Water, Place and Community: An Ethnography of Environmental Engagement, Emplaced Identity and the Traveston Crossing Dam Dispute in Queensland, Australia

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Queensland in February 2012
School of Social Science
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Abstract
As one of the driest countries in the world, Australia is increasingly concerned with the supply of water for human consumption, food production and environmental purposes. This thesis seeks to address the socio-cultural issues associated with a particular initiative by the Queensland State Government in 2006 to dam the Mary River in southeast Queensland. The so-called Traveston Crossing Dam was aimed, among other things, at providing additional drinking water for the city of Brisbane, which was by then effectively running out of water. The dam was to inundate a large area of agricultural land upstream from the proposed dam site and would displace hundreds of families.

This ethnography seeks to address the dispute that erupted as a result of the proposal, and it attempts to understand this dispute particularly in terms of local environmental engagements, emplaced identity and the symbolic politics of community. To provide insights into the region at the time of the dam announcement, I start with an environmental and social history of the region, followed by a detailed discussion of the anti-dam campaign. Drawing on anthropological concepts of community and identity politics, I describe how a sense of community was forged in this area despite significant local diversity.

I subsequently turn to the role of epistemology in the negotiation of community identity. I describe strategic engagements with science and the role of embodied experience to analyse the ways in which trust and the validity of knowledge were negotiated. I further draw on the analytical concepts of endogenous and exogenous identity to distinguish between different ways of knowing nature and related senses of emplacement. These concepts figure particularly in the final parts of the thesis, which attempt to understand the dam dispute by contrasting exogenous knowledge of the environment, developed often as abstract scientific and management models, with the ways in which local emplaced identities have emerged through practical, embodied environmental engagement, including naming practices. Through such contrasting relationships with the land and the river, and the mutually constitutive aspects of identity, practice and epistemology, this thesis seeks to address the socio-cultural aspects of a dispute surrounding a natural resource extraction project.

Keywords
environmental anthropology, dams, conflict, environmental campaign, place and identity, epistemology, ethnography, water.
Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

160104 Social and Cultural Anthropology 100%
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<td>AEC</td>
<td>Australian Electoral Commission</td>
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<td>AEP</td>
<td>Annual Exceedance Probability</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>Australian Water Association</td>
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<td>BMRG</td>
<td>Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management</td>
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<td>CCD</td>
<td>Census Collection District</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation</td>
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<td>DEEDI</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development and Innovation (Queensland)</td>
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<td>Department of Primary Industries (Queensland)</td>
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<td>DPI&amp;F</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (Queensland)</td>
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<td>EIS</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Statement</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EPBC</td>
<td>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</td>
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<td>FCA</td>
<td>Federal Court of Australia</td>
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<td>FN#</td>
<td>Field Notebook Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<td>GMA</td>
<td>Greater Mary Association</td>
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<td>IFD</td>
<td>Intensity Frequency Duration</td>
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<td>ILUA</td>
<td>Indigenous Land Use Agreement</td>
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<td>LNP</td>
<td>Liberal National Party (Queensland)</td>
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<td>ML</td>
<td>Megalitres</td>
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<td>MNES</td>
<td>Matters of National Environmental Significance</td>
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<td>MRCCC</td>
<td>Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee</td>
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<td>MV BEAR</td>
<td>Mary Valley Business Expansion and Retention Program</td>
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<td>MVI</td>
<td>Mary Valley Inc.</td>
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<td>NIMBY</td>
<td>Not In My Back Yard</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>OED Online</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary Online</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctorate of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>PSGC</td>
<td>Pineapple Sectional Group Committee</td>
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<td>PMAV</td>
<td>Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation</td>
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<td>PMP</td>
<td>Probable Maximum Precipitation</td>
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<td>QDO</td>
<td>Queensland Diaryfarmers’ Organisation</td>
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<td>RE</td>
<td>Regional Ecosystem</td>
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<td>REDD</td>
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<td>SEQ</td>
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<td>SIA</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>SKM</td>
<td>Sinclair Knight Merz</td>
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<td>STMRCG</td>
<td>Save The Mary River Coordinating Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travie</td>
<td>Traveston Crossing</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>US or USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VMO</td>
<td>Vegetation Management Offsets</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCD</td>
<td>World Commission on Dams</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wildlife Fund</td>
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Preface

On a very hot and sub-tropically humid Sunday afternoon in January 2008, my wife, two children and I checked into a small and somewhat dilapidated old motel in the rural town of Imbil, 170 kilometers north of Brisbane, Australia. It is one of the many small rural towns in the region north of Brisbane; less than a thousand residents and tucked away amidst green hills, forests and paddocks. Apart from the ubiquitous high pitch drone of the cicadas and some busily chirping nearby rainbow lorikeets, the main street seemed dazed by the oppressive heat and rarely did we see or hear a person moving around. It was a town we did not know, and it was the last we decided to visit on a 2000 kilometer drive from Melbourne in Victoria to Brisbane in Queensland. About an hour after checking in, my four year old son and I left the rest of the family at the motel where they were settling in for an afternoon sleep – our daughter was only two years old and needed a rest. As we drove out of the town, the hot air thick with the smell of damp earth, trees and grass, I saw in paddocks and on roadside trees the first of many signs I was to see during that afternoon: ‘Hell No, We Won’t Go’, ‘Money can’t buy what I’ve got’, ‘Don’t Dam our precious farmland’, and so on.

Since 2003 I had been working, first as the managing anthropologist of the Kimberley Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (a Native Title Representative Body) in Western Australia, and then as the senior anthropologist at the Central Queensland Land Council Aboriginal Corporation in the town of Mackay. In that capacity I undertook and organised anthropological research for native title claim ‘connection reports’. These are detailed analyses of customary rights to land amongst Aboriginal groups. Such reports are relied upon in native title claim negotiations with relevant State or Territory Governments. Driving outside Imbil it was apparent that here was a conflict over land in which apparently non-Aboriginal farmers and others asserted strong connections to areas designated for flooding by the State. I was intrigued.

Notwithstanding the heat and sweat (the campervan did not have air-conditioning) we drove on to the neighbouring small town of Kandanga where, according to the signs, we could find the ‘Info Centre’. The Centre, basically a large shed near the railway line just outside the town, was quiet and we were offered some cold water by the only person there: a volunteer in her sixties who had just started her first shift. We were in time to become good friends. A woman aged around sixty-five later came in with biscuits, home-made. She was a cattle farmer and supported the campaign against the dam. But when I asked her about her situation, she explained she had already sold her property to the Government and was now leasing it back. I became even more intrigued, and we had a brief
conversation about the dam before she left. Too tired to stay much longer, I accepted a number of information leaflets from the volunteer and we returned to the motel.

About a month after we had arrived back in Mackay in Central Queensland, where I worked at the time, disaster struck. Mackay was hit by a tropical storm which dumped 625mm of rain in six hours; we had half an hour to save what we could before our house was flooded at about 7.30am and we had to evacuate. The house was later declared unlivable. There was a strange coincidence to this flood: at exactly the same age as our children my own parents had been evacuated during a flood that killed thousands in the southwest of the Netherlands when numerous dykes broke during the stormy winter night of 31 January 1953.

My wife and I both grew up in that rural part of the Netherlands; my wife on a farm producing wheat, potatoes and sugar beets, I myself in a nearby village on an island with fertile dark clays once recovered from the sea and still largely devoted to agriculture. My wife’s parents eventually sold their farm and bought a much larger farm in northwest Tasmania, the reason also for our migration in 2001. It was however on the island where I grew up that I first developed an interest in various forms of environmental engagement and what is deemed to belong in the landscape. Every summer during my teenage years I worked for farmers to weed their fields and harvest the crops. The ‘weeds’ we uprooted often included the germinated remains of last year’s valued crop, the plants spread from nearby protected grassy road-shoulders or the neighbouring fields. On that basis the categorisation of plants and nature according to human value came to interest me. As a result, years later at the University of Nijmegen, I wrote a few essays on Dutch backyards and focused my Masters fieldwork in anthropology on the notion of wilderness and the conflict between the utilisation and conservation of natural resources in Interior Alaska, where my wife and I spent three months in and around Denali National Park.

After the Mackay flood in 2008 I decided to write a proposal for anthropological research on the Traveston Crossing Dam. After positive indications from The University of Queensland I subsequently resigned from my native title work and we went back to the Netherlands to briefly visit family, friends and the graves of our grandparents. It was the second visit in the seven years after our migration, but we were both struck by the remaining familiarity of places, the ways of the people, the smells in the air, the sounds and colours. When I told an old friend about our amazement he commented in Dutch terms which translate into something like: ‘well, of course you recognise it; you were pulled from the clay here’. ‘Pulled from the clay’, a common expression in the Netherlands, refers to being born and growing up in a rural agricultural area, to being of that land,
and, common to all the people who carry that permanent essence, to know it intimately, almost intuitively.

With this comment about a sense of belonging, community, and the clay-soils of my ancestors in the back of my mind I returned to Australia, not to continue research into Aboriginal connections with land and water, but to start a new project concerning settler-descendant identity and relationships to land in the context of the Traveston Crossing Dam.
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Study Region: Environment and Population

The region of interest to this study is locally referred to as the Mary Valley, the centre of which is some 170km north of Brisbane, the capital city of the State of Queensland in Australia. It is generally understood to be that part of the Mary River catchment in between the city of Gympie in the north (population 16,455)$^1$ and the town of Kenilworth in the south (population 525); an area about fifty-five kilometers long (see Maps 1 and 2 below). The landscape is characterised by extensive alluvial grass flats along the Mary River, flanked by rolling green timbered hills on average about 300 meters above sea level$^2$ (see plates 1 and 2). The Mary River itself is approximately 300 kilometers long and runs south to north. It starts around Bellthorpe, a small locality high up in the heavily vegetated Conondale Range some fifty kilometers south from Kenilworth, and empties into the Great Sandy Strait at River Heads in between the cities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay, some 130km to the north of Gympie. The river was described by Angela Arthington (2007: 4), a professor in ecology at Griffith University in Queensland, as ‘the best example of an unregulated coastal river … in this part of Queensland’.

As a result of rainfall patterns, the Mary Valley landscape visually fluctuates between the winter yellow and summer green of the grass. On average it receives 1170 mm of rain annually, most of that in summer, and average daily maximum temperatures vary between about 20 degrees in winter and 30 degrees in summer.$^3$ At the extreme ends the temperature drops to below freezing point during a few winter nights and climbs to above forty degrees during the hottest of summer days. Characteristic of a subtropical climate, the relative humidity in summer is often high, and the remnants of northern tropical cyclones may cause high intensity, flooding rains.


Map 1 The Mary River Catchment.\textsuperscript{4}

Map 2 Localities in the study region (part of map 1). Names in red added by the author.
Plate 1 Part of the Mary Valley, looking north from the hills near Kenilworth.\(^5\)

Plate 2 The alluvial flats along the Mary River near Kandanga.

