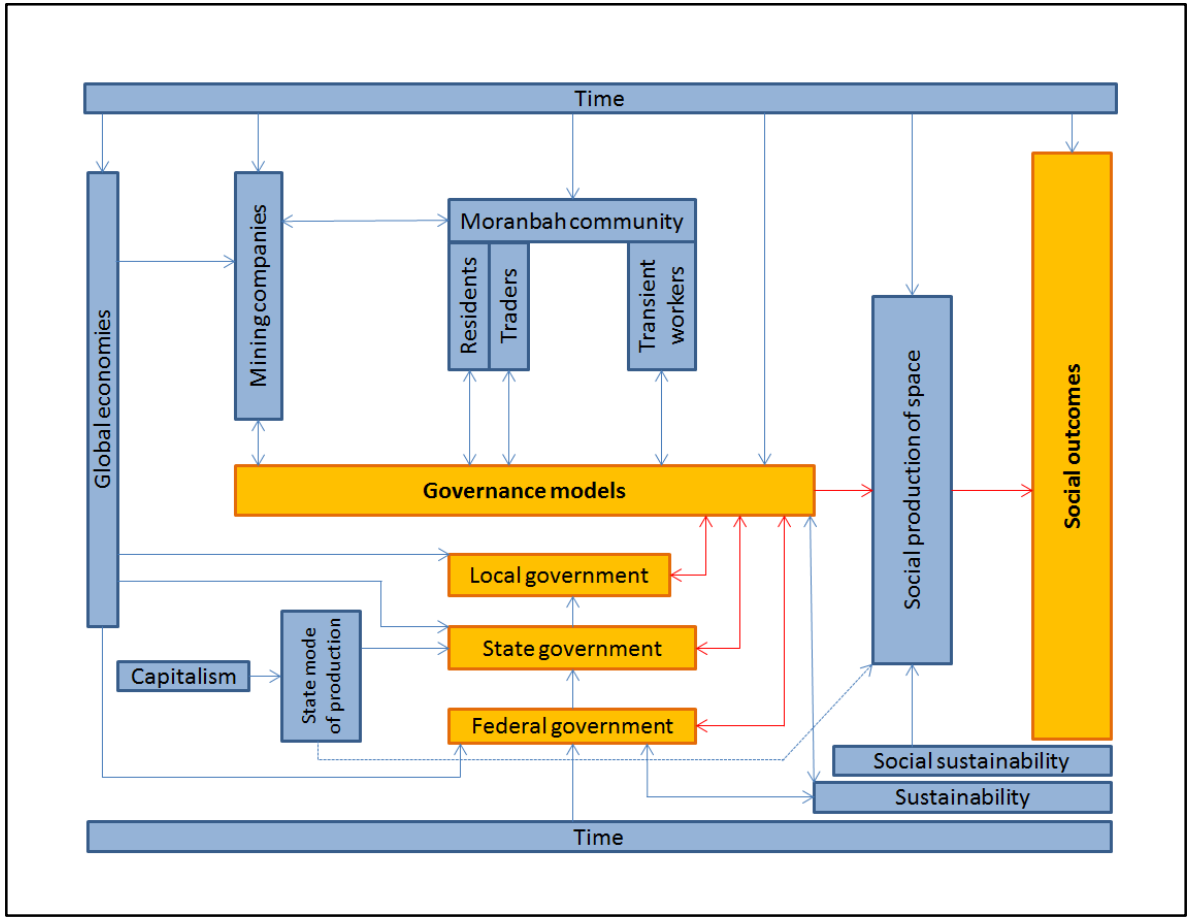
Time is an enduring element in the conceptual framework as this study deals with the government-governance nexus, and the social outcomes thereof, over time. Time is a cornerstone of the work of Lefebvre as per *The Social Production of Space* theory. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). In this context, time impacts on all the role players and the roles they assume in the government-governance nexus. Time also gives rise to specific global economies. It impacts on the community itself, starting with the creation of the community and the changes brought about by changes in the mining industry, global markets. Historical time prescribes the modes of governance prevalent at any given time, depending on how much power the state is willing to delegate to its citizens (Bevir, 2011; Cheshire et al., 2011; José, 2008; Stoker, 1998). Hence, time is directly linked to the different social outcomes experienced and reported over time.

Lefebvre introduced the notion of globalisation in his *The State Mode of Production* (SMP) theory (Brenner, 2000; Elden, 2008; Shields, 2011). Capitalism is closely linked to the SMP, but not to the global economies, as not all economies can be deemed capitalist. The global economies impact not only on the federal government, but also state and local government.

The different role players to governance are illustrated in the conceptual framework, as are the directionality of the relationships between them. The role players are directly linked with *The Social Production of Space*, which occurs in a variety of spaces (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), and which results in certain social outcomes. Social sustainability is directly linked to *The Social Production of Space*, as sustainability is about sustaining society in the first place and society and the spaces it occupies are clarified in *The Social Production of Space* theory. The hierarchy of the three tiers of government is evident from the conceptual framework, and these different levels of government are impacted by changes brought about by time, such as the Global Financial Crisis. The mining companies, although in situ, do not form part of the community but rather assumes the role of a governance role player. The transient workers are not permanent members of the community, as are the residents and the traders, and hence are separated in the conceptual framework.

The social outcomes in this study are thus conceptualised to be the culmination of historical events (time), the global economies, capitalism in which the SMP operates, the different role players and the relationships between those role players, who then socially produce their spaces, be those spaces concrete or abstract and aimed at sustaining society, at least in theory.

Figure 2-9 Conceptual framework drafted for this study



The complex nature of the research problem and its context is apparent from the conceptual framework. The nature of the research problem has presented challenges in terms of the volume of literature on different, but overlapping topics that had to be mastered, including the work of Lefebvre. The research context was dynamic and constant updating of information was required to ensure currency. Crafting the vast volume of work into a conceptual framework has been challenging, but has contracted the study into a coherent topic. Gradually the ability was developed to evaluate the work of other scholars and to decide if it contradicts or supports the findings from this study. The ability to access more abstract cognitive skills proved to be invaluable during the drafting of the discussion and the concluding chapter. In hindsight, it might have been useful to collect data at a slightly later stage purely in terms of limiting the time used after data collection to complete the study and the thesis. The research design is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter the research design is presented and linked with the conceptual framework and the literature. A comprehensive explanation is given of the data collection, and the analysis strategies and processes. Assumptions and constraints are presented. The validity of the research is justified and the limitations acknowledged. The aim is to emphasise that sound design principles have been adopted for the study.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter justifies both the methodology and the methods employed (D. Evans & Gruba, 2002). Somekh and Lewin (2011, pp. 325-326) define methodology as

> …the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken and judged to be valid [in its narrowest sense; and in a broader sense] the whole system of principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research.

As there is an interactive, creative relationship between the methodology and the research questions (Judith, 2012) the research questions presented in *Chapter 1 - Introduction* are repeated here. The main research question is:

What are the social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus in resource regions?

The secondary questions are:

- *What are the social outcomes experienced and observed by stakeholders in the case study town?*
- *Who are the role players and what roles do they assume?*
- *How important (desirable/relevant) are sustainable social outcomes to the regional resource community?*

3.2. The research paradigm and the methodology

In this section of the research design chapter, the links between the literature, the conceptual framework, and the research paradigm are explained. The choice of a qualitative paradigm is justified, and the assumptions and constraints of this study are presented.

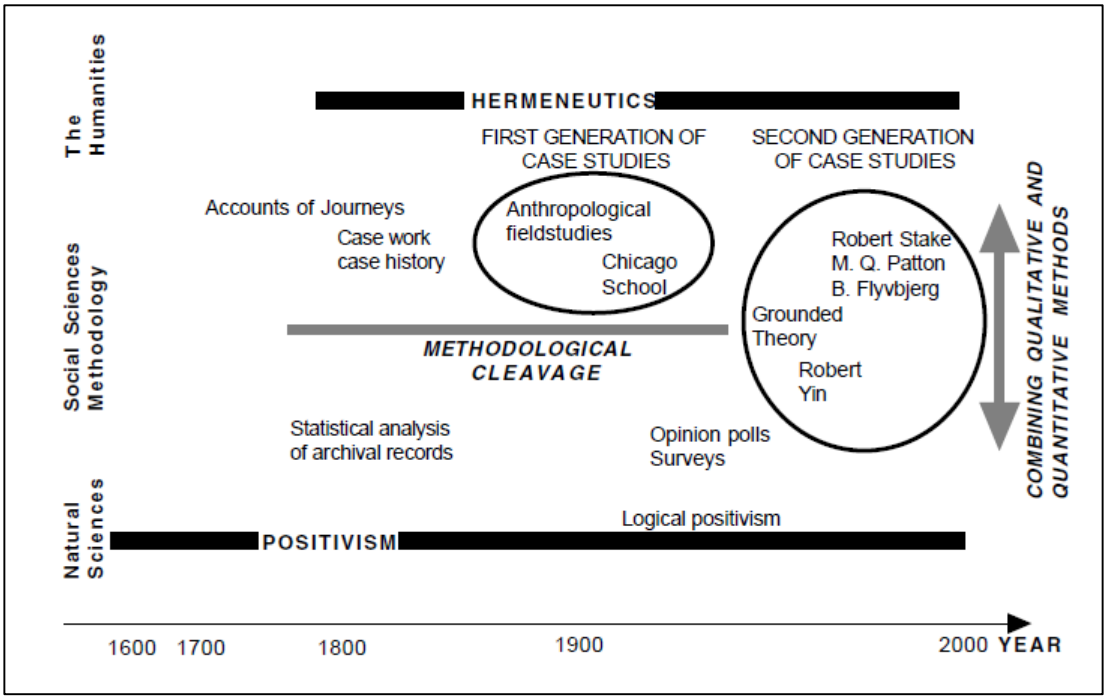
3.2.1. The literature and the research paradigm

The scholarly literature reported on in *Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework* has informed the compilation of the conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 2-9. This framework in turn has aided the progression from abstraction to the practical actions reported on in this chapter.

Following the work of Gergen (1985), Burr (2015), Denzin and Lincoln (2003), and Babbie (2004), the theoretical paradigm and perspective for this study are social constructionism (the world as artefact of communal interchange) and hermeneutics (the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation). The research strategy is a case study; while the methods of data collection are interviewing, mini-focus groups and a community workshop; and analysis is done through data management and computer assisted analysis.

Figure 2-10 (Johansson, 2003b) illustrates the development of second generation case studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences with Grounded Theory forming the dividing line between Hermeneutics and Positivism (Johansson, 2003a). This study is located in the top half of the timeline as a second generation case study in the field of the humanities, using social sciences methodology.

Figure 2-10 The development of second generation case studies in the Humanities and Social Science



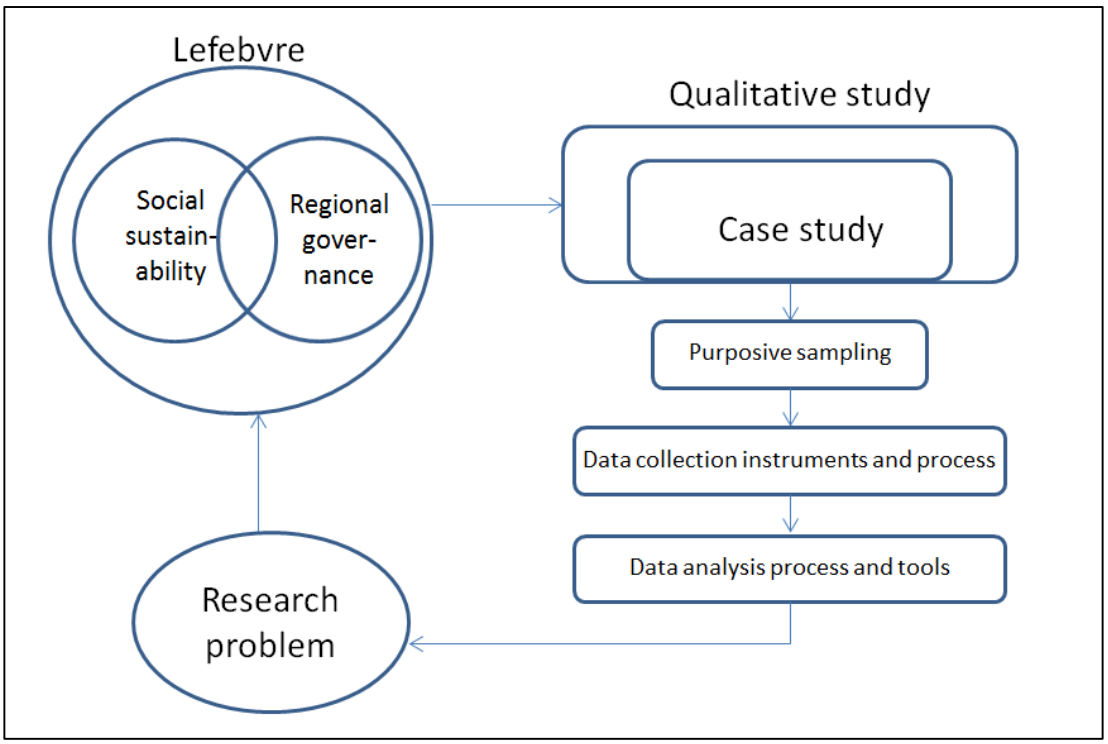
Note. Reproduced from *Case Study Methodology* (p. 7) by R. Johansson, 2003, Keynote address at the *International Conference on Methodologies in Housing Research*, Stockholm.

The study is deemed to be social constructionist, as knowledge is seen as determined by social and political structures, and not social constructivist, where the emphasis is more on individual construction of the world (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985; Judith, 2012). The existence of an objective observer was rejected (Stake, 1995); the social world can only be understood from the viewpoint of the individual, hence an interpretive paradigm (Swan, 2009). As social phenomena are complex, an immersion in the research situation was necessary (Swan, 2009). Lefebvre, as per the theoretical framework, was interested in the everyday and lived experience of people (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, 2009a). He has stressed that contexts are significant; the world is in constant flux, non-homogeneous and non-coherent. In addition, he saw people as deliberate, creative, and actively constructing their social world, and multiple realities are theorised. A link can be observed between the social constructionist nature of this study, the work of Lefebvre, included in the theoretical framework chapter, and the conceptual framework compiled for this study.

A qualitative research design was chosen to underpin the humanistic focus of the conceptual framework; also to achieve a greater depth of understanding of the research issues. The emphasis that Lefebvre placed on context, mentioned above,

made a case study a logical choice, from a conceptual viewpoint, for this study. The collective and individual nature of humans was reflected in the data collection methods, namely mini-focus groups, individual interviews and a community workshop. The hermeneutic nature of the research is observable from the filtering of the different realities through interpretation (Judith, 2012). The links between the work of Lefebvre, social sustainability and regional governance discourses, the research design and the research problem are illustrated in Figure 2-11.

Figure 2-11 Links between the research design and the literature



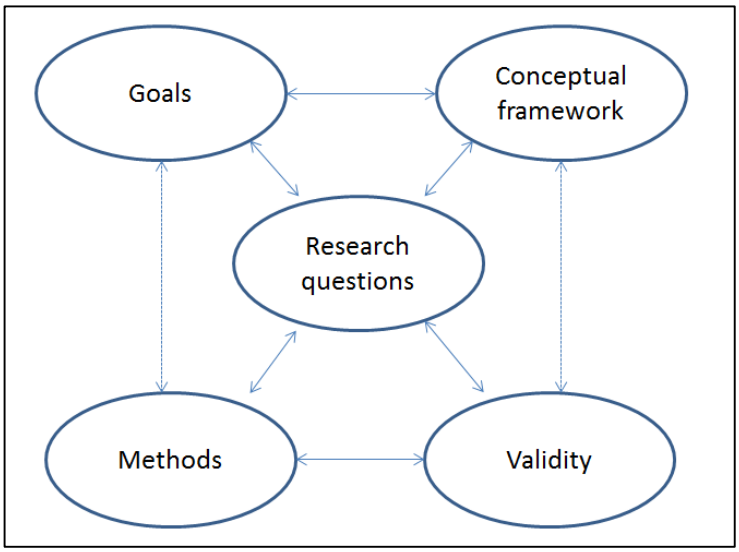
The literature also points to the suitability of an on-site and in-depth investigatory strategy (Judith, 2012), as most existing research on social outcomes in the resource regions focuses on measurable social outcomes, obtained from telephonic surveys (Brereton, 2012; MCIG, 2014; Rolfe & Ivanova, 2006). To contribute to the gap in knowledge, the focus here was on less measurable social outcomes and an in-situ and in-depth investigation. The gap in knowledge on social outcomes and regional governance, as reported in the literature, further dictated descriptive work, which was deemed appropriate when attempting to answer ‘what is’, ‘what was’ or ‘how much’ questions (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). Although descriptive, this study includes the identification, description and discussion of possible links between the government-

governance nexus and social outcomes, and the conceptual framework has provided the reference points for this explanation. The qualitative research design, introduced above, is discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.2.2. A qualitative research design

Maxwell's (2009) interactive model of research design, depicted in Figure 2-12 (2005), was consulted to ensure that a complete and comprehensive research design was drafted for this study. It consists of the components of a research study and the relationships between them, without any prescriptive order or directionality of influence. It is a model for (or the actual structure of) the study, as well as a model for the planning and execution of the research, and it was utilised as such.

Figure 2-12 An interactive model of research design



Note. Reproduced from "Designing a qualitative study", by A. Maxwell, 2005, In: *The Sage Handbook of applied social research methods* by L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.), p. 217. Copyright 2005 by Sage Publications, Inc.

The five components described by Maxwell are all essential to the coherence of this study, with the upper and bottom triangles forming separate, but closely integrated, units. The research questions are at the heart of the model as they connect all the other components of the design (Maxwell, 2009). Aligning with Maxwell's' model, in this study,

- the goals of this study are clarified in *Chapter 1- Introduction*
- the conceptual framework is presented at the end of *Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework*

- the research questions are presented in *Chapter 1 - Introduction*
- the research methods are presented in *Chapter 3 – Research Design*
- the validity (in this study termed credibility and transferability) is addressed in *Chapter 3 – Research Design*.

In addition to a complete methodology, as per Maxwell (2009), a sophisticated methodology was deemed essential for this study. Sophistication ensures that political implications are included in the research design, as qualitative research can be relevant to the policy process (Ezzy, 2002; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The policy value of sophisticated research ties in with the role of the researcher and the nature of qualitative research. Furthermore, the notion of political implications of research links with the notion of qualitative researchers being philosophers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 3) claim that current qualitative research has become a series of "critical conversations sites" on social issues including nation-states, globalization and community, thus closely aligning with the theories postulated by Lefebvre. Qualitative researchers are divided, with realists believing that there is a world that exists apart from us and our lives, and constructivists claiming that everything is experienced through our constructs and ideas (Gibbs, 2007). However, in practice few researchers are purely realist or idealist (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), as was the case in this study. The aim with the methodology in this research was to achieve a level of sophistication that would enable the use of the study by local government to inform policy processes, i.e. governing for social sustainability in collaboration with other actors. To achieve this goal, the overall aim of the qualitative approach had to be considered.

The aim was to develop an understanding of the meaning participants attach to government and regional governance, processes they are involved in or impacted by; including the process of generating meaning, and the impact of their own understanding of their behaviour. Understanding the nature and impact of the participants' particular context was essential. Unanticipated phenomena and influences highlighted the complexity of relationships, contextual elements and the need for flexibility in the research design. The qualitative, flexible approach to implementation enabled in-study modifications (Maxwell, 2009) which became necessary during the data collection process. This study, although planned, was

emergent and responsive, as advocated by Stake (1995), and was well-positioned to deal with unanticipated events, such as the non-availability of certain groups of participants during particular data collection phases. The aim of the study was to determine the social outcomes of the government-governance nexus in the resource regions, and a particular type of relationship between government and governance is implied.

Qualitative research can identify causal relationships, by considering causality in terms of processes and mechanisms, rather than simply using the positivist concept of causality (J. Maxwell, 2005; Stake, 1995). Processes through which governance unfolds and impacts on social outcomes were investigated with the aim to develop causal explanations.

3.2.3. Assumptions and constraints

It was assumed that there are discoverable links between the government-governance nexus and social outcomes that could be presented in the study as causal explanations. Also, that there are social outcomes that are not reflected in the social sustainability indicators reported on in traditional measurement activities such as the national census; and that those non-reported outcomes are at least as important as the measured ones. Third, that knowledge of those less-known social outcomes may be important for enabling governing that leads towards socially sustainable regional resource communities.

Research was conducted within the typical constraints of a PhD study. Other constraints included prohibited access to certain categories of mining employees. This was overcome by relying on information provided by spouses, adult children of mining company employees, and friends of mining company employees on the beliefs, assumptions and attitudes expressed by this category of participants. A second constraint that emerged during the study was the proclaimed unavailability of the elected representatives as a group in spite of earlier indications to the contrary.

As mentioned before, the gap in the literature and especially the work of Lefebvre pointed to the suitability of a case study design for this study, and which is presented in detail in the next section.

3.3. The choice of a case study and its design

In this section, it is explained why a (single) case study was preferred and conducted; and the planning and execution of the case study are set out. The sampling strategy, the data collection instruments, and the data collection process are also presented.

3.3.1. The choice of a (single) case study design

This case study falls within the social constructionist perspective of social science and is descriptive, inductive and heuristic as it allowed the researcher to uncover, describe and draw general conclusions from particular instances (Burr, 2015; Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Gergen, 1985). It provides the opportunity to investigate the social world of a community in its natural state (Eisenhardt, 1989; D. Evans & Gruba, 2002), producing a first-hand description and understanding of people and events (Yin, 2014) in a specific physical and historical context (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011) which underscores the importance attached to context by Lefebvre (1974/1991). The study report the meanings created by individual actors (D. Evans & Gruba, 2002), with the researcher's first obligation being to understand the case (Stake, 1995, p. 4). As the topic was the subject of exploration, there was no proposition to the research, but rather exploration (Yin, 2014). The aim was to gain a greater understanding of the case through studying it intensively (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The study will be deemed successful if less measurable, less reported social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus can be identified and described, and causal explanations provided.

Criticism of case studies was considered in order to ensure a rigorous methodology that addressed any possible shortcomings. These criticisms typically centred on generalisability and rigour. The aim of the study was not to present statistically generalisable findings, but to allow the reader to apply generalised principles to their own case from the causal explanations presented. This was possible as the findings have value in that they "illuminate more general issues" (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 54). It is expected that the findings from this study will be valuable to readers and researchers in other Australian resource regions, and other scholars interested in the work of Lefebvre. This value is attributed to the lack of research on

regional governance and development, and the call to practically apply the theories of Lefebvre (Butler, 2009, 2012; Schmid, 2008; Stanek, 2011; Waite, 2008).

Methodologically, a case study approach is appropriate where an unfamiliar, complex and contemporary social phenomenon is studied; especially where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are blurred (Edvardsen, 2011; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; D. Evans & Gruba, 2002; Yin, 2014). It is also used where the research aims to find answers to descriptive or explanatory questions, which is appropriate for an unfamiliar phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). This study meets the criteria stated above, indicating the appropriateness of a case study design. At the same time, a rigorous methodological path was followed.

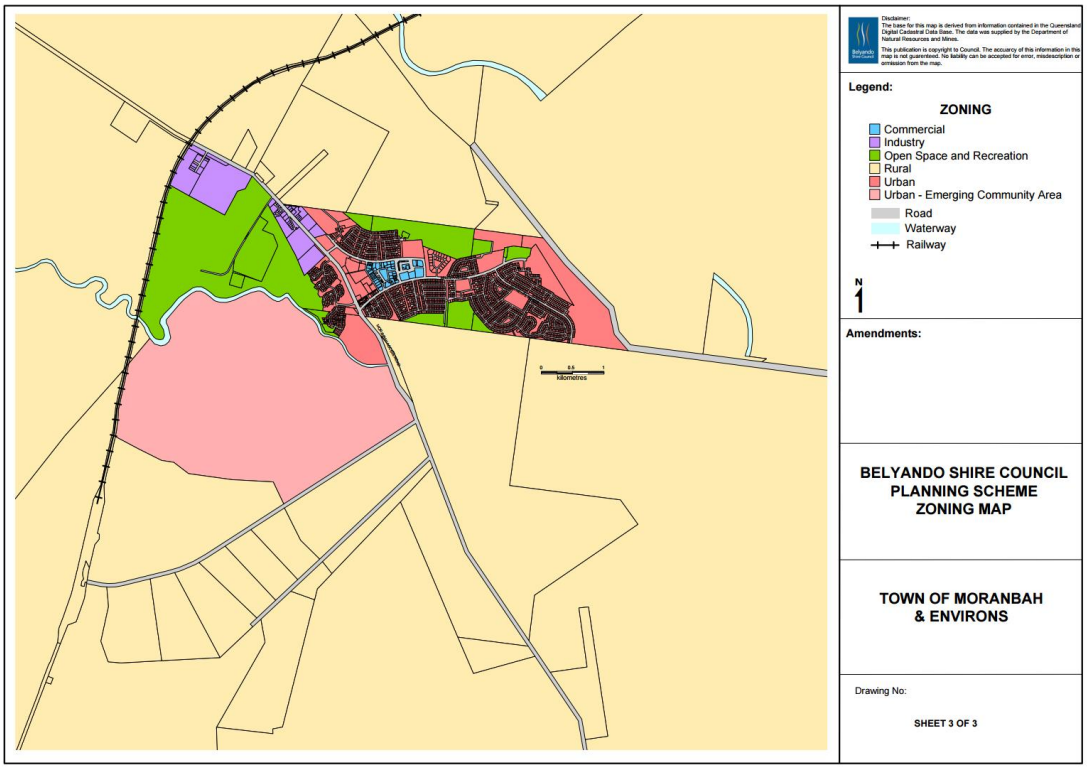
The single case design is a variant of case study design (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), and is appropriate where extreme (or critical), unusual, common, revelatory or longitudinal cases are studied (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Maxwell, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Moranbah was identified as an extreme or critical case as it presented the most severe disruption to housing supply and affordability in Queensland during the previous mining boom (Anderson, 2011; Office of Economic and Statistical Research, 2011). The social implications of Moranbah being an extreme or critical case were expected to echo a pathology of space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, 1996). Apart from Moranbah being identified as an extreme case, screening criteria for a single case were applied to further ensure the suitability of the case for this study. These criteria included the willingness of key persons to participate in the study, and confirmation of the richness of the evidence suggestive of the phenomenon to be studied, both of which were addressed on site.

Scoping visits were conducted to obtain a sound understanding of the research context prior to designing the study (Bickman & Rog, 2009a; Yin, 2014), supplementing the knowledge and insights gained from the pilot study conducted during 2010/2011. The scope of this study was subsequently defined, and a comprehensive research plan developed during the planning phase of the study. The execution phase of the study entailed the implementation and monitoring (data collection and analysis) of the research plan, followed by reporting (Bickman & Rog,

2009a), or in this case the writing of the findings, discussion and conclusions to this study.

Undertaking a case study implies the delineation of the case study boundaries (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Here the case boundaries were drawn using first the pre-amalgamation local government boundary of Moranbah, previously part of Belyando Shire Council (Belyando Shire Council, 2008) and now part of the larger Isaac Regional Council; and second the boundary around stakeholders working and/or living in Moranbah, as delineated in Figure 2-13.

Figure 2-13 Map of Moranbah as per the Belyando Shire Council Planning Scheme



Note. Reproduced from "Town of Moranbah & Environs", sheet 3 of 3 by Belyando Shire, 2008. Copyright 2008 by Belyando Shire Council.

The delineation considered both the social and historical geographical context, as well as the role players' actions (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011), in this case where they live and/or work. The role players' actions also impacted on the sampling strategy employed in this study, as is explained in detail in the next section.

3.3.2. The sampling strategy employed in this study

A sampling frame provided the definition of the study population (Henry, 2009): people living and/or working in Moranbah, including non-permanent residents such as FIFO, BIBO and DIDO workers. Mining company employees were included as they have been a part of the governance arrangements in this community, as has been the case in many other mining communities in Queensland (Cheshire et al., 2011). The sampling strategy included a consideration of how to access participant perspectives (Henry, 2009); and how and why their perspectives would provide the data to answer the research questions (Punch, 2006; Yin, 2014). The sampling strategy also addressed what the unit of analysis would be for the study. The primary unit of analysis was the individual participant, although homogenous groups were used as secondary units of analysis in order to facilitate inter-group analysis (Yin, 2009). This sampling strategy was based on the belief that the appropriate way to understand the complex social world is through the multiple viewpoints of individuals, and based on individual constructions of that world as elaborated in *Chapter 2 -Theoretical Perspectives*.

The aim of the sampling strategy was to get access to participants who were local or in-situ government-governance role players and/or impacted by governance arrangements in Moranbah. The depth or richness of the data collected was more important than the breadth, and the focus was not on the number of participants, but on the possible contributions they could make in terms of the issues embedded in the research topic (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). The sampling strategy exercised was non-probability or purposive sampling, which is common in small-scale research, such as case studies (Somekh & Lewin, 2011). This allowed the specific selection of participants for the study (Henry, 2009; Punch, 2006), capturing the heterogeneity in the population and enabling comparisons between subsets of participants (Maxwell, 2009).

Critical case sampling, a form of purposive sampling, gave access to participants who were deemed information rich in regards to the topic of inquiry (Struwig & Stead, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The entry point for the sampling was knowledge rich participants identified during the pilot project. The Isaac Regional Council (IRC) CEO facilitated the execution of the sampling strategy by appointing

an IRC community liaison officer to assist with approaching the pilot project participants, as well as approaching possible participants on a list compiled by IRC officials, based on the selection criteria provided by the researcher. The community liaison officer was assisted by the Moranbah Traders' Association (MTA) in the dissemination of details pertaining to possible participation in this study. The key stakeholder groups and the number of participants per data collection type are illustrated in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Key stakeholder groups and number of participants per data collection type

Key stakeholder groups	**Total number of participants**	**Number of participants in mini-focus groups**	**Number of participants in individual interviews**	**Number of participants in community workshop**
Isaac Regional Council officials	6	5	3	3
Elected representatives	3	0	3	0
Residents	7	7	5	5
Business owners and non-governmental organisations	7	5	3	2
Mining company employees	1	1	1	1
Mining company liaison officers	4	1	2	4
Totals	**28**	**19**	**17**	**15**

Using the initial potential participants, approached by the liaison officer and the MTA representative, a snowball or chain sampling technique was used to identify additional suitable participants (Punch, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Snowball sampling was necessary as certain categories of participants were difficult to identify, for example mining company employees. The aim was to obtain data from individuals whose experiences were particularly relevant to the study's research questions (Henry, 2009), and to ensure that participants from all the categories in

Table 2-1 were included. The potentially different perspectives of these groups were crucial to provide a greater depth of understanding (Punch, 2006).

The sampling strategy enabled an iterative process of data collection, analysis, review and refinement, involving the key informants. During each phase, participants were given the opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the next phase, and also to suggest other information-rich participants. The data collection methods and process illustrate the overall approach to acquiring that depth.

Specific sampling considerations arose for the different data collection phases. Ethical considerations were considered when making decisions about the sampling for the mini-focus groups (Barbour, 2005) to prevent certain disadvantages from arising. Disadvantages were associated with the participants' possible histories with each other (Barbour & Schostak, 2011; Quible, 1998), as group interaction can be disrupted by power, surveillance and subjectivity (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). Ethical issues were important given that several of the participants have ongoing relationships (Barbour, 2005; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), and the researcher had to assume responsibility for the impact that participating in a focus group could have on such ongoing relationships.

3.3.3. Data collection and data collection instruments for this study

Introduction

This data collection section covers the plan for the data collection process; and the procedures and the explanation of how the fieldwork was carried out (Punch, 2006). During the planning of the data collection phases of this study, Stake's (1995) guidelines were adapted. A data collection plan was compiled ensuring that the data collection process was rooted in the research questions. It included the following components: the list of research questions and the data collection questions that flowed from the research questions; possible data sources, time allocation, and the format the data collection would take.

Primary data was collected on site by the researcher, ensuring extensive interaction with the participants (Punch, 2006). Data collection events took place in meeting rooms at the Moranbah Community Centre in town, as it provided a neutral and

familiar context for the participants (Stake, 1995). Primary data were collected in four phases: during a preliminary mini-focus group, a set of mini-focus groups, individual interviews and a community workshop, as illustrated in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 The four phases of the data collection program

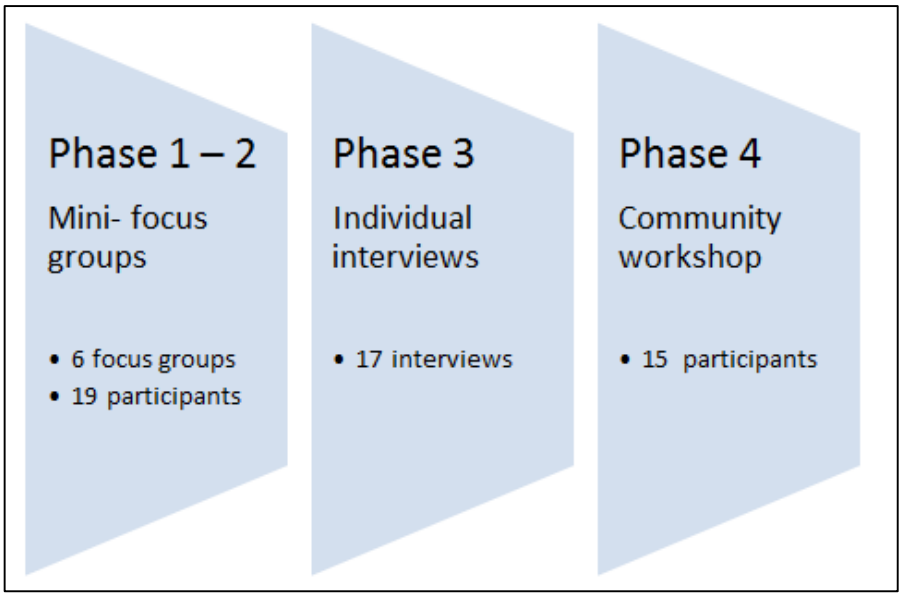
Phase	**Type**	**Duration**	**Number of events**	**Month (2014)**
Phase 1	Preliminary mini-focus group	2 hours	1	August
Phase 2	Mini-focus groups	2 hours	5	September/ October
Phase 3	Semi-structured individual interviews	1 hour	17	November
Phase 4	Community workshop	2 hours	1	December

Secondary data collection continued, as an expanded review of seminal, recent and current literature, throughout the project. Secondary data was also sourced from public domain demographic data, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data, and reports by public authorities and organisations. These ABS and public data were mainly used to describe the demographic context of the case study town and its inhabitants in *Chapter 1 – Introduction*. The scholarly literature allowed for the identification of gaps in the literature and the positioning of this study in the different discourses. It also contributed to the compilation of the conceptual framework for the study, presented at the end of *Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework*.

For the first and second phases of the primary data collection, mini-focus groups (Krueger, 1994, 1998b; Krueger & Casey, 2009) were used as the data collection instrument. The mini-focus groups were anticipated to provide the breadth of data to answer the research questions. The preliminary mini-focus group was used to confirm the focus and the suitability of the data collection plan (Bickman & Rog, 2009a; Stake, 1995). Phase Two consisted of five mini-focus groups. Seventeen information-rich participants were then selected purposively from the different participant categories in Phases One and Two to participate in individual interviews during Phase Three, which was based on the depth of knowledge on the research issues they revealed during the mini-focus groups. The interviews were intended to reveal the depth of data to understand the issues studied. Phases One to Three

provided the data needed to compile a set of Initial Findings which formed an important element during Phase Four. Phase Four consisted of a community workshop with participants from the focus groups and the individual interviews, but it also allowed for the inclusion of new participants. This workshop provided the opportunity for the participants to verify, dispute or expand the initial findings. The four phases of the data collection process and the number of participants per phase are depicted in Figure 2-14. A table presenting the summary of the data collection events is presented as Appendix A.

Figure 2-14 Data collection phases and number of participants per phase



The combination of data collection methods enabled the creation of converging lines of evidence, thus ensuring robustness (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). Data was collected until the researcher was confident that no new themes were emerging and that the answers to the research questions had been obtained. The data collection process was complemented by a data collection journal and a data analysis journal. A data collection journal allowed the practice of reflection and was found to be a valuable data collection instrument. It differs from the data analysis journal, which documented the process of analysis, emerging themes and the researcher's unfolding understanding. Professional transcription of the digital voice recordings of the events was undertaken. Data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously to ensure flexibility of the data collection plan (Maxwell, 2009). Firstly, this provided the researcher with the opportunity to determine the saturation point for certain

themes, and to focus on less illuminated themes in subsequent phases. Secondly, it allowed for the development of a framework for the individual interviews from the analysed mini-focus group data. Preliminary data analysis allowed the researcher to progressively identify emerging themes (Maxwell, 2009; Yin, 2014). This analysis revealed the tendency amongst the participants to use a chronology for relaying significant events, opinions, attitudes and beliefs. The three types of data collection methods are discussed next, following the chronology of the data collection events.

Phases 1 and 2 – Mini-focus groups

In this section, which deals with Phases 1 and 2 of the data collection, the reasons why mini-focus groups were chosen as a data collection instrument are discussed. The mini-focus group plan is presented, followed by a description of the data generated from the mini-focus groups and the limitations inherent in mini-focus groups.

A focus group is "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (Morgan, 1996, p. 130) in an environment that is non-threatening (Krueger & Casey, 2009) and it delivers results that are time and place-specific (Barbour & Schostak, 2011). Focus groups are popular in social research and behavioural science disciplines (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) and are particularly useful for exploratory research on little known interests, where they are used early in the study (Stewart et al., 2009), as is the case here. Mini-focus groups were found to have a high degree of appropriateness for this study. Focus groups are suited for exploratory research that aims to answer why, how, when, where, and what questions such as the research questions in this study. Mini-focus groups, like other forms of data collection, require advance planning.

A mini-focus group plan was compiled prior to conducting the mini-focus groups (Stewart et al., 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The research questions guided the selection of the categories of participants, the types of questions that were asked, and the types of analyses that were conducted (Stewart et al., 2009). Mini-focus groups of three to four participants were deemed appropriate for this study as the participants were information rich, and had specialised knowledge and/or

experiences to discuss in the group (Krueger, 1994). The following criteria justified the smaller sized focus groups:

- The participants had a high level of involvement with the topic in their professional capacity and were experts on aspects encompassed in the research topic.
- The topic was complex with cause and relationship patterns, and role players and stakeholders, enmeshed.
- Detailed and personal accounts were required (Krueger, 1998c).

The number of mini-focus groups planned was determined by how much diversity was desired in the sample (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), but also to ensure that all participant categories were covered. Seven mini-focus groups were planned to follow the Phase 1 preliminary mini-focus group, over a period of two months. The data collection plan had to be amended to exclude the group of elected representatives who remained unavailable as a group for the duration of the data collection time frame. The resulting groupings for the mini-focus groups in Phase Two were: two groups of residents; two groups of mining company representatives, combined with appropriate IRR officials; and a group consisting of business owners combined with community organisations. By the sixth mini-focus group it was clear that the data had become saturated (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1996). In spite of the earlier plan to have more mini-focus groups, no further mini-focus groups were thus added to the mini-focus group plan.

The mini-focus groups were conducted after hours to ensure ease of attendance outside of working hours, and the duration was two hours each (Quible, 1998). Even more than the convenience of participation, ethical considerations were deemed to play an important role. Ensuring confidentiality was addressed upfront (Barbour & Schostak, 2011). Mini-focus groups were limited to one per day to allow for thorough completion of the data collection journal after each focus group (Krueger, 1998a).

The preliminary mini-focus group served a different purpose than the Phase Two mini-focus groups. The Phase One mini-focus group was made up of homogenous, compatible and information-rich individuals (Krueger, 1998c) with whom the

researcher had worked during the pilot project. These members were chosen purposively by the researcher to allow for discussion of the research problem, the research questions, and the suitability of the data collection plan in the local context. Semi-structured questions were prepared to test these items against the opinions of these expert participants. Questions posed during the preliminary mini-focus group centred on the social conditions observed in the region, the existence of links between those and the government-governance nexus, the chronology of social outcomes, and the impact the government-governance nexus has had on the execution of professional duties, local government and the community at large.

The Phase Two mini-focus groups were comprised of both individual and group activities. Individual activities, focused on identifying social outcomes, preceded the mini-focus group activities. The aim was to stimulate thinking, but also to provide an opportunity for less assertive mini-focus group members to have their opinions included in the general discussion. During the general discussion, the individual data were collated according to themes, and then discussed, clarified and added to. The data generated by both the Phase One and Two mini-focus groups consisted of different types of data.

The mini-focus group consisted of digital voice recordings which were then professionally transcribed. Participant input was captured on sticky notes and butcher sheets, demographic data was provided by the participants, and observation and reflection entries were added to the data analysis journal by the researcher. Videotaping was used during the preliminary mini-focus group, but was found to be too intrusive and was discontinued with the other mini-focus groups.

Limitations linked to mini-focus groups include the moderator effect (similar to the researcher effect), and data that could be idiosyncratic and unique to the group (George, 2012; Stewart et al., 2009). A strategy employed to mitigate these disadvantages/limitations was combining the mini-focus groups with other data collection methods (George, 2012). Combining the mini-focus groups with individual interviews negated these disadvantages. Conducting the mini-focus groups prior to the individual interviews provided the advantage of identifying a range of

experiences and perspectives from which issues were selected to be investigated in more depth during the individual interviews (Morgan, 1996).

Phase 3 - Individual interviews

In this section, which deals with Phase 3 of the data collection, the individual interview plan is presented, followed by the format the interviews took and the types of data that were collected.

The individual interviews were one of the most important data sources for this case study (Yin, 2014), as they investigated in greater depth the themes uncovered during the mini-focus groups in Phases One and Two. Individual interviews were deemed appropriate as the study consist of descriptive, exploratory research in a new area of enquiry (Bickman & Rog, 2009a).

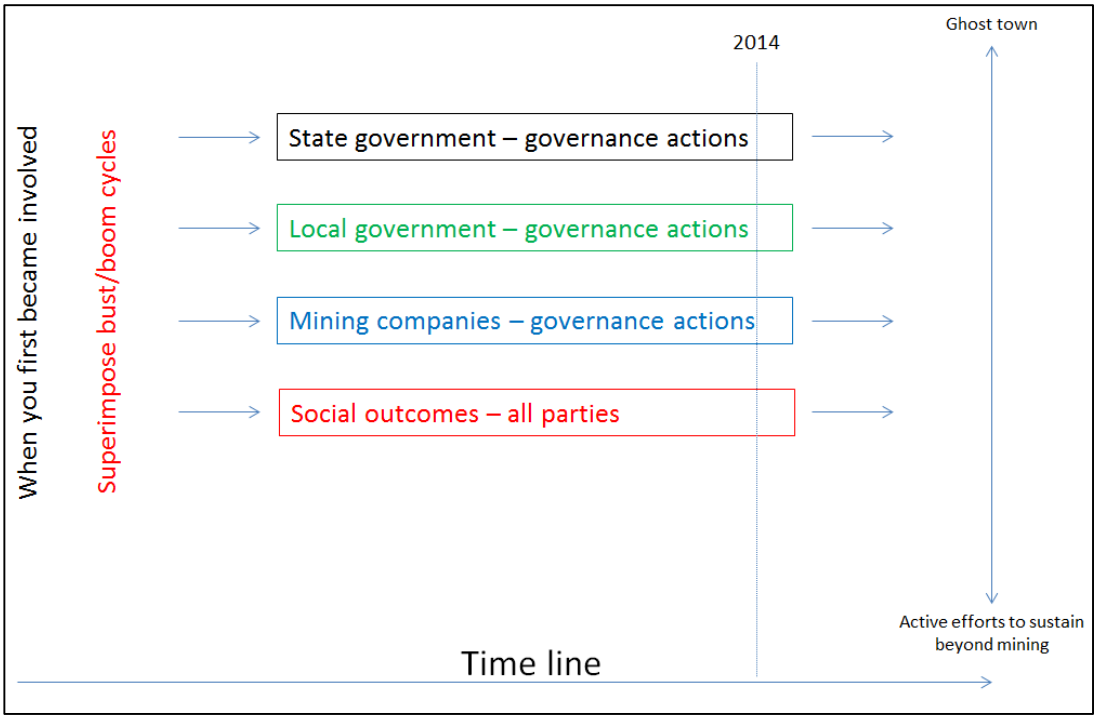
The individual interview plan included the way participants were selected purposively from the mini-focus group participants who had indicated an interest to be involved in Phase Three. The key criterion was the depth of knowledge displayed during the focus groups. Given that they volunteered their participation in Phase Three, it was assumed that they felt comfortable enough in a data collection setting, and trusted the researcher sufficiently, to participate in Phase Three. Participants were selected from all categories included in the mini-focus groups.

Participants from the elected representatives' category entered the data collection at this point for the first time, after claims of schedule conflicts during the mini-focus group phase, as previously reported.

These semi-structured conversations of approximately one hour were conducted on site by the researcher. The tool used to provide structure to the individual interviews resulted from Phases One and Two. During the Phases One and Two data collection and analysis process, it became evident that there was a universal tendency amongst participants to use a chronological timeline to relay the social outcomes they observed and experienced since taking up residence or becoming involved, in Moranbah. The decision was therefore made to use this preference as the starting point for the semi-structured discussions of the individual interviews. A simple

diagram, depicted in Figure 2-15, was compiled to provide the ‘semi-structure’ during the individual interviews. The diagram depicts a time line, the main stakeholder groups, as well as the range of futures predicted for the town during the mini-focus groups.

Figure 2-15 Diagram compiled and used to direct semi-structured individual interviews



The use of the diagram was supplemented by the posing of semi-structured questions that were tested in pilot form prior to the commencement of the individual interviews. A spread sheet was used to keep track of the questions posed during each individual interview (Stake, 1995).

The format had unexpected advantages. First, it was clear that interview stress alleviation was a benefit of using the diagram, and second, participants revealed their individual, preferred styles of participation. Some participants gave verbal responses only to the prompts contained in the diagram, whilst other made additions to the copies of the diagram prepared by the researcher for the individual interviews. Yet others made extensive annotations in the diagram. Using the diagram also provided clear boundaries for the individual interviews, and rather than going through a set of predetermined questions, it encouraged participants to tell their own stories. This approach was appropriate as “Narratives are a very common and natural way of

conveying experience" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 59). This chronological approach further tied in with the Most Significant Change (MSC) model explained in *Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework*, as participants relayed significant changes in terms of social outcomes. The data derived from these individual interviews took various forms.

Data collected from the individual interviews comprised the digital recordings made of each interview, supplemented by the notes and annotations made by the individual participants. The individual timelines were compiled by the individual participants in most cases, but by the researcher based on the transcription and digital voice recording files, where participants preferred to give verbal input only. The use of the diagram resulted in additional written data in some cases, in the form of annotations on the diagram reproduced on butcher sheets. This written input was reproduced in spread sheet format by the researcher on the same day as interviews took place.

The data collection journal was updated immediately after each individual interview to ensure capture of the observations, and impressions the researcher had of the participant and the nature of the interview, including key ideas and episodes captured from each interview (Stake, 1995). Memos and spreadsheet were used to track the progress of data collection from the individual interviews. The recordings were transcribed professionally and returned within three working days, which allowed the analysis to proceed whilst successive interviews were still being conducted.

The data collected and analysed in Phases One to Three enabled the drafting of five preliminary findings that were made public at the community workshop in Phase Four.

Phase 4 – Community workshop

In this section, dealing with Phase 4 of the data collection, the reason why the community workshop was included in the data collection plan is presented. The community workshop plan is presented, followed by a description of the data generated by the community workshop.

The purpose of the community workshop (Basson & Dowling, 2013) was to give participants the opportunity to discuss the preliminary findings from the analysis of the mini-focus group and individual interview data.

The community workshop took place at the Community Centre over two hours on a Tuesday evening, similar to the mini-focus groups to allow people to participate outside of working hours. Fifteen people from Phases One to Three participated, plus two new participants, nominated by other participants based on their expertise surrounding the research topic.

The community workshop plan provided the structure for the workshop. Five draft findings, compiled from the mini-focus groups and individual interviews, were presented in writing to each member of the group at the start of the workshop. These findings are presented in the next chapter. Each participant responded in writing to those findings before the break-out group discussion of the draft findings commenced. Explanations or clarifications were briefly given by the researcher to individual participants and to break-out groups when required.

Break-out groups were conducted with groups comprising council officials; traders and community organisations, resource company liaison officers plus a specific category of professional Isaac Regional Council (IRC) officials, and residents. Most of these configurations resulted in groups consisting of people who have had professional contact in the past. The homogeneity was intended to facilitate ease of conversation and speed up the progress (Krueger, 1998c) of reviewing and discussing the draft findings. After the break-out groups, the whole group reconvened to discuss the different group views.

No voice recordings were made due to logistics, such as difficulty in recording the break-away groups. Raw data from the workshop consisted of worksheets with the draft initial findings of each participant's anonymous feedback, and flip chart sheets with the group discussions. This was supplemented by the entries made in the data collection journal immediately following the community workshop. The data collection journal was used to record observations regarding the participants' interactions during the break-out groups.

Conclusion to data collection and data collection instruments

Data was collected over four phases, commencing with the Phase One and Two mini-focus groups, followed by the Phase Three individual interviews and finally, Phase Four, a community workshop. Data collected included digital voice recordings that were professionally transcribed, written participant input, and notes compiled by the researcher in a data collection journal. The data collection process was tracked by the researcher using a spread sheet and memos. The aim with the combination of data collection methods was to ensure robustness of the single case study design. The primary data collected was significant to the study as it has illuminated the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders in the community and provided the data needed to answer the research questions (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). Data analysis occurred concurrently with data collection and is described in detail in the next section.

3.3.4. The analysis of the data from the case study

Introduction

Overlapping the primary data collection with the analysis revealed that minor amendments should be made to the data collection plan, such as accommodating participants' preference for presenting social outcomes chronologically. It also sped up the analyses process as analysis commenced straight after Phase One, the preliminary mini-focus group (Eisenhardt, 1989). The primary unit of analysis was the individual with groups as secondary units (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). Due to the fact that it was a single-case study these other embedded units of analysis added opportunities for more extensive analysis (Yin 2014), including inter-group comparisons.

The analysis framework preferred was hermeneutics, although the data analysis commenced with a thematic analysis based on coding using a data management software package, Nvivo. The use of hermeneutics stemmed from the desire to do more than find themes supported with quotes (Lichtman, 2013), and to get thick descriptions to offer explanations for what was happening (Gibbs, 2007). Hermeneutics is one of the four traditions of narrative analysis in the social sciences distinguished by Bernard and Ryan (2010); one where analysts look for larger meaning of narratives by interpreting the content. A hermeneutic approach to

qualitative data analysis was also advocated by Ezzy (2002) due to the interpretive nature of the analysis, which theorises the relationship between prior interpretations and the interpretation of the texts and people studied.

Thematic analysis allowed categories to emerge from the data, with the aim to identify themes (Ezzy, 2002). Maxwell (2009) argues that strategies for qualitative analysis fall into three main groups that should generally be combined: categorising, for example coding and thematic analysis; connecting, for example, narrative analysis; and memos and displays. The data was prepared and organised, then reviewed for coding, categorising and concepts, revealing ten central themes (Lichtman, 2013).

Coding was both concept-driven and data-driven, and enabled examination of data from data excerpts, as well as an analysis of relationships between codes based on detecting hierarchies of codes; and case-by-case comparisons (Gibbs, 2007). The final stage, selective coding, was analytic and theoretical, and involved identifying the central coded phenomena whilst systematically relating the central code to other codes (Gibbs, 2007). The first cycle was thus grammatical, affective, and exploratory, whilst the second cycle was about classifying, integrating and conceptualising (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The second cycle fed into the hermeneutics analysis framework. Coding thus resulted in a frame of ten thematic ideas mentioned in the previous paragraph.

There was a strong cultural studies focus in this data analysis, as the perspective employed was locating the meaning of the data in broader social and political contexts. This framework required a theoretical framework such as the one presented in *Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework*, which was in alignment with the conceptual framework compiled for this study. The analysis of the data collected during each phase of the data collection process is discussed individually in the following sections, starting with the mini-focus groups, followed by the individual interviews and concluding with the analysis of the community workshop data.

Analysis of the mini-focus group data

This section, on the analysis of the mini-focus group data, presents the aim with the analysis, the tools used during the analysis, and the ways that rigour was ensured during the analysis.

There is a lack of literature on how to analyse focus group data in social science research, although transcript-based analysis is argued to be the most rigorous (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009; Stewart et al., 2009). Extensive use was made in this section of the work of Krueger and Casey (1994, 1998a, 1998b; Krueger & Casey, 2009), due to the comprehensive and enduring nature of their work on focus group analysis.

The aim of the analysis of the mini-focus group data was to reveal new information embedded in the data, but also to test any preconceived ideas the researcher had. The mini-focus group analysis was complex and occurred at several levels. Following a hermeneutic, analytical framework entailed building upon a foundation of descriptive statements, and then investigating the wider meaning of such findings (Krueger, 1998a). This approach ensured both the exposure of new information and the confirmation, or not, of prior assumptions and was executed using a variety of data analysis tools.

Nvivo, a data management tool, was used during the initial coding and thematic analysis of the professional transcriptions of the mini-focus groups. Transcript-based analysis, although deemed to be the most rigorous, is a time-intensive mode of analysis and the use of Nvivo assisted in adhering to constraints, in terms of time frames, as well as ease of analysis of significant volumes of data. The transcript-based analysis formed the backbone of the analysis, due to the claims of rigour about it in the literature and the analysis of other data was used for refinement or verification purposes. In addition to Nvivo, more traditional means such as tabulation, spread sheeting and mind mapping were employed. These different analysis tools were used to approach the raw data from different angles to ensure rigorous analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Stewart et al., 2009).

The rigour in the data analysis was ensured through firstly determining the appropriate unit of analysis, secondly having a guided research plan focusing on the research questions, thirdly conducting a timely analysis and fourthly ensuring a rigorous analysis process.

First, the appropriate unit of analysis for the mini-focus group data was considered. The most appropriate unit of analysis is disputed in the methodology literature by focus group theorists. Some focus group researchers claim to use the group as a unit of analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009), but the ability to track the internal consistency of the individuals' contributions over time was deemed to be a justification for having the individual as the unit of analysis (Krueger, 1994). Ten participants took part in the mini-focus groups, individual interviews, as well as the community workshop and the ability to track the consistency of the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions was enabled by having the individual as the primary unit of analysis. The homogenous group formed a secondary unit of analysis, which proved valuable when attempting to discern power relations and group dynamics over the course of the data collection, as well as in inter-group comparisons (Barbour & Schostak, 2011). Having clear decisions on the unit of analysis ties in with having a clear research plan, focused on the research questions, as a way of ensuring rigour during analysis of the mini-focus groups.

Second, given that the mini-focus groups were intended to expose the breadth of the social issues, care was taken to ensure that the analysis was guided by the research plan and the research questions (Krueger, 1998a). Justifying rigorous findings from the mini-focus groups was an important element in the research design, as those findings served to inform the focus and format of the subsequent individual interviews, and hence the initial findings presented at the community workshop. Rigour in the analysis was ensured through a disciplined approach, systematic steps, a defined protocol, verifiable results and multiple feedback loops embedded in the research plan (Krueger, 1998a). Part of this protocol to ensure rigour was timely analysis of the mini-focus group data.

Third, the analysis of the data collected during Phase One, the preliminary mini-focus group, commenced immediately after Phase One upon receipt of the

professional transcription. The reason behind the expedited analysis was to avoid the hazards of delayed analysis, which include decreasing recall of the sense of the group, the mood and the dynamics (Krueger, 1998a). Krueger (1998a) also warns against the danger in assuming that focus group transcripts can be analysed in the same manner as individual interview transcripts, as participants influence each other and the selective perception by the researcher becomes very important, and the data collection journal proved to be a valuable source in this respect. Another factor necessitating timely analysis was that the initial findings had to be presented at the community workshop in Phase Three, within the constrained time frames of the study. Data analysis of the other five mini-focus groups also started immediately upon receipt of transcriptions, usually within three working days after the event. The analysis of the mini-focus group data and the conducting of the remainder of the mini-focus groups thus overlapped.

Fourth, during the analysis of the mini-focus groups data the two points served as a guide to ensure a comprehensive analysis: confirming or challenging existing knowledge and suspicions; and analysing new and unsuspected points that emerge (Krueger, 1998a). Only limited cleaning of the raw mini-focus group data contained in the transcriptions was done, in order to preserve important insights into the group dynamics, especially with pre-existing groups (Stewart et al., 2009). Tracing the group's dynamics and interactions played an important role as it helped reveal unspoken elements (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010), such as gestures, facial expressions and body language, which were noted in the data collection journal. The same was true for the conversations or the social interaction that took place immediately preceding the commencement and after the conclusion of the actual mini-focus groups.

After the limited cleaning of the word processing files, the digital voice recording files and the transcriptions were imported into Nvivo, as sound and word processing files respectively. The collated written input from participants was also imported into Nvivo as spread sheets. Coding and initial comparison of data within groups, and also between groups, commenced (Krueger, 1998a; Stake, 1995). Tentative conclusions were drawn about the themes that had emerged and deliberate disconfirmation of those conclusions was sought (Stake, 1995), especially when

using tools other than Nvivo. The transcripts of the mini-focus groups, the data collection journal and digital voice recordings, as well as the data produced by the participants, were deemed to constitute a sufficient trail of evidence (Krueger, 1998a) for the conclusions drawn. These conclusions, or themes, are presented in the next chapter. In addition, post-focus group verification, as recommended by Krueger (1998a), took place during the community workshop.

The next stage of the data analysis process comprised analysing the data from the individual interviews; and then analysing the mini-focus group data in conjunction with the individual interview data. The aim was to check for internal consistency of individual responses and the effect of group dynamics and maturation, or amendments of opinions and insights, in the interceding times. The analysis of the individual interview data is discussed in detail in the next section.

Analysis of the individual interview data

As with the section on the analysis of the mini-focus group data, this section on the analysis of the individual interview data deals with the aims of the analysis, the tools used to conduct the analysis and the ways in which rigour was ensured during the analysis.

The aim of the individual interviews was to drill down deeper into the social outcomes identified by the participants during the mini-focus groups in Phase 1, in the form of the links they mentioned between government and governance, the impact they perceived the government-governance nexus to have on social outcomes, and the different stakeholders or actors they identified as being impacted or involved in this case study town.

The aim of the analysis of the individual interview data was, therefore, to uncover the greater depth of the data and to test assumptions or conclusions the researcher had reached prior to the study, but also the ones that were acquired during the analysis of the mini-focus group data. Secondly, the aim was to determine if there were any new or emerging themes that had not presented themselves during the analysis of the mini-focus group data. The tools used to achieve these aims were largely the same as for the analysis of the mini-focus group data, although the

diagram to support the semi-structured individual interviews (Figure 2-15) allowed for a more structured approach to the analysis process as the themes that were identified during the mini-focus groups were embedded in its design.

The tools used during the analysis of the individual interview data included the data management tool Nvivo, which was used again as a time and labour saving device as the individual interviews produced a significant amount of data to be analysed, both on their own and then in conjunction with the data from the mini-focus groups. Tabulation, spread sheeting and mind mapping was also employed again to approach the data from alternative viewpoints in order to ensure a rigorous analysis.

The rigour of the individual interview data, similar to the analysis of the mini-focus group data in the preceding section, is addressed in terms of firstly, the unit of analysis, secondly, the use of the research plan and the research questions, thirdly, the timeliness of the analysis and fourthly, the rigour employed during the analysis process.

First, as for the preceding analysis, the individual was considered to be the main unit of analysis, with the homogenous group being the secondary unit of analysis. The reasons underpinning the selection of these are the same as for the preceding analysis. Second, the constant and consistent use of the research plan, and the focus on the research questions, were important to ensure a rigorous analysis. Third, the analysis was conducted in a timely manner to prevent the drawbacks of delayed analysis, discussed under the analysis of the mini-focus group data. The need to finish the data analysis in time for Phase Three, the community workshop, became more imperative, as the initial findings needed to be drawn from the individual interview data as well. Fourth, the analysis process followed to ensure rigour, which to some extent mirrors the process that was followed during the analysis of the mini-focus group data.

After limited cleaning, the transcription files were imported into Nvivo, as were the digital voice recording files. Coding of the individual interview data was done using the themes identified during the coding and analysis of the mini-focus group data. At the same time, the data was analysed to ascertain if any new themes were emerging

that pertained to the research problem and could shed light on the research questions, and where encountered, such new codes were added. Codes were collapsed and hierarchies of codes were constructed during this process.

Distinct from the analysis of the mini-focus group data was the processing and analysis of the timelines compiled by/for each individual participant. The individual timelines were compiled by the individual participants in most cases, but instead by the researcher from the transcription and digital voice recording files, where participants preferred to give verbal input only. These individual timelines were collated into one timeline in a spread sheet format and then imported into Nvivo.

In addition, to approach the data from a different angle to ensure rigour, mind maps were compiled first for the different groups of participants to facilitate inter-group comparison. The mind maps created for the intergroup comparisons were useful when refining the hierarchy of nodes in Nvivo. Second, data summary tables (Lichtman, 2013) were compiled from the transcriptions, reflecting what data were provided by each participant. The data summaries were complemented from the data collection journal as well as the spread sheet that tracked the use of semi-structured interview questions, which in turn supplemented the use of the timeline diagram during the individual interviews. Third, a data summary table was compiled for all individual interviews collectively. Fourth, spread sheets were drafted combining all individual responses to questions or themes. Quotes were selected from the transcriptions to highlight salient points, and to substantiate both common and unusual findings.

Individual interview transcriptions were checked against the contributions made by the individuals during the mini-focus focus groups to determine internal consistency in individual responses and opinions. This helped to determine the impact of the group dynamics during the mini-focus groups, but also indicated refinement of participant opinion during the data collection process, especially for the 10 participants who participated in all the data collection phases.

Apart from the thematic analysis using the nodes defined, particular attention was paid to “events (what happened), experiences (images, feelings, reactions,

meanings), accounts, explanations, [and] excuses" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 67) as moments of most significant change (MSG). Many of these MSGs revealed social outcomes that are not typically reported or measured.

The initial findings of the mini-focus groups were refined against the data from the individual interviews and enabled the drafting of five initial findings, presented in the next chapter. These findings were then presented at the last phase of the data collection, the community workshop. The analysis of the raw data obtained from the community workshop is presented next.

Analysis of the community workshop data

The aim of the community workshop was to do a member check of the initial findings. The aim with the analysis was to determine the extent to which the participants agreed or disagreed with the findings, to reveal alternative interpretations provided by the participants, and to determine group differences between the acceptance, or not, of the initial findings.

The data analysis tools were the same as the ones used during the analysis of the mini-focus group and individual interview data. Ensuring rigour was also approached in the same way as during the analysis of the mini-focus group and the individual data, which is testimony to the adherence to the research plan and the focus on the research questions.

During the analysis the individual written feedback on the initial findings was collated in a spread sheet to get a clear overview of areas of agreement and areas of disagreement. The butcher sheet data compiled by the different breakaway groups was collated into a single spread sheet and a group-by-group analysis was done to ascertain group specific agreements or disagreements. The data collection journal was consulted to ascertain the impact of group dynamics. After that, referral back to mini-focus groups and individual interview data was done to check for consistency in individual and homogeneous group arguments and maturation of views. Areas of disagreement were investigated in detail to search for alternative explanations for any disputed findings.

The research design is a crucial element for ensuring the quality of a study, and the next section presents the justification of the quality of this study.

3.4. Ensuring the quality of this study

Ensuring the quality of a study is one of the main aims to accomplish, as was the case in this study. The criteria for judging qualitative research centres on trustworthiness, which is made up of credibility, dependability and transferability (D. Evans & Gruba, 2002). Conformability can be added to the list to replace the positivist concept of objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The concepts used to prove the quality of qualitative research, compared to quantitative research, is provided in Table 2-3, including explanations of the different concepts.

Table 2-3 Criteria for judging research

Qualitative research	Quantitative research	Explanation of criteria for judging qualitative research
Credibility	Internal validity	Results must be credible or believable from the perspective of the participant.
Transferability	External validity	Degree to which results can be transferred to other contexts or settings. Enhanced by thorough description of research context and central assumptions. Other researchers judging transferability – their responsibility to transfer results to different contexts sensibly.
Dependability	Reliability	Describe and account for ever-changing research context and impact on conclusions.
Confirmability	Objectivity	Refers to the degree to which others can confirm or corroborate results - each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Search for, and describe, negative instances that contradict prior observations; post –research data audit (data collection and analysis procedures) - judgements on potential for bias or distortion.

Note. Compiled from "Effective evaluation - improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches", by E. Guba & Y. Lincoln, 1981. Copyright 1981 by Jossey-Bass Publishers; and "Research methods knowledge database" (3rd ed.), by W. Trochim & J. Donnely, 2008. Copyright 2008 by William Trochim.

The criteria, as they pertain to this study, are addressed in the order they are presented in Table 2-3.

First, the credibility of this study, as per the perception of the participants, is based on the efforts by the researcher to establish that the results are credible. This was done during the community workshop where the initial findings were presented, evaluated individually, discussed in breakaway groups, and then discussed in the whole group. Areas where there was dissention were re-analysed and alternative explanations were then considered, thereby ensuring credibility.

Second, transferability, or analytic generalisation as termed by Yin (2014), involves the degree to which results can be transferred to other contexts or settings. Transferability is argued to be enhance-able through thorough descriptions of the research context and central assumptions. In essence, the responsibility is on the person doing the transfer of the results to ensure that such transfer is sensible (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Some of the findings of this study can be argued to be highly transferable, as Lefebvre pointed out that the urban problematic is not unique to either a capitalist of socialist society, but is a global phenomenon, not reserved for capitalist societies (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). Findings on the impact of urbanisation on the regions are applicable to any society subject to large scale urbanisation, whilst findings that pertain specifically to the SMP and the role of the state in a capitalist system are transferable to regional contexts in a capitalist system. The findings are also transferable to countries like Canada that have large unpopulated regions that are dominated by resource companies (Polèse, 2013), and this can prove valuable for the purposes of comparison between Australia and Canada in further research. It is held that the transferability of the findings of this study is enhanced by the comprehensive descriptions of the research context, especially in Chapter 1, but also in the rest of the thesis. Yin (2014) refers to the generalisability of qualitative studies, or transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), and states that it is based on analytic generalisation (generalizable to theoretical propositions) rather than statistical generalisation (to populations). The onus falls on the person doing the transfer to do it in a sensible way by employing established parallels at conceptual or theoretical level between the cases (Boström, 2012a).

The idea of the quantitative concept validity is not supported by all qualitative scholars, based on the argument that individuals see different realities because of

different perspectives and experiences. They argue that qualitative research is "less about the truth than it is about reaching meaningful conclusions, deeper understanding and useful results" (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. 148), which is the point of departure for this study. Validity aligns with what D. Evans and Gruba (2002) call credibility in qualitative research. Validity is about the stability of observations, and corroboration and triangulation, and threats are argued to be researcher bias and reactivity (the effect of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied), which have to be acknowledged and managed through methods such as triangulation. A method of enhancing validity is to develop converging lines of evidence (Bickman & Rog, 2009b; Maxwell, 2009).

Multiple data sources and/or data collection methods are used to see if they converge and support the same conclusions. The more diverse the sources and methods, the greater the confidence is in the findings (Eisenhardt, 2002). Such triangulation contributes to the validation of the research design (Eisenhardt, 1989) and reduces the risk that conclusions will reflect the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method (Maxwell, 2009). The need for triangulation in qualitative research derives from the need to establish the validity of conclusions (Bickman & Rog, 2009a; Eisenhardt, 1989; Maxwell, 2009). In this study, as is evident from the preceding sections, care was taken in the research design to ensure corroboration of findings, not only through the triangulation of data collection methods, but also through approaching the analysis of the data from different angles and using different tools, and finally, through the verification of the initial findings by the participants.