\(^5\) Unless indicated otherwise, all photographs in this thesis have been taken by the author during fieldwork.
Five small rural towns are located in between Gympie and Kenilworth (see Maps 1 and 2 above). They include Dagun, Amamoor (population 194), Kandanga (population 595), Imbil (population 799) and Brooloo (population 334). Scattered in between them are farms of various sizes which produce (beef) cattle, milk, and a variety of fruits, nuts and vegetables (mangoes, pineapples, macadamia nuts, avocados and ginger in particular). Other properties located among them are smaller rural residential subdivisions. These vary in size but they are generally not bigger than about 50 acres. Food is sometimes produced at these properties, but not in commercial quantities. They are often referred to by local people as ‘lifestyle blocks’ or ‘bush blocks’, and many are owned by newcomers from urban areas to the south. The Mary Valley, including a number of small localities immediately to the east of the river, has a population of approximately 5,000 people. The wider Mary River catchment, including the major regional centres of Gympie and Maryborough, has a population of over 100,000 people and covers an area of 9595km² (see Map 1 above).

The western and northern regions of the catchment around Kilkivan and Maryborough receive significantly less rainfall than the upper reaches in the Conondale Range (see Map 3). The grazing industry is dominant in the west and sugarcane is an important crop in the north. The sugarcane is processed at the regional sugar mill in Maryborough and grown with irrigation water pumped from the water storage at the Mary River barrage about ten kilometers upstream from Maryborough. At Maryborough the tidal reach of the river is significantly wider than upstream, allowing fishing boats and other vessels to anchor in its harbour. The river can, in this sense, be loosely separated into three geographical areas: the steep upper reaches with high rainfall and lush vegetation from which the river rapidly descends towards Kenilworth, the more undulating reach in between Kenilworth and Gympie, and the much drier and flatter reach from about Gympie to the mouth (see Figure 1).

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6 Dagun is not isolated in the 2006 Census data, but I estimate the population to be around 150.
7 With a few exceptions, these farms are generally not bigger than a few hundred acres. There are no longer any of the large pastoral leases, or ‘stations’, still characteristic of the more arid regions of Australia.
8 Based on ABS data. See also Queensland Water and Infrastructure (QWI) 2007a: 15-8, 15-9
Map 3 Map of annual rainfall in the Mary River Catchment

1.2 The Traveston Crossing Dam Proposal

In April 2006 the former Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, publicly announced the State Government’s proposal to dam the Mary River at Traveston Crossing, about twenty kilometers south from Gympie, in the heart of the Mary Valley. Since 2005 the city of Brisbane, with a population of approximately 1.7 million, had been under increasing levels of water restriction. In the announcement however the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam was not explicitly related to the looming urban water crisis. Instead, it was described as ‘essential for the south east corner of our State – especially the Cooloola [i.e. local] region as well as the burgeoning Sunshine Coast’. The anticipated benefits of the dam were thus said to be relatively localised.

Immediately after the announcement a number of outraged local residents set up the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group (STMRCG) and initiated a campaign to stop the proposal. Significant efforts were subsequently made by the State Government to convince affected people that many local benefits would result from the dam in the form of increased business, training and employment opportunities, increased tourism, and a general development of the area and community facilities. A few weeks after the announcement, the State Government positioned the proposal within a wider agenda to achieve water security for the whole of southeast Queensland.

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13 See e.g. the weekly full page advertisements in the Saturday Gympie Times and various information documents on the Queensland Water Infrastructure website such as at: http://qldwicomau.ozstaging.com/TravestonCrossingDam/ProjectInformation.aspx (accessed 11 September 2008).
This involved the construction of an expansive ‘water grid’, said to allow the State Government to ‘move water … from areas of supply to areas of need’.

The dam was to be built in two stages, with Stage 1 to be completed in 2011. Stage 2, the installation of bigger gates to hold additional water, was ‘dependent on climatic factors, population growth and usage patterns’ and would be completed in 2035. According to the State Government, the ‘anticipated yield for the proposed dam is 70,000 megalitres per annum’, which was said to be equal to 4 percent of the mean annual flows in the Mary River. In 2006, the Premier estimated the costs for the construction of Stage 1 to be $1.7 billion. The estimated costs however fluctuated somewhat between sources. SunWater, a company involved in the feasibility studies for the dam, for example estimated the costs at $1,592 million, while the company charged with building the dam put out a figure of $1.6 billion. The World Commission on Dams (WCD) (2000: 39-41) implicitly warned about such discrepancies by pointing out that ‘[t]he evidence gathered by WCD strongly confirms the view that there is a systematic bias towards underestimation of the capital costs of large dams’, with an average ‘overrun’ in their study of 56% of the original estimate. Similarly, Scudder (2005: 293) concluded his research on the future of large dams with the note that ‘the development potential of large dams is seldom realized because of the complexity involved, because of institutional inadequacies, because of implementation uncertainties and because of corruption’. Complexities and uncertainties would certainly play a role in the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam.

The proposed dam on the Mary River was to displace hundreds of local residents in the Mary Valley. Of all the towns in the Valley Kandanga was to be most heavily impacted (see Maps 4 and 5 below). The exact area to be flooded however, and therefore the exact amount of properties affected, became a point of some confusion and change over time. On 1 November 2006 it was reported in the local newspaper, the Gympie Times, that the proposed location of the dam wall had been moved upstream, reducing the amount of properties to be inundated from an initial 1000 to 597. As a result, sixteen properties already purchased were no longer needed and were being

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15 Ministerial Media Statement by Peter Beattie, former Premier of Queensland, 05 July 2006.
16 QWI Factsheet 26 October 2007.
17 All monetary amounts in this thesis are in Australian dollars. Ministerial Media Statement by Peter Beattie, former Premier of Queensland, 05 July 2006.
offered back for sale to the previous owners. In order to flood properties, the State had to purchase them from those willing to sell, or, alternatively, compulsorily acquire them after all the regulatory approvals from the Queensland Coordinator-General and the Federal Environment Minister had been obtained. Anticipating that such approvals would be obtained in due course, a policy for voluntary land purchases was put in place after the announcement in April 2006, and eventually 494 properties were sold to the State. In June 2006, the State Government created the company Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd (QWI) to coordinate all aspects of the dam including the legally required social and environmental impact studies, the design and construction. It also handled land purchases.

As the map of the proposed dam below shows (Map 4), major roads were also to be affected by the proposal. Additionally, a so-called ‘buffer area’ was to be established around the inundation zone. This area was:

aimed at protecting water quality, bank stability, addressing safety matters, excluding activities with a high risk of adverse impacts on water quality and/or dam operations allowing for revegetation and control of access; and/or flood margin area where there is a risk of damage to the land caused by any increased extent or duration of temporary flooding as a result of the dam. The Operational Area of the dam includes the dam wall, embankments, spillway, dam access road, associated infrastructure and facilities and a buffer for this area, as well as the inundation, buffer and flood margin areas (QWI 2007a: 1-17).

The area directly impacted by the dam, in other words, was significantly larger than the areas designated for inundation (see Map 5).

Map 4 The proposed Traveston Crossing Dam inundation area, including the localities of Carters Ridge and Federal (QWI 2007a: 1-20).
Map 5 The ‘designation area’, including the inundation and buffer zones (QWI 2007a: 1-18).
1.3 Research Questions

The proposal by the Queensland State Government to dam the Mary River at Traveston Crossing resulted in a sustained campaign by local residents to stop the proposal. Through ethnographic fieldwork focused particularly on this campaign I sought to address matters pertinent to environmental anthropology generally and the dispute in particular. As a result of preliminary investigations in the area and anthropological literature research in preparation for the study, I undertook my fieldwork with a number of interrelated questions in mind: Why, firstly, do certain people wish to protect their properties, the river, and the Mary Valley more broadly from inundation? Anticipating possible variations to such motivations, how does the campaign represent a sense of community identity, and how can this identity be understood historically? Are there pertinent internal socio-cultural distinctions and, if so, how are they relevant to the campaign? How are local notions of community informed by land use practices, ideas about nature and a sense of place? How can emplaced identity, belonging and place attachment be understood in this area? In terms of the campaign, what is the relationship between science and lay forms of knowledge and what is the role of epistemology in the articulation of emplaced identity and belonging? How do people know and name places and what does this tell us about the role of place, belonging and identity in environmental disputes? And lastly, how may insights into this dispute and the area more broadly be relevant to a discussion of belonging and emplaced identity in a settler-descendant society such as Australia? The literature which informed the formulation of these questions is outlined below, aspects of which will be reiterated as I describe my findings throughout the thesis.

1.4 The Literature

Culture, Identity and Community

A notable study into environmental dispute and the cultural aspects that underpinned it is the ethnography by Terre Satterfield (2002) concerning old-growth forests in Oregon, USA. Analysing both environmentalists’ and loggers’ points of view, she presents the formation of a social movement as ‘informal, fluid networks of people who, through their evoked commonalities, come together as a group and feel bounded by their collective sense of belonging and their shared vision of the world’ (Satterfield 2002: 70). It is important however that this ‘shared vision of the world’, or ‘culture’, should not be viewed as static. Rather, as Satterfield explained, culture can be viewed as ‘an overarching, multi-origined, and multi-faceted resource. Individuals draw upon this resource while manipulating it to fit both their own ends as well as the context and social positions from which they act’ (Satterfield 2002: 6). Such a view is useful in that it highlights the political and contextual aspects of culture and identity formation.
Theoretical discussions about the relationships between such notions as ‘culture’, ‘society’ and ‘agency’ are important here. I draw particularly on Sherry Ortner’s work (1984:153), who understood ‘action [as] constrained most deeply and systematically by the ways in which culture controls the definitions of the world for actors, limits their conceptual tools, and restricts their emotional repertoires. Culture becomes part of the self’. However, after a discussion of human agency, she concludes: ‘society is a system … the system is powerfully constraining, and yet … the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction’ (Ibid: 159, on the role of agency see also Strang 2005b, 2009; Trigger, Toussaint and Mulcock 2010). In this study the notion of community will be approached similarly, focusing on the ways in which it is mobilised, consciously or less so, by various groups involved in the contest over the Mary River.

Arun de Souza (2007: 139) proposed the ‘myth of community’; a reference also to the dynamic and political aspects of identity formation. ‘Mythical’ however should not be equated with ‘imaginary’. Rather, it refers to the strategy of stressing similarities in spite of differences, since communities ‘are always and everywhere in a state of animated tension. Factions, quarrels, status distinctions are as much [a] part of social life as solidarity, mutual regard and unified action’ (Ibid: 141). A succinct description is offered by Richard Jenkins (1996: 104, 107) in his view of community as the ‘symbolic construction of similarity’. Similar to de Souza, he points to ‘the capacity of symbols to encompass and condense a range of, not necessarily harmonious or congruent meanings’. As Marilyn Strathern (1982: 249) noted for the notion of the ‘real villager’ in a rural English village, symbols can contain both ‘openness’ and ‘closure’. Understanding the manipulation of contrast – the cultural politics of asserting difference and similarity - is important in a study of community and conflict which draws upon symbolic resources and ‘repositories of meaning’ (Cohen 1985: 118).