Bias refers to the ways in which data collection or analysis is distorted by the researcher's theory, values or preconceptions (Maxwell, 2009), which present "particular political interests and theoretical influences" and are integrally political (Ezzy, 2002, p. 57). Bias in this study was limited by data collection approaches that addressed bias, such as using numerous knowledgeable participants who viewed the focal phenomenon from diverse perspectives (Eisenhardt, 1989). Participants also came from different organisational hierarchy levels, functional areas and groups, as well as from other relevant organisations (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Respondent validation of the preliminary findings further addressed possible bias in

this study, and thus enhanced the credibility of the findings (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Swan, 2009).

Philosophically, the act of qualitative research design can be construed to be biased. Here, the work of Lefebvre as a philosophical underpinning for the study can be seen to represent a bias for a socialist-humanist perspective. Counteracting this inherent bias can be done through a "commitment…to see things through the eyes …of participants" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 7), which was achieved in this study through the opportunity for participants to make their views known during four different phases in the data collection process, including the verification of the initial findings.

Third, dependability of the findings of this study is ensured through describing and accounting for the ever-changing research context and the impact thereof on the conclusions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The ever-changing context is a key element of the research design in this study and highlights the impact of change on outcomes over time, which can be translated to include the impact of changing research contexts on findings in those contexts.

Fourth, confirmability refers to the degree to which others can confirm or corroborate results as each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Bias or distortion is addressed here through the triangulation of data collection methods, namely mini-focus groups, individual interviews, and the community workshop. The researcher's urban and regional planning perspective was stated upfront to ensure that the reader understands the point of departure. The research questions drafted for the research context also provide an indication of the focus of the researcher, as another researcher might have drafted an alternative set of questions for the same research context. The use of the theories of Lefebvre, and the corroboration of findings with like findings, is considered in the literature to reduce bias.

3.5. Limitations of study

This section acknowledges the limitations in the methods used in this research, how these shortcomings might have influenced the findings, and how those were dealt with (Yin, 2014). A distinction is made between delimitations and limitations.

Delimitations are the characteristics of the study that were under the researcher's control. Delimitations limited the scope and defined the boundaries of the study and were made at the beginning of the study. Limitations describe the weaknesses in the study that were beyond the researcher's control and occurred during the study (Cone & Foster, 2006; Simon, 2011).

In terms of delimitations, the first point is that the focus in this study was on the Australian governance context, as the intention was not to do a comparative analysis between the Australian and international context, but an in depth investigation of the Australian context. Little is known on the topic in the Australian context and the in-depth analysis was thus deemed more valuable.

The second delimitation is that there was no in-depth investigation of the various forms of governance, as the focus here was on the concept and not on the typology of governance forms.

Third, the study did not focus on FIFO and its outcomes as a phenomenon, but included FIFO as an outcome of a certain government actions. The measurable social outcomes of FIFO as a phenomenon is receiving attention in government and independent inquiries, as mentioned before.

Fourth, the complete Queensland government regulatory and policy framework as it applies to urban and regional planning, is dense, complex and contradictory (W. Wilson & Basson, 2012), and was deemed beyond the scope of this research. For this reason, only government regulation and policy as it applies to urban and regional planning and land development in the Isaac Regional Council area of Queensland was considered.

Fifth and last, descriptive research is not intended to answer questions of a causal nature and problems arise when the results from descriptive studies are inappropriately used to make causal inferences (Bickman & Rog, 2009a). The aim was not to prove causality but to provide an in-depth causal explanation (J. Maxwell, 2005; Maxwell, 2009). The likelihood that it is impossible to prove, without doubt,

the direction of causality and the actual causality between governance models and social outcomes can be ascribed to the multiplicity of factors that contribute to social outcomes and the fact that human systems are complex and dynamic.

The following limitations, as encountered during the study, apply to this study:

- Difficulty getting participation from mining employees, allegedly due to instructions from companies to not speak to researchers and the media, as conveyed by relatives of mining employees and the small number of employees who participated.
- The elected representatives were not available to participate in a focus group or the community workshop, despite an earlier indication of willingness to participate. Three elected representatives participated in the individual interviews.

A possible way for any future studies to overcome this limitation of access to mining company employees might be to source ex-mining employees as participants. The inclusion of the elected representatives in the individual interviews somewhat compensated for the absence during the focus group and the community workshop phases.

A potential weakness or limitation in the study is the fact that the research field is dynamic and vulnerable to changes in government. New governments tend to implement new policies and projects that can change the research landscape and this has already occurred since the inception of this research project, for example the introduction of the *Royalties to Regions* program by the (previous) Newman state government. Attention was drawn to such changes and their impact throughout the document.

3.6. Ethical considerations pertaining to this study

Ethical concerns should guide every aspect of the research design (Maxwell, 2009). Ethical frameworks determine anonymity, confidentiality and rights of access (Barbour & Schostak, 2011), and they are important when dealing with highly political and controversial social problems (Bickman & Rog, 2009b) such as those

investigated in this study. This research was conducted under the research ethics policies of the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) (See Appendices B- D).

Permission was obtained from the Isaac Regional Council (IRC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to access the research site. The entry point to possible participants was an IRC community liaison officer, assigned by the IRC CEO. This strategy was chosen to avoid perceptions of pressure, due to existing relationships established during the pilot study with the IRC officials, on IRC officials and elected representatives to participate in this study. Good standing with the participants was created and enhanced by effective communication. Participants were informed what they were likely to experience, including time demands and potential harm, and risks were mitigated in accordance with university policy. Benefits to participants of participating in this study included building valuable relationships, enhanced understanding of the community's problems, and empowerment through the possibility of using the research findings for policy purposes (Sieber, 2009).

3.7. Conclusion to Chapter 3 - Research design

This chapter has presented the research paradigm and the methodology. It has illustrated how the paradigm and the methodology are embedded in the discourses, included in *Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework*, on social sustainability and regional governance and regional development. The work of Lefebvre on *The State Mode of Production* and *The Social Production of Space* served as the philosophical underpinning. The humanistic focus of the work of Lefebvre dictated a qualitative approach to uncover thick descriptions to explain a little known phenomenon. The social sustainability literature, likewise, dictated an approach that would put people and their well-being first, hence the case study approach and the data collection methods that are focused on human interaction rather than on, for example, content analysis. This also dictated prolonged exposure to the research context and the participants to show respect, and to ensure a thorough understanding of the context and the different stakeholders or actors. The regional governance literature, like *The State Mode of Production* theory, stresses the dominance of the urban over the regional, and further strengthened the decision to conduct a case study of this regional town. The assumptions and constraints that applied to this study were discussed.

Following the explanation and justification of the research paradigm and the methodology, the decision to conduct a case study and the design decisions pertaining to the case study have been presented. The reasoning behind a single case was made clear. The purposive sampling strategy was justified and the data collection process and methods explained and justified. The four phases of data collection included mini-focus groups, semi-structured individual interviews and a community workshop to verify the initial findings from the first three phases.

The analysis of the data obtained from the different phases of the data collection process was presented in line with the aims of the collection of the data from each phase, the aims with the analysis, the tools used during the analysis process, and the different methods employed to ensure rigour during the data analysis process. This included timely analysis, a multi-pronged approach, adherence to the research plan and a focus on the research questions.

A justification of the quality of this study was presented based on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The limitations that apply to this study were presented and a distinction was made between delimitations at the start of the study and limitations beyond the researcher's control that arose during the study. The importance of an ethical focus and framework was discussed and the adherence to the university human ethics policies proclaimed.

4. CHAPTER FOUR– FINDINGS

The format and content of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are based on an interpretation-analysis-continuum format (Krueger, 1998a), with raw data and description in this chapter; interpretation in *Chapter 5 – Discussion*; and the conclusion and recommendations in *Chapter 6 - Conclusion and Recommendations*.

4.1. Introduction

The aim with this study was to find answers to the main research question: What are the social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus in resource regions; and to the secondary research questions:

- What are the social outcomes experienced and observed by stakeholders in the case study town?
- Who are the role players and what roles do they assume?
- How important (desirable/relevant) are sustainable social outcomes to the regional resource community?

This chapter, which presents the findings, follows the chronology of data collection phases. The findings from the mini-focus groups are presented first, followed by findings from the series of individual interviews and, lastly, the findings from the community workshop. Participants are referred to using gender-free pseudonyms followed by a group identifier in brackets.

4.2. Demographics

Demographic data for the participants is presented briefly to highlight demographic traits that were deemed important and are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The participant categories are illustrated in Table 4-1. There was an overlap between the categories Residents and Isaac Regional Council (IRC) officials. Two-thirds of the IRC officials who preferred to participate in the Residents category were under 28, had less than 4 years' experience as council officials, and occupied junior professional positions as opposed to those IRC officials who participated solely in the IRC officials category who were almost exclusively older, had extensive experience in local government, and occupied senior and management positions.

Table 4-1 Number of participants per group

Category	Number of participants
Council officials	6
Elected representatives	3
Residents	7
Mining company representatives	4
Mining company employee	1
Moranbah Traders Association (MTA) members and non-governmental associations	7
Total number or participants	**28**

Participant ages ranged from 22 to 63, with an average age of 42. Participants aged 20-29 reported extensively on their social experiences. The age groups 50-59 and 60+ were comprised of senior IRC staff and elected representatives, with a greater focus on the government-regional governance nexus in their input. This age group also included residents, who were more focused on their lived experiences as residents. Participants' employment or residence in the region ranged between 1 and 41 years, with an average of 14 years. The number of participants who had spent a substantial number of years in the community decreased sharply over time.

The category of participants who had, on average, spent the longest time in the IRC region was the elected representatives, with an average of 28 years between the 3 participants. Those who had, on average, spent the shortest time were the IRC officials, with an average of 6 years for the 6 officials. If the overlapping resident participants are added to the officials category, the officials had spent on average 12 years in the region. An extended stay in the town was reported to result in a stronger sense of attachment to place and the preference for a family-based community. These demographic traits are evident in the detailed findings, which are presented next. The breadth of the issues, as reported by the mini-focus groups, is presented first.

4.3. The breadth of issues – findings from mini-focus groups

Ten broadly defined themes were identified from the mini-focus group data in which 5 local government officials, 2 mining company representatives, 5 traders and NGO representatives, and 10 residents participated. These themes are depicted in Table

4-2, with columns for stakeholder categories and key issues. The findings are presented per row, and per stakeholder category, namely state government, local government, the community and the mining companies/industry.

Table 4-2 Key themes identified from mini-focus group data per stakeholder category

Key themes identified from mini-focus group data	
Stakeholder sector	Key theme
State government	Lack of a strategic focus.
	The political nature of decision-making by the state government.
Local government	The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government.
	The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government.
	Lack of a strategic focus by the elected representatives.
The community	The impact of the changing roles of the mining companies in the community over time and the legacy thereof in the psyche of the community.
	The impact of FIFO on the nature of the community.
	Fears over the sustainability of the community.
Mining industry/mining companies	The nature of mining companies.
	The perceived power mining companies exert over the state government.

For each stakeholder category in the following sections, an excerpt from Table 4-2 precedes the findings, for the sake of clarity.

4.3.1. State government themes

The following key themes, as per the excerpt in Table 4-3, were identified as pertaining to the state government, and are presented in more detail below.

Table 4-3 Key themes from mini-focus groups on state government

Key themes identified from mini-focus group data	
Stakeholder sector	Key theme
State government	Lack of a strategic focus.
	The political nature of decision-making by the state government.

Lack of a strategic focus

A lack of a strategic focus by state government was perceived by all the mini-focus groups. This lack, alongside the short-term political and economic focus of the state government, was argued by the participants to have resulted in a disregard for regional communities.

In spite of the existence of state government regional strategies and plans, a lack of strategic focus can be observed in those strategies and plans, according to Lane (local government). This perceived lack of a strategic underpinning of state government regional plans and policies was seen to be enduring by Max (mining company), who observed that it was partly due to the short political term and the related tendency of new governments to introduce new strategies and plans. Lane (local government) further argued that the lack in strategic planning had impacted on governance arrangements, as there is no regional decision-making framework that allows stakeholders the certainty of knowing where they fit into the governance arrangements.

These lacking policy documents, current at the time of data collections, was regarded as delivering a different and undesirable future for regional areas, according to Leslie (local government). At the same time, the state government policy direction was also regarded to have made the need for strategic planning even more urgent, as argued by Lane (local government), who stated that

> the state government said we want half of our population outside the south-east corner…in which case what the h… is Queensland going to look like in thirty, fifty, a hundred years' time?

Another state government action that was seen as evidence of a lack of strategic focus was state government interventions in local government planning, which were mentioned by the majority of the mini-focus groups. The intervention outcomes were regarded as a failure by both the local government and mining company representative mini-focus groups. The motives behind the interventions were judged to be economic. The opinion of Max (mining company) illustrated this viewpoint:

> So, a government intervention in the housing, maybe it was just that the intervention wasn't the appropriate intervention, because it clearly had the

> wrong outcome in terms of housing … and of course anyone could see that was always going to end in tears. …state government should not try to make money from housing …

The political nature of decision-making

The political nature of decision-making was reported to rest on an intertwined economic focus and a political focus. The poor fiscal position of the state was seen to be the reason behind the regional development decisions made by state government. Leslie (local government) was of the opinion that the state government was "so bereft financially" that they were making decisions that were not in the best interest of regional communities. The attitude of politicians towards the well-being of the regions had deteriorated, according to Lane (local government) who stated that,

> …earlier at least there was a sense of trying to establish a scheme or some framework for regional governance. I look around now and it's every man for himself. But there's a competing agenda there, I guess, with the state government wanting the money that the mining industry can bring.

The use of regional funding schemes as a political tool or leverage against local government was raised by the local government group. Leslie (local government) regarded the $400,000 allocation from the Royalties for Regions (R4R) fund for medical facilities on state government land in a small town in the Isaac Regional Council area, to be the

> …government's response to the antagonistic process of an undesirable local government authority. We sent 1.8 billion dollars [in royalties] odd to state government and they give us sweet bugger all back…we have been ripped off [by the state]…

This undesirability of the local government was alleged to have resulted from two events. First, a politician changing alliance, and second, the local government's unwillingness to partner with a state government department through Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) in the development of a residential subdivision, Belyando Estate in Moranbah, from which EDQ would have profited financially.

Apart from the opinion that state government intervention is evidence of a lack of strategic focus, the local government group saw the 2010 intervention by the then

Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), now EDQ, as a disregard by the state for the value of local knowledge. Leslie (local government) reported a sense of frustration that there was no acknowledgement on the part of the state government of expertise and local knowledge in the region and the town. Terry (trader) stated that the state government has effectively "neutered our local government" through the 2010 ULDA intervention and the 2011 intervention in the one-hundred-percent-FIFO applications.

In summary, the points that were raised by the mini-focus groups pertaining to the state government were that the state government displayed a disregard for regional communities, as well as a disregard for local expertise and knowledge. A lack of strategic focus was observed in state government policies, documents and processes including regional plans and policies, and state government intervention. The focus of the state government was regarded to be economical and to be resulting from the poor fiscal position of the state due to large budget deficits. The economic focus was argued to have resulted in the use of regional funding as leverage over regional local governments.

4.3.2. Local government themes

The following key themes (Table 4-4) were identified as pertaining to local government, and are presented in more detail below. The majority of these issues were perceived to pertain to the elected representatives rather than to the local government officials.

Table 4-4 Key themes from mini-focus groups on local government

Key themes identified from mini-focus group data	
Stakeholder sector	Key theme
Local government	The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government.
	The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government.
	Lack of a strategic focus by the elected representatives.

The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government

The role, function and capabilities of local government as an institution of the state were raised by the council officials and the mining company representatives, and to a lesser extent, by the traders. In spite of a perceived lack of power, there was a sense of huge responsibility placed on local government, according to Lane (local government) who claimed that,

> Both the federal and state government have abrogated that responsibility [for the community]. …local government is left to pick up the bank.

Leslie (local government) referred to the state government pressure exerted on the Isaac Regional Council, to build the economy of the region to alleviate the dependence on the mining sector.

The local government focus group reported serious concerns about the service provision capacity of the council in a financially constrained environment, resulting from the downturn in the mining industry and the impact of FIFO work practices. The psycho-social impact of the deteriorating financial position on the local government workforce was inferred from the emotional descriptors used to relay the state of affairs.

The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government

The relationship between the different tiers of government was reported to be problematic. Ronny and Robbie's (residents) perceptions were that there were feelings of resentment towards, and between, different levels of government, and that state and local government were working against each other. The preliminary focus group reminded the researcher that the town was dependent on a mining company for its town water supply, putting the local government in what Leslie (local government) called a "hostage" position. The local government mini-focus group was of the opinion that inadequate financial support from state government for infrastructure provision was partly to blame for this reported predicament. Taking into consideration reports of animosity towards state government, the lacking collaboration between different mining companies, the disregard for local knowledge, and the lack of strategic planning, Max (mining company) and Lane

(local government) came to the conclusion that the government-regional governance nexus in the Isaac Regional Council area is “a b….. mess…”.

A lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives

A lack of strategic focus, resulting from poor leadership, was seen to pertain to the elected representatives, and not the council officials. The second group of residents were the only group who did not mention the brevity of a four-year political cycle and the leadership role of the elected representatives. All other parties were concerned about a perceived lack of strong and strategic leadership by elected representatives. The governance role of the local government was not mentioned, apart from the traders’ opinion that community consultation by council was lacking.

The elected representatives were labelled idealistic and unrealistic by the majority of the mini-focus groups. A lack of respect and trust in the elected representatives were reported by the mining company focus groups, the council officials, as well as both groups of residents. Max (mining company) was of the opinion that the community at large does not respect or trust the elected representatives. The first residents group unanimously agreed that elected representatives were focused on being re-elected.

The opinion on local politicians was reported to date back to the establishment years of the mining company towns when there was, according to Max (mining company),

> …political lobbying to get mining towns [established] in all [pre-amalgamated] council areas…

This lobbying, and the subsequent proliferation of mining towns across the region, in addition to existing towns, was perceived to have resulted in poor outcomes in terms of regional economies over time, according to both the mining company and the preliminary mini-focus groups.

A concern that all the mini-focus groups deemed important was the ongoing lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives, and hence the rest of the council. Max (mining company) referred to the provisioning of housing to illustrate this point, stating that

> Everyone is going, "oh s…. it is a crisis – how are we going to get the houses built, how are we going to do this, how are we going to do that?"…no one actually said "well what if there was a downturn?"

There was an approval of certain decisions made by the elected representatives. The first was the decision to appoint a consulting firm, KPMG, to compile an evidence base that could be used by local government to base decision-making on. This was applauded and mentioned by the first residents group, as well as the traders. A second leadership decision that attracted support from the residents mini-focus groups was the elected representatives' strong opposition to the then proposed hundred-percent-FIFO camps. FIFO opposition was also the only area where collaboration between the Isaac Regional Council mayor, and other mayors of regional coastal cities in adjoining regional council areas, were mentioned by the mini-focus groups.

The elected representatives and the mining company representatives referred to a perception that a lack of strategic focus and leadership has, over the years, helped to establish a local government dependence on the mining companies in the area. This dependence included a sense of entitlement to financial support for the community. There was an acknowledgement that contributions from the mining companies can have long term budget implications for council. Ronny and Ray (residents) recalled the aquatic centre contributions, which had presented the IRC with considerable ongoing maintenance costs it could ill-afford. The dependence was also perceived to have an element of entitlement or greed, as reported by Lane (local government)

> So, you've now got twenty years [lifespan of mine] in which to milk these b……. for everything you possibly can to get a legacy project …

In summary, the points raised by the mini-focus groups pertaining to local government include the pressure on local government to build a local economy, the impact of the current mining industry downturn on the Isaac Regional Council's revenue, the lack of collaboration with the state government, a lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives, the dependence on mining companies, and the sense of entitlement to financial support from the mining companies.

4.3.3. Community themes

The following key themes (Table 4-5) were identified as pertaining to the community, and are presented in more detail below: the way that the mining company has, over time, impacted on social outcomes, including a sense of entitlement and a sense of dependency on the mining companies, and a sense of loss of the earlier family culture in town. Fear and uncertainty pertaining to the future were common, including reports of a sense of hopelessness.

Table 4-5 Key themes from mini-focus groups on community

Key themes identified from mini-focus group data	
Stakeholder sector	Key theme
The community	The impact of the changing roles of the mining companies in the community over time and the legacy thereof in the psyche of the community.
	The impact of FIFO on the nature of the community.
	Fears over the sustainability of the community.

The impact and legacy of the changing roles of the mining companies in the community over time

The residents' groups, the mining company representatives mini-focus groups, and the traders, all remarked extensively on the way the nature of the mining industry has changed over time. This was reported to have impacted on the social outcomes in the town. The historical importance of the mining sector was acknowledged and reported by all groups. First, it was responsible for the creation of the town and its continuance since. As Leslie (local government) put it,

> …without mining we are nothing … a few cows running around in the paddock…

Second, Tatum (trader) stated that the culture of the mining company that established the town resulted in the establishment of a strong family culture in the town. This culture included the employment of mainly married workers, regular celebrations organised and funded by the mining companies, the provision of family-type community facilities, and company practices that allowed the use of company supplies and equipment by the mine workers to construct community facilities over weekends.

In addition to the family culture, a strong attachment to place was reported by both the mini-focus groups of mining company representative as well as both residents groups. Ray and Ronny (residents) still regarded Moranbah as home and reported that they got drawn back to the town having left upon completing school. The traders' and the young residents' mini-focus groups also reported the importance of land uses, which were perceived as symbols of permanence and a sense of community, such as the cemetery and the caravan park. The conversion of the caravan park into a workers' camp was seen to signal a loss of the sense of community by Robbie (resident). It was evident that the residents who had grown up in the region had a very strong attachment to place, which was reported to also apply to their children. These residents and their children have been witnesses to the dynamic nature of their town.

The social outcomes of various changes that have impacted on the town over time, in particular, were focal issues for the residents. A third of these participants reported having strong feelings about the perceived loss, over time, of the family culture and the sense of community. They ascribed this sense of loss to having lived in Moranbah or the region for decades and knowing what life used to be like. One of the outcomes of the decline of the family culture was reported to be a few remaining enclaves of residents with a strong sense of community or belonging. A notable counterargument was raised by Lane (local government) that

> … people seem to have a perception that Moranbah's changing but nowhere else is changing…

One of the first changes was brought about by the introduction, by the federal government, of the Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) in 1986. This was viewed to have had a significant impact on regional resource communities. The second residents mini-focus group and the mining company representatives group mentioned that FBT led to the normalisation of the mining company towns, where responsibility for the running of the towns was handed over to local governments. Private home ownership in those communities also became possible for the first time. This homeownership had far-reaching outcomes, for example it encouraged longer term residency according to Max (mining company). At the same time, Max argued that

> …if you've got [home] ownership, you want to have some say in how it [the town and region] is run…

Later impacts that brought change to the family culture and the sense of community were the introduction of shift work and extended work hours, the previous mining boom, and more recently the stronger FIFO practices. The young residents group was unanimous that the boom had brought the greatest changes to the town in terms of social outcomes. Their comments included observed social changes such as

> [Now it had become] ok to slap your waitress on the butt …because they don't have anything to do with you… And, [strangers would] hit you up for a drink in spite of the fact that you were there with your partner…

The negative social outcomes in the community of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines were reportedly experienced by nearly half the participants. The preliminary group, the residents and the council mini-focus groups argued that FIFO has damaged the sense of community and the family culture even beyond the town.

The boom and bust nature of the mining industry has had an impact on homeownership and the cost of housing, especially over the last couple of decades. People were sleeping in their cars at the Red Bucket [an open space at the entrance to town] due to a lack of housing during the last boom, according to the young residents' mini-focus group.

Mining companies' financial support for community projects was mentioned in all the mini-focus groups. The original culture of the mining companies was argued to have contributed to the development of a culture of dependence on the mining companies, both by the community as well as the local government. A strong sense of entitlement to financial assistance was argued to have resulted from this dependence, with the community and the local government displaying this sense of entitlement. A second form of entitlement, raised by both the residents groups, was the commonly held view of entitlement to mining company employment, especially by school age boys and their families. The younger residents group also linked this sense of entitlement to poor educational outcomes, especially for school age boys who often did not complete school. A third sense of entitlement, reported by the mining sector focus group, was entitlement to financial compensation, in the form of

high salaries, for the perceived hardships they endured while being employed in the region. Max (mining company) claimed that mine employees

> …all hope they're going to leave here with a bundle of money ….feel bad about living in a c… hole like Middlemount or Moranbah…

The impact of FIFO on the nature of the community

A sense of them and us allegedly existed between construction workers versus mining company employees in the establishment days; it also existed between mining company employees of the two companies after that; and it now appears to apply to FIFO workers versus permanent residents. This sense of them and us was mentioned by both residents groups, as well as by the traders group. The young residents in particular mentioned the changes in behaviour in local restaurants and social places as a result of the influx of FIFO workers during the last boom. Ronny (resident) reported feelings of resentment that accommodation villages or camps, during the

> …floods in 2011 [when the] camp couldn't get their food ... went and raided Coles in town and none of us had food…

Fears over the sustainability of the community

All the mini-focus groups stated fear and uncertainty about the sustainability of the town and the community, yet more than three quarters of the participants were of the opinion that the town would survive beyond mining. The general consensus, amongst those who saw a future for the town, was that it would be much smaller after a decrease in mining, or post-mining. Leslie (local government) suspected that the town "…will slip back into agriculture". One participant stated that the town would not survive beyond mining, and the remainder of the participants were undecided. The future of the town was also perceived to be impacted by the quality of political leadership.

The perceived inability of local and state political leaders to ensure the well-being of individual residents, businesses and local government was raised by all the mini-focus groups. The question posed was who will assume responsibility for strategic planning for the region to ensure a sustainable future? Lane (local government) referred to the gap between what companies deem necessary to run their businesses on the one hand, and the certainty that people desire on the other, and asked what the

residents wanted to envisage in that gap. The lack of security, arising from poor leadership, impacted on the levels of optimism regarding capacity and opportunities to safeguard the future.

A certain sense of hopelessness was voiced by the traders, mining company representatives and council officials. In all three of these stakeholder groups, concern was expressed about finding opportunities for secondary economic activities that can sustain the town during mining downturns and post-mining. Max (mining company) asked the question

> What can you actually do with a b….. great deep hole of s….. water, other than [breeding] three-headed fish?

The sense of hopelessness also appeared to stem from the perception that the town was at the mercy of political influences. Ray (resident) made a statement that

> The biggest thing out here, [is that] politics rules everything, no matter what you do.

Given the small size of the community, one of the concerns Leslie (local government) held was that, based on its population size, it was

> …democratically a voice in the wilderness…

In summary, the points raised by the mini-focus groups pertaining to the community were, firstly, that the culture of the parent company had been responsible for the creation of a family culture in the town. Secondly, the changes in company culture and business practices, especially since the introduction of other companies in the region and especially since the last boom, had been responsible to a large extent for the demise of that family culture. Thirdly, the benevolent role played by the parent company was argued to have resulted in a culture of dependence and entitlement. Fourthly, a strong attachment to place was reported, especially by people who had lived in the community for a substantial amount of time and/or had grown up in the community. Fifthly, strong fears about the sustainability of the town were reported, in spite of the fact that the majority of the participants argued that the town would survive beyond mining. Lastly, there was a sense of hopelessness regarding what alternative economic base could be put in place instead of mining.

4.3.4. Mining company/industry themes

The following key themes (Table 4-6) were identified as pertaining to the mining industry or the mining companies, and are presented in more detail below: the historical role of the mining sector in the region; the impact of the cyclical nature of the industry on the region and the community; and the shareholder focus of the global multinational companies. It also exposed the perceptions of the power wielded by the mining industry over state governments.

Table 4-6 Key themes from mini-focus groups on mining

Key themes identified from mini-focus group data	
Stakeholder sector	Key theme
Mining industry/mining companies	The nature of mining companies.
	The perceived power mining companies exert over the state government.

The nature of mining companies

Issues centering on the nature of mining companies were raised by the first residents and the local government mini-focus groups, and they focused on changes in the business and governance models of the mining industry in an increasingly constrained global environment.

There was agreement between the participants that mining companies are businesses that are accountable to their shareholders. The shareholder focus of the mining companies was summed up by Lane (local government) as:

> Mining companies have one overriding objective and that is return to shareholders. So, all this other stuff that companies do, social licence to operate, is all seen in the perspective of 'is it good for our shareholders'?

Lane described the mining industry as being

> …like the new colonialism, we're not really connected to the country, we're just here to plunder it…

According to Max (mining company) one of the tools used to ensure profitability was a FIFO workforce, but FIFO has social impacts, as

> …one of the positive benefits of having a FIFO workforce in your town is that when they get the boot the [social] impact is less because you're transferring your problem somewhere else…

Not only was the transfer of social problems reported, but also the transfer of senior mining company staff.

Lane (local government) voiced the opinion that mining company executives have also become transient workers, who are being shifted between continents. Mining company executives were reported to be city-based and removed from the realities, on the ground, that the regional mining communities face. Leslie (local government) summarised that the company had always provided, but the global company did not, contrasting with Robbie's (resident) memories:

> When I was a kid it was all about community...

Another reason was argued to have impacted on companies' commitment to the community.

The mining company representatives' mini-focus group reported that, over the years, more and more mining companies had entered the region, and the original culture and legacy of the parent company had become diluted. This was held to be an explanation for the original companies withdrawing from supporting the town, as the workers who were resident in the town were employed by several companies and there was less motivation for the company to provide for the employees of other companies. Not only was there a gradual decline of certain practices, but also cyclical events that impacted on the community.

The cyclic nature of the mining industry was mentioned by all the mini-focus groups. Ray (resident) expected, after the last boom, that the mining industry would never reach the boom heights again. The last boom was regarded by all as a major game changer for Moranbah, specifically due to the one-hundred-percent-FIFO approvals by the state government in response to the housing crisis during the boom. The home ownership that resulted from normalisation had far reaching impacts during the boom, as many longer term and closer to retirement age residents chose to move on. Ronnie (resident) recalled that

> My dad bought his place for $4,000 and sold it for $500,000…

The expectation that the mining industry in the region would never regain its strength also resulted in speculation about possible retraction or implementation of a long-term exit strategy from the community by the mining companies. The traders were the only group that did not mention the possibility that at least some of the mining companies were executing an exit strategy. All groups reported a change in the role the mining companies played in town: a smaller role, with more focus on the education of its own workforce, some community access to their education projects, as well as a possible legacy project envisioned by one company. There was, however, acknowledgement by Max (mining company) that the type of

> …exit strategy where [the] last train pulls up the rails is totally unacceptable today…

In spite of the acknowledgement that past exit practices might not be acceptable today, there was no disagreement amongst the participants as to the power wielded by the mining companies.

The perceived power mining companies exert over the state government

Reports on the power of the mining companies over the state government were ascribed to the state government's economic desire to have the mining royalties as a source of income. Leslie (local government) recalled the intervention of the state government, in the overturning of a local government approved residential estate of 350 lots, prompted by a mining company's complaints of "coal being sterilised". Another example of the power that the mining companies are perceived to have over the state government was reported to be the approval of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps at two mines, Caval Ridge and Daunia, in spite of strong opposition from the local government and residents. Power over the state government included impact on the demographic distribution of the state's workforce. The mining companies have influence over the workers in terms of locality of residency, according to Max (mining company). Mining companies were perceived to exert their power as individual companies and not, typically, as a group of mining companies. Only Max reported an instance of cooperative governance between different mining companies to strengthen their power, which occurred when

> [The] mining companies got together to make a plan to not keep on paying increasing rent [during the previous boom] – found alternative arrangements, including FIFO…

In summary, the points pertaining to the community raised by the mini-focus groups were the changes in the culture and business model of the parent company, the introduction of other mining companies that diluted the culture of the parent company, the stakeholder focus of the mining companies, the cyclical nature of the mining sector, and the power wielded over a state government desiring an income from royalties.

4.4. The depth of issues – findings from individual interviews

The structure of this section follows the structure of the previous section, namely findings are presented as pertaining to firstly the state government, secondly the local government, thirdly the community, and lastly the mining companies. Where relevant, findings are, however, presented using a chronological structure as used during the interviews, rather than the thematic structure in the preceding section. New themes that emerged from the individual interviews are presented thereafter. Concluding this section, the main themes from the individual interviews are summarised in a table that also presents the main themes from the mini-focus groups.

4.4.1. State government themes

The state government themes that were exposed in more depth during the individual interviews were the lack of strategic focus, and the political nature of decision-making.

Lack of a strategic focus

Participants based their perception of a lack of strategic focus by the state government on specific examples. The first example was the previous state government's decentralisation plans. Cass (elected representative) stated that

> Now part of their grand plan is decentralisation. Decentralisation means to me that we've got to get people out to the regions. To get people out to the regions - and you're not giving those regions any money or you're screwing them over. Is there a flaw already in the document?

Toni (trader) echoed Cass's concerns and stated that there were no incentives outside of the south-eastern corner to attract and retain people.

The second example was shifting the responsibility for regional planning to local government. The new generation of regional plans was also perceived to be an indication of a lack of strategic focus. Leslie (local government) pointed out that

> Regional plans … the responsibility and the accountability fall back to local government, but we're in a space where we can't influence our destiny. We haven't actually got the tools.

A third example of the lack of strategic focus was viewed to be the state government intervention in the urban and regional planning, and land development, affairs of Isaac Regional Council. Leslie (local government) argued that the state was using its authority as overriding decision-maker for economic gain for the state. Cass (elected representative) stated that the overturning of the council approved 350 lots residential subdivision by the state government in 2005

> …really … killed the town… set the scene for the travesty of injustice that happened to the town…

Larry (local government) pointed out the outcomes of the 2010 intervention by the then Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), now Economic Development Queensland (EDQ), and stated that the ULDA was of the opinion that the agency could provide housing at a lower cost, but in the end the product did not reach the market any cheaper than conventional developments.

Not only were the outcomes of the 2010 intervention off-target, but state government intervention per se was reported to impact negatively on progression. Leslie (local government) pointed to the stagnating impact it had on the IRC:

> Every major development that comes up state intervenes in… when are you [state government] going to leave us alone? … we can't move on…

Ray (resident) raised the impact of the state government intervention on the perceived competence of local government in the town, and claimed that local government was portrayed as incompetent to its community by the state intervention.

Fourth, the focus on the economic contributions from the coal industry was regarded as an indication of lacking strategic focus by Lane (local government), who asked:

> … what planet are these people [state politicians] on? How many other people in the world are quietly, just quietly getting out of the coal business? But no, in this state we are in the coal business…

The political nature of decision-making

Decision-making by the state was reported to be underpinned by politics, and specifically economic aims. Links were drawn between the lack of strategic focus and the perceived money-driven nature of the state government. Leslie (local government) was of the opinion that

> The only thing they're [state government] interested in is the money. We sent them $8 billion out of the region last financial year in terms of the economic stimulus to the state. Isaac is part of the largest regional economy in Queensland outside the south-east - a considerable cash cow …

Toni (trader) was in agreement with this viewpoint, stating that the driver behind state government decision-making is the desire to accumulate funds to reduce the state budget deficit. Max (mining company) echoed this sentiment, but linked the current focus on decreasing the budget deficit, to a lacking view on the future of the state and, specifically, the resource regions. Toni (trader) agreed that the focus was on getting the financial benefit of royalties, which, according to Cass (elected representative), led to a lenient approach by the state government towards the mining companies. Leslie (local government) added that state leadership is flawed due to its narrow focus on economics.

Cass (elected representative) expected the economic focus of state government to be enduring, based on the perception that

> It will never be changed in government because the coal royalties are too important to them… more important to the government than people's [worries about] a town going belly-up. …if your mining company is your bedfellow you don't upset that.

Not only was the perceived economic focus of the state criticised but also where, and to whom, funding is allocated. Dissatisfaction was expressed that the state

government was using the Royalties for the Regions (R4R) funds for areas outside of the regional mining communities that are impacted by the mining industry. Max (mining company) argued that

> … we in this region want to have our appropriate share of royalties for regions because it is… this is the community we impact on and therefore this is the community that should get the share of the royalties, but that's - the state government's view is that the royalties are about - to be shared, to share the wealth across the whole of the state.

Cass (elected representative) recalled that the R4R fund was set up by the Labour Government to ensure a flow of money back to the areas being impacted by mining activities. The use of these funds outside of areas they were originally intended to service was seen to be an indication that the state government did not care about the social well-being and sustainability of the resource regions. Cass claimed that the alleged mismanagement of the R4R funding was the worst case of "bastardy" ever done to the resource regions by the government.

Apart from the perceived disregard for the social sustainability of the regions, a disregard of local knowledge and opinion was also reported. Toni (trader) told about the drafting of the regional plan that

> …was in print already before we arrived [for consultation] … so it was all lip service. But we still have to be at the table. Because if we don't, they'll [state government] say that you didn't engage.

The lack of collaborative planning between the state and local government was also raised and is addressed under the local government themes.

In summary, the points pertaining to the state government, raised during the individual interviews, were a lack of strategic focus by the state government, with examples such as decentralisation strategies; the new generation of regional plans that were the responsibility of a disempowered local government; the state intervention in the IRC developments; and the focus on the coal industry. Decision-making by the state was deemed to be underpinned by politics, and driven by economic aims. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the allocation of state government funding, which was originally intended to compensate the regional areas for the impositions posed by the mining industry.

The second category of themes that emerged in greater depth during the individual interviews, were those pertaining to the Isaac Regional Council, and these are presented next.

4.4.2. Local government themes

The local government themes that were exposed in more depth during the individual interviews were the power and fiscal constraints faced by local government, the lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government, and the lack of a strategic focus by the elected representatives.

The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government

Some of the fiscal constraints originated during the 2008 forced amalgamations of local government, according to Max (mining company). Max was of the opinion that the amalgamated region was too big, had too many problems and did not have enough resources to deal with those. These factors allegedly resulted in local government being overwhelmed in the years after the amalgamation.

The fiscal constraints the Isaac Regional Council faced were seen to have forced a dependency on the mining companies for financial support. At the same time, Mel (mining company) stated that although local government depended on the mining companies, it did not trust them enough to establish a working relationship with them, preferring "that we just give them the money". Oli (community organisation) argued that the mining companies had contributed more to the town financially than the state government had. Charlie (elected representative) raised financial support from the mining companies from another perspective, that of asset management, and stated that council had started considering the long term infrastructure management cost implications of projects, such as the aquatic centre. Charlie also stated that

> The relationship [with the mining companies] is changing and there's a new way of doing business for all of us that I think is being strongly underpinned by that push for a better governance structure for everyone.

This local government desire for a changed relationship with the mining companies was reported to have had consequences as well. Charlie was of the opinion that the mining companies had become less supportive because of the council's drive for independence. Mel (mining company) expressed doubt that the council's quest for

autonomy would eventuate. The absence of a desire to collaborate was not just reported as applying to the local government and the mining companies, but also to the local government and the state government.

The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government

Cass (elected representative) argued that the relationship between state and local government was determined by the belief that

> Local government needs to toe the line and at the end of the day we need state government to get that revenue so that the whole state runs well.

Charlie and Cass (elected representatives) mentioned one example of collaboration, namely the Moranbah Growth Management Group (MG2), where the state government, between 2005 and 2008, facilitated industry and local government discussions about the short, medium and long-term growth of the town. Leslie (local government) was of the opinion that the MG2 never resolved anything, but was a state government-local government "talk fest". Charlie stated that the MG2 had one outcome, namely

> …Belyando Estate… [but it] took four years to actually sort that land tenure out…. It was [mining company] land… Then it became a real political issue… [the mining company did not want to extinguish their mining rights on the property].

This outcome was partly ascribed to a lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives, evidence of which was also observed in other instances.

The lack of a strategic focus by the elected representatives

The lack of a strategic focus was linked to local elected representative leadership. Strong local leadership was deemed necessary to counteract the powerful nature of the mining companies according to Oli (community organisation). Oli claimed that the leadership cohort, current at the time of data collection, was willing to assert the Isaac Regional Council's (IRC) opinion to the state government in a way not experienced before. Charlie (elected representative) acknowledged that leadership was what the community wanted most from the elected representatives. The dilemma of leadership without power was raised by Tatum (trader) who stated that

> …state government has neutered our local government…

Cass (elected representative) referred to a perceived lack of engagement with the community, who were reported as not having a high regard for the elected IRC representatives. Charlie (elected representative) argued that the community had unrealistic expectations of the role of local government, as they did not understand the role and function of local government and its limited ability to influence the state government and the mining companies.

Leadership demands were regarded to have changed over time. Charlie (elected representative) recalled less challenges to leadership before the last boom, and a change in the nature of leadership since, stating that before the boom local government was a much simpler 'world' and that, over the years, the IRC has gone from "almost the Wild West to something very structured…" Charlie saw evidence of an emerging strategic focus by the elected representatives, stating that

> …you start to realise that you need to have a strategy. Back then it used to be all reactionary … I think transitioning is a good word. I think we began transitioning at the beginning of this term. We knew we needed to… whatever we'd done before wasn't working and we needed to do business differently.

Not only was there acknowledgement of changed leadership demands, but there were also examples of stages where the leadership was seen to have satisfactory outcomes. The initiator of such leadership was a community organisation.

Oli (community organisation) referred to effective leadership by a community organisation during the opposition against the two applications for one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines, Daunia and Caval Ridge, stating that the current elected representatives had observed

> …there has been some good leadership in that area [community organisation] in the past and so people feel now that they've watched one person the way she's gone about things and we'll do that too and just took notice of her success, communication mediums [she used]…

Apart from one past example of strategic leadership by the elected representatives, namely the Isaac Views residential development, which was noted by Oli (community organisation), a lack of leadership and a strategic focus was reported.

Leslie (local government) stated that the Isaac Regional Council did not have leaders, amongst the elected representatives, able to control or manage issues that are significantly important to the region, such as its future. Toni (trader) had the same concerns: that the elected representatives did not have a clear view of what the future of the town was. However, Toni included the council officials in this statement. The MG2 served as an example of an initiative impacted by poor strategic vision and lack of leadership.

Cass (elected representative) reasoned that the MG2 was another example where progress was hampered by poor leadership and a lacking strategic focus. During the MG2 round table, the development of a residential subdivision, Belyando Estate was signed off but, with the general election 2008 and a change of council, it lost impetus, reported Cass, who saw this outcome as

> …the second phase of disaster… he [the mayor] didn't think it was in the council's interest to be in land development … should sell Belyando Estate to EDQ [then ULDA] … but because some players in council decided that they were not going to do that …. for four years the council sat there and did nothing on Belyando Estate.

Another example of a lacking strategic focus was seen to be the conviction by several of the elected representatives that the mining industry would recover significantly from the current downturn. Lane (local government) regarded them as either not having an understanding of the global nature of the economy, or being "wishful thinkers" who saw a future for their region based on the 300 million people in India who live without electricity. The elected representatives' lobbying to get the power over the EDQ Priority Development Area (PDA) returned to the jurisdiction of the IRC was raised by Charlie (elected representative). Leslie and Larry (local government) viewed this lobbying as another example of lacking strategic focus as local government did not have the planning instruments in place to deal with this area.

The lack of a strategic focus was argued to be visible in the Isaac Regional Council's poor relationships with the residents, as well as the mining companies, by two of the

elected representatives and a council official. Charlie (elected representative), however, believed that

> … we're [elected representatives] genuinely going to have the groundswell of people behind us [in the future].

On the other hand, Mel (mining company) reported a budding strategic focus, recalling one of the elected representatives talking about building dams in region. Mel recalled thoughts, at the time, of

> …hallelujah…. they're actually looking outside coal for another source of revenue and economic sustainability.

Charlie (elected representative) linked the realisation of the need for a strategic focus to the presence of elected representatives with more than one term's experience, and argued that those elected representatives made better decisions, as they were cognisant of historical events in the region. Furthermore, accountability for actions and decisions by the elected representatives was raised.

Casey, a single term elected representative, denied that the elected representatives instigated discussions with the Urban Land Development Authority (now EDQ) in 2010, resulting in the ULDA intervention. By contrast, during the 2010 pilot study, Doug (elected representative) wanted recognition for bringing about the ULDA intervention:

> …we were actually the ones who instigated – it was through us we got the ULDA in. So we are aware of all the steps they will take. We were aware of what they were trying to do with Fitzgibbon in Brisbane and we thought well maybe this is a way forward for us…

Cass (elected representative) recalled that the elected representatives

> …welcomed EDQ coming in and they were also offering up EDQ Belyando Estate…. Disastrous…

The lack of foresight into the outcomes of the EDQ intervention in 2010 was also raised by Casey (elected representatives) who stated that

> I don't think …we fully understood what that meant and what was said at the beginning, and how that whole process rolled out has not been any help to us.

The previous statements covered the perceived overall lack of strategic focus and lack of leadership by the elected representatives. The following group of statements revealed what the elected representatives were arguably focused on instead of displaying what the participants regarded to be a strategic focus and a vision.

The elected representatives were reported to be focused on opposing the one-hundred-percent-FIFO. This was evident from the following statement by Cass (elected representative):

> …this current council is not doing much at all. All we're doing is we're trying to turn around the FIFO argument …

Charlie (elected representative) agreed that the elected representatives had focused on the-one-hundred-percent-FIFO, and stated that they were "doing a very good job of keeping that issue on the table." Casey (elected representative) reported that the reason behind the elected representatives' ongoing strong stance against FIFO was the election of a leader of a community group, who had strongly opposed the one-hundred-percent-FIFO, onto the current council. Casey argued that the presence of this person had resulted in other elected representatives gaining the courage to take a position on major issues that impacted the region.

Another current focus of the elected representatives, identified by Leslie (local government), was the elected representatives' intent to continue with residential land development in Belyando Estate in Moranbah. Leslie argued that

> We're [elected representatives are] still building Rome. There's no need for Rome. We actually need to diversify.

Cass (elected representative) was of the opinion that the current council had become more bureaucratic than ever before and was focused on processes rather than outcomes. Different reasons for the lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives were put forward by the participants.

Charlie (elected representative) viewed the reason behind the lack as the elected reps being blinded by power. Leslie (local government) added the view that senior council employees had been overburdened for the last five years, and subsequently had little opportunity to think strategically about the future. Another reason was argued to be that some elected representatives firmly believed that the mining industry would

recover from its current slump, and return the prosperity of the past to the town. Lane (local government) argued that it was particularly the elected representatives who had lived in the region since childhood who had the perception that the mining industry was cyclic but would always bounce back substantially.

In summary, the points pertaining to the local government raised during the individual interviews were firstly the power and fiscal constraints faced by local government, some of which were argued to have resulted from the forced local government amalgamations in 2008. Secondly, the fiscal constraints were deemed to have contributed to a forced dependence on the mining companies in spite of a distrust of the mining companies. Thirdly, a general lack of collaboration between the state and local government was observed. The one instance of collaboration, the MG2, was deemed to have not produced significant outcomes. Fourthly, a lack of strategic focus and strong leadership by the elected representatives was reported, although the inclusion of a past community group leader onto the council was argued to have led to a greater willingness on the part of the elected representatives to take a stronger stance against state government for their community. Finally, a cause for concern was the perceived distorted focus of the elected representatives on one-hundred-percent-FIFO and residential development instead of positioning the town for the future.

The third category of themes that emerged in greater depth during the individual interviews, were community themes, and these are presented next.

4.4.3. Community themes

The findings from the individual interviews that are related to the community are presented first using the timeline format that was used during the interviews, as these findings were significantly linked to time, or to particular eras. Although these timeline events could have been included into the community themes, it would have obscured the importance of the historical unfolding of events. The community themes are therefore presented afterwards. The themes that emerged in more depth during the individual interviews were the social impacts of the mining companies over time and fears over the sustainability of the community.

Chronological events

During the early years, when the mining towns in the Isaac Regional Council area were established, miners were reported by Max (mining company) to have come from

> South East Queensland mining communities [such as] Ipswich [which meant that they were] mainly relocating. Those [town building days] were the pioneering days. There was a large construction workforce many of whom were transient, DIDO workers.

These construction workers were regarded as the outsiders, according to Max.

The early residents confirmed seeing themselves as pioneers of the region, and spoke of physically contributing to the building of the case study town and other towns in the region. Tatum (trader) recalled carrying bricks in buckets to help the bricklayers build a church over weekends. In spite of such relaxed construction arrangements, the mining companies rented houses to staff under strict regulations according to Max (mining company).

During the 1980s, with the introduction of Fringe Benefit Tax, the mining companies normalised the mining towns and private ownership of housing became possible for the first time. Tatum (trader) recalled people being suspicious of the mining companies offering company houses for sale.

In the 1990s, according to Max (mining company), workers were still working eight hour shifts, which meant that there was time for significant participation in sport and clubs. Participants did not recall any memorable events in the state government or mining company realms during the mid-1990s.

Ray (resident) recalled times, during the early 2000s, when families were still allowed on site and on mining equipment. For example, even primary school children were allowed to operate the dragline under adult supervision. Ray (resident) also recalled the town as a family oriented community, with friendly neighbourhoods and many social gatherings and community events.

Lane (local government) observed that during the mid-2000s, mining companies had improved their governance abilities, but there were differences between the different companies, based on their company culture. Lane further recalled that, during the mid-2000s, there was a high turnover of workers in the mining industry. This was the same era that Max (mining company) remembered the twelve hour roster in the mines being introduced. Ray (resident) recalled that during this era there were also lay-offs, and the

> …strikes started. Changes were observed in neighbourhood behaviour… families not playing out at the end of the day … parents began sending kids to boarding schools or moving to the city to get a better education.

During 2008, the commodity prices continued to increase. In spite of the Global Financial Crises (GFC), Moranbah was reported to have survived the GFC well and was still in a boom state. Leslie (local government) reported that the town was approaching what could be considered a mature community until the boom, with several families in town spanning three generations. The forced amalgamation of Queensland local governments took place and it "didn't go well in Isaac" according to Max (mining company). Four storey units were constructed in town around this time to house the mine workers, according to Larry (local government). This was an achievement that some local government officials were very proud of, stated Lane (local government), although Robin (resident) recalled there was some anger in the community over these units, based on an anticipation of the type of occupants who would live there.

By the late 2000-2010s, recalled Larry (local government), there were still predominantly families in town, but housing was not affordable for local residents. The Urban Development Area (UDA, now PDA) was declared and the community initially responded positively to the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) efforts. This intervention occurred in spite of the fact that the local government had launched an engaged governance project, Adaptive Communities, to address the housing supply and affordability issues. State government and the mining companies were aware of the project but did not show much support, in spite of the fact that it had garnered strong approval from the local residents and had a significant community participation rate, recalled Larry.

The biggest changes to the family culture and the sense of community was reported to have occurred fairly recently during the last boom, which was felt to have greatly changed the culture of the town. Ray (resident) was angry about the treatment of a childhood home by a group of mining company employees:

> …what they did to my house [that I grew up in] sucks …they thrashed it…

Robin (resident) reported that people became greedy, not only out of town investors, but also local business people and residents who were property owners at the time of the boom.

Towards 2010, "the fight against FIFO was awakening" stated Oli (community organisation). Robin (resident) saw a gap forming between "miners and locals" and also between the "permanent population" and the "transients", whilst Ray (resident) noticed that "socialising shifted to gatherings at home." Tatum (trader) pointed out that

> The 100 percent [FIFO] has really got a lot of people so angry that they can't get past it."

Lydia (local government) stated that opposition to the one-hundred-percent-FIFO became the motivation for some people to stay on in the town over the longer term.

Max (mining company) reported that by 2011 the mining boom had resulted in an acute housing shortage. [A mining company] was said to have leased a large number of houses which drove the prices up, according to Ray (resident). Cass (elected representative) saw the competition between the resources companies for housing as

> …probably the biggest disaster … mining companies were leasing properties, short term leases, which drove prices up and took market away.

Robin (resident) recalled that the housing shortage also impacted on the businesses in town, as shops had to close due to lack of staff, as non-mining residents could not afford renting accommodation in town whilst working in non-mining related businesses. Larry (local government) recalled that the Isaac Regional Council had to introduce free housing as a fringe benefit to attract and retain staff.

The approval by the state government of the two one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines at Daunia and Caval Ridge was reported as having caused an upheaval in the town. Max (mining company) stated that

> The community experienced angst about FIFO. Perceptions about FIFO was that [they] don't respect our [family] values.

Larry (local government) argued that the outcry against one-hundred-percent-FIFO occurred because the FIFO workers were not connected to the community. Ray (resident) agreed, stating that the camps isolate workers. Max (mining company) reasoned that the community had expected to be involved in the decision-making by resource companies, for example in decision about the on-site accommodation villages.

By 2012, the end of the boom was in sight. Larry (local government) reported that the planned construction of 10,000 FIFO rooms did not eventuate due to the downturn in the mining industry. Council and the community were seen to have come to the realisation that the 175 EDQ properties were not going to be cheaper than what the market could provide, according to Larry (local government) and Max (mining company).

By 2013, Larry (local government) observed the departure of a number of longer-term, closer to retirement age, residents. This resulted in a

> …leakage of community leaders [who] had moved out of the community, including a number of previously elected representatives resulting in community structures starting to break up…

By 2014, the house prices were still declining but the banks were hesitant to provide funding for the community to buy property, according to Lane and Larry (local government). They also noticed that there were people who saw the downturn as cyclical and were hoping and waiting for the return of the boom. Robbie (resident) thought that some people had decided to take a wait-and-see attitude. Mel (mining company) was of the opinion that by 2014, the community had become

> …depressed, they're – people are just in a really uneasy place. There's a lot of anxiety in town. But in saying that, you also have the flipside of that where people … business community… are seeing opportunity around diversifying.

Cass (elected representative) stated that the people who loved the region would "fight like all buggery, but … we've been through bad times before and … this one is a lot worse…" Toni (trader) argued that the desire to see a sustainable community was most evident in the long-term residents.

Leslie (local government) voiced concern about the current [2014] population decline, stating that people in the community could not adapt to changed social outcomes. Lane (local government) observed the community as not being adaptable because it was entrenched in one industry. Toni (trader) echoed this concern, arguing that

> I think there is more pain to come out of the mining companies as well. I think they'll make more people redundant. I think they'll keep on changing and try and screw down costs because that's what the focus is really.

The chronological individual interview findings above, also assisted in further exposing the community themes, identified from the mini-focus group data. A brief summary of the findings pertaining to those community themes is presented next. These findings centre on the social impact of the changes to mining companies over time, followed by fears over the sustainability of the community.

The social impact of mining companies' changes over time, including FIFO

Nearly three quarters of the individual interviewees commented on the sense of loss in the community, largely based on the loss of a family culture which was felt to have been the benchmark in the community until the recent past. The majority of interviewees in each participant group confirmed the loss of the family culture in the community and expanded on that. The highest number of reports on the loss of the family culture came from residents, with two-thirds of the residents reporting on their own sense of loss.

Nearly half the participants in the individual interviews confirmed a culture of dependence on the mining companies, as well as a sense of entitlement to financial assistance, large salaries, and guaranteed employment for children from households where parents were mining company employees.

The impact of FIFO as a mining company business model was mentioned twice as much as any other point during the individual interviews. The second most raised and discussed point consisted of the changing economic profiles and the market pressures applicable to mining. The nature of mining as a business was also strongly reported on, with more than a third of the participants raising this topic. The traders and the residents were the groups who least focused on the role of the mining industry in the government-governance nexus, although the residents did refer to the role of the unions. The mining companies and the council officials most extensively reported on this role. The role of the mining companies in the government-governance nexus was rarely mentioned by the elected representatives but two of the elected representatives referred to the power the mining industry holds over the state. While the council officials raised ten discrete points about the role of the mining industry per participant, and the mining company representatives seventeen, the elected representatives raised only three points per participants on average.

Fears over the sustainability of the community

The most pressing issue identified in the individual interviews was the individual participants' concerns or fears about the future of the town, with more than three quarters of the residents and traders expressing fear about the future. Twelve of the participants discussed these concerns in detail. However, fourteen of the individual participants expected that the town would survive in some form beyond the era of profitable mining.

Part of this theme included discussions about possible economic bases for the town. Lane (local government) speculated about alternative economic bases for the town, pondering whether the beef industry should be boosted, but expressing concerns that the state government would not want to lose the income from the mining royalties. Larry (local government) pointed out that Moranbah had an advantage as it had several metallurgical coal mines, producing coal used in the steel manufacturing process. Leslie (local government) on the other hand was of the opinion that the economic base of the town was built on a commodity for which there is a declining demand.

Toni (trader) raised the issue of a common goal or vision for the future asking

> …what are we trying to aim towards in this community? There just isn't a clear view of what the future us. Council don't have one. The whole area doesn't have one and probably businesses don't have one as well. That's why I said I think if we had a common goal that we were working towards …

Only two of the seventeen participants in the individual interviews were considering leaving Moranbah in the foreseeable future, although nearly a third of the participants knew of other people planning to leave soon. On the other hand, less than a quarter of the participants expressed a desire to stay in Moranbah over the long term, whilst slightly more knew of other people planning to do so. Nearly half of the participants explicitly worded a desire for the continued sustainability of Moranbah. Those wanting to stay were not clustered in any category of participants, but were fairly uniformly spread over the categories. The group of local government officials appeared to be the category most focused on the long term sustainability of the community, with repeated mention of the sustainability of the town, and all the local government participants listing threats to sustainability. The only other category of participants who all mentioned threats to sustainability was the elected representatives. The elected representatives were all focused on FIFO as a threat to sustainability, with the local government officials raising other issues such as the single economic base, competing markets, and erosion of the community. Two thirds of the participants saw FIFO as a threat to sustainability.

In summary, the points pertaining to the community raised during the individual interviews were that the early residents in the region were mine workers and their families, who had relocated from other mining communities. These early residents perceived themselves to be pioneers, cared for by a benevolent mining company, resulting in a dependence on the mining company and a sense of entitlement to benefit from the mining company. The introduction of FBT, shift work, and FIFO were regarded to have brought significant changes to the town. The last boom brought the greatest change in terms of the family culture, especially through expanded FIFO practices. The community strongly opposed the one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines. By the end of 2012, the boom was ending in Moranbah, planned FIFO camps did not eventuate, and the ULDA affordable housing came to

the market at typical market prices. A number of long-term residents had departed during the boom, resulting in a leakage of local leadership. The current (2014) decline in population numbers was a cause for concern. Fears for the future of the community were common, and a perceived lack of an alternative economic base was raised.

The fourth, and last category of themes that emerged in greater depth during the individual interviews were those pertaining to the mining companies, and these are presented next.

4.4.4. Mining company themes

In this section, the themes are first presented chronologically. Although these timeline events could have been included into the mining themes, this would have obscured the importance of the historical unfolding of events. The chronology is followed by a summary of the changes over time, and the power held by the mining companies.

Chronological events

Lane (local government) stated that in the 1970s the mining companies were required to build company towns as part of the government's attempt at regional development, which was based on a belief of "populate or perish". Lane argued that there was a clear understanding of the "role and function" of these mining communities, and that there was a "sense of community" and a "strong cohesion".

During the 1980s, there were layoffs which Mel (mining company) recalled, stating that the approach to workforce reductions "was pretty cut throat and unfeeling" and that it made the unions stronger, resulting in Moranbah becoming a very strong union town. Cass (elected representative) added that the creation of the unions was an outcome of the poor treatment of the workers by the mining companies.

Max (mining company) recalled extensive state government attempts at regional development during the early 1990s, stating that

> Rural community development continued and was supported by the state government. The Feds set up Area Consultative Committees… Regional

> development initiatives got funded … the state planning department held a futuring workshop for regional planning" … ROC established…

Lane (local government) added that in this era, state government and the mining companies were seen to have been cooperating and collaborating. There were, however, arguments about who should be responsible for the cost of infrastructure as the mining companies had started arguing that companies should not be building towns. This dispute led to a Productivity Commission Report being compiled, according to Lane.

By 2010, Larry (local government) observed that the mining companies had started planning an exit strategy for a time beyond high commodity prices, which was evident from the maximised input into accommodation villages run by service providers, and not the mining companies themselves. This was argued to have granted the mining companies a smaller financial vulnerability and the ability to respond quickly to the changes in the market.

Leslie (local government) argued that by 2011 the mining companies had consciously created a housing affordability issue in order to obtain the leverage to demand from state government that development applications for camps or accommodation villages be approved. Max (mining company) confirmed that the mining companies were approaching state government directly, bypassing local government. Max also recalled that there was a big mining expansion, resulting in a shortage of skilled mine workers. Accommodation was mainly provided in accommodation villages or camps. Union issues were experienced and the enterprise bargaining process (EBA) was contentious.

By 2013, Larry (local government) recalled that the mining industry was restructuring and laying off contractors. Oli (community organisation) added that the downturn appeared more serious than past downturns. Further decline in the mining industry was reported. Larry (local government) observed that the state government still appeared to be favouring the industry in order to partly recoup budget deficits from royalties.

Lane (local government) stated that by 2014 the mining downturn was well underway with competing producers emerging in South America and Indonesia. Larry (local government) observed a breakdown in local government discussions with mining companies on strategic directions, with no further indication from mines on future directions. Max (mining company) confirmed Larry's observation, stating that the mining companies had become reactionary. Robin (resident) argued that this led to people looking for more secure employment in larger centres.

Mining company themes: the changes over time and the power held by mining companies

The first of these temporal themes elaborated on was the perceived power that the mining industry had over local, state, and federal government. Larry (local government) argued that the mining industry was so powerful that they had brought down a prime minister (Kevin Rudd). Cass (elected representative) added that they had exerted so much pressure on state government that the state gave the mining companies the green light to "just get in there and do whatever you want to do." Charlie (elected representative) confirmed Cass' observation, stating that the industry behaved as if it was the government, and that there was significant puppeteering of the state by the mining companies. Oli (community organisation) stated that the mining sector had more control over government than any other industry or sector. Max (mining company) argued that one mining company's ownership of major infrastructure (the water supply) was used as leverage over the Isaac Regional Council.

The mining company representatives expanded on the historical benevolence of the mining companies. The sense of entitlement brought about by a history of benevolence, was argued by Mel (mining company) to have arisen because

> …we've [mining companies] aided that entitlement mentality. Because I don't think there was a lot of research done at that stage about the impact of running an organisation or a company like that. It just wasn't known. It was just the way it was done.

Max (mining company) stated that the mines had been trying to change the dependence that council had on them, but that council would continue to ask for

assistance. Mel (mining company) agreed that the community had become used to the culture of benevolence, and that withdrawal of that benevolence was difficult to manage.

The continued presence of the mining industry in the region was discussed, with Larry (local government) arguing that mining would always be a part of the region, as there would always be an international demand for metallurgical coal used in the production of steel. Leslie (local government) on the other hand, linked the presence of mining companies to international decision-making, arguing that

> The other dilemma that I can see is in terms of the mining companies' governance. Its governance action is linked to international components. We're being ruled by boardrooms outside the country.

Max (mining company) observed that this international character of mining companies made it possible for companies to walk out, quoting examples where mining companies closed up and left ghost towns behind, for example Mary Kathleen, May Town and Mount Britton.

In spite of the volatile and uncertain nature of the mining industry as reported by the individual participants, the mining company representatives elaborated on the social responsibility of mining companies which was ascribed to a global move to corporate social responsibility. Mel (mining company) stated that

> …we're trying to work smarter because of the changing and economic times, but also because we realise that we've got a more longer-term corporate responsibility to assist Moranbah to actually be sustainable when we leave eventually.

Max (mining company) agreed with this statement and referred to a 'buy local' program run in Moranbah by one of the mining companies. Max (mining company) did, however, point out that there was no legal obligation on the mining companies around corporate social responsibility.

One result of the social responsibility focus was seen to be greater collaboration with local government, with Max (mining company) arguing that communication and engagement between the mining companies and the local government had increased over time. Charlie (elected representative) stated that one of the mining companies

was perceived to be executing a definite exit strategy, whilst the other was trying to improve relationships with council. At the same time, Max (mining company) stated that the only problem was the mining companies' tendency to not reveal their future business intentions. Charlie (elected representative) argued that having discussions with the mining companies

> …is not worth the paper it is written on. You're not discussing with the decision makers. You're discussing with those local people who will talk to you. Quarterly industry meetings are just a box to tick for them to say they've had their consultation with the local council.

Max (mining company) revealed that not only local government, but also the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA), had forged some collaboration with the mining companies. One of the mining companies had provided financial assistance to the MTA to employ a part time growth and resilience officer, to build an e-business directory, and to increase local business exposure to mining companies.

A significant new theme emerged from the individual interviews: the stronger role played by the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA) in collaborative governance attempts, and the quest for future sustainability at the time of the data collection. Data excerpts are provided to illustrate this emerging theme. Charlie (elected representative) referred to the MTA joining forces with larger traders' organisations in the region, stating that Moranbah has this

> …business group here, the Traders' Association, [which] has been quite vocal for some time – very small voice in a very small area. [They] get invited two weeks ago to attend, as a lobby of a business group in Mackay, which are big business people, who held their own forum on the effect of the 100 percent FIFO. That's massive.

Mel (mining company) stated that

> Moranbah Traders have been great… progressive focus type people, I think the penny has finally dropped and they also have the motivation and the energy to actually do something [to ensure the sustainability of the town].

An obstacle to the attempts at collaboration was seen by Toni to be that

> …businesses [are] too focused on the here and now… I think a lot of them have just had it easy… [during the boom] …you had a really good time for five years. What did you do with all that money? Did you not retire debt?

Toni expressed concern that where collaboration with the state was concerned, it was a box ticking exercise. The traders were also reported to be working with the mining companies, but according to Toni (trader) the traders realised that they did not, at that stage (2014), have leverage to exert influence. These attempts included the e-directory launched in 2014, as mentioned by Toni (trader), for which the mining companies provided some financial support according to Mel and Max (mining company). Another obstacle in the path of collaboration with the mining companies was seen to be the global mobility of the mining company employees, with Lane (local government) stating that

> …as soon as you establish a relationship with someone, then they've gone to go work for another mine or gone overseas.

At the same time, the investment of the traders in a sustainable future was acknowledged by Toni (trader), who stated that the traders were market focused and invested in the future. However, Toni had concerns about retaining Moranbah businesses into the future, and pondered how businesses could be enabled and enticed to remain in town.

In summary, the points pertaining to the mining companies/industry raised during the individual interviews were: the clarity of the original role and function of the mining companies regarding their communities; the development of the unions due to poor treatment of workers, the demise of the company town with normalisation, the manipulation of state government by the mining companies, the reactionary nature of the mining companies after the last boom, the non-statutory social responsibilities of the mining companies, and the future presence of the mining companies in the region. The key themes from Phases One to Three are presented in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7 Key themes from Phases One and Two

Stakeholder sector	Key themes identified from Phase One and Two of the data collection process	
	Mini-focus groups (Phase One)	**Individual interviews (Phase 2)**
State government	Lack of strategic focus.	Lack of strategic focus confirmed. Negative and snowball impact of state government intervention.
	The political nature of decision-making by the state government.	Economic constraints underpin the political nature of decision-making by the state government. The disregard for the regions in the quest to accumulate capital.
Local government	The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government.	Local government dependence on the mining companies, created by fiscal constraints. Budding emergence of a drive for greater local government independence.
	The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government.	Collaboration does not guarantee successful outcomes.
	Lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives.	Lacking strategic focus is a symptom of lacking leadership. Leadership demands a dynamic over time. Misconceptions contribute to misdirected focus of elected representatives. Lacking strategic focus leads to poor collaboration. Experience impacts on strategic focus.
The community	The impact of the changing roles of the mining companies in the community over time and its resulting legacy in the psyche of the community.	Sense of loss of family culture deemed to be identity of town. Sense of outrage at the disregard of the family culture by the mining companies. Events from the boom era contributed the most to the destruction of the family culture. Psycho-social adaptation to the changing

Stakeholder sector	Key themes identified from Phase One and Two of the data collection process	
	Mini-focus groups (Phase One)	**Individual interviews (Phase 2)**
		role of mining companies.
	The impact of FIFO on the nature of the community.	Creation of separation in the community. Anger and angst as a result of FIFO practices. Obsession with opposing FIFO.
	Fears over the sustainability of the community.	Alternative economic bases. Perceived exit strategy of mining companies. Unwillingness of state to support non-mining bases in favour of royalties. Common vision lacking for community/region. The emergence of the role of the traders as a new theme.
		The emergence of the MTA as a stronger role player in collaborative governance attempts, and the creation of a sustainable future for the town.
Mining industry/mining companies	The nature of mining companies.	Initially benevolent creator/parent role to their communities, now absent/distant global company leadership. Dilution of culture of original company by entry of other companies and global developments. Social responsibility not statutory.
	The perceived power mining companies exert over the state government.	Conscious manipulation by mining companies to obtain leverage over state government.