It is within this context that I approach the symbolic politics of the anti-dam organisation, the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group. I ask in which contexts particular ‘repositories of meaning’ were drawn upon in order to create, as Adrian Peace (1999: 152) described it for a forest dispute in New South Wales, Australia, ‘a sense of ‘community-ness’ - a measure of unity and coherence, a sense of direction and purpose’?

Internal stability and cohesion were important for the activists to maintain. This study therefore seeks to address the extent to which various groups involved in the anti-dam campaign could, as Edwards (1998: 154) put it in a study about an English rural town, ‘suspend the internal distinctions
between them in order to contrast e.g. administrators and service providers who, as incomers or outsiders, are perceived not to belong …’.

In terms of internal activist distinctions, Checker (2001: 136) noted that by creating ‘broad-based definitions of the environment that included all aspects of their lives and of their social justice activism, [various ethnic groups in Brooklyn] … constructed an environmental identity that superseded rigid ethnic categories’. Similarly, Peace (1999: 155) noted that during the forest dispute in New South Wales:

the discrete iconic potential of both forest and community was being constituted and elaborated at one and the same time through the discursive creativity and political resourcefulness of the residents themselves. The fate of community and forest became so intertwined as to constitute them as a symbolic unity. Henceforth, any further destruction of the forest would be an assault on the integrity of the community.

Importantly, Peace (Ibid: 159) approached community as an ‘unfolding, processual, affair, one which is continually responsive to changing political circumstance rather than being somehow programmed and predictable’. It is in this way that I will approach the notion of community in this study.

**Nature and the Notions of Endogenous and Exogenous Identity**

In terms of the relationships between humans and the natural world, anthropological theorists have criticised the rigid nature-culture dichotomy which has informed many constructionist approaches. Harrison, Pile and Thrift’s (2004) book on this issue for example carried the subtitle ‘Entanglements of Nature and Culture’ (my emphasis). As Kay Milton (1996: 214) noted in her work on environmentalism and cultural theory:

The assumption that reality is ‘constructed’ through social interaction, that meanings learned through participation in human society are imposed on an otherwise meaningless world, denies any role for the environment itself. It prevents us from studying the impact of the environment on human society and culture because the existence of a world outside cultural construction is not acknowledged. ... It is not possible to conceive of an entirely modelled reality, for it leaves no raw material out of which to construct the models.
Similarly, Tanya King (2005: 352) regarded nature as ‘produced through iterative discourses between human action and the world’. It is a view in which humans are regarded within an ecological phenomenology as ‘environed subjects’ (Michell 2008: 45) with deeply emotional attachments to, and sensory interactions with, their surroundings (e.g. Feld and Basso 1996, Howes 2011, Milton 2002, Strang 2005a, 2006a). Tilley’s (1994: 34) phenomenological view is relevant to my approach of human-environment relationships:

A landscape is … a writing pad for inscription, a scape of and for human praxis, a mode of dwelling and a mode of experiencing. It is story and telling, temporality and remembrance. … Landscape is a signifying system through which the social is reproduced and transformed, explored and structured – process organized.

Timothy Ingold further developed the dwelling approach (1992, 1993, 1996, 2000). His work has informed my analysis of environmental engagements and identity in the Mary Valley. The passages below are particularly instructive (2000: 19-41):

[T]he ecology of textbooks could be regarded as profoundly anti-ecological, insofar as it sets up organism and environment as mutually exclusive entities (or collections of entities) which are only subsequently brought together and caused to interact. A properly ecological approach, to the contrary, is one that would take, as its point of departure, the whole-organism-in-its-environment. In other words, 'organism plus environment' should denote not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality. ... [T]his totality is not a bounded entity but a process in real time: a process, that is, of growth or development. … [W]e should] follow the lead of hunter-gatherers in taking the human condition to be that of a being immersed from the start, like other creatures, in an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world. This ontology of dwelling, I contend, provides us with a better way of coming to grips with the nature of human existence than does the alternative, Western ontology whose point of departure is that of a mind detached from the world, and that has literally to formulate it - to build an intentional world in consciousness - prior to any attempt at engagement. The contrast, I repeat, is not between alternative views of the world; it is rather between two ways of apprehending it, only one of which (the Western) may be characterised as the construction of a view, that is, as a process of mental representation. As for the other, apprehending the world is not a matter of construction, not of building but of
dwelling, not of making a view of the world but of taking up a view in it [original italics].

Reflecting to some extent the *emic* (insider) and *etic* (outsider or analytical) perspectives employed by anthropologists in the past (e.g. Harris 1976, 1993), in this thesis I will refer to views taken up in the world and those of the world as representing endogenous and exogenous identities respectively (Ingold 1993, see also Meurk 2011). It must be noted however that Ingold’s ontology of dwelling, based on Martin Heidegger’s philosophical work on dwelling and being (e.g. 1996 [1927], 1971), has received pertinent criticism, not least because it was seen to have informed Heidegger’s sympathy for Nazism (see, for example, Nevo 1991). The notion of dwelling can be seen to posit a sense of ‘home’, authenticity and totality that is introverted, bounded and homogenous; vulnerable to political ‘*Blut und Boden*’ theories and dangerous xenophobic nationalism (e.g. Bammer 1992, Harvey 1992, Massey 1993). It may also be seen to inappropriately imply emotional detachment and alienation to environmental engagements in industrial societies (c.f. Carrier 2003), promulgating an all too romantic view of hunter-gatherer culture and pre-industrial societies.

With these concerns in mind, I apply the notions of endogenous and exogenous identities not as static fixed categories, but as analytical tools to describe relational processes which develop through different forms of situated engagement; as ways of apprehending the world to be understood not in moral terms, but in terms of interaction and identity processes. The term *endogenous* is therefore used differently from the term *Indigenous*, which commonly denotes innate, static qualities (e.g. OED Online 2011); a term in Australia further burdened with socio-cultural and political sensitivities. However, as I discuss in the thesis, some commonality between endogenous and Indigenous identities may exist, particularly where they are concerned with notions of belonging and the ways in which such notions are informed by practical engagements with the environment and community participation.

**Belonging, Indigeneity and Community**

The issue of belonging in settler-descendant societies has received significant anthropological attention in the last decade (e.g. Read 2000; Dominy 1997, 2001; Trigger and Mulcock 2005; Strang 2008; Mulcock 2007, 2008; Trigger 2008a, 2008b; Gressier 2008). While settler-descendants in the southern Highlands of Australia have been described by Dominy (1997: 251) as ‘alpine indigenes’, the focus in much of the literature is generally on the processes through which such

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20 A German phrase meaning ‘Blood and Soil’ employed to devastating effect by the German National-Socialist party under Adolf Hitler (see e.g. Lovin 1967).
indigeneity is conceived or asserted. In his personal reflections about his sense of belonging in Australia, the historian Peter Read (2000: 223) for example says ‘[m]y sense of the native-born has come - is coming’. This notion of indigeneity is often contrasted, or at least compared to some extent, with notions of Aboriginal belonging (see e.g. Read 2000, Dominy 2001, Trigger and Mulcock 2005, Findlay 2008). As Mulcock (2008: 184) mentioned, ‘[i]ndigenous belonging in this sense has increasingly come to provide an inevitable point of reference and comparison for non-Indigenous populations in settler societies’. Imagining Aboriginal attachments to the area which encompasses her farm in New South Wales, Findlay (2008: 17) for instance concluded that “[o]ur relationship with ‘country’ [as settler-descendants] can never be equivalent to that of Indigenous Australians’. Trigger and Mulcock (2005: 312) found that environmentalists in particular ‘tended to characterise Aboriginal Australians as icons of true belonging, role models, holders of superior spiritual knowledge, the real autochthons’. My research is similarly concerned with the relational ways in which settler-descendants articulated notions of autochthony and indigeneity in their opposition to the proposed dam.

Generally speaking the literature describes various forms of belonging and attachment to place. Goodrich and Sampson (2008: 260) for example distinguish between genealogical attachment, economic attachment, attachment through loss or destruction of place, religious or spiritual connection, and place attachment through storytelling and the naming of place. Such forms of attachment may apply to both Aboriginal people and settler-descendants. While it is useful to theoretically distinguish between various forms of attachment, it may in any one setting not be easy to disentangle these so clearly from each other. Trigger and Mulcock (2005: 309) for example distinguished between three forms of expressed spiritual attachment to forests in the southwest of Australia, though they were said to be ‘interrelated [and] often overlapping’. These were religious, ecological and Aboriginal forms of attachment (Ibid: 309-315).

Belonging and place attachment, as well as general oppositions between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, are considered in my analysis of the notion of community in the campaign against the Traveston Crossing Dam. As symbolic constructions of similarity and difference, such oppositions may take a variety of forms and can be expressed as the tensions between those who are ‘local’ and those who are ‘strangers’, between the rural and the urban, between the powerful and the marginalised (Harrison 1999), between those who know and those who ‘don’t know shit from clay’ (Peace 1996: 51), and so on. As they define contrasts between ‘us’ and ‘them’, these oppositions are fundamental to community identity.
Contrasts may also be created by references to time and experience. As Satterfield (2002: 96) noted for the loggers in Oregon, ‘[h]ard work and knowledge born of continual episodes of trial and error in particular forests are fundamental to timber workers’ self-assessments regarding who they are and what they are good at’.

**Epistemology**
As in the Oregon forest dispute described by Satterfield (2002), a notable role in the campaign against the Traveston Crossing Dam revolved around various forms of knowledge held by ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, particularly concerning the status and validity of local knowledge and non-local science. Satterfield (2002: 82) found that activists may display an ambivalent attitude towards science which is:

> itself a product of identity negotiations, of activists strategically constructing political advantage in relation to science and its accompanying hold on what counts as valid knowledge.

More specifically, in the case of Oregon, ‘[e]nvironmentalists referred to science in its abstract mode [promoting the fragility and complexity of forests] while loggers referred to it in its applied mode [‘working’ forests rather than forests as wild or recreational places]’ (*Ibid*: 8).

Yearley (1996: 181) noted that in the United Kingdom environmental organisations regard ‘[t]he supposedly scientific and technical statements of officialdom … as commonly containing a political agenda, and as a reflection of how the authorities wish an issue to be viewed’. Such attitudes to ‘official science’, in conjunction with the growing reliance on scientific expertise by the environmental organisations themselves, has created a need for these groups ‘to strike a pragmatic balance between accepting and denying the overriding validity of science’ (*Ibid*: 187). The debates about the validity of scientific expertise also conform to Franklin’s (1995: 165) conclusion that ‘[s]cience is defended so vehemently because it is cultural, not because it is extracultural’.