4.5. The verification of findings - results from the community workshop

4.5.1. Introduction

Five initial findings, drafted from the Phase One and Two mini-focus groups and the Phase Three individual interviews, were presented to the participants at the community workshop, which made up Phase Four of the data collection and verification process. The five initial findings are presented next, one by one, followed by the results as derived first from the individual feedback, followed by the different like-group discussions, and then the whole-group discussion during the community workshop. The five initial findings are presented in Table 4-8.

Table 4-8 The five initial findings

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
1. The impacts of government actions, by any party, are magnified due to the small population size, the single economic base, and the lack of land available for development.
2. Although State Government has the power and the funding, it does not guarantee better outcomes for the community when the State Government intervenes in Local Government affairs; this is clear from the instances where mining companies "ran to" or "put pressure" on the State Government to overturn local government decisions in their favour, as well as during State Government land development efforts.
3. The original State Government and mining company governance models forced, enabled and supported the creation of a family-based community, whereas some of the latest models do not – the family culture is strongly entrenched in the long-term residents' cohort, and it is enduring.
4. There is a strong cry in all sectors of the community for leaders with vision, and strategic planning, but no clear, strong leadership in this space.
5. There is a fledgling understanding that greater collaboration is needed in the future between local government and the resources companies (not just mining), but there is no clear or strong leadership in this space either.

The findings related to each initial finding are presented next, preceded by each individual finding, as extracted from Table 4-8.

4.5.2. Initial Finding One

Table 4-9 Initial Finding One

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
1. The impacts of government actions, by any party, are magnified due to the small population size, the single economic base, and the lack of land available for development.

The individual feedback on Initial Finding One revealed that the majority of participants agreed with Initial Finding One, and no participants disagreed. Supporting statements of agreement centred on the themes of lack of developable land due to mining leases, state government power, the nature of the mining companies and the challenges faced, and the tight-knit nature of the community.

The small population base resulted in what Leslie (local government) described as the town and its people being

> …at the mercy of the state government, and ultimately we have no voice in this area.

Larry (local government) added the opinion that government-governance decisions have

> …potentially more devastation [here] than a decision made in a larger community.

The three participants who somewhat agreed with the finding, raised provisos that the nature of the government actions impacted on the outcomes in the town, with not all government actions resulting in the same level of magnification. It was also cautioned that any government action has an outcome in any town. One participant argued that smaller communities have more community involvement, escalating the level of concern regarding government and governance actions in the community.

From the like- or homogeneous breakaway group discussions it was apparent that the younger residents had a naïve understanding of the issues, based on their way of life and their social interactions in the town. They were the group that reported most extensively on the role that gossip plays in magnifying the perceived outcomes of government actions. The local government and traders combined group raised the role of the state on local outcomes, in particular, as having a magnified impact in the community. The single economic base was argued to have resulted in a less resilient community. It was also agreed that whether positive or negative, the impacts of any government or governance actions are magnified. The somewhat agreed statements raised by individuals were not noted by any of the like-groups. As during the individual feedback, there was no disagreement about the initial finding.

During the discussion amongst all the participants, the regional and state influences on local outcomes and the single economic base were singled out as the most pressing issues. They were perceived to impact on a lack of resiliency in the community and to cause the magnification of impacts.

4.5.3. Initial Finding Two

Table 4-10 Initial Finding Two

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
2. Although the State Government has the power and the funding, it does not guarantee better outcomes for the community when the it intervenes in Local Government affairs; this is clear from the instances where mining companies "ran to" or "put pressure" on the State Government to overturn local government decisions in their favour, as well as during State Government land development efforts.

The majority of participants agreed with this initial finding, with only one participant disagreeing. The participant who disagreed argued that

> ...state government look at the big picture and what's best as to resource companies…

Those who agreed mentioned examples of the state government overruling local government decisions, intervening in local government planning, and land

development, for example with the overturning of the local government approved 350 lot residential development, the ULDA (now EDQ) intervention in 2010, the subsequent development of Bushlark Grove residential estate, and the overturning of the local government refusal of one-hundred-percent-FIFO mining camps.

Extensive reference was made to the perception that local knowledge and the regional community were being disregarded, two points raised by the majority of the participants in their individual feedback.

At the same time, the economic focus of state government was reiterated by half the participants, as well as a strongly expressed perception that the state government was favouring the mining companies, evident from opinions like

> …state has intervened and removed such conditions [as imposed by local government] for the interest of the mining company and not the community.

Also,

> The state government is very out of touch with its revenue-generating towns such as Moranbah and will make whatever decisions that keeps the mining companies happy and therefore continue making money for them.

Furthermore, there is an impression that the regional resource communities are discounted in this economic focus:

> …state government is willing to sacrifice the development of communities in exchange for royalties.

It was also raised that the government-governance nexus preceding the data collection period was of such a nature that the democratic right of regional citizens was being undermined, through decisions that took away their individual choice, and public participation, and caused lack of equity between metropolitan and regional citizens.

Statements such as the following highlight the point:

> …the presence of self-interest at state level on economic grounds forces the political hand of 10,000 people versus the rest of the state. We at 477 come a second poor…

The one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps were seen to take away the choice to reside in the community.

It was reported that not only the community, but also the mining companies, are negatively impacted by the lack of democratic processes and the acknowledgement of local knowledge, with a participant claiming that

> …bypassing local government and the community, the mines are losing the [benefit of] strategic planning that is put into the community [such as the Adaptive Communities project].

Another individual participant's response was that

> …streamlined approval processes appear to limit access or ability to oppose projects or elements [of projects].

In addition,

> ...bypassing local government, partnerships are damaged and future development of the towns are de-prioritised for the sake of resource development.

Moreover, the perception that public consultation is a public relations exercise is evident from statements such as:

> …there is significant backroom deals or arrangements that are put in place that we have no direct influence on, for example the one-hundred-percent-FIFO, to be consultative, but in reality are pre-determined.

The outcomes of state government intervention after the 2010 intervention was also raised:

> …EDQs authority in order to make land available faster, however this was not what occurred and by the time the land came out [a year after the due date] the downturn was already in effect and there is still vacant land in this area today.

Counter-arguments to this initial finding originated from the mining company representatives group discussion and centred on the viewpoint that it is standard business practice to lobby and advocate for favourable outcomes. It was also raised by this group that there were instances where the local government has been successful in blocking development they did not approve of, for example

> …local government has stopped or impeded mining development assessments, for example Buffel Park Village [a mining camp].

This group also raised the point that this finding appeared to be less relevant in the current mining downturn situation.

The whole group summarised their opinions on the findings, stating that the state government interventions in land development in Moranbah have been significant over the years, and that consultations were mostly lip-service to democratic processes.

4.5.4. Initial Finding Three

Table 4-11 Initial Finding Three

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
3. The original State Government and mining company governance models forced, enabled, and supported the creation of a family-based community, whereas some of the latest models do not – the family culture is strongly entrenched in the long-term residents' cohort and is enduring.

The majority of participants were in agreement with this initial finding, with one participant disagreeing.

Those who were in agreement with the initial finding elaborated on the changing nature of the mining companies. There were references to the historical nature of the mining companies, in statements such as

> In the past, mining companies played a vital role in enhancing and making our towns appealing for families.

There were also references to more recent developments in the business models of the mining companies. Opinions were raised that there has been a pull-back in the mining companies' commitment to the communities, as the perceived push towards a non-residential workforce has become stronger. One of the reasons behind the more recent and current business models was seen to be that

> …mining companies do not consider local communities, but rather economical outcomes when making decisions around work hours or shifts work as well as residential, Drive-In-Drive-Out and Fly-In-Fly-Out [work practices].

The outcomes of these changes in workforce models were perceived to be that

> …FIFO doesn't support the family culture and it [the family culture] is slowly dying…

Counter-arguments were presented stating that every community in Australia is changing, and that some are changing rapidly. The question was raised why Moranbah should be different given that small rural communities have collapsed in other parts of the country when a rural industry has closed.

Those who 'somewhat agreed' with the initial finding, argued that perceptions of non-resident workforce practices are changing and that

> …the mindset of FIFO is now the norm…

One participant saw this new mindset as a

> …complete reversal on the original concept of the mining culture…

These participants also argued that the ones who were fighting to retain the family culture were the older and more permanent population. However, the same participant acknowledged that as people aged, they moved away partly due to a lack of aged-care facilities in town. The perception of another participant was that a cohort of elected representatives is intent on retaining the family culture. These opinions tie in with the statement by a third participant that

> …it is a small population that are strongly fighting for family…

Another point that was raised in part agreement with the initial finding is that there needs to be a workforce model that caters for a diverse cohort of employees in synergy. The Adaptive Communities project was cited as one such effort, but it was argued that such local efforts were ignored by the state government and the mining companies.

The whole group agreed that the family culture that had been established was preserved for decades, but there was doubt that an adherence or a return to previous workforce models would guarantee the survival of a family culture, as preferences and perceptions have changed in the community and elsewhere.

4.5.5. Initial Finding Four

Table 4-12 Initial Finding Four

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
4. There is a strong cry in all sectors of the community for leaders with vision, and strategic planning, but no clear, strong leadership in this space.

The majority of participants agreed with this finding, with one participant disagreeing.

The nature of current leadership was split between state, local government and the mining companies. State government leadership and strategic planning was described as lacking due to the short political term, inconsistencies in government approaches and plans, and ill-conceived development foci, evident from statements such as

> …we are in the coal business, really?

Local government was described as reactionary, focused on self-interest, narrowly focused, and lacking vision. The point was, however, raised that

> …leadership in the communities usually comes from local government or the business community in which people have trust…

Leadership from the mining companies was discounted, based on a perception that

> …mining companies are unlikely to take any leadership because they are inherently mistrusted…

The participant who disagreed was of the opinion that there are stakeholder groups in the community who are happy with the leadership displayed in that group. This opinion was echoed by one participant who partly agreed and stated that there is strong leadership in some sectors, but that there is no support from major role players, such as the state, for strategic planning. A call was made for

> ...a strong vision that transcends political or industry biases [which] is paramount for the community future…

Also, a

> …strong need for leaders who strategically plan for the benefit of the community, not revenue…

The whole group agreed on the existence of a short-term focus in the mindset of local and state leaders, largely based on self-interest and a focus on short-term gains, both personally and politically. State and local government was observed to not present a single united leadership front for the region and the town.

4.5.6. Initial Finding Five

Table 4-13 Initial Finding Five

The initial findings compiled from Phases One to Three
5. There is a fledgling understanding that greater collaboration is needed in the future between local government and the resources companies (not just mining), but there is no clear or strong leadership in this space either.

The majority of participants agreed with this finding and no participants disagreed. Concern was raised that without comprehensive collaboration and long-term planning for the end of industry, a sustainable future for the town might not be realised. The current state of collaboration was described as "helping government and the companies get what they want". It was argued that there is a need for state government to realise that

> …local government know better in terms of what affects and benefits their communities…

At the same time, it was acknowledged that local government does not have the political power to force collaboration with the resources companies in the Isaac Regional Council area.

Distrust in the mining companies was raised extensively by the participants. Opinion ranged from a perceived self-interest on the part of the mining companies, to a disregard for local government, partly blamed on a perception held by the mining companies that state government is pro-mining. This state government favouritism was seen to have resulted in the resource companies "bypassing local government and go[ing] straight to the state of federal government". This was perceived to not provide a strong base for collaboration, as it resulted in relationships between local

government and the mining companies becoming disjointed. The distrust was also evident from the mining company representatives who voiced that there was a

> …culture of opposing what industry or the resource companies propose, rather than an engagement in discussions…

Local government participants referred to the perceived 'exit strategy' of the mining companies. At the same time, a statement was made that it was

> …difficult for local government to take strategic decisions about development if they do not have an indication of where industry is heading…

Those who partly agreed raised perceived obstacles in the path of collaboration, for example the short term of office of elected representatives, a perceived lack of leadership capacity amongst the elected representatives, a lack of trust between the different parties, state government influences, and a lack of common ground.

The whole group agreed that there was a lack of collaboration between the different role players in the government-regional governance nexus, but raised the point that the intention of collaboration needs to be determined first. It was raised that more collaboration was needed between the local government and the mining companies to avoid the pitfalls that came with the perception that the state government was pro-mining.

4.6. Findings – Phases One to Four

The mini-focus groups raised a lack of strategic focus by state government, and the political nature of decision-making by state government, linked with a disregard for regional communities. The individual interviewees provided examples of the lack of strategic focus and expanded on the reasons behind the political nature of state government decision-making, namely the poor fiscal position of state government, evident from large budget deficits. The economic focus was reported to have resulted in intervention in this region to maximise income from royalties.

Local government was reported by the mini-focus groups to be under pressure to develop the region economically, but lacked the power and the fiscal ability to do so. Local government was deemed to be dependent on mining companies and to have a sense of entitlement to mining company support. The elected representatives were

perceived to be lacking a strategic focus, and collaboration between state and local government was reported to be poor. During the individual interviews the reasons behind the poor fiscal position of local government were raised and the origin of the dependence on the mining companies highlighted. A failed example of state and local government collaboration was raised. The election of a community organisation leader as a representative was stated to have given the elected representatives greater confidence to oppose FIFO. The current focus of the elected representatives on opposing the one-hundred-percent-FIFO and on residential development, was regarded to be flawed.

The mini-focus groups argued that the culture of the parent company had been responsible for the creation of a family culture in the town, but that various changes have been responsible for the demise of that family culture. The parent company was argued to have enabled a culture of dependence and entitlement. A strong attachment to place was reported, and substantial fears about the sustainability of the town were reported, especially based on the absence of a secondary economic base. The individual interviews revealed the characteristics of the early residents, and the changes that impacted the community were discussed in detail. The last boom was argued to have brought the greatest changes in terms of the family culture, especially through expanded FIFO practices, but also due to the departure of a number of long-term residents. Fears for the future of the community were discussed in detail and an alternative economic base was raised. The role of the Moranbah Traders Association emerged as a new theme during the individual interviews.

The changing nature of the mining companies was raised during the mini-focus groups, as well as the power wielded over the state government, which desire to draw an income from royalties. The individual interviews revealed the clarity of the original role and function of the mining companies regarding their communities; the development of the unions due to poor treatment of workers; the demise of the company town with normalisation; the manipulation of state government by the mining companies; the reactionary nature of the mining companies after the last boom; the non-statutory social responsibilities of the mining companies; and they raised questions regarding the future presence of the mining companies in the region.

The community workshop participants singled out the regional and state influences on local outcomes, and the single economic base as the most pressing issues. It was perceived to impact on a lack of resilience in the community and the magnification of impacts. The results of several state government intervention attempts over the years were confirmed to be poor by the participants, confirming that state government intervention in local government planning and land development did not guarantee better outcomes for the community. The origin of the sense of community, the family culture and the sense of attachment to place was confirmed to have been the original role played by the parent company, as well as the nature of the parent company at that time. Collaboration between most of the stakeholders was confirmed to be lacking, but hampered by a lack of strategic focus by state government and the elected representatives, and by a misdirected focus by the elected representatives.

The findings from the different phases of the data collection process are presented in Table 4-14.

Table 4-14 Key themes from Phases One to Three of the data collection process

Stakeholder sector	Key themes identified from Phase One, Two and Three of the data collection process		
	Mini-focus groups (Phase One)	**Individual interviews (Phase 2)**	**Community workshop (Phase 3)**
State government	Lack of strategic focus.	Lack of strategic focus confirmed. Negative and snowball impact of state government intervention.	Intervention does not guarantee better outcomes.
	The political nature of decision-making by the state government.	Economic constraints underpin the political nature of decision-making by the state government. The disregard for the regions in the quest to accumulate capital.	The impact of state influences on local outcomes.
Local government	The power and fiscal constraints faced by local government.	Local government dependence on the mining companies created by fiscal constraints. Budding emergence of a drive for greater local government independence.	
	The lack of collaboration and co-operation between state and local government.	Collaboration does not guarantee successful outcomes.	Lacking collaboration resulted from lack of strategic focus (state government and elected representatives, and misdirected focus (elected representatives).
	Lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives.	Lacking strategic focus is a symptom of lacking leadership.	

Stakeholder sector	Key themes identified from Phase One, Two and Three of the data collection process		
	Mini-focus groups (Phase One)	**Individual interviews (Phase 2)**	**Community workshop (Phase 3)**
		Leadership demands - dynamic over time. Misconceptions contribute to misdirected focus of elected representatives. Lacking strategic focus leads to poor collaboration. Experience impacts strategic focus.	
The community	The impact of the changing roles of the mining companies in the community over time and the legacy thereof in the psyche of the community.	Sense of loss of family culture deemed to be the identity of the town. Sense of outrage at the disregard of the family culture by the mining companies. Events from the boom era contributed the most to the destruction of the family culture. Psycho-social adaptation to the changing role of the mining company.	The role of the parent company in establishing the original culture of the community.
	The impact of FIFO on the nature of the community.	Creation of separation in the community. Anger and angst as a result of the FIFO practices. Obsession with opposing FIFO.	
	Fears over the sustainability of the community.	Alternative economic bases. Perceived exit strategy of mining companies. Unwillingness of the state to support non-mining	The single economic base resulting in a lack of resilience. The magnification of impacts due to single

Stakeholder sector	Key themes identified from Phase One, Two and Three of the data collection process		
	Mini-focus groups (Phase One)	**Individual interviews (Phase 2)**	**Community workshop (Phase 3)**
		bases in favour of royalties. Common vision lacking for community/region. The emergence of the role of the traders as a new theme.	economic base.
		The emergence of the MTA as a stronger role player in collaborative governance attempts and the creation of a sustainable future for the town.	
Mining industry/mining companies	The nature of mining companies.	Initially benevolent creator/parent role to their communities, now absent/distant global company leadership. Dilution of culture of original company by entry of other companies and global developments. Social responsibility not statutory.	
	The perceived power mining companies exert over the state government.	Conscious manipulation by mining companies to obtain leverage over state government.	

4.7. Conclusion to Chapter Four - Findings

From the themes and findings in Table 4-14, the initial findings and the feedback from the community workshop, the four main findings was summarised as follows:

- First, the state government lacks a strategic focus in terms of social outcomes for regional resource communities, instead focusing on state economic goals. This lacking focus has resulted in cumulative negative effects in Moranbah over the years, particularly as a result of the several state government interventions in land use and development.
- Second, the local government lacks fiscal means and power, but the lack of strategic leadership and a misdirected focus of the elected representatives also impact on the social outcomes. Although collaboration does not guarantee better outcomes, the lack of strategic leadership and the misdirected focus of the elected representatives impacted negatively on collaboration between local government and the other stakeholder sectors.
- Third, the culture of the original or parent mining company contributed significantly to the establishment of a family culture and a sense of attachment to place. The entry of new mining companies over the years diluted the role of the parent company and the established culture. This dilution was exacerbated by the changes in the culture and the business models of mining as an industry, but also by the power the mining sector wields over state government. Currently, a disregard for the well-entrenched family culture of the town and the inability or unwillingness to divulge future directions with mining in the region, which has resulted in a limited role played by the mining companies in the government-governance nexus as far as local governance is concerned.
- Fourth, anger towards the state government, a sense of loss of the established culture, and fear about the future of the town resulted from these changes. The Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) work practices and the constraint of a single economic base for the town, in particular, contributed to the fear about the future.

The following chapter, *Chapter Five – Discussion*, presents a comprehensive discussion of these findings.

5. CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the interpretations and discussions of the findings from this study. These interpretations and discussions form a contextual bridge between the findings, the research of other scholars in the relevant fields, as well as the work of Henri Lefebvre in *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*.

5.1. Introduction

The discussion of the findings of this study takes place against the backdrop of the previous chapters, and necessitates a brief return to some of the concepts included in those chapters, before the discussion is presented.

Space is continuously produced and reproduced through an intricate web of relationships, and in that space subjects identify with the space itself and their status as actors (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The gaps in the literature on the social outcomes of regional governance models (Collits, 2012a, 2015; Eversole, 2005; Hogan et al., 2015) suggest the need for an investigation into the intricate web of relationships, in the government-governance nexus, and its social outcomes.

Outcomes were deemed, in this study, to be the visible or invisible changes that result from actions or programs, as in systems theory. Social outcomes are outcomes which can specifically be labelled social, referring to people and notions of equity (Magis & Shinn, 2009). This view of outcomes ties in with the notion of social space as product, but also of social space as a tool for the analysis of society (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). In systems theory, society, environment, and economy are interrelated elements of a larger system (Magis & Shinn, 2009), similar to Lefebvre, as discussed in Chapter 2, portraying the interrelatedness of space, society and economics.

In this study, the main focus was on the social outcomes of the government-governance nexus as experienced and observed by stakeholders in Moranbah. The first research question was therefore drafted to uncover such social outcomes. The second research question was concerned with uncovering the different role players in the government-governance nexus, and the last research question with the importance attached to social sustainability by the people who live in Moranbah.

Four categories of role players were identified by the participants, namely the state government, the local government, the community, and the mining companies. The structure of the discussion in the rest of this chapter is based around the role of those role players, in the order mentioned above.

5.2. State government, the government-governance nexus and the social outcomes

The main finding pertaining to the state government, as a role player in the government-governance nexus, was that the state is focused on state economic goals. This focus was accompanied by a lack of strategic focus on social outcomes for regional communities, and especially the resource communities. Cumulative negative effects in Moranbah were found to have resulted over time from this economic focus, particularly as a result of several state government interventions. The role of the modern state needs to be considered in this discussion to clarify the economic focus of the state. The outline for the discussion on state government, the government-governance nexus and the social outcomes is illustrated in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 The state government, the government-governance nexus, and the social outcomes

The role of the modern state			
Global competitor	Localism	Economic focus	Fiscal position
State intervention in local government planning			
Examples of intervention	Outcomes of intervention	State government reaction to resistance	Intervention and lack of state strategic focus
The state government and regional planning			
Regional development policies and plans	Shifting responsibility to local governments	Unresolved regional issues or ails	Regional planning - a lack of strategic focus

For each section of the discussion on state government, an excerpt is presented, for the sake of clarity, from Table 5-1.

5.2.1. Views on the role of the modern state

Table 5-2 The role of the modern state

The role of the modern state			
Global competitor	Localism	Economic focus	Fiscal position

This study found that the role of the modern state government, as a competitor on global markets, was not ascribed to by all participants. Instead, the commonly held view of state government was a more historic one, with the state viewed as the entity responsible for the well-being of its citizens. The state was criticised for excluding the social well-being of, especially regional, citizens from its agenda.

The global role for the state was ascertained to be accompanied by a localism agenda to regional development. The findings from this study did not support the view of the localism agenda as partly resulting from acknowledgement of the limits of state intervention (Cockfield, 2015; Eversole & Martin, 2005a), as there have been several instances of state government intervention in Moranbah in spite of the state's localism agenda. The impact of intervention, discussed later, undermines self-determination, which is a determinant of a successful localism agenda (Hogan & Young, 2015). Self-determination is seen to be linked conceptually to Lefebvre's (1974/1991) autogestion and the right to the city. The latter outlines a demand for a participatory role in decision-making (Butler, 2009), including citizens who reside in the regions (Kofman & Lebas, 1996). In a localism approach, communities and voluntary organisations have to address issues of redistributive justice themselves (Hogan et al., 2015). Such redistribution issues can be argued to be the result of the state's focus on the pursuit of capital (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

The economic focus of the state was commonly observed in the findings. A surplus budget was reported as being a measure of good governance (Cockfield, 2015), and the aim of state capital accumulation (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 1974/1991) was comprehended as resulting in an economic state focus. Although the economic focus was recognised, no common understanding was observed about the impacts, on regional communities, of the adoption of neoliberal models and state economic restructuring.

The study found that the economic focus of the state was ascribed to the poor fiscal condition of the state, rather than to its global role. Moreover, the poor fiscal position of the state was highlighted as a significant determinant of the role that the state government had been assuming in the government-governance nexus, particularly in its relationship with local government. The tendency of politicians and bureaucrats to

focus on economic development in an age of austerity (O' Riordan, 2012) was evident, with state government in this case found to be favouring the mining companies in order to safeguard the income from royalties. Economics are meant to serve the people (Cuthill, 2010), but interpreting Lefebvre (1974/1991), the opposite may be occurring in this case, with economics serving the state in the accumulation of capital and the promotion of its role as a market player in a global economy in *The State Mode of Production* (SMP).

The emergence of the SMP was enabled through technological advances (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Societal and technological changes have impacted on social sustainability (Cuthill, 2010), including the urbanisation of mankind which has resulted in cities becoming the decision-making centres (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The dominance of the urban focus and the economy has resulted in a complex movement by which the political city, or the state, desecrates the countryside economically to the benefit of the expanding city (Lefebvre, 1996). This can be regarded as a break of the social contract between the city, or the state, and the countryside in Australia, which leads to inequity (Cockfield, 2015; Hogan & Young, 2015).

The focus on the SMP and the economic has an important consequence for the regions, and which is the way the state disregards the spatial aspects of political processes (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). One political process or tool used by the state that not only has been shown to lead to inequities, but has also impacted spatially, has been the use of state government intervention in local government planning affairs, which is discussed in detail next.

5.2.2. State government intervention in local government planning affairs

Table 5-3 State government intervention in local government planning

State intervention in local government planning			
Examples of intervention	Outcomes of intervention	State government reaction to resistance	Intervention and lack of state strategic focus

This study has found evidence of state government dictating to local government and the community, especially through the use of state intervention in local government

land development and planning decisions. Regional space is a constitutive domain in capitalism and is used by the state for the purpose of capital accumulation through *The State Mode of Production* (SMP) (Lefebvre, 2009b). If the capital accumulation from the regional space is threatened, a common state government response in this context was found to be intervention.

Examples of intervention

The instances of intervention that are referred to are the 2005 overturning of a 350 lot residential development, the 2010 ULDA intervention, and the 2011 approval of two one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps. The 2012 attempts by Economic Development Queensland (EDQ), and the previous Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), to partner with the Isaac Regional Council in developing Belyando Estate, was also construed to be an attempt at intervention by some. In the rest of this discussion, these interventions will be referred to by the years in which they occurred.

The outcomes of state government intervention in local government planning and land development

Insight into the domino effect that state government intervention in local government planning affairs can have is argued to be an important finding from this study. It is argued here that the state government intervention in the affairs of the Isaac Regional Council has contributed significantly to the regional ails that beset Moranbah in the past decade. The issue of regional ails in Australia is well-documented in the literature, but insights from historical narratives (Tonts et al., 2012), political economy and evolutionary perspectives (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 1974/1991, 1996) aid an understanding of how regional ails develop. In this case, a history of state government intervention contributed to regional issues experienced in Moranbah.

The outcomes that are highlighted in this section are: first, the impact on housing supply; second, the impact on successful strategic planning by the Isaac Regional Council; third, the impact on the resident-non-resident workforce ratio; fourth, the impact on service provision by the Isaac Regional Council; and fifth, the local resistance to intervention and the alienation (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 2009b) that resulted from the intervention.

- First, the 2005 intervention decreased the possible housing stock by at least 350 units, and probably more, given the common presence of multiple-unit-lots in Moranbah. The intervention, at least partially, exacerbated the housing shortage experienced during the last mining industry boom. It also compounded the supply- and-demand imbalance balance during the boom, which substantially drove up property prices. These increased prices were found to have enticed some of the closer-to-retirement-age residents to sell their properties. Many of these residents came from a cohort of early mining company employees who had bought their residential properties from the mining companies at low cost. Their departure was found to have undermined the three-generation-family-culture that had started to emerge in the town prior to the boom.
- Second, the intervention was found to have been a significant blow to the Isaac Regional Council's (IRC) attempt firstly, at strategic planning and provisioning of residential land to the market, and secondly its ability to position itself strategically to absorb the impacts of the cyclic mining industry through a larger stream of local tax revenue. It was ascertained that the 2010 intervention, and the subsequent approval of one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps, were instrumental in the demise of the Adaptive Communities project, a strategic initiative by the Isaac Regional Council to position itself for a more sustainable future.
- Third, the 2005 intervention also paved the way for pressure from the mining companies on state government for the one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps, as well as on allowing larger non-resident to resident workforces, based on the housing shortage. The larger percentage of FIFO workers was confirmed by this study to have pushed the ratio between permanent and non-permanent resident close to the tipping point, where changes become irreversible (Duit et al., 2010), and space becomes recreated (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). In this case, it can be reasoned that the approach of the tipping point has been a co-factor in the gradual demise of the entrenched family culture in the town.
- Fourth, at the same time, the larger ratio of non-resident workers was found to have undermined the Isaac Regional Council's ability to deliver services and infrastructure. These non-permanent residents are not counted as residents in state government funding models, in spite of the fact that they

make use of services and infrastructure. The original approval of the 350 lot residential development would likely have prevented the current levels of non-resident workers, and would have granted the local government a larger stream of revenue.

- Fifth, the study found that the state intervention in the approval of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps was a disregard for the wishes of the regional community, as well as that of the Isaac Regional Council. The approval was regarded as state government permission to the mining industry to disregard local communities. The study found ongoing resistance to state intervention from the community and the Isaac Regional Council, but also alienation (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 2009b) as a result of the intervention, where alienation is the lack of a "feeling that there is an ability to achieve the possible" (Kofman & Lebas, 1996, p. 21). The importance of the point that the loss is economic, social, political, ideological, and philosophical (Elden, 2004), was confirmed in this study. State government intervention was confirmed to have removed the right of the citizen to participate in decision-making in this resource region. This was found to have been the case even in the 2010 intervention. The impression was left that local wishes were disregarded in spite of what was regarded to have been extensive community consultation by the ULDA. This loss, on several fronts, contributed to the alienation observed in the findings.

In *The State Mode of Production*, Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) explained the reaction to any resistance that might undermine the accumulation of state capital, many features of which were encountered in this study. The use of its power by the state to deal with opposition that threatens capital accumulation was found to be a symptom of alienation in this study (Elden, 2004). In this case the power was used through intervention, which was found to have resulted in anger and distrust towards the state by all stakeholders except the mining companies. Not only was the state observed to use its power to intervene, but also to use its power to deal with opposition to intervention.

State government reaction to opposition to state government intervention

The importance of the tools at the disposal of the state government for use during intervention in local government planning was confirmed by this study. The state government has at its disposal certain tools to intervene, in this case the statutory state planning system. In this state, the existence of a parallel state planning system, with the capacity to override local planning schemes, was interpreted to favour the mining companies, and to have removed the ability of public participation in decision-making. This parallel system might be proof that existing planning systems are ineffective, but was also found to allow the favouring of a powerful, multinational industry from which the state government has considerable financial gain (Mayere & Donehue, 2013; Nicholls, 2012). Whilst it was regarded as empowering the mining industry, it was seen to have had the opposite effect on the Isaac Regional Council in its role as local government.

The existence of a parallel state system of land-use was confirmed to fundamentally undermine local government (Mayere & Donehue, 2013), not only in terms of credibility, but also in terms of disregarding local expertise and knowledge (Brown, 2005b). State intervention was found to have exacerbated the lack of role clarity, which already existed in the regions and was confirmed to have contributed to blame shifting (Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b), and in this case to have resulted in adversarial relationships between the local government and the state government, the local government and the mining companies, the elected representatives and the council officials, and the community and the elected representatives.

State government intervention does not only entail the manipulation of space in *The State Mode of Production* (SMP), but also the people who inhabit that space, evidence of which was also found in this study. State government granting permission for a larger non-resident workforce to serve the regional mining companies, allowed regional space to become a place of employment for larger numbers of urban residents. This can be interpreted to have contributed to the commodification of the worker in the SMP (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), where the worker becomes a disposable entity when mining activities decline; to be sent back to the urban area the worker originally came from. In this scenario, state spatial

intervention was found to be a strategy the state uses to force a hierarchy of social relations upon spaces of different scales, as suggested by Brenner (2008).

In spite of the powerful statutory tools at the disposal of state government when it desires to intervene in local government planning affairs, an instance was identified where the local community achieved some success opposing the one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps. This opposition resulted in the current state government undertaking to not approve further one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps (Validakis, 2015) . This partial success was found to contradict Brenner's (2008) view that the SMP closes off the possibility to challenge the power of the state, supporting the view of Butler (2012) that it does not. The ways that state government reacts to opposition to intervention, was also observed in terms of funding from the Royalties for the Regions (R4R) fund.

A lack of significant funding from the R4R fund to the Isaac Regional Council (IRC) was determined. In spite of being created specifically to compensate the resource regions for the negative impact of mining, and in spite of the Isaac Regional Council area contributing more than eighty percent of the R4R funds collected, the IRC was allocated $470 000 from the 1.8 billion dollars R4R fund. This allocation was for a hospital on state land in a small town in the Isaac Regional Council Area. The views expressed, on this small percentage being allocated from the R4R fund to the IRC, were a further reflection of the adversarial relationships between the local government and the state government, and the alienation experienced by the local government. These views included the opinion that the local government declining to partner with the ULDA (now EDQ), in land development from which the EDQ would have profited, was the reason why the R4R funding application for the bridge granting access to Belyando Estate was not approved, effectively halting the development.

The use of R4R funds in South East Queensland, contrary to the original intention with the fund, can be argued to support the view that metropolitan Australia is mainstream Australia (Tonts et al., 2012). The alienation observed in Moranbah was also evident from the perception that the state was misappropriating funding, obtained from the regional resource areas, to buy votes in South East Queensland.

Part of the anger over the allocation of the R4R fund, was evident from the views that the IRC should get out of mining companies what they can, to make up for the fact that they are not getting what they are entitled to from state government. This attitude, perceived by the mining companies, was seen to have contributed to the souring relationships with mining companies.

The use of state interventions as a tool, as well as the ways that the state responds to opposition to intervention, was found to reveal a lack of strategic focus by the state government.

A lack of strategic focus underpinning the use of intervention

The use of intervention through state development agencies was found to be questionable, based on the view in the literature that, in spite of successes in other countries, Australia has not had much success using state development agencies (Gurran & Whitehead, 2011). This lack of success was confirmed in Moranbah.