Attending to the relationship between knowledge and community, Skogen and Krange (2003: 318) found that during a conflict over the presence of wolves in a Norwegian rural area:

> [l]ocal knowledge [was] pictured as common to the people who make up the community, and fundamentally different from the hegemonic external knowledge
which legitimates the perceived assaults on rural economy and ‘the rural way of life’.

Similarly, Carolan and Bell (2003: 225-8) found that during an environmental dispute regarding the alleged emission of dioxine at a garbage-burning power plant in Ames, Iowa:

challenges to what constitutes the ‘truth’ are equally challenges to identities and the social networks of trust in which that truth is embedded. … [Knowledge] is social, historical, and normative. … It is a thing of this world, produced by virtue of the multiple forms of social networks in which it is embedded. … Truth and knowledge are not outside of power, therefore, or lacking of power; they are discursive products of power.

In my analysis of the dam dispute and the role of knowledge I will employ the concept of an ‘epistemic community’, referred to by Veronica Strang (2004: 26) in her work on the meaning of water. While such a concept, similar to the ontology of dwelling by Ingold, could be at risk of inadvertently postulating homogenous, fixed entities, I use it as an analytical tool to identify dynamic social networks and concomitant forms of knowledge and values. My focus is on strategic interaction and heterogeneous identities rather than a presupposed form of internal stability; about understanding the ways in which knowledge is challenged within the particularities of socio-cultural and political contexts.

A useful concept in this regard was recently offered by Ana Delgado (2010) in her work on ‘green expertise’, activist trust, and the Landless People’s Movement in Brazil. Elaborating on the work in science and technology studies by Irwin and Michael (2003), she described environmental social movements as intimate science-lay hybrid assemblages (2010: 564). This definition allows, appropriately I argue, an approach to the campaign as a heterogeneous network of closely interacting identities among whom multiple forms of knowledge are strategically negotiated.

1.5 The Methods

The research methods employed during the empirical component of this study entailed relatively standard ethnographic methods including interviews, informal conversations and participant-observations in the field (e.g. Bernard 1995, Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). I gathered information on the various topics described above during a period of approximately eighteen months of fieldwork, with intermittent visits to the region after I had started to write this thesis. The vast majority of my material, written up in twenty field notebooks covering a few thousand pages,
has not found its way directly into this thesis. However, through ongoing reflections on my notes and developments in the area during the fieldwork itself, they played an important role in guiding my enquiries and findings. Ethnographic fieldwork, in that sense, is an essentially open-ended affair in which qualitative fieldnotes are used both to identify and develop the most salient categories in the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 175, Strathern 2002).

From June 2008 to December 2009 I lived on the outskirts of Gympie with my wife and two young children, which is about twenty kilometers from the proposed dam site, allowing easy access to the Mary Valley. I undertook seventy-two in-depth interviews, most for approximately three to four hours, with some extending over an entire day. Mostly semi-structured, these interviews addressed the pre-determined questions described above, with the background of the informant and the quality of the forthcoming information influencing the topics addressed in particular detail. They generally also included detailed socio-economic and personal history information to allow statistical analyses, where relevant, to be made. As my relationships with local people developed, most of the topics were discussed on more than one occasion with informants, particularly the activists with whom I had regular contact. Interview and observational data were subsequently entered into Filemaker Pro databases I custom-designed \(^{21}\) and coded according to keywords for the purpose of analysis (see, for example, the Interview database lay-out at Appendix 1).

**Informants, Locations and Events**

Given my interest in the nexus between community, belonging, emplacement and environmental engagement, I interviewed a cross-section of people, including both multi-generational residents and more recent newcomers. They were involved in various forms of land-use including cattle and dairy farming, sand mining, forestry, and non-productive forms of the environmental rehabilitation or recreational kind. I also interviewed local Government Councilors, representatives of community organisations, and a variety of Gympie-based professionals who for many years had been engaged with the region in the fields of agriculture and environmental management. The informant selection process employed throughout my fieldwork can be understood as a snow-ball sample technique (Bernard 1995: 97-98), one particularly useful in researching community networks: ‘who people know and how they know each other’ (*Ibid*).

In terms of place I selected informants who reside at a variety of locations, both inside the dam’s so-called footprint (the area directly impacted), and at geographical locations spread throughout the

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\(^{21}\) I developed three Filemaker databases for this research: one for literature and archival research, one for observational data and one for interview data.
Mary River catchment from about Conondale in the south to Maryborough in the north. I attended a number of meetings of the downstream activists in Maryborough, organised in the Greater Mary Association (GMA), as well as their day-long scientific forum on environmental impacts. A number of other events, including a demonstration and an anti-dam book launch, I attended in Brisbane. The strongest focus however was on the area in between Gympie and Kenilworth; the region most directly impacted by the proposed dam.

As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, this region was not new to dam proposals. A number of individuals who had been involved in a previous anti-dam campaign during the 1990s provided pertinent information for comparisons with the current campaign to be made. Remarkably, one farmer had a comprehensive but dilapidated archive of that campaign boxed up in his shed. It included valuable but insect-damaged records, including minutes of meetings, correspondence, maps, scientific studies, and financial records, the majority of which I was able to scan and store on my computer for analysis.

Further events I attended from time to time included the monthly meetings by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC), the regional environmental management organisation based in Gympie, local Government information sessions for farmers, various meetings of community organisations in the area, agricultural shows, and local art festivals.

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group
The most important focus in my research was on the anti-Traveston Crossing Dam campaign. Researching the campaign and the activists of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group was, particularly at first, not an easy task. In a conflict characterised by distrust and suspicion towards the authorities, it was unsurprising that I was questioned repeatedly, despite my explanations and information sheets, about the sources of my funding (a University of Queensland Research Scholarship), the purpose of my notes, the affiliations of my supervisors, and so on. I was, in other words, met with a level of suspicion not uncommon to many anthropologists elsewhere (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 80). However, after interviewing the core group of activists and after obtaining permission from the President to attend their weekly strategy meetings I was increasingly regarded, not so much as a possible spy, but as an observer with harmless, if somewhat curious, interests. I attended all events associated with the campaign where I could, including protests, all sorts of meetings, and information or social events. Through such participation I became well acquainted with those activists most heavily involved, particularly with those few with whom I turned out to share some personal interests such as the classical guitar. Friendships
developed and people came to know me in terms of my own rural background and personal family; my wife and two small children intermittently attended public events or barbeques as well.

A poignant moment in this respect took place a few of months into my fieldwork. The local activists had organised a joint strategy meeting at the Kandanga hall with activists from Brisbane and downstream areas. After explaining the organisational aspects of her group and introducing each individual local activist for the benefit of those from outside the region, the President pointed at me: ‘We’ve also got Kim, he’s at the back there; he’s a student, he’s doing his PhD’, she added. Stunned, the only reply I could give to those who immediately turned their heads was: ‘Yes, that’s right’. In subsequent meetings she regularly announced my research as an indication of the campaign’s importance, and while I never took a position on the dam during my research, it was above all an indication that mutual relationships and trust were developing well. About twelve months later, when the Federal Environment minister eventually announced his decision during a nationally televised address, those personal bonds became most palpable in my reactions shared with those gathered at the local Kandanga hotel. Ethnographic fieldwork is, also in my experience, a deeply emotional activity (Davies and Spencer 2010, Bernard 1995: 164).

State Officials and Scientists
While the majority of my informants were local residents, I also interviewed a small number of State officials. Because the available public records provided a good insight into the State’s position, I had not planned, nor did I seek, to interview a significant number of public officials. Most of the officials I did approach were hesitant and either referred me to their superiors, requested a list of questions prior to the interview, or refused to answer certain questions. I was repeatedly told the dam and associated issues such as social impacts could not be discussed without specific authorisation.

Aspects of science and exogenous identity were similarly researched through the publically available scientific record. While some interviews with scientists may have been useful, in the context of limited time and resources the approach I took allowed me to focus strongly on the Mary Valley and to undertake uninterrupted fieldwork with local residents.

Aboriginal People
This study is concerned with settler-descendant identity and relationship to land. While this concern involves an investigation of indigeneity as a potential aspect of all human identity, it was not my intention to provide a comprehensive analysis of local Aboriginal history or relationships to land.
and the river, a topic which would require a significant proportion of the research to be devoted to it. The dam proposal certainly involved Aboriginal people; an involvement I have described predominantly through the lens of settler-descendant activism. This is not in anyway to deny the importance of an Aboriginal perspective. Rather, it is a consequence of my aim to analyse the ways in which activists engaged with Aboriginal perspectives and notions of indigeneity. Notwithstanding, I obtained an ethics approval during the fieldwork to interview Aboriginal people about the dam in order to supplement, where relevant, the publicly available information.

**Records**

Throughout the eighteen months I lived in Gympie I gathered large amounts of records relevant to the study. Particularly valuable were the local newspaper (the *letters to the editor* especially), Government documents, the anti-dam website and newsletters, scientific studies, but also local artistic material such as poetry, photography, music and paintings. On many of my fieldwork trips I took photographs, some one thousand in total, whether it concerned a particular farm, the Mary Valley Art Festival, road signs, the Kenilworth Show or a protest rally near the river. In combination with the material obtained through interviews and participant-observations, these records were important to the analyses and arguments described in this thesis.

The historical component of this study was undertaken predominantly through archival research, including the rich array of local history materials held at the Gympie Library, Government documents, academic publications, newspaper articles, and so on. Additional historical data however were obtained from elderly informants in the form of oral accounts during interviews.

**1.6 The Thesis Structure**

Additional to the qualitative data obtained through fieldwork, this thesis also draws on published accounts from a variety of academic disciplines, including, but not limited to, anthropology, sociology, geography, political science, history, ecology, science and technology studies, and environmental studies. The aim to present a cogent analysis drawn from such a variety of research perspectives is certainly challenging, if not daunting at times. The structure of the thesis becomes important in this regard. The chapters below are ordered in such a way as to take the reader from a broad historical analysis of the region to the details of highly particular contemporary engagements with land and the river. While linked through the shared themes of community, emplacement and environmental practice, the thesis in that sense progressively narrows down: from the explorer who named the river in 1842 to the ways in which contemporary farmers know their land and assign names to their paddocks, for example.
Chapter Outline

I start with an environmental and social history of the Mary Valley. Related to the broader colonial history of Queensland and Australia it describes the process of European exploration and settler engagements with the local environment. Following this early settlement history, the major socio-economic developments over the ensuing decades are highlighted. These include the emergence of timber, pastoral and agricultural industries as well so-called ‘closer settlement’ Government policies. I seek to argue how these developments resulted in the postulation of a named region – the Mary Valley – defined in terms of the physical landscape, economic activities and a sense of community. This chapter, in other words, aims to provide a history of the region in terms of the dynamic interrelationships between the natural environment and the human population; a discussion, I argue, important to a contemporary understanding of both the regional environment and the conflict which gripped the Mary Valley as a result of the dam proposal in 2006.