Evidence was found of the late delivery of the ULDA housing stock and the market-related cost thereof. In addition, the nature of the housing stock was deemed to have been unsuitable to the context, and the dissatisfaction regarding the ULDA deviation from the preferred path was expressed by the community. A lack of strategic focus underpins the use of state government intervention in this context, given the lack of success with intervention through agencies like the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) in Australia. Lefebvre‘s (1974/1991) criticism of state management of space is therefore justifiable.

The approval of a hundred-percent-FIFO accommodation village to service Caval Ridge mine, a metallurgical coal mine, can be taken as an example of a lack of strategic focus, or an example of place prosperity being put before people prosperity. Given that metallurgical coal has a more certain future in the production of steel, this could have been a vehicle to ensure greater people prosperity for the local community. Instead, the state government made the choice to export the economic benefits from this mine to urban communities and to the state via royalties (Storey, 2001).

The preceding discussion has presented the findings and the discussion of findings as they pertain to the state government, and the role the state assumes in the government-governance nexus in a capitalist state. The next section deals with the ways in which the state government uses regional planning as a tool for regional development.

5.2.3. The state government and regional planning

Table 5-4 The state government and regional planning

The state government and regional planning			
Regional development policies and plans	Shifting responsibility to local governments	Unresolved regional issues or ails	Regional planning - a lack of strategic focus

Regional development policies are the government instruments used to guide regional development (Collits & Rowe, 2015). The aim with such regional development was found to be linked to *The State Mode of Production* (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), with the focus being on the accumulation of capital from the region, rather than a balanced development of the state, encompassing social, economic and environmental concerns. Evidence of this was found in the generation of regional plans, drawn up at the time of the study, which had as the main aim the management of conflict between mining and agriculture. This focus was found to have strengthened the perception that mining interests have captured the regional development agenda , as suggested by Everingham and Franks (2015).

There appears to now be a return to the older generation growth management regional plans, such as the South East Queensland Regional Plan, under the current state government (A. Foley, Department of State Development, personal communication, September 21, 2015). This return warrants further investigation and research on the role of different types of regional plans in the SMP. It has been observed that in the past the sub-regions were regarded as engines of economic growth, but that the new state government focus is on residents and more pluralistic regional development approaches, with more local control (Eversole & Martin, 2005c, 2005e). However, this was found to not be true in conflict-management generation regional plans, and it remains to be seen if it will be the case with the next

generation of growth management regional plans, which the state government planning department has announced.

Shifting responsibility

The shifting of the responsibility for regional planning to local government was also regarded as evidence of a lack of strategic focus by the state government, and a disregard for local capacity. Regional local governments do not have the capacity to generate costly growth management regional plans, and neither do they have the statutory powers to force adjoining regional councils to participate and bear the cost for regional plans that cross regional council boundaries. A new generation of growth management regional plans may answer the question of whose responsibility regional well-being and development is (Collits, 2012a), and may be hinting at a greater state government willingness to collaborate and share decision-making, if the South-East Queensland Regional Plan format is to be resurrected.

Delegation of power in a regional planning context

The findings confirmed that there has not been a consistent regional development approach, as suggested in the literature (Argent, 2011a, 2011b; Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b; Kelly et al., 2009). The findings from this study also reiterated the highly centralised nature of the state government (Beer & Clower, 2013), and the establishment of centres of decision-making and power by the state as propositioned by Lefebvre (1970/2003). The findings confirmed that the centralisation of power had produced conflict between local powers and central powers in this context; and between countryside, city, and society (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Given the centrality of the state government, the findings from this study showed that the state hampered multi-level and multi-actor governance regional governance, as postulated by Collits and Rowe (2015).

Instead, the state is argued to have created an illusionary institutional form and an emergent institutional void (Morrison et al., 2012), which is conceptually linked to Lefebvre's illusionary space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). There appeared to be no acknowledgement in regional development policy that there are different drivers for regional success, some of which are beyond the control of government (Collits, 2015). This was evident from the findings that revealed the significant impact of the

last mining boom, something over which the state government had no control, but arguably did have the responsibility to mitigate the impact of.

Unresolved regional issues

This study confirmed the existence of unresolved regional issues (Brown, 2005b, 2007; Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Gross, 2015). The lack of attention to soft infrastructure in a localism approach to regional development has resulted in negative social, economic, and local governance outcomes (Cuthill, 2010), as well as questions on the links between governance and social sustainability. An absence was found in this study of the provisos for successful localism outcomes in the literature: first, multi-actor, multi-level governance (Hogan et al., 2015; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008); second, appropriate governance processes (Hogan & Young, 2015); third, the mitigation of negative impacts on local government (T. Jones & Ormston, 2014); and fourth, a multi-pronged governance approach (Eversole & Martin, 2005d; Hogan et al., 2015). This absence supports the conclusion that a localism agenda will not succeed as a regional development strategy in this context, especially when coupled with the global misfortune experienced by regional Australia. Regional communities were confirmed by this study to be subject to disadvantaging global economic and political processes, which put them in constrained situations (Gray & Lawrence, 2001).

The findings from this study support the notion that state regional development policy is focused on place prosperity rather than people prosperity, with the aim being to protect the industry, which the state government is benefiting from financially (Collits, 2015). Regional space becomes the object of actions and struggles as a result of the pathology of space that developed in response to the state's endeavours to preserve the status of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). This is arguably a short-term economic focus that speaks of a lack of strategic focus.

Considering the social commentary of Lefebvre, the findings of this study about the state's attitude towards the regions can be interpreted to suggest that the resource regions have been abandoned socially by the state government in favour of the state's pursuit of capital gains. This suggestion is based on Lefebvre's arguments that one of the consequences of accelerated economic growth, regardless of the costs in pursuit

of competition, prestige or power, are unequal development and the "abandonment of whole regions and sectors of the population", which in this capitalist system is deemed negligible (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 55). This interpretation ties in with the observation that communities in many regional areas are facing an uncertain future (Gross, 2015), as well as with the opinions about the global misfortune that impacts regional Australia.

Lefebvre (1970/2003) stated that society has been completely urbanised. This can be argued to be particularly true for Australia and to have contributed to the misfortune of regional Australia, resulting in statements that "Metropolitan Australia is mainstream Australia" (Tonts et al., 2012, p. 300). Links can be drawn between this statement and the work of Lefebvre on urbanisation, the use of the regions in a SMP, as well as the breach of social contract between country and city, signalled by the localism agenda (Cockfield, 2015; Hogan & Young, 2015).

Lack of strategic focus

The lack of strategic focus of the state government has impacted on regional governance arrangements, and the findings from this study supported the viewpoint that there is no regional decision-making framework that allows stakeholders the certainty of knowing where they fit into any governance arrangements. The findings of this study also confirmed a weak regional planning tradition ascribed to the urbanised nation of Australian society (Buultjens et al., 2012; Buxton, 2013), which again displays a lack of strategic focus.

The lack of strategic focus, resulting in a lack of certainty as to where role players fit into any regional governance structure, was shown to have resulted in a lack of role clarity and in blame-shifting between different levels of government (Collits, 2012b, 2015) in this study. More specifically, the findings from the study confirmed the lack of a regional governance structure (Argent, 2011a, 2011b; Collits, 2012a, 2012b; Hogan et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2009). The lack of a governance structure implies that space is not managed appropriately by the state government, in spite of the state gaining a significant economic benefit from this space, which in turn suggests that the 'strategic focus' of the state is in fact capital accumulation in an SMP, where the regions are sacrificed to the greater good of the urban (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

At the same time, there was no provision to manage the outcomes of the downswing in the mining industry, an industry which is deemed a driver for regional success. The lack of provisions to manage drivers beyond the state's control was interpreted to imply a lack of strategic focus. The argument that regional policy and strategy are fundamentally misconceived (Collits & Rowe, 2015) was evident from the previous state government's aim to decentralise substantial urban populations to regions outside of South East Queensland, and the findings suggested that regional policy and strategy contained few incentives to attract and retain people.

Thus, the state can be argued to lack a strategic focus to regional development. Regional economic success in Europe and North America has been directly linked to regional identity, agency and autonomy, but this has not led to the adoption of the same attitude towards Australia's regions by the Australian state governments.

Not only is the Isaac Regional Council a role player in the government-governance nexus, but it is also impacted by the roles assumed by the state. The role of local government is discussed in detail in the next section.

5.3. Local government and the government-governance nexus – the social outcomes

Two main points are discussed in this section. The first deals with the outcomes of state government intervention in local government planning affairs, and the second with the lack of strategic focus by local government. The significant impact of state government intervention on local government was revealed by the study, as part of the first main finding presented at the end of *Chapter Four - Findings*. In addition, the second main finding confirmed that the Isaac Regional Council, similar to other regional councils, lacks fiscal means and power. The lack of strategic leadership displayed by the elected representatives was revealed to have impacted on social outcomes, including an absence of collaboration with other stakeholders.

5.3.1. State intervention in local government affairs

One of the main outcomes of state intervention in local government planning affairs was found to be alienation (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Alienation impacted not only the community, but also the elected representatives, as well as the council officials. The

participant statement that state government had neutered local government during the last boom was deemed to be a significant example of the negative impacts of state intervention (Cooper & Flehr, 2006). The demise of innovation was found to have been one of the main outcomes of state intervention.

The Adaptive Communities project was the last notable example of innovation, including extensive community consultation, which was instigated by the council. The demise of professional creativity and innovation, as a result of intervention, has arguably contributed to the current absence of community consultation, but so has the reduced power of the Isaac Regional Council.

The impact of state government intervention on local power was revealed by this study. The right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996) is based on the recognition of local power (Purcell, 2013, 2014). If local power is lacking, constrained, misdirected or disengaged, as was found here, it is doubtful if the right to the city, or any other meaningful form of governance, will arise in this community. The absence of any significant form of governance, at the time of this study, underscores this point. Local government as an institution was found to be disengaged from the community, in spite of claims by some of the elected representatives of having the support of their constituents. The majority view was found to be the absence of a high regard for local power, mainly based on a misdirected and lacking strategic view by the elected representatives. Local power was certainly found to be constrained, not only as typical in an Australian context, but more specifically as a result of the 2010 intervention, as Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) was still in control of the vast majority of developable land in Moranbah.

It is argued here that the modern state has managed to "stifle social life [almost] entirely under the crushing weight of politics" as suggested by Merrifield (2006, p. 129). The alienation, resulting partly from the state intervention, resulted in anger, distrust, and resentment towards not only the state, but also the mining companies. The impact that state intervention has had on leadership was found to be substantial.

Local government is a logical building block for regional governance (Beer, 2011; Collits, 2012b), but the nature of local leadership is a key determinant. There was

little evidence of place-based leadership, which is collaborative, shares power, and trusts in the formation of horizontally based leadership coalitions (Sotarauta, 2014) by the elected representatives or the council officials. Although there was some evidence of collaboration with adjoining regional councils impacted by FIFO and the mining downturn, it can hardly be construed to have reached the stage where the focus was on creating functional economic areas as described by Collits and Rowe (2015). Localism demands self-sufficiency from regional communities who have to competitively mobilise local assets and resources (Argent, 2011a; Brown, 2005b; Hogan et al., 2015; C. Howlett et al., 2011), but lacking strategic leadership was found in this study to be preventing even attempts at identifying viable alternative assets and resources.

5.3.2. Lack of a strategic focus

The study revealed extensive criticism of the elected representatives for a lack of strategic focus, as well as a misdirected focus on issues that were deemed to not be relevant at the time of this study.

The point that retrospective and prospective knowledge of space help us comprehend how societies (in this case the community in this region) have produced their space over time (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) was evident in the finding that elected representatives, who have served more than one term, had a stronger strategic focus. This finding aligns with the importance attached to local and traditional knowledge in a social sustainability context (Ames, 2006; Magis, 2010).

At the same time, those who had not served several terms, but who had lived in the community for a substantial time, revealed a strategic focus that can be considered a desire to maintain a historic status quo. Social sustainability is about sustaining something (Sutton, 2000), and what some elected representatives wanted to sustain (Duit et al., 2010) was the family culture experienced in the past. The positive reports on the family nature of the community can be construed to have resulted in pressure from the electorate on the elected representatives to preserve that culture, resulting in what some people saw as an obsession on the part of the elected representatives with opposing FIFO. FIFO became the focus of concern (M. Davidson, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000; Sutton, 2000) as it was perceived to be threatening the family culture.

Given the current labour government's indications that it would not be supporting further one-hundred-percent-FIFO applications, this focus appeared irrelevant. Instead, the demographic changes observable in Australian society call for a new approach to employment and housing.

Others, who were less focused on the preservation of the family culture, desired their elected representative to have a focus on lobbying the state government for funding to establish additional economic bases for the community or the construction of infrastructure that would enable and enhance the expansion of agriculture. The almost unanimous participant concern about the future, and the ponderings about other economic bases for the region, can be considered to indicate the desired focus for the region and the community. The shift in the role of local government, from service provision to economic development (Ruming & Gurran, 2014), surely confirms the need for an amended focus. The lack of a strategic focus was found to be linked not only with the long term, but also with current aims.

The elected representatives were lobbying the state government to return the Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) power over the Priority Development Areas (PDA) to local government at the time of this study. The irony is that the Isaac Regional Council (IRC) does not have a *Sustainable Planning Act* (SPA) planning scheme in place to deal equitably with land development applications in areas under its jurisdiction. In this case, local government can be regarded as not fulfilling its role as a regional institution (Eversole & Martin, 2005c; Morrison, 2014).

The same can be said for the continued focus on the provision of housing in Moranbah, given the overwhelming view by other stakeholders that coal mining, apart from metallurgical coal, is a declining industry in this region. Given the vacancy rates at the time of data collection, and the construction of demountable residential units in town by one of the largest mining companies, there was no indication that additional housing would be required any time soon, if at all.

This lack of strategic leadership was found to effectively undermine the opposition of *The State Mode of Production* (SMP), including intervention. The successes the Moranbah Action Group (MAG) had with the opposition of the one-hundred-

percent-FIFO was taken as proof that the SMP can be opposed (Butler, 2012). In spite of the catalyst effect that the election of the leader of the MAG had on the willingness of the elected representatives to take a stand against the state and the mining companies, the misdirected nature of that strategic focus was found to detract from any success opposing the SMP. The role that council officials can play in opposing the SMP, and other strategic actions, was found to have been weakened by capacity issues.

The statement that senior council employees were overburdened over the last five years, and had little opportunity to think strategically about the future, ties in with the lack of strategic focus ascribed to the elected representatives. Not only were the officials feeling overburdened by the impacts of the last mining boom, but they also experienced the need to adjust to self-sufficiency. The role and task of senior professional staff as advisors to the elected representatives was observed to have been negatively impacted by capacity issues, possibly contributing to the lack of strategic focus by the elected representatives.

Ongoing regional local government capacity issues (Brown, 2005b; Cockfield, 2015; Kelly et al., 2009) were found to have impacted on the roles assumed by council officials. The role that professional staff can play, as catalysts for community change (Beer & Clower, 2013), was affected negatively by capacity issues brought about by the boom. These issues included increased workload, but also staff attraction and retention issues as a result of the housing crises. There was no evidence of professional staff acting in a catalyst capacity since the demise of the Adaptive Communities Project.

At the same time, little expectation was found that professional staff would assume any leadership or catalyst positions in the community. This can be linked with the finding that the elected representatives did not sufficiently value the professional staff's expertise, partly resulting in a stifling effect on professional expertise, motivation and innovation. This can be construed to be alienation of the professional staff as a result of the power of elected representatives.

5.4. Community and the government-governance nexus – the social outcomes

The three main points for discussion in terms of the community are presented in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5 The community and the government-governance nexus, the social outcomes

The community and the government-governance nexus, the social outcomes		
Absence of governance forms	Reasons for the absence of governance forms	Social outcomes and social sustainability

5.4.1. Absence of governance

There was no evidence from this study of engaged governance processes, apart from the Adaptive Communities project and the earlier opposition of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO by the Moranbah Action Group (MAG), both of which were before the time of this study. The inclusion of the people who are potentially impacted by an issue, in the form of an effective and equitable decision making process (Maclean et al., 2013), was absent. Activity by the community in the government-governance nexus was found to not be a consideration of the Isaac Regional Council, or an expectation by the community, apart from the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA). This expectation of the MTA was linked to the emerging governance role of the MTA.

Emergence of the governance role of the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA)

The fledgling attempts of the MTA to become a governance role player were not common knowledge and neither did they feature in any consideration of governance forms by the Isaac Regional Council. The MTA themselves saw their impact on state government as purely a public relations exercise on the part of the state. However, there was evidence of emerging MTA collaboration with similar associations in coastal cities. An explanation of the emergence of the MTA, can be found in the work of Beer and Clower (2013). They state that an economic shock, such as the mining downturn, causes the emergence of new leaders.

The governance efforts of the MTA are the first evidence of community leadership since the disbanding of the MAG, which had some success opposing the one-hundred-percent-FIFO in 2010/2011. No community organisation has emerged in this vacuum, but the MTA has emerged as a potential catalyst to recreate the space. The MTA has an extensive network of relationships, including state government, local government, traders' organisations in adjoining regional council areas, and mining companies. The potential impact of the MTA was not realised by any of the role players. Several reasons were uncovered for the absence of other community role players in the government-governance context.

5.4.2. Reasons for the absence of governance forms

Nature of society and this community

Society tends to avoid, in general, the questioning of the centre and the centrality of the combined powers of decision-making and power. This tendency is compounded by the transfer of decision-making power to representatives (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). Apart from the opposition to one-hundred-percent-FIFO by the Moranbah Action Group, there have been no instances of citizens questioning the state government. This lack of questioning could partly have arisen from the view that residents have of themselves as a result of the history of the town and the community.

The long-term residents viewed themselves as pioneers and community builders, resulting in a sense of attachment and identification with their community. This culture was strengthened by the opportunity of private ownership of residential properties in the late 1980s. In terms of their role as citizens, the findings revealed a different role. Long-term residents reported themselves as both victims and survivors of state government regional development policy. Given the lack of an enduring regional approach, this community's ability to adapt can be argued to have been undermined in the face of constant change (Maclean et al., 2013; Magis, 2010), which in turn can be seen as being partly responsible for the perceived helplessness. This helplessness was exacerbated by the impact of state intervention.

Impact of state intervention

State intervention in local government planning affairs is generally perceived to undermine the demos of citizens (Cooper & Flehr, 2006; Drew et al., 2014; S. Jones & Wiltshire, 2011; Moore, 2005; Nicholls, 2012). The one instance of state intervention where the state did seek the input from the community, the 2010 intervention, led to disappointing outcomes, resulting in a feeling of disregard for the wishes of the community. This disappointment decreased community desire for greater community involvement in state decision-making. Leadership was found to have had an impact on the presence of governance forms over time.

Leadership and vision

The leadership displayed by the Moranbah Action Group was found to have awakened a latent sense of loyalty to the town and community in some individuals, making a sustainable future important to them as well. The leadership of the Isaac Regional Council during the Adaptive Communities project resulted in the emergence of engaged governance forms. Since the demise of that project, there has been no leadership by the Isaac Regional Council and this lack of leadership is deemed to be one of the reasons for the dearth of governance forms at the time of this study.

Just as local leadership was found to be lacking by this study, so was a common vision for the town and the community. This lack of a common vision is linked with poor leadership by the Isaac Regional Council. A variety of visions was encountered, ranging from a family town, to a prosperous town, to a town with additional economic bases, to the extreme view that there is nothing to sustain. Sustainability is deemed to have become political and normative because of the question of what it is that communities want to sustain (M. Davidson, 2009; Munda, 2006; Stren & Polése, 2000; Sutton, 2000), and indeed there is a lack of clarity in Moranbah as to what it is that the community wants to sustain. The absence of a common vision can also be explained by the constant changes that the town and the community have been subjected to in the last decade and their ability to adapt.

Change, capacity and adaptability

The impact of the dynamic nature of this town on capacity, leadership and vision cannot be underestimated. The importance of change revealed in the literature is particularly relevant here as the case study community has been subjected to the latest mining boom and bust, the 2008 amalgamation of councils, decreasing social infrastructure funding, three change-overs in state government, two changes-overs in local government, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC), significant population increases during the boom, a larger non-residential workforce, and several instances of state government intervention.

The scale and intensity of these changes has raised concern about whether the threshold has been reached where transformation is needed, as opposed to adaptation (Duit et al., 2010). Complementing the notion of tipping points is path dependence, which is deemed to be very much evident in Moranbah. Path dependence is a characteristic of a system or process whose outcomes evolve as a consequence of its own history. Once path dependence has developed, it takes a large external shock to move the entity onto a different developmental path (Tonts et al., 2012). Whether the fears that the mining industry will not return to former levels, or the fears about coal as a declining commodity, will be the shock that will move Moranbah onto a different developmental path, remains to be seen. In the meantime, the ability of the community to adapt to change is of relevance to its social sustainability.

The presence of certain types of capital is deemed to make an entity resilient (Magis, 2010). In this community, there was no clear vision of what could constitute natural capital apart from mining the natural resources, although there was some mention of agriculture. Regarding human capital, the reported lack of leadership and a strategic focus can be argued to detract from social capital. Financial capital does not exist in the community, and with the reported unwillingness of the state government to invest the Royalties for the Regions (R4R) to an amount that reflects the contributions from the region, it is unlikely that financial capital exists that would contribute to social capital in a significant way. In terms of political capital there is a fledgling commitment to influence power brokers by the elected representatives, but the question was posed if this focus was relevant. Cuthill (2010) views the concept of social capital as a theoretical starting point for the attainment of social sustainability.

In terms of social capital, which is made up of the ability and willingness of community members to participate in actions directed to community objectives and the processes of engagement (Magis, 2010), it was clear from the outcomes indicated that social capital was largely absent, with bonding, bridging, and linking capital either token or fledgling efforts. Therefore, at this stage little capacity appears to counteract alienation, as a dis-alienated spatial practice depends on the capacity to collectively appropriate, create and transform reality (J. Wilson, 2014).

5.4.3. Social outcomes and social sustainability

Evaluated against the City of Vancouver (COV) definition, as well as those of Stren and Polése (2000) and Hutchins and Sutherland (2008), the outcomes reported by the participants did not indicate a community or region that was in a position to strive towards social sustainability at the time. The human capacity for self-development was not evident here, although there was evidence of fledgling attempts, for example with a number of individuals attempting to steer towards social sustainability. Social or community capacity for the development of the community, including organisations and networks that foster interaction, was also largely absent, apart from the efforts by the MTA.

The common fears pertaining to the future and the sustainability of the town, as reported by the participants can be viewed as displaying how the everyday, as per Lefebvre's theories, critically theorises the way of life under contemporary capitalism (Butler, 2012). It is also not surprising that the participants reported fear and uncertainty, when taking into consideration several reports in the literature of threats to regional well-being (Brown, 2005b; Mayere & Donehue, 2013; Morrison et al., 2012), and predictions of exit strategies formulated by an inherently time-bound industry (Everingham & Franks, 2015). What was surprising was the overwhelming conviction that the town would survive in some form or another, in spite of the overwhelming number of Australian and international towns that did not survive post-mining.

The anger towards the state government can be construed to be partly the result of the low profile that social sustainability has in government and amongst bureaucrats (Boström, 2012b; Cuthill, 2010; O' Riordan, 2012). The participants felt disregarded

as Australian citizens by the state government. The disregard can be linked with the sacrifice of the regions for the well-being of the urban in a capitalist, urbanised economy (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Lefebvre (1996) argued that to direct growth towards development means that new needs have to be prospected as they emerge, which stands in contrast to reports by the participants that their needs are disregarded by the state.

5.5. Mining companies and the government-governance nexus – the social outcomes

The third main finding, presented at the end of *Chapter 4 – Findings*, pertained to the role of the mining companies. Three sub-findings are of importance for this discussion. The first is how the changing nature of mining companies, including the parent company, has impacted on social outcomes in Moranbah overtime. The second sub-finding pertained to the power of the mining companies in the government-governance nexus and the third to the social outcomes thereof. The outline for the discussion in this section is presented in Table 5-6. For each section of the discussion on mining companies, an excerpt from Table 5-6 is included for clarity.

Table 5-6 The role of mining companies in the government-governance nexus and the social outcomes identified

The role of mining companies in the government-governance nexus and the social outcomes identified		
The changing nature of mining companies		
Parent company and the entry of other companies	Global company	Mining industry cycles and declining commodities
Power held by mining companies		
Power over state	Power over local government, community and employees	
Social outcomes		
Disruption of established culture	Dependence and entitlement	Anger and distrust

The study found that the changing nature of mining companies, over time, had impacted on the social outcomes in the town.

5.5.1. The changing nature of mining companies

Mining companies are not static entities and the changes experienced in the mining industry, both nationally and globally, have impacted on the community and the

social outcomes. Three elements of change, presented in Table 5-7, were found to be particularly relevant and are discussed next.

Table 5-7 The changing nature of mining companies

The changing nature of mining companies		
Parent company and the entry of other companies	Global company	Mining industry cycles and declining commodities

The role of the parent company and the entry of other companies

The nature of the parent company was found to have been a major determinant in the establishment of a family culture in Moranbah. The state government-mining company governance model at the time fostered the creation of traditional, family-based mining communities. This culture was subsequently disrupted by the entry of other companies, as a division between the employees of different companies developed, but also because the impact of the parent company was diluted by the culture of other companies. Part of the disruption of the family culture could be ascribed to the evolving global and multinational character of mining companies.

The global, multinational company

A general consensus was found in this study on the point that mining companies are businesses, accountable to their stakeholders and not the community. The increase of FIFO workers in Moranbah can be deemed to be part of the globalised workforce, in line with the ethos of the mining companies and their new business models. A global workforce includes not only miners, but also management. In addition to being global, mobile employees, management was perceived to consist of urban business people, making decisions that impact on regional communities of whom they have little knowledge. This form of urban decision-making is reminiscent of the power the state accumulates in the urban centres (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), especially when measured against the view that the mining sector is more powerful than the state government, or arguably, the federal government (Everingham & Franks, 2015). The geographical separation between management and the local communities could also be a factor in the lack of strategic focus that the mining companies were accused of in this study. The lack of local connection, as well as the responsibility towards stakeholders, has contributed to a reactionary leadership style, rather than a sense of local responsibility.

Cheshire et al.'s (2011) claims that weak local governance structures, as found in this case, necessitate involvement from mining companies were found unlikely to come true. Given the large scale use of non-resident workers and mining company owned and operated infrastructure, there is little motivation for the mining companies to become involved in local governance beyond tokenism. There was also no evidence in this case of a growing governance role of the Australian mining industry, as postulated by Cheshire et al. (2011) and Morrison et al. (2012), nor of the multi-scalar and diverse governance arrangements, including the mining industry, which was observed in the US and Canada (Lawrie et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the mining industry cycles can be seen as a catalyst for regular direction changes by the industry.

Mining industry cycles and declining commodities

The impact of cycles in the mining industry was found to be of particular concern to the local government, which has to deal with their financial as well as social outcomes in Moranbah. The current concern was found to not only be the downturn in the industry, but also warnings sounded on the inherently declining nature of the thermal coal mining industry. Three actions by the mining companies were perceived to signal the presence of an exit strategy in the business models of the mining companies. The first is the use of private service providers to run the accommodation villages, which was regarded as giving the mining companies the opportunity to pull out of mining operations at the smallest expense. The second was the investment in modular accommodation in town that could be removed if an exit strategy was ever executed. The third was a general decline of social investment in the town by the mining companies. It is, however, not only the industry cycles that make the community vulnerable, but also the way that the government addresses those cycles.

It has been argued by (Brown, 2005b) that the free market approach of government is leaving regional development vulnerable to market forces or the cyclic nature of mining industry. This was found to have been the case in Moranbah when house prices rose in an unprecedented way during the last boom, but it is contradicted by the point that government did then intervene in 2010, which was found to have

exacerbated the vulnerability of the community. Not only the cycles are of relevance here, but also the post mining times.

The normative view that mining companies should help prepare the communities for post mining times, through a system of local governance based on partnerships with the state community groups and other relevant stakeholders (Cheshire et al., 2011), is seen to be unrealistic and unattainable. Companies have no statutory obligation to execute such actions, with the main obligation being to rehabilitate the mine site. There appears to be little likelihood that the mining sector will take up a significant role in the establishment of sustainable futures for mining communities. Their current focus is reported to be on social responsibility, i.e. the education of the workforce and dealing with social issues arising from FIFO practices such as absenteeism. This focus is coupled with reports in the literature that Corporate Social Sustainability (CSR) is more focused on OHR issues (Gond et al., 2011). Efforts by the mining companies at social sustainability in this case were found to depend on the efforts by individual employees rather than on company initiatives. The alleged interest of one of the mining companies to establish a secondary industry in town, revealed during the data collection, has not been progressed since.

If the mining companies are not using their power to ensure sustainable futures for the communities they operate in, what is the impact of their power? The particular power wielded by the mining companies was a major finding of this study and is discussed next.

5.5.2. Power held by mining companies

The state government's focus on mining has allowed mining to dominate Australian society, the economy, and the political system (Everingham & Franks, 2015). This statement succinctly sums up the extent of the power held by mining companies as perceived in this study. Not only do the companies have power over the state, but also over the local government, the community and their workforce. Only the power over the state and the local government is discussed here, with a brief reference to the commodification of the worker through the power held by the mining company. The power wielded over the community is largely the result of the dependence on,

and entitlement to, mining company financial support, and this is discussed in the next section.

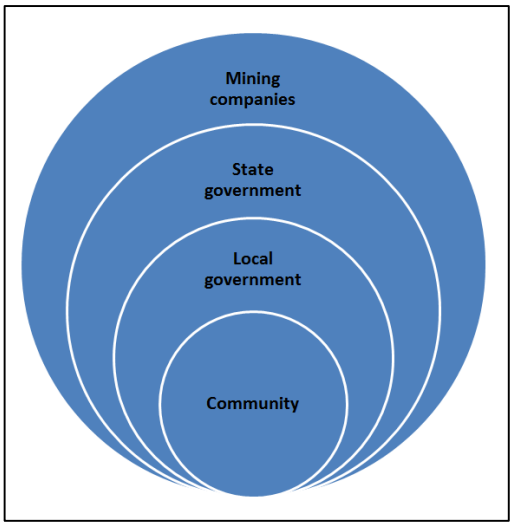
Table 5-8 Power held by mining companies

Power held by mining companies	
Power over state	Power over local government

Power over the state

The dominant theme in the findings on the role of the mining companies in the government-governance nexus was the power that the mining companies wield over the state. The mining companies were perceived to be more powerful than the state government, and hence able to bypass local government in cases where local government decisions did not serve their profit-driven goals. This bypassing of local government has had detrimental impacts on the relationship between the mining companies and local government, as well as the community. Even where there was some element of collaboration between role players, the outcomes were seen to be token and mainly determined by the mining companies. The encompassing nature of the power of the mining companies can be depicted simply, as in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1 The power relationship between the different stakeholder groups



It is clear from Figure 5-1 that local government, the community, and the mining company workforce are all impacted, in terms of social outcomes, by the role that the mining companies assume in the government-governance nexus.

Power over the local government

Power over the local government was found especially in the ability to bypass the local government in an effort to attain the overturning of local government land development decisions by the state planning minister, such as in the case of the 350 lot residential development and the one-hundred-percent-FIFO camps. Lefebvre suggests that effects appear as causes and causes as effects in *The State Mode of Production* (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). In this case, the housing crises were the cause for the 2010 intervention. However, it can be argued that the housing crises, at least in part, was the result of the 2005 intervention, instigated by a mining company on the basis that the development would sterilise a coal deposit. Given the number of mines in the Isaac Regional Council area, as depicted in Figure 1-3, and the landlocked nature of Moranbah, the power of the mining company is evident. The same applies to the intermingling of cause and effect, which was also touched upon in the section on the negative impacts of intervention.

Furthermore, it was also found to not be in the interest of mining company decision-makers to collaborate on local projects, such as the Adaptive Governance project. This disinterest in the project occurred in spite of the knowledge that the project would have provided a variety of housing options to mining company employees. This lack of interest in local solutions in this case negates companies being institutional mainstays in this community, as claimed by Hutchins and Sutherland (2008). Infrastructure agreements, including the town water supply, were also found to be distorted by the power held by the mining companies.

Other instances of the use of power were found to be more insidious and included ongoing disinterest by the mining company executives in active discussions with local government. Instead, responsibility is often delegated to mining company liaison officers, who have no decision-making power and no financial delegation. The resulting relationship with local government is largely based on social licence to operate as a result of the relationship with the mining company liaison officers, rather than real collaboration. It is argued that the mining companies are aware of their virtually unassailable position of power in the Australian regional landscape, and therefore can exercise that power over local government as they see fit. No collaborative relationship with local government is essential to their operations, as

they have the ability to exert power over the state government to attain their goals. The way that funds are made available to local government is also questionable.

The use of mining company funding of community projects, such as the aquatic centre, can also be seen as the use of power over a financially dependent local government. It could be argued that the substantial amount of money would have been better spent on a legacy project. However, legacy projects would make the local government less dependent on the mining companies for financial assistance and therefore more inclined to follow their own visions for their community. Instead, this makes local government more dependent as the running costs of the life-cycle costs for the infrastructure provided by the mining companies have to be borne by the local government.

From the findings it was evident that statements in the literature on the (positive) role of the mining companies in regional governance do not have substance in this case. Given the importance of governance (Cheshire et al., 2014; Cheshire et al., 2011; José, 2008; Pillora & McKinley, 2011; Stoker, 1998), and the need for a new governance focus on problem solving during times of change, such as those experienced here (Agnew, 2013; Duit et al., 2010), the absence of the main industry at the local governance level detracts from the possibility of a sustainability future for the community. This absence is made even more possible by the commodification of the worker (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). With the ability to source workers from elsewhere, there is decreased motivation to play a role in local governance.

Although the mining industry is obviously not the only contributor to the social outcomes, the powerful nature of their role in the community has a significant impact on the social outcomes in the community and hence the discussion of such social outcomes is presented next. The impacts by other role players are acknowledged and included where relevant.