This conflict is discussed in the subsequent chapter which entails a socio-cultural analysis of the anti-dam campaign. The analysis involves the strategies and internal dynamics of the campaign, constituted as an unusual alliance between farmers, environmentalists and urban newcomers, among others. In light of this social diversity and concomitant forms of land-use the chapter focuses particularly on the symbolic politics of community identity, indigeneity and belonging. In the context of such politics I also seek to address the complementary roles of emotion and rationality: the ways in which facts and scientific knowledge were linked to social and emotive concerns about nature and community. Such linkages are introductory to my subsequent arguments for an understanding of the campaign as a hybrid lay-science assemblage (Delgado 2010).

The interrelated aspects of identity and epistemology are particularly explored in the fourth chapter on art, science and experience. It is in this discussion that I increasingly draw on the notion of endogenous and exogenous identity. Intimate local engagements with the river, artistic and otherwise, are used as examples to demonstrate how endogenous identity and embodied knowledge based on practical experience were contrasted with the scientific and exogenous abstractions in the environmental impact statement produced by the dam proponent. Associated with such contrasts I pay particular attention to the politics of science and the related negotiation of trust and credibility during the dispute, which was relevant not just to the internal dynamics of the activist campaign, but also to the final Federal Government decision and the Queensland Government reactions to that decision in late 2009.
Elaborating on the contrasts between endogenous and exogenous identity, the subsequent two chapters are concerned with the naming of places. I firstly describe the Mary Valley as a site of multiple, not necessarily congruent, exogenous definitions of place. Treating such definitions as naming practices, they are typically divorced from notions of community and social interaction. They commonly represent, as per Ingold (2000), a view of the world. I include in this description various administrative definitions and those terms based on ecological classification. In the following chapter these are contrasted with endogenous senses of place, both on a regional and specific property level. The ways in which residents conceive the Mary Valley, and name their properties and places on their land, provide poignant examples of emplaced identity and views taken up in the world. This detailed discussion of local place names, the last substantive chapter in the thesis, also draws together the topics of the previous chapters on land use, knowledge and the symbolic politics of community and belonging during the campaign.

The final chapter provides a summary of the thesis in which I reiterate the main findings of the study. I subsequently explore the contributions this thesis makes to contemporary understandings of human-environment relations and the ways in which anthropological research regarding notions of community, belonging and emplaced identity may assist in understanding environmental disputes.

**A Note on Style**

The individual chapters are reasonably long, including substantial and detailed discussions of the topics described above. Notwithstanding the length there is much material I did not include, both from the public record and from the interviews in which many people spoke with sincerity about their lives, their relationships, the river and the land. I have however written this thesis with their voices in mind, using as much as I could the actual expressions and actions of people, or the atmosphere of places, to portray what the Mary Valley was like as a result of its environment, its people, the dam, and the campaign. For that same reason I have used numerous photographs and other forms of illustration. They all form part of my attempt to produce a detailed, vivid, and engaging ethnography which not only contributes to the academic literature, but which also captures the variety and circumstances of lived experiences in the area.
Chapter 2  The Mary Valley Historically Placed

‘The [name] Mary Valley is used in terms of the Mary River catchment: from Bellthorpe to the sea. [On second thought]: from Bellthorpe to Gympie. I don't know. For me it's what I can see from my seat on the top of the hill. Included are Imbil, Kandanga, Moy Pocket, Kenilworth, no others. Gympie is where it ends, I don't know why. Because of the shops? The Mary Valley is bounded [on the east] by the Highway. Jones Hill is not in the Valley; it's on the boundary of Mordor [i.e. Gympie]. Amamoor and Dagun are in the Valley. [Campaigner X] and [Campaigner Y] are there.’ (Anti-dam campaigner in her mid sixties, born in Brisbane and thirty years resident on a twenty acre non-agricultural ‘bush block’ in the Mary Valley in 2009). 22

2.1 Introduction
The name Mary Valley refers to an area in southeast Queensland, Australia. Yet, as the above quote indicates, it generally does not equate with the land alongside the entire course of the Mary River. The majority of local people who have historically used this term referred to a much more confined area, about a quarter, of the river’s total length. It entails, with interesting variations, part of the upper reach south of Gympie; one of the catchment’s most fertile regions (see Map 6).

Map 6 The 'Mary Valley' as a general indication for further discussion below 23

22 Interview 15 January 2009, Field Notebook Number (FN#) 3
23 Adapted from Map 1, the ‘Mary River – Locality’ map by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC).
The historical roots to this confined definition give an insight into how this area developed a sense of identity which is currently expressed, for example, through a regional name such as the Mary Valley and other ‘symbolic constructions of similarity’ (Jenkins 1996: 104, 107). Historically in this case, I argue, the relationships between ‘community’ and economic enterprise, particularly the development since White settlement of different forms of land use and regional economic initiatives, are the context in which expressions of socio-cultural similarity and difference are best understood. Importantly, the natural environment has not been a static ‘given’ while local settlements and emplaced forms of identity developed. Rather, it is intimately tied to them.

This first chapter therefore focuses particularly on the recorded relationships between economic enterprise, the natural resources upon which these enterprises were based, and the manner in which forms of emplaced identity developed. I begin with an overview of the early settlement history of the area, starting in the 1840s. One of the decisive factors during this early period in the Mary Valley was the availability of local, and commercially potent, natural resources. In their potted but excellent recent history of the region, historians Johnson and Saunders (2007: 3) also noted that ‘[l]and use is clearly the most significant factor in the development of this district’. The same can be concluded not only from the more comprehensive regional history Winds of Change: One hundred years in the Widgee Shire by Ian Pedley in 1979, but also from a wide variety of locally produced histories contained in such publications as centenary celebration booklets and town settlement histories, local autobiographies, photographs, newspaper articles and so forth. This region saw a rapid transformation of its environment, from densely vegetated Aboriginal territory, first entered by white settlers in the late 1840s, to prime agricultural area just over fifty years later. This transformation was closely aligned with early economic activities, so-called Government closer settlement schemes and related environmental attitudes.

After the Second World War, local agricultural enterprise became increasingly difficult through, for instance, a new exposure to world market price fluctuations and increasing costs, while a growing number of urban residents became interested in rural living and the small-acreage hobby farm (c.f. O’Keeffe and McDonald 1994, Johnson and Saunders 2007). The resulting land use changes, accelerating particularly from about the 1970s, eventually formed the socio-economic and environmental context in which the Traveston Crossing Dam was proposed in 2006.

More generally then, this history, aims to introduce themes important to the thesis: land and water use, emplaced identity, naming practices and engagements with nature. It also provides a regional background to an appreciation of the term Mary Valley, both as a geographically defined area, and
as an expression of identity, understood historically in the context of broader socio-economic developments, environmental attitudes, and relationships with abundant natural resources.

2.2 Exploration

White settlers did not seriously enter the upper reaches of the Mary River until about 1850 (Pedley 1979, Brown 1995, Johnson and Saunders 2007). The exceptions were a handful of Moreton Bay penal colony escapees (where Brisbane is now located) such as James Davis and James Bracefield (also called Bracewell), who lived with Aboriginal people along the Mary River in the 1830s, and a few expedition parties passing through in the early 1840s. The mouth of the river in the north had been discovered for settlers by the explorer Andrew Petrie in 1842, who had named it the Wide Bay River. It took six years for a settlement to take hold at the mouth, first named the Wide Bay village, eventually becoming the commercial port and regional centre of Maryborough (Mathews 1995). Petrie’s exploration party had come by boat from Moreton Bay and they sailed up the river for about eighty kilometres, to the end of the tidal reach near present day Tiaro. They had already found Bracefield, one of the escaped convicts, near Noosa Heads to the south, and, with his assistance, managed to find Davis up the river as well. When the settlement at the mouth began to grow six years later, the river had already been renamed by Governor Fitzroy into the Mary River in 1848, in honour of his wife Lady Mary, who, three months after the fact, passed away in a carriage accident (Matthews 1995: 42).

In contrast to this naming practice focussed on the political elite, the tributaries in the upper reaches of the Wide Bay River were more regularly given Aboriginal names, or interpretations thereof, such as those shown on an early 1860 map as Emama, Yaber Yaber and Uby Uby Creeks (Matthews 1995: 48). It remains obscure however exactly by who or when these were named prior to 1860. It seems most likely some were recorded from the escaped convicts James Davis and James Bracefield, who had lived in the area with Aboriginal people for over a decade and offered various Aboriginal names to the parties of early white explorers as they guided them through (c.f. Eipper 1843, Pedley 1979: 12). These creeks are known today as the Amamoor, Yabba and Obi Obi creeks (see Map 2).

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24 On the topic of colonial naming practices, see e.g. Furphy (2000), Trigger (2003), Koch and Hercus (2009), Strang (1997), Tent and Slatyer (2009).
25 The meaning of these names were varied, with a broad translation of Hinka Booma as a particular area of ‘extensive flats’ while at least one other appears to refer to an Aboriginal owner of the area (e.g. the man called Ubie Ubie), see Eipper: 21, 26 March 1843 and 14 April 1843. The Aboriginal people of the Mary Valley were Kabi speakers, sometimes also referred to as Gubbi Gubbi or Kabi Kabi (e.g. Tindale 1974: 172, Tennant-Kelly 1935: 462, and Tennant-Kelly’s 1934 ethnographic fieldnotes as contained on the DVD by Trigger et al 2011).
W.K. Joliffe, who had been a member of the Petrie expedition earlier in the year, had, mistakenly, seen sheep grazing possibilities along the lower part of the river near present day Tiaro. In mid 1842 he brought sixteen to twenty thousand sheep overland after convincing his employer on the Hunter River, some seven hundred kilometres to the south, to start a new station there (Pedley 1979: 14). This was the first serious top-to-bottom colonial incursion into the Mary River catchment. He too was assisted by James Davis and, before he descended into the Valley, he took advice on the area from the pioneer settler David Archer at the edge of settlement on Durundur Station near Kilcoy, on the other side of the Conondale Ranges in the southwest (see Map 1). David Archer and his friend Frederick Bigge had briefly explored the upper reaches of the Mary River but found the area unsuitable for sheep (Pedley 1979, Brown 1995: 289, Archer and Wales 1988: 59). Undeterred, Joliffe pushed on for another two hundred kilometres.

Driving up to twenty thousand sheep for hundreds, in some famous cases a few thousand kilometers through poorly known areas seems extraordinary, yet large sheep and cattle drives were relatively common in the wake of early explorers. In the newly formed Queensland of the 1860s, livestock movements became more urgent as squatters were by then required, as stipulated in the Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act of 1860, to stock their new leases with sheep or cattle to one quarter of its carrying capacity within nine months. In utilitarian fashion, and with disregard for any environmental variations, that capacity was set at one hundred sheep or twenty head of cattle per square mile.26

As thousands of sheep traveled through an area, the routes taken were presumably visible for some time after the event, for a year later another traveler repeatedly described in his diary not a track, but a road.27 Additional to the effects on vegetation, the devastating impact of a visit by such numbers of sheep to local water resources such as waterholes and small creeks, often important to the Aboriginal inhabitants, can not be underestimated. While there are no records available on Joliffe’s journey, such events certainly evoked strong Aboriginal responses in other cases, particularly in the drier parts of the continent (c.f. Goodall 2008, Cooper and Jackson 2008, Smith 2007, Jackson et al 2008). Joliffe’s route itself is likely to have been an Aboriginal route known by his guide James Davis (c.f. Evans 2002: 49). In any case, Aboriginal people were onto Joliffe, for a visitor to his station later in 1842 found the remainder of his sheep herd in a bad way, the entirety of his business including animals, materials and people the subject of what local historian Elaine Brown called ‘incessant Aboriginal hostility’ (Brown 1995: 291, see also Pedley 1979: 14, Matthews 1995: 39).

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27 Presuming the transcription is correct, Eipper, e.g. 22 March 1843. He used the word ‘track’ on 28 March 1843.
Earlier that year, up to sixty Aboriginal people had been brutally poisoned at Kilcoy Station near Durundur, which had added another grim context to Joliffe’s activities. Following the massacre, numerous Aboriginal groups from the region were reported to have met in the Bunya forests of the Blackall Ranges in the south, deciding on confrontations ‘intended to annihilate all the stock in the district and to drive the white people out’ (McKenzie-Smith quoted in Evans 2002: 50; c.f. Eipper 30 March 1843).

It is therefore not surprising that the exploration party which included the missionary Christopher Eipper and Land Commissioner Stephen Simpson, and which travelled north through the same area the next year, also included four mounted policemen (Eipper’s Journal, 06 March 1843). It is however most likely, though unrecorded, that James Davis and James Bracefell, who again acted as guides and interpreters, avoided violent confrontation during this journey of more than fifty days. Their acquaintance with local Aboriginal people and their importance to the party was obvious.28

Associated with Swiss Evangelical Lutherans and the Zion’s Hill Aboriginal Mission at Nundah, Eipper was exploring the Bunya Country for a new mission site north of Brisbane, accompanied also by Dr. Stephen Simpson, the Moreton Bay Commissioner for Crown Lands charged with conducting an inquiry into the massacre at Kilcoy (Evans 2002: 48). At the top of the range Eipper noted in his journal (18 March 1843), possibly as the first to do so on-site, the divide between the Brisbane River and Mary River catchments:

We are told that the distance from here [where a creek runs south to the Brisbane River] to the first creek of the Wide Bay River [which runs north] is not above two miles.

After they had descended further north into the valley the next day he celebrated: ‘the country along the narrow valley of this creek is extremely rich, consisting of apple tree flats and good ridges, the grass came up to the horses’ mouths.’29 Throughout his diary Eipper made particular note of geographical and environmental features: mountains, ranges, and creeks, many of which appear to have (anglicised) Aboriginal names30. He assessed areas with such terms as pretty fair, indifferent, bad, broken, or very bad country. These seem to reflect his opinion on the viability of a mission site

28 This can be inferred in particular because Davis reportedly showed cicatrices resulting from participation in Aboriginal ritual (Pedley 1979: 13). Eipper (27 March 1843) describes the pertinent example of a meeting with an Aboriginal family group, the only Aboriginal man ‘a particular friend of Davis whose coo-ee he recognised’. See also Matthews (1995: 31-2).
29 Eipper 19 March 1843
30 Eipper, e.g. 26 March 1843
and/or the day’s travel experiences, most of which, except for a plain called Hinka Booma, he characterised as average at best. Ultimately, a mission was never built in the valley.

Soil and water resources too, described in terms of clay types, grass cover and the distribution of waterholes, are a regular feature of his daily summaries. But on the 23rd of March 1843, after five days and forty-three miles of arduous river and creek crossings, he first describes those other valuable resources known from the area:

In the Scrub which is on both sides of the River we saw the red and white Cedar, Bread Fruit, Bunya, Native Fig Trees and every variety of Scrub Timber.

2.3 Timber, Vermin and Gelignite
Valuable trees provided the early stimulus for Anglo-European incursions into the upper reaches of the Mary Valley. Eipper used the term Bunya Scrub to refer to these resources. It was a term however not just reflecting the valuable softwoods of the Bunya Pine (Araucaria bidwillii)\(^{31}\) itself, but also the 1842 Bunya Proclamation by the New South Wales Government, which had made settlement and timber cutting illegal in the Bunya Country of current southeast Queensland (Long 1998: 59, Frawley 1990: 15, Evans 2002: 54). This was in the hope it would become an area suitable for Aboriginal missionary activities. All Bunya trees, bearing vast amounts of nutritional nuts every few years, were intended for the sole use and enjoyment of Aboriginal people, and settlers already in the declared reserve were ordered to leave (Huth 2002: 17). How many there were and how many left remains unclear however. Andrew Petrie had advised the authorities on the Bunya Pine after his earlier expedition in 1842 and had noted the importance of the tree to Aboriginal nutrition and culture more generally (Matthews 1995: 34). The famous Bunya Gatherings in southeast Queensland were well known among early white settlers because such large numbers of Aboriginal people from the entire region attended. (Evans 2002).

However, the Proclamation to protect the trees was hardly effective (Long 1998: 59, Evans 2002). This was particularly the result of limited policing and local settler attitudes such as those described in an autobiographical work by Thomas Archer (1988: 60), who was at Durundur Station near Kilcoy in the early 1840s with his pioneering friend Frederick Bigge:

When reminded of the prohibition, Mr. Bigge’s only reply was a sardonic smile. The prohibition was never enforced, and before long country nearer Brisbane was freely occupied.

Evans (2002: 54), in his history of the Bunya Gatherings’ demise, offers a context to that sardonic smile with an example from 1851 in which it was reported that ‘Europeans were deliberately destroying such trees, with the express purpose of ‘keeping the blacks from the neighbourhood’”. In the eyes of white settlers then, the Bunya forests, as sites of regional Aboriginal ceremony and alliance, had become a ‘base of terrorism’, ‘swarming with blacks’ in need of military-style attack by the infamous Native Police (Evans 2002: 52, 55). Rather than a frontal assault on up to two thousand people, the Native Police preferred to attack smaller groups as they approached and departed the Bunya forests, a tactic the settlers regarded as successful (Evans 2002: 52-4).

In other instances Aboriginal knowledge of the environment was exploited to enable timber extraction. While the importance of Aboriginal people to the pastoral industry is well documented (c.f. Smith (2003), Powell (1998a: 22) for example reported that Aboriginal people in the region also provided both guidance and labour to timber-fellers in search of cedar and other valuable trees.

Apart from settler concerns about restrictions and Aboriginal resistance, hardly off-set by the European aesthetic values ascribed to the unusually symmetrical tree as noted by Frawley (1990: 15), *Bunya Scrub* is best understood as a ‘utilitarian image’ (Frawley 1990: 15), referring to high quality softwood of considerable commercial value. By 1900, after approximately fifty years of manual labour, the naturally occurring Bunya Pine, and particularly the Red Cedar (*Toona ciliata*) 32, had been reduced to remnant stands throughout the entire Mary Valley (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 23, Frawley 1990: 15). In 1927 two Gympie historians reported in reference to the many logs they had seen floating downstream on the river over the years:

["freshing"] has [recently] been prohibited. It was a wasteful method ... as many logs were lost... [B]ut as a license to cut as much pine or cedar as a man was capable of within twelve months could be obtained for [five pounds], the wastefulness did not so much effect the timbergetters [sic]. 33

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33 Stumm and Woolgar 1927: 53
From the heavily timbered upper reaches of the river, branded logs were floated nearly three hundred kilometres downstream to the port of Maryborough during ‘freshes’ – a period of increased river flow after rainfall. Additional to the transport of logs, ‘freshes’ also had a more literal meaning, in the sense of removing waste such as effluent, gold tailings and piles of sawdust waiting along the banks. Timber ‘freshing’ was wasteful, environmentally damaging and potentially dangerous for the raftsmen looking after the logs (c.f. Powell 1998b: 111, [no author] 1985: 70), and it also resulted in downstream log-jams which could threaten bridges. As an example of scale in the early 1880s, the owner of Kenilworth Station struck a deal with a Melbourne business to sell one million cubic meters of Red Cedar floating in the river between Gympie and Kenilworth (Pedley 1979: 68). Judith Powell (1998a: 25) reported in her forestry history of southeast Queensland that up to fifty per cent of the timber harvest had been lost in this way during the years 1867 and 1875. In 1889 too

George Mason of Maryborough had 1,000,000 super feet of cedar logs lying on the banks of the Mary River waiting to be freshed downstream to Tiaro, but they were lost “in floating up back waters and stranding and later being burnt by bushfires and by being washed out to sea” (Johnston in Powell 1998a: 30).

In contrast to the term ‘Bunya Scrub’, Vine Scrub appears to represent a view of forests less focused on commercial timber. With a pejorative meaning that remained mostly implicit, the term was widely used from the 1820s. In his autobiography, and well after he had become an outspoken conservationist, Stan Tutt (2000) portrayed his life as a vine scrub feller a century later in 1920s Moy Pocket along the upper reaches of the Mary River. Interestingly, he occasionally replaced the term ‘vine scrub’, as it was historically used, with the phrase he had come to prefer later in life: ‘climax vegetation … alive with the essence of green growth’ (e.g. 2000: 49-50). Yet in an honest manner he was quick to add that ‘[w]e had arrived to destroy it for two pounds eighteen shilling and sixpence an acre’ (2000: 50).

Tutt’s vivid descriptions of environmental attitudes, socio-economic developments and, exceptionally in terms of the historical record of the region, rural working-class poverty in the context of the Depression leading up to the Second World War, depict harsh and difficult living conditions. Part of a relatively transient and vulnerable workforce which depended on local farms

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34 Interview with a resident regarding local history, 01 March 2010, FN#19
36 Using the calculation for cylinder volume $V = \pi/4.(\text{diameter})^2 \cdot \text{height}$ and averages for logs of fifteen meters long and a diameter of one meter, one million cubic meters of Red Cedar is likely equivalent to more than 8000 logs.
37 Bill Gammage (historian), personal communication, e-mail, 24-25 May 2010; c.f. Peace (2009: 64).
and forests for both (short-term) jobs and supplements to their diet, he offers an insight into how, with consistent hard work but varying degrees of success, agricultural settlement and forestry enterprise were established in the Moy Pocket – Imbil area. The small farms were cut from the vine scrub, which threatened to regain cleared banana patches and agricultural plots, particularly where it harboured large amounts of wallabies and other sorts of ‘vermin’ (Tutt 2000: 39).