5.5.3. The social outcomes of the role played by the mining companies in the government-governance nexus

Table 5-9 Social outcomes of the role of the mining companies

Social outcomes of the role of the mining companies		
Disruption of established culture	Dependence and entitlement	Anger and distrust

The disruption of established culture

Although the mining industry was found to have been largely responsible for the establishment of a family culture in the town, within the parameters set by federal and state legislation at the time, the industry also contributed significantly to its gradual demise. Some of the impacts on the mining industry, which were translated to the community, were beyond their control, but nonetheless impacted negatively on the family culture.

Earlier changes, such as the introduction of shift work and rosters by the mining companies, were determined to have undermined the family culture. Later, the last mining boom and the subsequent one-hundred-percent-FIFO work practices, adopted by the mining companies, further eroded the family culture. The role of the state government in FIFO has been explained in detail earlier. These three factors are construed to be the Most Significant Change events are discussed next.

In the first instance, the earlier changes to work hours by the mining companies impacted on participation in social and sporting clubs, and on the nature of neighbourhoods. In the years following the establishment of the town, mining employees, mainly men, worked five days a week and they worked day shifts only. This allowed time for the men, and especially the fathers, to be very visible and involved with their families and in the community. Since the introduction of shift work and a seven-day work week, the boundaries between economic, political, and private life have dissolved, as is typical in ever expanding capitalism (Merrifield, 2006). The boundaries, between private life and the economics that underpin and support the mining companies, shifted in favour of the mining companies as a result of the changed work hours and practices. These amended work practices by the mining companies are tied to the commodification of the worker in a capitalist

system (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The findings of this study revealed first-hand experience of the family culture, and its gradual demise, by the younger adult residents, who had been the beneficiaries of the strong family culture, and of the strong presence of fathers and men in the community. Not much change was evident to the culture of dependence and entitlement during this stage, although the unions had grown in strength due to retrenchments. The changes that had started as a result of the changed work practices were accelerated during the last boom.

The second significant series of changes which resulted in a further disruption of the established culture was reported to have occurred during the last boom. A number of near-retirement residents left the town to avoid the boom rush, but also to gain the financial benefit of selling properties at substantial profits. Many of these departing residents were the grandparents of three-generation Moranbah families. This departure undermined the maturation of the community that had become evident from the presence of three-generation families living in town, and which was regarded to be a substantial social asset in the community. Apart from the loss of people, the loss of symbols of permanence, such as the caravan park, during this phase had impact on the residents. The perception that land use such as the caravan park indicates permanence, derives from the process whereby the trivialised spaces of everyday life are made special by the symbolism attached to them by people (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The residents also regarded the cemetery as a symbol of permanence, but these symbols of permanence were in conflict with the state government and mining companies' actions and attitudes towards the community, which were instilling doubt in the participants' minds as to whether their community was actually permanent. Such actions included the lack of funding from the state government and the perceived positioning of the mining companies in terms of an exit strategy. The perception that the mining companies were executing an exit strategy was strengthened significantly during the next change.

The third significant change impacting on the established culture was the introduction of one-hundred-percent-FIFO work practices by one of the mining companies. FIFO is relevant to this study as an example of the outcomes of a government-governance model that allowed the adoption of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO work practice, but also as an example of a Most Significant Change

(MSC) moment. As a result of one-hundred-percent-FIFO practices, families were relocated or located elsewhere in urban areas, with the father becoming a transient worker. A strong fear was revealed by this study that the tipping point between resident and non-resident workers would be reached. This emerged as a social threat during the boom, as a result of the approval of two one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines by the state government. This fear was the result of government funding models that did not include non-resident workers in funding allocations, but also the undermining of the local government rates and tax income that permanent residents bring. The Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) model refers to thresholds or tipping points where changes become irreversible, and the problem-solving capacity of multi-level governance systems become more important than principles of good governance (Duit et al., 2010). The perceived threat was that the non-resident workforce would outnumber the resident workforce and that the ratio would become permanent.

Although there were fledgling elements of a multi-level governance system in place during the extended time of the boom, revealed by the pilot study, successes were limited. The Moranbah Traders Association (MTA), although a long-standing association, was not deemed very powerful at that stage. The Moranbah Action Group (MAG) was particularly active during this phase and lobbied state government strongly in opposition to the one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines. Of particular relevance in terms of the government-governance nexus was the subsequent election of the leader of the Moranbah Action Group, who strongly opposed the one-hundred-percent-FIFO, onto the council. This was reported to have had a significant impact on the council and its attitude towards the state government and the mining companies. The local government was wrapping up their Adaptive Communities Project with significant support and participation from the community. The state government was involved through their land development agency, the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), as well as through the calling in of development applications, typically assessed by local government. These elements of a multi-level governance system were, however, not part of a larger government-governance system, and there was little evidence of ongoing collaboration between the different stakeholders.

During the gradual demise of the family culture, the social space had not disappeared, but had undergone metamorphoses (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The bi-directional relationship between life and space was observable in this case study: to change life is to change space and to change space is to change life (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), here evident in all three major change events. These changes impacted also on the culture of dependence and entitlement that had developed in the community throughout the history of the town.

Dependence and entitlement

The disruption of the established culture does not only refer to positive aspects, such as a family culture, but also to negative aspects, such as the dependence on mining companies and the sense of entitlement to benefits derived from the mining companies. Although not as strong or prevalent as the family culture, a culture of dependence on the mining sector, as well as a sense of entitlement to mining company support for the community, was found in this study. The extended presence of mining companies and the enmeshment of the mining companies into the local social fabric (Cheshire et al., 2014; Cheshire et al., 2011; Storey, 2001), especially during the early years, contributed to the sense of dependence and entitlement. The relaxed mining governance models, in terms of access to the work site, and the use of company equipment and material provided for the construction of social infrastructure in town, contributed to a sense of ownership of the workplace. Other changes were mentioned throughout this chapter, and it stands to reason that the community was not immune to these either. The impact of these changes on the social space and the everyday was what contributed to the anger and the distrust reported.

Anger and distrust

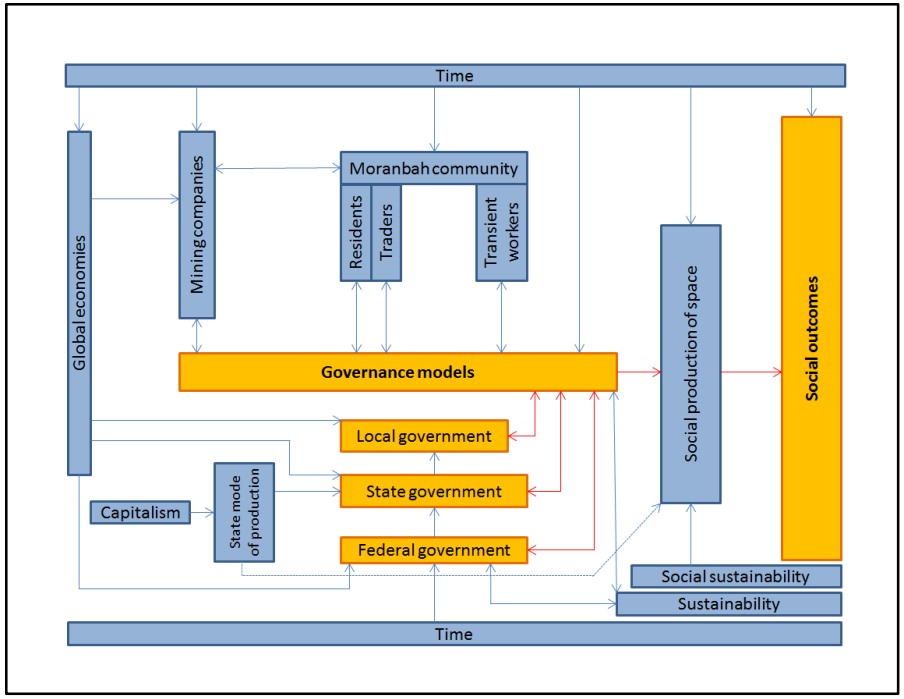
The disruption of this culture was perceived to be a result of the nexus between government, the mining companies and the elected representatives, in other words, between those who had been democratically elected to a position of power and those intermediaries who stand to gain financially from the community and its resources. The main focus for the anger was the state government, and to a lesser extent the mining companies. A strong contributing factor to the anger has been the perceived lack of a vision and a strategic focus by those in positions of power. The distrust reported appeared to be aimed at both the state government and the mining

companies. Community trust in a mining company is a strong predictor of community acceptance of its operation (Moffat & Zhang, 2014), and the distrust was revealed in the strong opposition from the community and the local government to the one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines. Moranbah was found to be a strong union town, which can be regarded as contributing to the reported anger and distrust towards the mining companies.

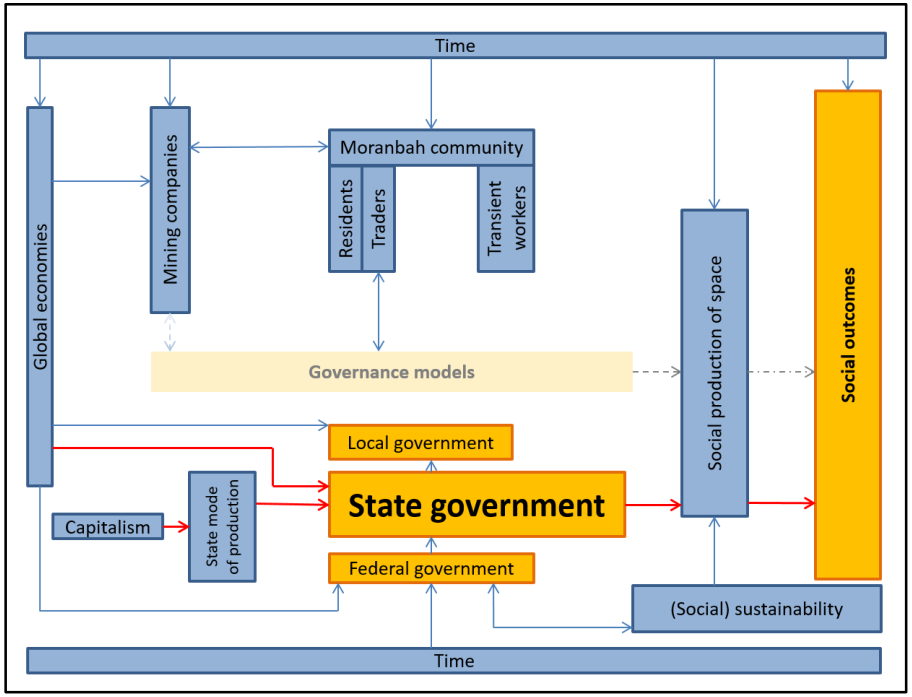
Given these different role players in the government-governance nexus, identified by this study, whose responsibility is social sustainability then? Is it the government's, whose free market approach is argued to have made the regional community vulnerable, compounded by the effect of subsequent interventions, or the local government and the local community who have been burdened by a localism agenda? Added to this lack of clarity on whose responsibility social sustainability is, mining is not a good basis for permanent settlement (Hugo, 2011) and no alternative economic base has been identified. In this scenario, the end has become the means, and the means the end; and the aim to secure economic gains for the state has eclipsed the normative view that all sustainability is social sustainability, as it is society that we are trying to sustain (Magis & Shinn, 2009).

The original conceptual framework drafted for this study, presented in Figure 2-9, (reproduced here for convenience) is a "system of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the research" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 222), based in this case on social sustainability and regional development literature, as well as the work of Lefebvre. It is evident from the findings in Chapter Four and the discussion in Chapter Five that the state has elevated itself above society (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) eroding the intricate web of relationships and governance modes, resulting in the actual conceptual framework encountered, depicted in the second column of Figure 5-2 . The role of the state as global competitor is dominant, resulting in a focus on *The State Mode of Production* (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The demise of governance eroded the relationships between the different role players, impacting on *The Social Production of Space*, resulting in undesirable social outcomes.

Figure 5-2 Original and actual conceptual frameworks compiled for the study



Original conceptual framework



Actual conceptual framework

5.6. Conclusion to Chapter Five – Discussion

This chapter has presented the different role players in the government-governance nexus in Moranbah, and was structured around the roles played by those four categories of role players: the state government, the local government, the community, and the mining companies. The conclusion to this chapter is structured around the three secondary research questions, namely the social outcomes, the role players, and the importance of social sustainability to the community, in that order.

First, in terms of the social outcomes, the social outcome most severely experienced by the community was the loss of the established culture in the community. The relationship with the global, multinational mining company is different from the benevolent parent company, and the demise of the latter has contributed to feelings of anger and distrust towards mining companies, as well as fear and uncertainty about the future. The importance of identification of status and roles in space was identified by Lefebvre (1974/1991) in *The Production of Space*.

The study has further revealed adversarial relationships between the local government and the state government; the elected representatives and the council officials; the council officials and the state; the elected representatives and the mining companies; the elected representatives and the community; and the community and the state. These adversarial relationships have impacted on the intricate web of relationships that make up a government-governance nexus, and thus on the social outcomes that derive from that nexus. Space is continuously produced and reproduced through this web, and in that space subjects identify with such space and their status as actors (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The status of local government actors has been distorted as a result of intervention, resulting in alienation and blame-shifting (Cockfield, 2015; Collits, 2012a, 2012b).

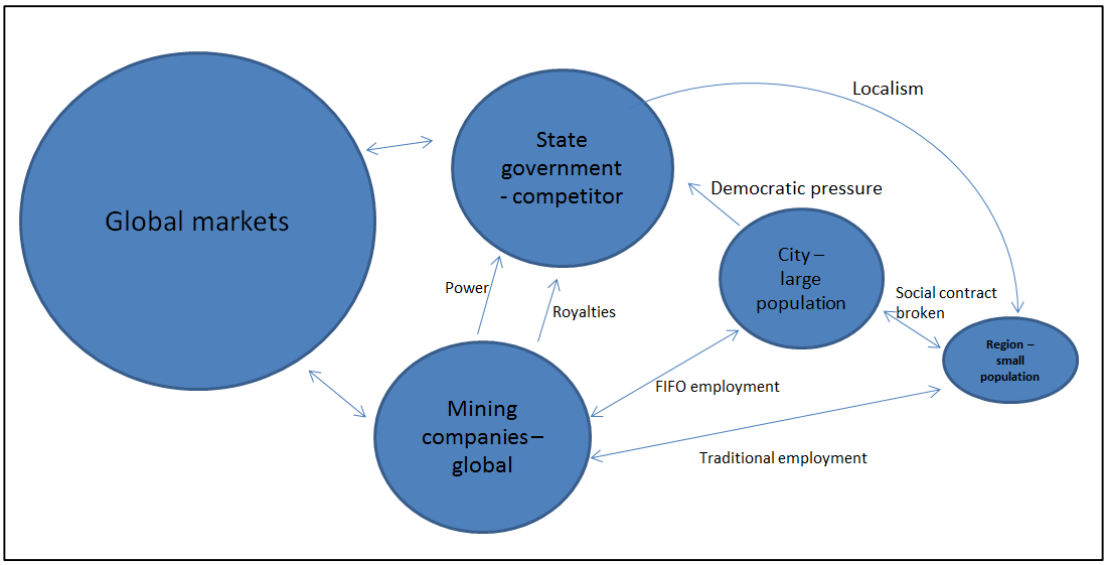
Intervention undermines self-determination, which is a determinant of a successful localism agenda (Hogan & Young, 2015) and is linked conceptually to Lefebvre's (1974/1991) autogestion and the right to the city (a participatory role in decision-making). Intervention also causes alienation, based on the absence of a conviction that there is an ability to achieve the possible (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 2009b).

Alienation, as described by Lefebvre, serves as a single concept to underline the sense that currently pervades the community: that the possible is not possible. This alienation can be argued to have been brought about by the roles assumed by the different role players in the government-governance nexus.

This space has become the object of actions and struggles, resulting from a pathology of space flowing from society not functioning in a satisfactory manner (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The social outcomes in Moranbah not only derive from its global misfortune, but also from metropolitan Australia being mainstream Australia (Tonts et al., 2012). The social outcomes remind us of Lefebvre's point on the sacrifice of the regions for the good of the urban (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). At the same time, the stifling of social life under the politics of the modern state was evident (Merrifield, 2006), including a lack of vision by all stakeholder groups.

Second, the roles assumed by the different role players and the basic relationships between the role players, in a global context, as described in the preceding sections, can be simply depicted as in Figure 5-3.

Figure 5-3 The roles of the different role players in the government-governance nexus in a global economy



The state government has assumed a role as player on global markets, aiming to ensure the competitiveness of the state. In the process, the focus has shifted to an economic focus. For the regions this has meant a localism agenda, where local communities are expected to identify and mobilise their own resources to ensure

their well-being. Findings from the study have revealed that the likelihood of a successful localism agenda in this context is extremely small. The focus of the state is on capital accumulation, in *The State Mode of Production* (SMP), theorised by Lefebvre. In the SMP, the state reacts to any obstacle to capital accumulation, which has resulted in several interventions in Moranbah (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, 1974/1991). The state has broken the social contract with the regions, instead strengthening the urban centres in terms of their decision-making and power. The emergence of the SMP was enabled through technological advances (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Societal and technological changes have impacted on social sustainability (Cuthill, 2010), including the urbanisation of mankind, which has resulted in cities becoming the decision-making centres (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The nature of the capitalist state in the SMP has put Moranbah on a path where outcomes have evolved as a consequence of its own history (Tonts et al., 2012), especially through intervention.

The mining companies have gained extreme power as a result of the state focus on capital accumulation, to the extent that there is a perception that the mining companies are more powerful than the state, and possibly more powerful than the federal government. Due to the power the mining companies wield over the state government, local government and local wishes are not of great concern to them. The focus is on the shareholders of the global, multinational companies. Advances in technology have enabled the mining companies to employ FIFO workers, which has removed their social obligation from host communities to a certain degree. The role of the mining company, during the establishment years of the Isaac Regional Council mines, has been eclipsed almost completely by the current form of the mining company. The focus on shareholder profit has made the mining companies reactionary. Coupled with the mining cycles and possible declining commodities, the mining companies have become positioned to execute a full or partial exit strategy from their host communities.

Local government is the level of government closest to the people, and arguably most cognisant of their wishes. As such, there is pressure on the elected representatives to guard the vision of their constituents. In this scenario, the pressure that has resulted in opposition to actions that are perceived to threaten the community and what they hold dear, including their economic sustainability. The council

professionals assumed a different role, not directly serving constituents, but rather the greater good in the community, which in certain cases has led to disillusionment with the elected representatives. The disregard of the local government, local wishes, and local expertise by the state government has undermined the role of the local government substantially, and so has the power that the EDQ has over a large portion of Moranbah. This is a disregard of the right to the city, and of local power (Lefebvre, 1996).

The community role in the government-governance nexus is one of almost total absence, apart from the fledgling attempts by the Moranbah Traders Association. This stands in stark contrast to the time of the pilot study when the Moranbah Action Group was opposing the one-hundred-percent-FIFO applications. The lack of leadership by the Isaac Regional Council, combined with the undermining of the status of the local government by the state, has contributed to the absence of the community in the nexus.

Third, the importance of social sustainability revealed by the findings was discussed. The enduring nature of social space was observed in the opinion of the majority of participants that the town would survive beyond mining, given the small likelihood of a town with only mining as economic base surviving substantially beyond mining. The point that no space ever disappears, but rather transforms, is of relevance here (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). In spite of the desire for the endurance of the town, in some form or other, there was little evidence of a common vision or any attempts to govern for social sustainability, apart from opposing FIFO. This is tied in with the lack in leadership and the passivity of a society that has handed over its decision-making power to representatives (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). In this case, the representatives have little power, nor a focus deemed appropriate, to ensure a socially sustainable future. The almost universal call on the part of the participants for a strategic focus can also be construed as a desire for certainty and leadership regarding the future of the town. This stood in sharp contrast with the pilot study, during which there was limited evidence of a desire for a strategic focus by stakeholders who are decision-makers.

Although these explanations are provided, it should be acknowledged that there can be alternative explanations derived from a different world view and the use of

different discourses in the literature. General demographic changes in society can be argued to have impacted on family culture; for example, more single person households will have an effect in some way on typical family-oriented communities. Technology can be argued to have contributed to the changing nature of society through technological advances, which are enabling people to live a less community oriented lifestyle. The role assumed by the state can be explained in terms of the after-effects of the Global Financial Crises (GFC), which are deemed to be long-lasting, rather than as part of an SMP context. Although these are all examples of ways that different viewpoints bring about alternative conclusions, the conclusions in this study are argued to be well-justified and well-entrenched in the work of Lefebvre, as well as social sustainability and regional development discourses. Hence, the next chapter presents the conclusion to this study.

6. CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion to this study. It serves to remind the reader of the aim of the study, explains how the research questions have been answered, and presents a conclusion to the research problem. Suggestions for further research are made. The chapter also contains a claim of contribution to knowledge, as well as the implications of the findings for theory, policy and practice.

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the social outcomes of the government-governance nexus in a regional resource region, at the hand of regional resource town case study. This resource town, Moranbah, Queensland, was selected due to it exhibiting the characteristics of a critical case, where phenomena to be investigated are particularly evident.

This study flows on from a pilot study, in the same town, on the expected social sustainability of a state government intervention in 2010. During this pilot study, it became evident that there were further issues worthy of research, especially the triad of government-governance-social outcomes. At the time the pilot study was conducted, the impacts of the last mining boom had become particularly evident in this community, with regular reporting of poor social outcomes and housing issues in the national media. At the height of the boom, Moranbah was labelled the most expensive place to live in Queensland by the Economic Development Office. At that time, a two-stream economy was particularly evident, with residents not working in the mining industry finding it virtually impossible to survive economically. The influx of mine workers into the region during the boom times were also reported to have contributed to social issues in the town and the accommodation villages or camps. During the design of this research project, the previous exposure to this community proved to have been valuable. Enduring relationships had been established, garnering trust in the researcher's aims with the current project.

For this study, the gaps observed in the literature confirmed the need to include all stakeholder groups in the community, and the pilot study participants provided a valuable entry point into the community. The single case study design was chosen

particularly since there was limited knowledge on the social outcomes of regional governance models, an ongoing lack of research on regional governance, especially in an Australian context, as well as an enduring lack of research on social sustainability. The exploratory and descriptive nature of this project was dictated by the lack of knowledge on the topic. The design allowed for the exposure of the breadth of the research issues by mini-focus groups, and the exposure of the depth of the issues by participants in individual interviews, with a community workshop used to verify the initial findings. The boundaries set for the research were that participants needed to be present in the case study town on a regular basis, which excluded individuals from federal and state government, who although important role players in the government-governance nexus, were not a daily part of the community. This does not mean that federal and state policy directions were not considered. The study did not investigate the social outcomes that are reported on by the Australian Bureau of Statistics such as, inter alia, divorce rates, income, or education levels either. Instead it did seek to uncover and investigate in depth the less tangible social outcomes that often have as important an impact in the community than the more tangible outcomes.

The framework for this research was compiled from two main sources. The first was the vast oeuvre of work by Henri Lefebvre, focusing mainly on *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*, in conjunction with work by a variety of scholarly authors on social sustainability and regional development. Given the emphasis that Lefebvre placed on historical context and his opinion that no space ever disappears, the framework made provision for the inclusion of participants' perspective on historical or chronological time.

The study sought to find answers to the research problem, namely what the social outcomes are of the government-regional governance nexus in resource regions. In order to shed light on that problem, the following research questions are answered by this study:

- What are the social outcomes experienced and observed by stakeholders in the case study town?
- Who are the government-governance role players and what roles do they assume?

- How important (desirable/relevant) are sustainable social outcomes to the regional resource community?

The contribution that this study makes to knowledge is in the fields of social sustainability where there is an enduring lack of research, the field of regional governance where there is also an enduring lack of research, as well as in the poorly researched area of the links between the government-governance nexus and social outcomes. This contribution is discussed in more detail later, in addition to the implications for practice and policy. Six additional possible areas for further research are identified, but these do not exclude other areas:

- First, a comparative study of Canadian and Australian regional resource cases. The literature review revealed sufficient similarities between the two countries to warrant further investigation. This was judged to be outside the scope of this study, which aimed to provide an in-depth investigation of a poorly researched Australian issue.
- Second, the notion of path dependence (Tonts et al., 2012) in relation to the impacts of state government intervention could be a worthwhile project. In this case intervention contributed significantly to path dependence, and policy development could benefit significantly from establishing if there are more instances where this is the case.
- Third, a longitudinal study of the return to growth management in regional development plans could trace the achievement of goals, engaged governance, delegation of power, and other factors that were shown in this study to be crucial elements for social sustainability.
- Fourth, the role of the business sector in regional development could be investigated. Given the emergence of the Moranbah Traders Association in the leadership void, further investigation is warranted. Business owners operate within legal constraints, but do not have the political motives ascribed to politicians, are not bound by the organisational constraints that local government officials have to contend with, and are not impacted by the use of power by higher levels of government. The role they play in the community is much more based on economic sustainability for their significant

investment, but they showed an equal understanding of the need for social sustainability in this case.

- Fifth, the impact of *The State Mode of Production* (SMP) on environmental sustainability as a research focus might prove fruitful, as there were some findings in this study that pointed to negative impacts and a decreased state government focus on environmental sustainability.
- Sixth, this study contradicted the reports of a growing governance role of the Australian mining industry (Cheshire et al., 2011; Morrison et al., 2012) and, given the reported power of the industry, further research would be justified.

In addition to uncovering topics for further research, this study is deemed successful. Less measurable, less reported social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus have been identified and described, and causal explanations provided. The sections below deal with the answers that were found to the individual research questions.

6.2. Research questions answered

The secondary research questions are addressed first, where after the conclusions pertaining to the main research question are presented.

6.2.1. Research question 1: What are the social outcomes experienced and observed by stakeholders in the case study town?

Four key findings in terms of the social outcomes are found: first, anger and resentment towards, and disillusionment with, especially, state government and the mining companies, but also with local elected representatives; second, fear regarding the future of the town and the community; third, a sense of loss of the family culture that had become established in the community and had become its identity; fourth, and last, a limited capacity in the community to deal with issues presented and to govern towards social sustainability.

The anger and disillusionment pertaining to state government was founded on, first, less than successful state government intervention in the town over time and, second, the impression that the state government favoured the mining companies to the detriment of the community. The interventions were a disregard for the demos of the citizens, which was interpreted by the participants as a disregard for regional people

and their well-being. The intervention has resulted in alienation. Alienation symptoms include a lack of innovation, motivation and creativity, inter alia, by the local government. The local government had perceptions of being disempowered, not only financially, but also operationally. The negative domino effect of a series of state interventions resulted in path dependence and changed the social trajectory of the town for the long term. It contributed to the housing pressures during the boom, and resulted in the introduction of larger non-resident workforces, which had a profound effect on the established and preferred social fabric in town. The anger and disillusionment aimed at the local elected representatives stemmed from their perceived inability to have a strategic focus, and their tendency to be focused on popular, but irrelevant matters. These findings suggest that the overriding social outcome was disillusionment with the state, and with the local political system and its incumbents, to ensure a sustainable future for the town and its residents. The anger and resentment towards the mining companies originated from the perceived power that the mining companies wield over the state government. The disillusionment with the mining companies arose as a result of the perception that they do not care about the community and its family identity. The dependence and entitlement of the community on mining company support, established since the inception of the town, exacerbated the disillusionment.

Second, the perceived inability of government, both at state and local level, to approach the future with a strategic outlook has resulted in a culture of fear regarding the future. The exit strategy of the mining companies, evident in the demountable residential units erected in town, the new business model for accommodation villages, less support for the community, and the general mining downturn is a substantial threat to the community. An expectation exists that the state should mitigate these threats as part of the social contract between the city and the region. This contract appears to be discounted by the state and the city, with the regions barely being sustained socially, whilst royalties benefit the city and the state. State government is blamed for its perceived lack of strategic focus, which the participants viewed as essential to provide some measure of security or credibility to the leadership of the state. The fear is also based on a sense of helplessness, first as a result of the small number of residents in the community who, in a democratic system, have very limited leverage on the state government to effect change. The

second reason for the sense of helplessness was the inability of stakeholders in identifying secondary economic bases that would help the town and the community to sustain itself beyond mining activity. This fear was also evident in the local government due to a sense of having been disempowered and alienated by the state interventions and the localism agenda, which occurred on top of the 2008 amalgamations that had long-lasting negative financial and capacity implications. The impact of the current downturn in the mining industry is another reason for concern for the local government.

Third, a sense of loss was encountered, based on the perceived demise of the family culture that existed in the town for nearly four decades. There was also a sense of loss for what was perceived to have been a maturing community at the time of the last mining boom, with several three generation families in town. A secondary finding here was that the family culture resulted from the government-governance nexus that was prevalent in the region during the time the town was established. The state government at the time expected the mining companies to construct family-type communities, and the mining companies allowed and supported the development of family-based communities. In addition, the residents were active participants in the creation of that culture. Ownership of the town was strengthened by the ability to purchase residential properties from the mining companies for the first time in the 1980s.

The fourth finding was that there was limited capacity in the town to adapt to the ongoing changes experienced over the last decade. This lacking capacity has resulted from the entrenchment of the town in a single industry, but also a culture of dependence on the mining companies and the sense of entitlement to mining company support, which was a result of the parent company culture. The impact of state intervention and lacking state fiscal support contributed to the lack of capacity. This lacking capacity also reflects on the community's inability to adapt to the changing role of the mining companies over time.

6.2.2. Research question 2: Who are the government-governance role players and what roles do they assume?

The government-governance role players identified by this study were the federal, state and local government plus their agencies; the mining companies; the community, its non-governmental organisations, and other community groups, such as the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA), and the disbanded Moranbah Action Group (MAG).

The federal government assumed a distant role in the government-governance nexus, but the impact of, for example, taxation legislation has had a profound impact on the social sustainability of the town. The introduction of Fringe Benefit Tax in the 1980s contributed to pressure by the mining companies on the government to be released from the obligation to provide company towns. The resulting 'normalisation' of these towns, and the assumption of service provision and other responsibilities by local governments, changed the government-governance nexus in these communities beyond recognition. Local government, previously non-existent in these communities, now became the face of government, and citizen representation was handed over to local elected representatives. Professional staff was appointed to ensure services were delivered in a professional and innovative manner. Private ownership of property became possible, which contributed to a sense of entitlement to participate in decision-making, and the sense of attachment to place was enhanced.

State government was perceived as a capitalist entity that was endeavouring to enrich itself in an effort to compensate for budget deficits. To gain maximum revenue from mining royalties, the state government assumes a role that appears to be focused on favouring mining companies. This role includes parallel planning legislation and state government intervention in local government planning affairs. Decision-making in these intervention instances were perceived to be in favour of the mining companies, against local wishes, and detrimental to the sustainability of the community. There is limited recognition of the role of the state government as a global market player. The focus of the state government was deemed to be entirely economic, and lacking strategic focus.

The local government was perceived as disempowered by state government as a result of fiscal constraints and state government intervention. Elected representatives were seen to be disconnected from their communities, and as not acknowledging the potential value of professional staff as catalysts for change in their town. Their role was construed to be self-serving and short-termed. There is little collaboration between state and local government, as relationships have been detrimentally impacted by the state government interventions, as well as the state government's support for the mining companies and for FIFO work practices. The meagre allocation of funding from the Royalties for Regions (R4R) fund, eighty percent of which has originated from the Isaac Regional Council area, was seen to be retaliation by the state government for the local government opposition to indiscriminate capital accumulation. The elected representatives perceived their role to be protector of the family-based nature of their community, resulting in an adversarial role towards the mining companies and the state government. Professional staff was disempowered due to the declaration of the Priority Development Area over which they held no jurisdiction, as well as by the lack of recognition they received from the elected representatives. Their role in the government-governance nexus is limited.

The mining companies were regarded as global, multinational businesses focused on shareholder interest. Their role in the community has changed considerably over the years. The current view is that there is no respect evident in current workforce practices for the family culture in town. The mining companies' decision-makers are absent in the local government-governance nexus, and are seen to bypass local government and the community in order to achieve their desired outcomes. Their role is largely seen as the business preparing and executing an exit strategy, from the community and the region, due to the decreased desirability of their product and the current mining downturn.

The community is virtually absent from the government-governance nexus. There has been no active community organisation since the Moranbah Action Group was disbanded. The Moranbah Traders Association (MTA) is emerging as a more collaborative role player, with links to the state government, local government, mining companies, as well as traders' organisations in neighbouring towns. However, although their involvement has increased, they acknowledge having

limited power to effect changes in the government-governance nexus. They are the only entity with non-adversarial links in the web of relationships in the government-governance nexus. These role players identified did not all share the same expectations about the social sustainability of the community. The importance of sustainable outcomes was addressed by the third secondary research question.

6.2.3. Research question 3: How important (desirable/relevant) are sustainable social outcomes to the regional resource community?

The main finding for this research question was that social sustainability was important to a significant portion of the community, but in spite of that that there was no effort to govern towards such social sustainability.

Given the culture of fear reported regarding the future of the town, coupled with a significant desire for extended residency, it can be stated that sustainable social outcomes were important to at least a sector of the population in Moranbah. There were residents with a stronger economic focus, based on the level of their financial investment in the town, but there were also the pioneers and long-term residents who called Moranbah home, and whose desire for sustainability was simply based on a sense of attachment to place. Their impression was that during mining downturns those who are not interested in the social sustainability of the community leave the town, and the population returns to its core of residents, who desire for the town to endure beyond mining.

For the elected representatives, social sustainability appeared to be very important, and maintaining the status quo, was the focus of their efforts. Council officials, although respecting the desires of the community for permanence, expressed concern about the lack of secondary industries that could sustain the community beyond mining, and about the impact of a declining commodity. The current mining downturn was perceived to be more significant than ever before and to be enduring, resulting in concerns regarding the short term sustainability of the community, in addition to long-term concerns. In spite of the desire for social sustainability, the lack of capacity, innovation and motivation was evident in the absence of any effort to govern towards social sustainability.

These three secondary research questions revealed the answer to the main research question, or the research problem: What are the social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus in resource regions? The next section reveals how the research has answered the main research question.

6.3. Conclusion about the main research question and the research problem

Three general conclusions are made about the research problem. The first is the applicability of the theories of Lefebvre to the research problem, the second confirms social and regional issues identified in the literature, and the third conclusion contradicts the increasing importance by the mining companies in local governance espoused by some scholars.

The first general conclusion that can be drawn about the research problem is that the social outcomes in Moranbah resemble, or can be explained by, what Lefebvre described in his work in *The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production.*

Space is the reservoir of resources, in this case the coal that is mined, but also the social capital, which is largely absent. It is also the medium in which strategies are applied, in this case regional development strategies. A more insidious strategy applied to this space is the accumulation of wealth; firstly, for the state from such resources in this space, but secondly for the shareholders of the mining companies. The state government strategies have resulted in negative outcomes in some instances, turning space into contested space.

This space is the object of political struggle, where the community is opposing state strategies that they deem to be undermining the sustainability of their region, town and community. Here, space and the resources it contains, represent a product used in a capitalist system. In a capitalist system the state is argued to be enriching itself, as it has become a role player in the global market, and is competing for economic success. The resources contained in this space are the commodity that the state uses

to vie for a space on global markets. The state withdraws from social redistribution, instead focusing on being globally competitive. This links closely with the localism agenda and the lacking provision for social services for the regions. Space is a product of the social relations that impact on, and continuously change, such space, representing Lefebvre's view that no space ever disappears but rather undergoes metamorphoses. On the other hand, space is a prerequisite for the social production that has impacted on it.

The different types of space are very visible in this context, with abstract space or the space of *The State Mode of Production* being the dominant space. The economic growth and political power has combined and produced the space of the nation state, which is exploiting the market to further its rule. In this dominant space problems arise that are a typical result of the role of the state in a capitalist system, such as the commodification of the role of the region and the worker, and the economic focus of the state, with an accompanying disregard for the social welfare of regional citizens.

In this view the state sets itself above society, although it is in fact part of society. The disregard for the social well-being of the resource regions, local desires, and the demos of those citizens is argued to exemplify this elevated position that the state has assumed. The view that the whole world is becoming urbanised Lefebvre (1970/2003) is especially relevant in the Australian context. In this urbanised space, the political city uses the regions to serve the city, and large regions are sacrificed by the state in an effort to serve the ever expanding, economic city. In a capitalist system the sacrifice of the regions is deemed negligible. A pathology of space arises where there is a disregard for social development (Lefebvre, 1996). The statement by Lefebvre that to change life is to change space, and to change space is to change life, is proven to be true in this context.

Lefebvre's explanation of state interventions also brings clarity to the research problem. Spatial constraints to capital accumulation by the state are addressed by interventions in both the economic and social life, here by intervention in land development, as well as in the approval of the one-hundred-percent-FIFO mines, which intervenes in social life. The sacrifice of the regions is also evident in the way that the interventions undermine the sustainability of the regions.

Alienation is expressed in the fear and passivity of the community. It is based on the loss of a feeling that there is the ability to achieve something that is possible, such as determining viable alternative economic bases or strengthening alternative existing ones, such as agriculture. The almost total absence of community participation and local leadership might relate to the observation in *The State Mode of Production* that bureaucracy is so powerful that it cannot be resisted (Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

The second general conclusion about the research problem is that the views in the literature on poor regional outcomes, and the poor tradition of regional planning in Australia, are confirmed here. This comment also links to the insights into the status of regions as provided by Lefebvre, and presented above.

The third general conclusion is that the position assumed by scholars in the literature on the increasingly important role that mining companies play in local governance, proves to be the opposite in this case. The finding relates to Lefebvre's view on the intermediary, who replaces the worker and enriches himself [shareholders] at their expense, as well as his views on the commodification of the worker in *The State Mode of Production.* There is no motivation for the mining industry to become a stronger local governance role player at the expense of shareholders.

Apart from answering the research questions, this study is also seen to have contributed to knowledge and theory, and to have implications for policy and practice at both state government and local government levels.

6.4. Claim of contribution to knowledge and implications for theory, policy and practice

6.4.1. Contribution to knowledge

It is argued that this study contributes to knowledge in several fields, namely social sustainability, regional development and governance, as well as the application of Lefebvre's theories. Both social sustainability (Boström, 2012a; Colantonio, 2010; Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009; O' Riordan, 2012) and regional governance (Collits, 2012a, 2015; Eversole & Martin, 2005a; 2012; Hogan et al., 2015) remain

poorly researched. The specific focus of this study, the social outcomes of the nexus between government and regional governance, is even less researched (Collits, 2015). The practical application of Lefebvre's theories is another gap identified in the literature (Butler, 2012; Schmid, 2008; Stanek, 2011; Waite, 2008). The contribution to knowledge from this study thus arises from the novel juxta positioning of the work of Lefebvre, the government-governance nexus and social sustainability.

In terms of the knowledge on social sustainability, the following contributions have been made:

- Links between the poorly researched government-governance nexus and social outcomes have been established by this study. In this case, the demise of governance was revealed as a result of the state government adopting the role of the capitalist state in *The State Mode of Production*. Social sustainability is undermined by poor or lacking governance. The damage to the process of governing towards social sustainability is caused by an economic state focus, combined with the power both assigned to, but also usurped by, a powerful global, multinational industry.
- A working definition of social sustainability has been presented, in line with the opinion of McKenzie (2004) that such an approach is more congruent with acknowledgement of local or individual contexts. Although the working definition is context specific, it does build on the work of the City of Vancouver (CoV) (2005) and Colantonio (2010) and as such can be construed to be a contribution to knowledge on defining contexts, but also on the importance of local context for governance. The study builds on the CoV definition by acknowledging its guiding principles as a framework for analysis, namely equity, social inclusion and interaction, economic security and adaptability. It shows how the absence of these guiding principles leads to poor social outcomes, contributing to the knowledge of attaining sound social outcomes.
- The philosophical underpinning of the study, formed by the work of Lefebvre, has given this study an overarching view of social sustainability, rather than a focus on social aspects for which much of the research on social

sustainability has been criticised for (Colantonio, 2010). Lefebvre links the economic, space and social, but also the important role played by the history of space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). This study thus contributes to the wider social sustainability discourse, rather than to knowledge on social aspects.

- This study contributes knowledge to the discourse that focuses on a normative viewpoint of sustainability: that which states that social sustainability is sustainability, as it is society that we want to maintain (Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000). The study contributes to the knowledge embedded in this view by showing how the disregard for social sustainability undermines the sustainability of a town and community economically. Although not part of the focus of this study, the negative impact of the SMP on environmental sustainability was evident from some of the findings and is included in the suggestions for further research. The study contributes the knowledge that the absence of a sound understanding of what it is a community wants to sustain, contributes to poor social outcomes.
- Contributions are also made to the knowledge on less measureable social outcomes by focusing on such outcomes, and the study confirms the importance of those outcomes as prerequisites of social sustainability (Centre for Urban Policy Studies & Department of Town and Regional Planning, 2008; Wong, 2011).

Regional governance and its outcomes are poorly researched (Collits, 2012a, 2015; Eversole & Martin, 2005a; 2012; Hogan et al., 2015) and this study contributes to the knowledge on regional governance in the following ways:

- This study established clear links between the government-regional governance nexus and its social outcomes and provided explanations of causality for these outcomes that can be generalised by other researchers to their research contexts. It shows the impact of the power of the global, multinational company in a regional context and, by contrast, the vulnerability of the regional communities. The study provides an alternative viewpoint to the emerging role of the mining companies in regional governance.

- It highlights the detrimental impact of state intervention on regional governance and provides a causal explanation for this at the hand of the work of Lefebvre, thereby contributing to knowledge on the outcomes of state government intervention.
- The study has revealed the emergence of the business sector in the leadership void that has been created by the state domination of the community which builds on the work of Beer and Clower (2013) and Elden (2008).
- The study contributes to knowledge on the possible outcomes of a localism agenda, in this case confirming the small likelihood of success for the localism agenda in the absence of provisos for success, confirming the importance of those provisos.
- A contribution is made to knowledge on the state's contribution to the production space, about which Butler (2003, 2009, 2012) reports a gap. Butler's viewpoint is expanded here to include regional settlements as an urban form, and hence knowledge was expanded through the inclusion of the regional context.

In terms of the practical application of the work of Lefebvre, on which a gap was reported, this study contributes in the following ways:

- The practical application of Lefebvre's theories is advocated, inter alia, by Butler (2003, 2009, 2012) whose work partly deals with Australian planning legislation and the theories by Lefebvre. This study contributes to this fledgling combination of research foci of Lefebvre and Australian urban and regional planning issues, and hence the associated existing knowledge. The current value of Lefebvre's work in a western, capitalist context is confirmed. This study adds to the western appropriations of Lefebvre (Kipfer, Goonewardena, et al., 2008; Merrifield, 2006) that have a wider focus on Lefebvre's work (Elden, 2001, 2004; Kofman & Lebas, 1996).
- Causal explanations, which are argued to be a contribution to knowledge, were derived from the work of Lefebvre for the following issues: the break of the social contract between the city and the region, and the sacrifice of the regions by the city and the state, the causal link between *The State Mode of Production* (SMP) and a localism agenda, as well as between the SMP and

state intervention, and the SMP and the state favouritism of the mining industry.

- The work of Lefebvre also provides a l for the passivity of the community (interpolated from society) and explained the alienation of the community and council, and its resulting outcomes. This is a contribution to the knowledge on collaborative and engaged governance processes.

6.4.2. Implications for theory

As this study was exploratory and descriptive, the aim was not to develop theory but to provide causal explanations. There is, however, the opportunity to use these causal explanations to inform further research, and also to augment existing theories. The contributions to knowledge, described in the previous paragraphs, can in themselves be used to inform the building or expansion of theories. This contribution is important as a lack of clear, theoretical direction can be argued to result in a lack of research on a given issue or topic. Given the opinions in the literature that social sustainability, regional development and governance, as well as the practical applicability of the theories of Lefebvre, lack research, it can be argued that theoretical direction is lacking.

The dearth of research om social sustainability is considered to be the result of a lack of clear theoretical direction (Colantonio, 2010; M. Davidson, 2009; Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008), but also of difficulties in measuring social outcomes (Sutton, 2000). It can be argued that the approach in this study, was not so much focused on measuring outcomes, but instead on a view of social sustainability as being sustainability, which, coupled with the underpinning of the work of Lefebvre, can be construed as a contribution to remedy the lack of clear theoretical direction. The conceptual framework that was compiled for this study first presented at the end *Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework*, and adapted and presented in Figure 5-2 in *Chapter Five – Discussion*, can form a discussion or starting point for further research on theoretical directions for social sustainability research.

- This case study has allowed the investigation of the social outcomes of the government-regional governance nexus in a representative instance (Moranbah). Existing theories (*The Social Production of Space* and *The State Mode of Production*) were found to be plausible in an Australian context, and

suitable for the examination of the consequences of a decision (here the social outcomes of government-regional governance decisions) (D. Evans & Gruba, 2002). As such, this study holds value for the development of theory on the practical application of Lefebvre in an Australian context.

- Social infrastructure, capital, and justice and equity rely heavily on engaged governance processes from a methodological perspective and in turn, engaged governance is a central constituent of social sustainability (Cuthill, 2010; Magis & Shinn, 2009). This study has contributed to the development of theories on the importance of engaged governance process to ensure a social sustainability focus.
- The theory on Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), which are linked to thresholds or tipping points where changes are irreversible (Duit & Galaz, 2008) and the work on path dependence (Tonts et al., 2012), were applied in this study, and hence this study contributes to the building of theory or the possible expansion of those theories. Most Significant Change (MSC) (Davies & Dart, 2005) was adapted from a social-change-program context to this context, and the cross-disciplinary application of MSC can be used to augment this theory.
- In an Australian context, the findings from this study can contribute to building theory on the global misfortune of regional Australia (Gray & Lawrence, 2001), the governance of regional Australia (Beer & Maude, 2005; Eversole & Martin, 2005c), or the social outcomes of regional governance models (Collits, 2015).

In addition to the contributions to knowledge and theory made by this study, it also holds value for policy making and for state and local government practice.

6.4.3. Implications for policy and practice

In terms of state government and regional development policy this study provides valuable findings to inform such policy and practice. It is especially desirable that the findings of this study are reflected in policy that deals with state government intervention in regional resource regions, as this was proven to be a critical contributor to poor social outcomes in this study. The potentially negative impact that state government policy and practice can have on social capital should inform regional development policy and practice, as social capital is a starting point for

social sustainability (Cuthill, 2010), and a prerequisite for a successful localism agenda. This study can serve to inform practice and policy relating to localism based on the conditions that would lead to greater success with a localism agenda (Brown, 2005b; Cockfield, 2015; Gurran et al., 2014; Gurran & Whitehead, 2011; Hogan et al., 2015), all of which were absent in this case. The findings from this study can contribute to a debate on the low profile of social sustainability in bureaucracy (Boström, 2012a; Cuthill, 2010; O' Riordan, 2012). Policy and practice, aimed at acknowledging local knowledge and expertise in regional communities, can be informed by the findings from this study, especially from the viewpoint of the detrimental impact of a disregard for the findings on motivation, innovation, adaptability, and trust.

Given that local government is the tier of government that is the closest to its people, local government practice stands to benefit from the findings in this study. Not only local government policy, but especially local government practice, arguably needs to address the disconnect between the views of elected representatives and the rest of the community, the total absence of community consultation, the disregard for professional knowledge and expertise and the demoralising effects thereof. This thesis has also uncovered the apparent spin-off effects of having a leader that is perceived to have been successful in opposing an undesirable outcome, opposing what Lefebvre regards as alienation. Here the possibility of opposing The State Mode of Production (SMP) was illustrated, and the council stands to learn from that. Governing towards social sustainability is largely the remit of local government in Queensland, and should be reflected in policy and practice. The role of governance and self-determination, and the strengthening of local government, are of particular concern (Argent, 2011b; Brown, 2005b; Collits, 2012a; Hogan et al., 2015; Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012; Megarrity, 2011b; Riley & Basson, 2011). Of particular importance to the local government is the finding from this study that social sustainability is about what the community wants to sustain, rather than about a reactionary strategic focus (M. Davidson, 2009; Stren & Polése, 2000; Sutton, 2000). The emergence of a body of literature on the role of non-governmental actors in governance (Boström, 2012a; Colantonio, 2010; Holman, 2009; O' Riordan, 2012) links to findings in this study that point to the need for local government to foster social sustainability through several approaches such as the use of professional staff

as catalysts for community engagement, efficient collaboration with other stakeholders. A new focus on governance would grant the local government the opportunity to use the character of governance to its advantage, especially its problems-solving capacity during change, according to Duit et al. (2010), which this community has been subjected to significantly over the last decade.

The aim of this research has been restated in this chapter, and the success of this study confirmed. The research questions have been answered and the contribution to knowledge illustrated, as have the implications for theory, policy and practice been. The chapter and this thesis are therefore concluded by the remarks in the following section.

6.5. Concluding remarks on the study

The aim of this qualitative study was to determine and describe the less measurable social outcomes of the government-governance nexus in a resource region. Moranbah, Queensland, was used as an example of a critical case in this case study. The research problem necessitated the juxta positioning of literature on social sustainability and regional governance, with the work of Henri Lefebvre serving as philosophical underpinning of the study and its findings.

The findings have revealed that poor social outcomes result from the government-governance nexus. The interventionist approach of state government over an extended period of time has not only eroded the earlier governance forms, but has also undermined the credibility and power of the Isaac Regional Council. It has resulted in anger, distrust, disillusionment, and alienation in the community, not only towards the state government, but also the mining companies who are perceived to be the beneficiaries of state favouritism. The state government view of the economic value of the mining industry has granted it a position of power, which is perceived to exceed that of the state government. The disillusionment with state politicians and policy makers also extends to local elected representatives.

A sense of loss of the established family culture is experienced, especially by the long-term residents. There is a conviction that the state government has sacrificed the

regions for the benefit of the city, breaking the social contract that has existed between the city and the regions.

Given the impact of the interventionist approach of the state and the demise of demos in an interventionist approach, local social capital and capacity to adapt to change has been greatly undermined. The Moranbah Traders Association is the only community group actively trying to establish collaborative relationships. The mining companies are seen to be less engaged than previously, with unsustainable individual efforts by mining company employees at collaboration. A lack of strategic focus has resulted in the community not being sure what it is that they want to sustain, or how to ensure sustainability.

The theories of Lefebvre on *The State Mode of Production* and *The Production of Space* proved to be highly relevant to the context as well as to the interpretation of the findings of this study. The state government is a global role player, endeavouring to be competitive. This results in an economic focus and a localism agenda to regional development. The state is intent on accumulating capital, and the regional industry that provides the state with a large income from royalties is the mining industry. The state is perceived to favour the mining industry, at the expense of the regional citizen, to protect this source of income, and the approach or tool used is intervention. Intervention results in alienation and a denial of the right to the city. The social space becomes the space for conflict and opposition.

Social sustainability, which in essence is sustainability, as it is society that we are trying to sustain, becomes impossible in this scenario. An ‘urban revolution’ would be required to break the SMP, and the Moranbah Action Group opposition to one-hundred-percent FIFO provides evidence that opposition to the SMP is possible. As to who is responsible for social sustainability, it is evident from this study that the state government will not be assuming that role any time soon, in spite of the return of growth management regional plans. The role of emerging leaders, such as local business owners, is therefore of special interest for the future. The role of local government in governing for social sustainability needs to be acknowledged and responsibility for it should be assumed, and the role of the professional council

official in strategic planning, but also engaged governance, needs to be acknowledged in this respect.

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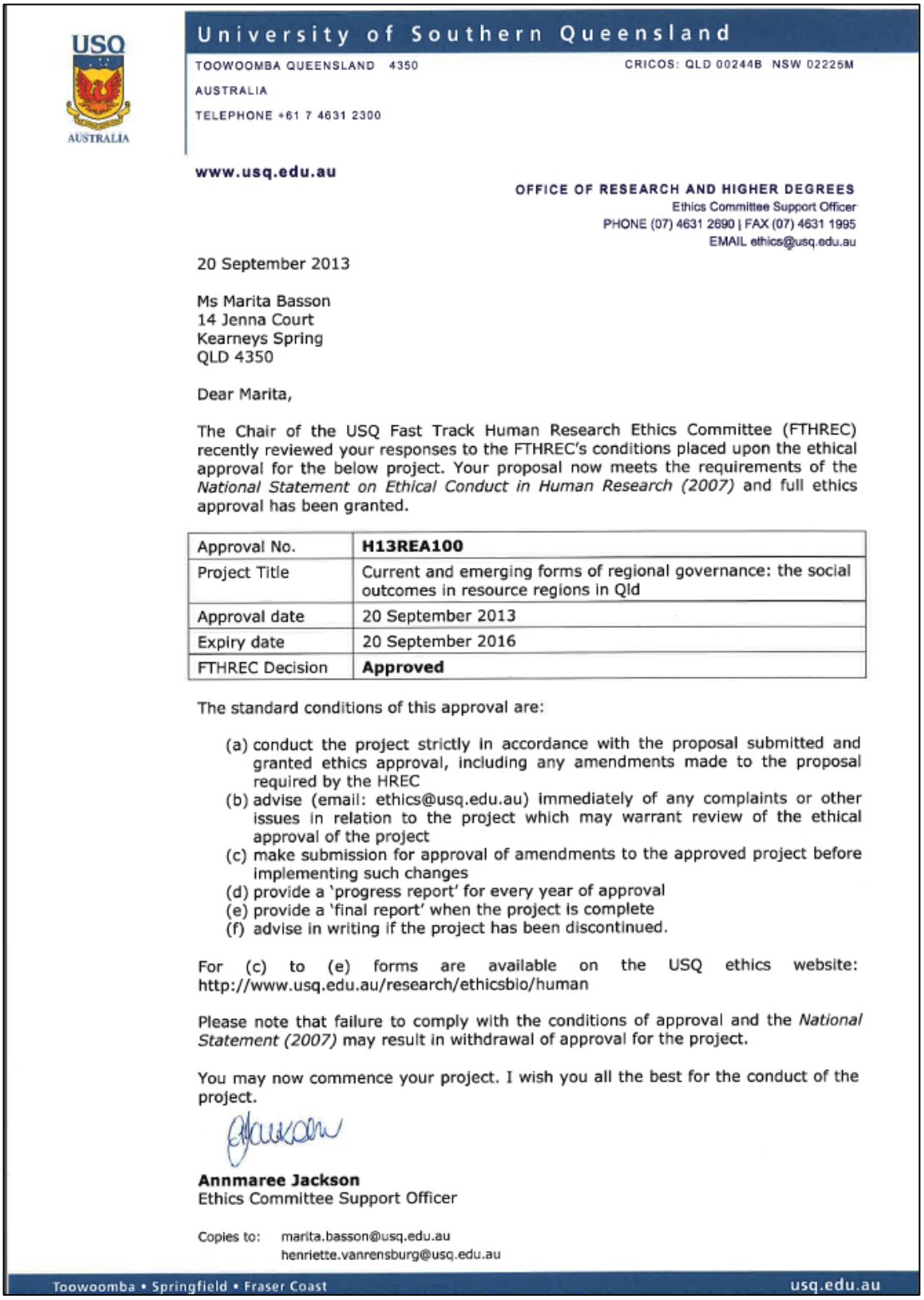
APPENDIX A – DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

Date	Method/ tools	Participants	Purpose	Format of data	Analysis	Amendments to data collection plan*
August	Focus group preliminary	IRC officials (4)		Recording ; journal and memos	Thematic analysis NVIVO (data management tool) – nodes and coding Tabulation and matrices Mind mapping	
September	Focus Group 1	*Elected representatives – cancelled* *	Uncovering breadth of issues and topics; uncovering differences between different groups	Recordings; journal, memos; flip charts; post-it notes *(Focus Groups all 2 hours)*		Rescheduled
	Focus Group 2	Residents (4)				Additional
	Focus Group 3	Business owners and community organisations (5)				
	Focus Group 4	*Mining company representatives (1)* *				Rescheduled
October	Focus Group 5	Mining company representatives and IRC official (2)				
	Focus Group 6	Residents (6)				
	Focus Group 7	*Elected representatives – cancelled* *				Individual interviews only

Date	Method/ tools	Participants	Purpose	Format of data	Analysis	Amendments to data collection plan*
November	Semi-structured individual interviews (16 x 1 hour)	Mining company representatives (2) and employees (1); residents (4); community organisations (1); business owners (2); elected representatives (3); IRC officials (3) (Total: 16)	In-depth discussion: topics and issues from Focus Groups	Recording; flip charts; journal and memos	Thematic analysis; hermeneutics; NVIVO (data management tool) – nodes and coding; Tabulation and matrices; Mind mapping	
December	Community workshop (2 hours)	Previous participants (13); new participants (2): Resource company representatives (3) and employees (1); residents (6); community organisations (1); business owners (1); elected representatives (0); IRC officials (3)	Participant verification of initial findings	Flip charts; notes; post-it notes; journal; memos	Hermeneutics	

APPENDIX B – ETHICS APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION



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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES
Ethics Committee Support Officer
PHONE (07) 4631 2690 | FAX (07) 4631 1995
EMAIL ethics@usq.edu.au

20 September 2013

Ms Marita Basson
14 Jenna Court
Kearneys Spring
QLD 4350

Dear Marita,

The Chair of the USQ Fast Track Human Research Ethics Committee (FTHREC) recently reviewed your responses to the FTHREC's conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the below project. Your proposal now meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethics approval has been granted.

Approval No.	**H13REA100**
Project Title	Current and emerging forms of regional governance: the social outcomes in resource regions in Qld
Approval date	20 September 2013
Expiry date	20 September 2016
FTHREC Decision	**Approved**

The standard conditions of this approval are:

(a) conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
(b) advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
(c) make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
(d) provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
(e) provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
(f) advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website: http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement (2007)* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

You may now commence your project. I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Annmaree Jackson
Ethics Committee Support Officer

Copies to: marita.basson@usq.edu.au
henriette.vanrensburg@usq.edu.au

Toowoomba • Springfield • Fraser Coast usq.edu.au

University of Southern Queensland

Memorandum

To: Manager, Research Integrity & Governance

CC: Dr Henriette van Rensburg, Supervisor; Prof Michael Cuthill, Co-supervisor

From: Marita Basson

Date: 18 September 2013

Re: **Ethics application**

H13REA100	**Current and emerging forms of regional governance: the social outcomes in resource regions in Qld**

Please find below my responses to your communique.

Participant recruitment, particularly of community members, is not clear in the application. Is it intended that the researcher contact potential participants by telephone once their details have been provided by the CEO of the organisation? Rather, should there be a process by which participants are made aware of the research and express their willingness to participate before being contacted? Does the CEO have authority to provide the names of people from the mining sector? Please clarify. Evidence of permission to recruit from the CEO of the Local Government Authority is required.

Participant recruitment, particularly of community members, is not clear in the application. Is it intended that the researcher contact potential participants by telephone once their details have been provided by the CEO of the organisation? Rather, should there be a process by which participants are made aware of the research and express their willingness to participate before being contacted?

Response

During the pilot project conducted in 2010, the researcher established contact with the chair and several members of the Moranbah Traders' Association as well as the Moranbah Action Group, which has since been disbanded. At a meeting held with Lyn Busk of the Traders' Association on the 5th of September 2013 she indicated that the Traders' Association would be willing to make public details of the research on their website and would act as first contact for interested participants. I am still awaiting a reply to the email sent on the 9th requesting Ms Busk to confirm the arrangement in writing. See Annexure A attached.

At a meeting with the Executive Director and the Manager of Planning on the 2nd of September 2013 they both expressed support for the research project and the fielding of possible participants. The Planning and Environmental Services Directorate will also disseminate details to possible participants and act as first contact for participants. For more

details please see the letter of permission to access the research site from the CEO, Terry Dodds confirming this arrangement.

Please see contact details below for the Executive Director and the Manager.

Scott Riley Executive Director **ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL** **Planning and Environmental Services Directorate** PO Box 97 Moranbah QLD 4744 Ph: (07) 49414569 / Fax: (07) 49418666 Mobile: 0417 195 502 Email: scott.riley@isaac.qld.gov.au	**Manus Basson** **Manager Planning and Compliance | Planning and Sustainable Communities** Phone: 07 4941 4576 | Mobile: 0419 833 386 PO Box 97 | MORANBAH QLD 4744 manus.basson@isaac.qld.gov.au | www.isaac.qld.gov.au

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Does the CEO have authority to provide the names of people from the mining sector? Please clarify.

Response

The CEO, several of the staff members of the Isaac Regional Council and several representatives of the mining companies are part of an interest group that meets monthly to discuss issues of common interest. Scott Riley will act as liaison for contact with interested parties from the mining companies at these events. Only after they have expressed interest in participating in the research will the names be released to me.

Evidence of permission to recruit from the CEO of the Local Government Authority is required.

Response

Attached

Minor typo in the consent form to access premises - line 1 para 3 no 's' needed after 'staff member'. Please correct.

Response

Corrected

The applicant nominates a 4 year data collection period for which they are seeking approval. Please note the maximum period granted for ethics approval is 3 years. Approval required beyond this period will require a new application submitted as, for example a 'continuing study' or 'stage 2'.

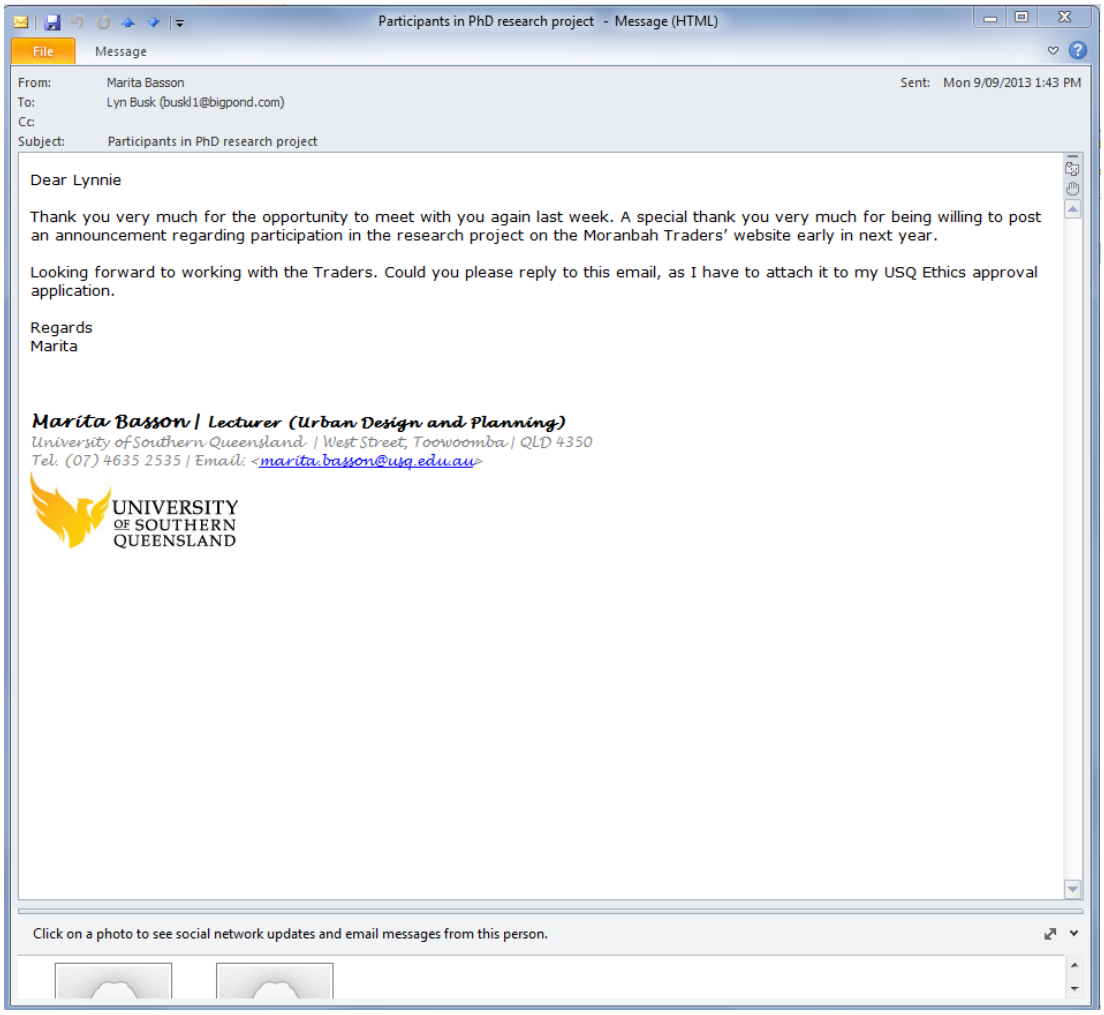
Response

Noted. At this stage the maximum period granted for ethics approval is sufficient.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me on 4631 2535 or marita.basson

Regards

Marita Basson



Participants in PhD research project - Message (HTML)

File Message

From: Marita Basson
To: Lyn Busk (buskl1@bigpond.com)
Cc:
Subject: Participants in PhD research project
Sent: Mon 9/09/2013 1:43 PM

Dear Lynnie

Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet with you again last week. A special thank you very much for being willing to post an announcement regarding participation in the research project on the Moranbah Traders' website early in next year.

Looking forward to working with the Traders. Could you please reply to this email, as I have to attach it to my USQ Ethics approval application.

Regards
Marita

Marita Basson | Lecturer (Urban Design and Planning)
University of Southern Queensland | West Street, Toowoomba | QLD 4350
Tel: (07) 4635 2535 | Email: <marita.basson@usq.edu.au>

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Click on a photo to see social network updates and email messages from this person.

APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information

TO: Moranbah; including councillors, council officials, representatives of residents and business owners, representatives of resource companies, residents

TITLE OF PROJECT: CURRENT AND EMERGING FORMS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE: THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES IN RESOURCE REGIONS IN QUEENSLAND

RESEARCH TEAM:
Margaretha Isabella (Marita) Basson, Student, University of Southern Queensland, 0406 398 077 (mobile), marita.basson@usq.edua.au

Dr Henriette van Rensburg, Supervisor, University of Southern Queensland, (07) 4631 1211 (w), Henriette.vanrensburg@usq.edu.au

Professor Michael Cuthill, associate supervisor, University of Southern Queensland, (07) 4631 2479 (w), michael.cuthill@usq.edu.au

Description

The purpose of this project is to determine the social outcomes of current and emerging forms of governance in regional resource communities.

The research team request your assistance because the opinions of Moranbah stakeholders need to be determined.

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project by Marita Basson.

Participation

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You can withdraw from the project at any stage without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw from the project will not affect your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

1) This project involves the submission of anonymous (non-identifiable) material. Please note: it will not be possible to withdraw your data once submitted.

2) This project involves focus group participation followed by a community workshop and, if required by the researcher or participant, an individual interview. If you decide to withdraw your data please notify a member of the research team. Any information obtained from you will be destroyed.

3) This project involves audio taping.

It is expected your participation will take approximately three hours of your time, plus an additional hour for the individual interview if needed.

Please note: the data obtained from this project may be used at a later time for any research purpose.

Risks

1) There are no risks beyond day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained in connection with this project and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will only be disclosed with your permission, subject to legal requirements. If you give us your permission by signing the Consent Form, we plan to share, discuss and publish the results in academic and professional journals and at academic and professional conferences*.*

In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

All data received for this project will remain stored for a minimum of 5 years in secure facilities.

Consent to Participate

Please read this information sheet carefully so that you understand what the project involves. If you do not understand any part of the project or require further information please contact the research teams members named above.

1) We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate

Questions/further information about the project

Please contact the research teams members named above if you have any questions or if you require further information about the project.

Concerns/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 USQ Ethics Officer on +61 7 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Officer is not connected with the project and can facilitate a resolution in an impartial manner.

Where the research may cause distress, independent 24 hour counselling services are available through *Lifeline* on 13 11 14 from anywhere in Australia.

APPENDIX D – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Consent Form

TO: ***The Executive Officer, Councillors and Council officials, business owners (or their authorised representative), residents (or their authorised representative), representatives from resource companies and other stakeholders***

CURRENT AND EMERGING FORMS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE: THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES IN RESOURCE REGIONS IN QUEENSLAND

Researcher: Marita Basson

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audio taped.
- I understand that the tape will be kept in locked storage until completion of this research project. The only person who will have access to it will be the researcher.

Name of participant…….....

Signed……**Date**…….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: +61 7 4631 2690
Email: ***ethics@usq.edu.au***