It was a time in which, as the historian Pedley (1979: 212-3) noted and Tutt (2000) confirmed, ‘a man stood or fell in the eyes of his fellows through his prowess with an axe’, with those individuals worthy of special honour capable of felling one acre of scrub per day. The big trees, Bunya and Red Cedar in particular, had by then been removed and broad scale clear-felling was used to improve selections for grazing and to make available more ‘scrub’ land for agricultural development and early forestry plantations. Such clearing became a long-term rigorous affair, and by the 1940s no longer included just a brush hook, axe and cross-cut saw, but as Tutt (2000: 80-1) remembered:

Yes, blowing stumps and big trees with gelly [gelignite, an explosive] was an art. …
We signed a contract to clear standing eucalypt forest for twenty-seven pounds an acre. That meant removing all trees, logs, branches and roots to a depth of eighteen inches. I remember there was a time limit, for they wanted to plant the land with pineapples by a certain date.

Up until at least the mid 1950s the same explosive was also used to fish the creeks and Mary River38, the values ascribed to endemic animals including turtles apparently still generally consistent with those already highlighted in the late 1920s. Rising unemployment and notions of ‘vermin’ had contributed to the winter of 1927 becoming an open season to trap koalas and possums for bounties. In their history of the Australian environmental movement, Hutton and Connors (1999: 43) reported that as result

[i]n one month over one million possums and over half a million koalas were killed by hunters for their skins - an onslaught from which the koalas have never fully recovered.

During the period 1877-1930 the Queensland Government assisted settlers to combat ‘vermin’ through various fauna Destruction Acts. They resulted in the mass slaughter of kangaroos, wallabies and koalas. Hrdina (1997: 272) reports that during the fifty-three years in which those Acts were in

38 Interview 23 June 2009, FN# 10
force in Queensland over twenty-seven million macropods, bandicoots, as well as dingoes and foxes, were destroyed for a return of bounties; adding up to a total Government stimulus package of over £1,187,000.

That the regulatory incentives were nevertheless confused is borne out by the introduction in 1914, in the midst of these marsupial destruction acts, of the Queensland Fish and Oyster Act, which, among other restrictions, completely banned the taking of female crabs and ‘Ceratodus’, a fish also known as the Australian or Queensland Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*)\(^{39}\). This fish had created a ‘furore’ among London zoologists in 1870 and was scientifically regarded as a ‘unique survivor of an ancient order’\(^{40}\), yet fed by local settlers only to their chooks and pigs\(^{41}\). Fishing techniques including the use of ubiquitous ‘explosive, poisonous or other noxious material’ were also banned, the Act giving inspectors far reaching powers to search premises, seize explosives, and arrest those employing such methods. ‘Murray Cod’, which was later shown to consist of three different species, including one endemic only to the Mary River, the ‘Mary River Cod’ (*Maccullochella peeli mariensis*)\(^{42}\), could only be taken when larger than fifteen inches.\(^{43}\) As much later oral accounts demonstrate however, this law was met with little adherence, and ‘gelignite’ fishing continued unhindered for at least another forty years.\(^{44}\)

### 2.4 Government Involvement

Notwithstanding certain attempts to contain unregulated natural resource exploitation through such legislation as the *Fish and Oyster Act* or the *State Forests and National Parks Act* of 1906\(^{45}\), including the much earlier 1842 Bunya Proclamation, the government was generally a ‘disposer’ of public lands, rather than a ‘manager’ (Frawley quoted in Powell 1998a: 18).

In terms of conservation, the Queensland Government had by 1870 begun, through a series of reserves, to set aside some of the timber resources, initially for railway construction (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 23). A later itemised ‘improvement’ account from a selector in the Mary Valley indicates how timber and land resources continued to be understood (Towner 1994: 7):  


\(^{41}\) Interview 23 June 2009, FN# 10


\(^{43}\) Fish and Oyster Act 1914, sections 12, 44, 44A and Schedule I&II.

\(^{44}\) Interview 23 June 2009, FN# 10

\(^{45}\) Frost 2004: 499
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Activity</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling house, hayshed and outbuildings</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 rods of post and rail fence</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringbarking 200 acres at 2/- per acre</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 acres scrubfelled at £5/acre</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 acres of scrub under cultivation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 acres grubbed, burned, cleared and prepared at £6/acre</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[TOTAL]</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practices that would later prove problematic therefore continued, as Powell (1998a: 18-9) noted:

Few settlers understood that the particular conditions of Australian eucalypt forests meant that removal of timber often encouraged the growth of useless woody weeds. Nor did the government consider that the waste of valuable timber resources on alienated Crown Land might have adverse consequences in the future. Trees were seen as an impediment to pastoral development and when considered as timber, the resource was thought of as virtually inexhaustible. It is hardly surprising that in such a climate, the early bunya protectorate decreed by Governor Gipps was revoked. … Government failure to regulate the felling of timber on freehold land, whether for grazing or for timber exploitation, combined with the progressive alienation of crown land to freehold is a constant theme in any history of forest use during the nineteenth and twentieth century in South East Queensland.

By 1868 the Crown Lands Alienation Act had been passed to further stimulate permanent settlement of Crown Land through more detailed requirements of ‘improvements’ and the compulsory resumptions of pastoral land, a move that impacted severely on the capacity of pastoralists to retain the large holdings they had created over the prior years. The required ‘improvements’ included new minimum monetary expenses, with activities such as clearing and fencing the main target, but they also focussed on water resources: dams, wells, reservoirs, tanks, troughs, artificial watercourses or watering places all became recognised improvements in law.46 In terms of mandatory resumptions

in the Mary Valley, Imbil Station was reduced from fifty to thirty-four square miles and all other contiguous stations suffered significantly (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 15, Pedley 1979: 57-71).

The legally sanctioned opinion that further improvements to such resumptions generally ought to include a form of timber clearing however was also challenged by organisations such as the *Acclimatisation Society of Queensland*, which demanded data on clearing rates and argued for forest conservation in the 1870s (Powell 1998a: 23-4). The more spiritual views such as those held by Ferdinand von Mueller, Colonial Botanist of Victoria, were also aired. In an 1871 lecture Mueller said (Hutton and Connors 1999: 51):

I regard the forests as a gift, entrusted to any of us only for transient care during a short space of time, to be surrendered to posterity again as an unimpaired property, with increased riches and augmented blessings, to pass a sacred patrimony from generation to generation.

Such sentiments however were the exception and, coming from the Colonial Botanist of Victoria, likely the result also of scientific interests. That would conform to the finding by Hutton and Connors (1999: 27) that:

[a]s an interest group it was the scientists, amazed at the uniqueness of the environment that they found themselves in and sensitive to its vulnerability, who were the first to call for the protection of special areas and species.  

In Queensland, as mentioned, some timber reserves were established in the 1870s, more to protect the future availability of railway sleepers than the natural environment itself. Near Gympie, 55,680 acres (22,533 hectares) were protected in that way but on the whole such reserves were ineffective and they had diminished in size by 1889 as a result of the unabated pressure of further settlement (Powell 1998a: 26, 31).

In the prevailing atmosphere of what was bluntly described as a ‘robber economy’ (Powell 1991: 53), it took another decade of increasing demands and dwindling supplies before in 1900 a dedicated forestry branch was created in the Queensland Department of Lands (Johnson and

47 See also, for example, the historical studies by Richard Grove (1992, 1995) on colonial botany and ‘the origins of western environmentalism’, and Richard Judd (2005) on the role of scientists in early American forest conservation. See Griffiths and Robin (1997) for additional historical research on the environmental history of settler societies.

48 The reserve near Gympie is not named but is most likely the Toolara Reserve east of Gympie.
It was an indication of the government’s intention to bring to an end a period characterised by lax and confused regulations of land tenure and natural resource development, and also a sign that the previously latent concerns about Australia’s environment were taking hold more broadly, in forms such as outdoor recreation, nature education and so on (c.f. Dunlap 1993, Hutton and Connors 1999, Mulligan and Hill 2001). Three years earlier in 1897 all land related acts in Queensland had already been repealed after a Royal Commission had investigated settlement related issues. Fifty-five years after the Bunya Proclamation in 1842, the resulting *Crown Lands Act of 1897* was another Government attempt to finally lay down settlement law (Powell 1998a: 37).

In the Mary Valley it was in 1907 that the government decided to act, declaring the first State Forest in Queensland, Reserve 135 at Brooloo (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 23). As indicated by the following newspaper report some fourteen years later, such reserves were highly controversial in the context of concurrent Government schemes for closer settlement and contested forms of land use:

> For quite a long time now there has been going on, in the rich regions of the south west of Gympie, what is colloquially known as the 'war of the Upper Mary Valley'. It would perhaps be more fitting to term the clash a mild vendetta. For it is after all, only a difference of opinion as to the best way to develop this notable portion of the State. The parties are settlers and potential settlers on the one hand, and the Queensland Forest service on the other; and the point at issue is the question whether the Brooloo State Forest and contiguous timber reserves, should remain as such or whether they should be thrown open to dairying and agricultural settlement.49

The author supported forestry, although he did find it necessary to counteract productivity concerns held by farmers by applying some the grand metaphors they themselves were employing in schemes for closer settlement: ‘the Brooloo Forest contains many areas which appear to be blackened waste... But look closer and you will see promise for the future’, he concluded (in Harris 1999: 46).

Forestry certainly was to become important, but agricultural pursuits in the Mary Valley also expanded rapidly, particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These new forms of land use however grew through increasing Government interventions at the expense of the pastoralists; the beef cattle producers who had obtained large holdings during the previous fifty years.

2.5 Pastoralism

While it took a number of years for interest in pastoralism to build up after the likes of Joliffe, Simpson and Eipper had reported on some of the area’s potential in the early 1840s, by 1851 large parts of the Bunya Scrub were held as pastoral leases. In the Mary Valley, John David MacTaggart for example owned the Bunya Creek, Bluff Plains and Police Creek leases, which together covered approximately 52,000 acres (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 15). Just to the south a 22,000 acre run called Kenilworth was held by Richard Joseph Smith in 1850 (his wife was reading Sir Walter Scott's novel 'Kenilworth' when he named it)\(^{50}\). The squatters, as they were called, in other words owned the Mary Valley (Pedley 1979: 17; c.f. Taylor 1968). The meaning of the term squatter shifted meaning as the pastoral industry developed, as Weaver (1996: 983) noted in his history of early to mid 19\(^{th}\) century settlement in Australia:

Initially, it had the conventional definition: someone who illegally occupied land. Early Australian usage went further and associated the squatter with the convict and bushranger (rustler), but by mid-century [i.e. the 1850s] it meant a wealthy pastoralist.

As the earliest professional surveyors’ map of the region was not produced until 1865\(^{51}\), their free, unregulated reign was also underscored by the boundary descriptions of their leases, which often included references to marked trees or vegetation patterns, the formalisation of which had already been of concern to Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell in 1836 (Stubbs and Specht 2002: 256). The Basin of Wijji Widgee run, central in the building up of what was later to become Widgee Station, one of the most notable in the Gympie area, was for example described as:

Commencing at a large gum tree, marked [symbol] on the west face of the left bank of the main Widgee Creek, about half a mile below the junction of the two branch creeks, and near where the scrub first joins the creek, below the gap leading from Woonga; thence west three miles; thence in a line parallel with the general course of the creek upwards eight miles; thence east to the creek, then down by the creek to the starting point (Pedley 1979: 57-8).

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\(^{50}\) Kenilworth Centenary Celebrations Committee (1950) [n.p.].

\(^{51}\) Survey of Part of the Mary River 1865 by Wilson, licensed surveyor, Map WB39 14; Gympie Library local history section.
While cattle roamed relatively free in the Mary Valley, drinking from the creeks and river, there were also the scattered calico-tent bush camps of solitary, armed and often violent timber-getters, similarly-spirited station workers, and, from 1870 to 1872, gold miners at Imbil Station (Pedley 1979: 17-8, 243; Johnson and Saunders 2007: 20, Evans 2002: 55-6; c.f. Tutt 2000). The historical relationship between the pastoralists and timber-getters in the Mary Valley has not been explored in much detail, but it seems likely they were strongly connected as pastoralists attempted to improve the carrying capacity of their leases with the assistance of axemen who ‘opened up the country’. Squatters were often timber-getters themselves. The Elworthy and Mellor brothers for example, who by 1873 owned Imbil Station, an amalgamation of the Bluff Plains and Bunya Creek leases, were also heavily involved in the red cedar trade. Setting an example to early diversification, they also tried mining, butchering, and regional supply services such as food, shelter, transport, and postal services at their station (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 15, 23; Pedley 1979: 62).

Many of the early pastoralists in other words were opportunistic businessmen. Some became wealthier, some became poorer. Politically organised and powerful in Queensland, notwithstanding the logistical and social difficulties associated with living and/or conducting a business in an area where few others had gone before, they seized opportunities wherever they arose (c.f. Taylor 1968). Such dynamics were locally evident in the number of property related transactions, which came in the form of amalgamations, resumptions, new leases, subdivisions, shares or outright sales. For example, three years after their successful application for the Widgee and Orange runs in 1849, the Tooth brothers sold out to their Sydney cousins having in that period acquired six other runs, their combined estate by then an area of seventy by one hundred miles. During the sixty-two years to 1911, when Widgee Station was finally subdivided into smaller lots for closer settlement, it had changed hands in one way or another ten times. Kenilworth Station similarly changed hands no less than five times during the first twenty-five years from 1850 (Pedley 1979: 58-60, 67-8).

Part of the ‘squattocracy’, many of these large landholding ‘cattle barons’ were businessmen with socio-economic and political networks far beyond the Mary Valley (Pedley 1979: 57, Cameron 2005: 4). Examples include James White, ‘a gentleman of Sydney’ who, due to disease among his cattle herd, sold Widgee Station in 1864 at a loss just twelve months after he had bought it, and ‘the Wienholt Estate Company’ which bought Widgee Station in 1895 and whose manager enjoyed lion hunts in Africa. There were also Thomas Holt, the son of a wool merchant from Leeds, who had to forfeit Traveston Station, where he had never lived, for non-payment of rent, and Isaac Moore, ‘a wealthy Victorian’ who bought Kenilworth Station in 1863 and soon added two contiguous runs, and so forth. Some of the early landholders also exhibited their wares far beyond the Mary Valley
market, with one farmer winning bronze at the 1886 Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London and another’s champion bull winning the 1877 Sydney Show (Pedley 1979: 29, 59, 64, 67, 182).

While some of their local land transactions were made to obtain profits, others were due to the negative financial consequences of floods and unpredictable weather, unsuccessful trials with sheep, cattle or crops, personal circumstances, or, at least in one case at Kenilworth, Aboriginal attack (Pedley 1979: 67). While the reasons varied, in general there was little stability or permanence to land ownership, a situation that changed only after the closer settlement schemes at the start of the First World War.

It was in the early period, in 1867, that another valuable natural resource was found lying in a tributary of the Mary River. The area was officially declared as the Upper Mary River Goldfield though it was locally known as either Gympie Creek or Nashville, a reference either to the Aboriginal name for the infamous endemic Gympie Gympie stinging tree (*Dendrocnide moroides*)\(^52\) or James Nash, the man accredited with the gold discovery (Holthouse 1973: 44).

### 2.6 Gold

Within four months of the discovery, five hundred and sixty business licenses and fifteen thousand miner's rights had been taken out (Holthouse 1973: 83). It was a classic rush and at its peak in 1901 the population of Gympie was just under twelve thousand.\(^53\) A pertinent example of the rush is illustrated by reactions to the news in Maryborough, about seventy kilometres to the north:

> Farmers walked off their land. The sugar harvest came to a standstill. The boiling-down works closed. Ships left without crews. The schooner *Rose* was already on her way down-river when her crew got the news and dived over the side to a man. There was nothing the captain could do but let the anchor and wait until an incoming ship lent him hands to get back up the river (Holthouse 1973: 42-3).

In light of the goldfield’s spectacular growth, land just to the south of Gympie in the Mary Valley was opened up for settlement, particularly for agriculture, in 1869. In combination with the Government resumptions of pastoral areas and their subsequent subdivision for closer settlement, the population in the Mary Valley from then on slowly grew.


\(^{53}\) Gympie Library (local history section): undated compilation of Gympie census data by Elaine Brown.
With the gold rush came also an increased use of local natural resources. The gold field itself used vast amounts of timber for mine props and fuel (Powell 1998a: 21) and much of the surrounding area was stripped as a result. The contaminated tailings produced by quartz crushing batteries also had major environmental effects, particularly because by 1903

[i]t was estimated that from 18,000 to 20,000 tons of tailings got into the river every month. … [T]he river was silting up to an alarming extent, the water polluted, and the bridges endangered. (Ramsey n.d.: 7).

The detrimental effects of these tailings became the impetus for the first documented major conflict surrounding the Mary River. This conflict over the years 1902 to 1907 included the two dominant mining companies in Gympie - Scottish Gympie Gold Mines Ltd and South Glanmire and Monkland Gold Mines Company - local government authorities both in Gympie and downstream, farmers, as well as the State government (Ramsay n.d.).

By 1907 the Scottish Gympie Gold Mines were alleged to have dumped a total of 500,000 tonnes of tailings directly into the river since their operations had begun. As a result, farmers downstream occasionally had the fences on the river flats covered by tailings during floods; their drinking and irrigation supplies were also under serious threat. An analyst from the Government Chemical Laboratory, engaged by Widgee Shire Council to provide advice on the water quality, concluded: ‘the sample was a hard water mixed with a considerable quantity of battery slimes. The mixture is, of course, not suitable for domestic or stock purposes’ (Ramsey n.d.: 10). The Chairman of the Widgee Shire Council observed himself that ‘when the river is at its ordinary level there is only a few inches of muddy fluid unfit for any purpose’ (Ibid: 13, see Plate 3).

Gympie City Council, which was surrounded by the much larger Widgee Shire Council, had devised a by-law in 1906 to prevent the mines from dumping mine tailings in the river, but, given the powerful economic role of the mining companies in Gympie, they were unwilling to enforce it. It took four years of meetings, expert reports, objections and legal advice before in 1907 the Widgee Shire Council, with financial support from some of the settlers along the river, intended to act. Gympie City Council however, citing financial concerns, responded it would not join, leading all other local authorities to make a joint deputation to the Queensland Government for its assistance. After such assistance was declined and the mining interests triumphed, the author disappointedly added the adjectives to his ‘History of a Great Unredressed Wrong’.
2.7 Agriculture and Closer Settlement

While those despondent early settlers downstream of the goldmines continued to worry about the future of their river flats and water supplies, in 1905 sufficient agricultural activity existed around the goldfields for the local newspaper’s special reporter to undertake a survey of the Gympie region’s farming and grazing industries. The growth of these industries was Queensland wide, with the total area under crops increasing by more than eleven thousand per cent in the forty years to 1901, from 1,600 hectares in 1860/1861 to 185,300 hectares in 1900/01 (Frawley in Powell 1998a: 36). Locally, the cleared upstream alluvial flats of the Mary River south of Gympie were quickly gaining a reputation as outstanding farming country. This was stimulated *inter alia* by the wealth created on the Gympie goldfields, the invention of the cream separator in the early 1880s, and Queensland’s Department of Agriculture programs such as the travelling dairies from 1889 to 1896 (Lake 1992: 1, Statham 1995: 5-6).

Notwithstanding an earlier reluctance to battle the dense vegetation on the part of goldminers, who, according to the Gympie residents Stumm and Woolgar (1927: 49), ‘looked with disdain upon anyone who had thoughts for the agricultural development of the country’, the Mary Valley was increasingly appreciated in terms reminiscent of those by the earlier local settler Loyan in the 19th century:

> The whole Wide Bay district was then an uninterrupted meadow of weaving grass on which the few stock could scarcely make an impression. Kangaroos and emus

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54 Gympie Times, 25 December 1902. From: Gympie Library, local history section.
hopped or ran lazily across the plains; ducks flew out of every waterhole and black swan was often met with; whilst the stately bustard strutted and puffed out its breast feathers as if indignant at the intrusion. Every tree appeared full of foliage and locust sang gleefully as if to welcome the white man to the New Arcadia. (Loyan in Holthouse 1973: 4-5)

With the use of words that echoed this earlier description, the 1905 journalist tasked with surveying the farms of the district also produced a glorious report. Interestingly however, he also provided a layer of additional information such as the socio-economic background of landholders and descriptions of their properties, while at the same time expressing a growing sense of permanence to settlement:

Unfortunately many residents of the town [of Gympie] and most people living at a distance are quite unaware of the beautiful scenery and prosperous homesteads, that lie within a day’s drive. Within ten miles of the Post Office can be found prosperous and well-cultivated farms, with areas comprising hundreds of acres, where dairying and general farming is carried on. Then there are the smaller farms from twenty acres upwards, many of which are situated on the goldfield, the homesteads on which show the prosperity of the owners, after probably years of thrift and hard graft. Again the homes of the miners can be seen with their one to five acre blocks, some fenced in with comfortable house, garden, patch of cultivation, etc., and others in all conditions down to where the family is living in skillion of the house to be erected. All these views prove the inherent love of man to the free country life, and the desire to own a piece of land that he can call his own and where he can make his home.55

Such visions of belonging through ownership of land and the appropriation of nature, both economically and ideologically, must be understood within the context of the much larger Australian project of ‘closer settlement’. This project was characterised by Cameron (2005: 1, 4) in his history of Queensland closer settlement as a ‘grandiose vision of an agrarian society … dominated by an independent and morally superior yeoman citizenry living on their own family farms’. The practical application of such grandiose visions however meant much hardship was endured by aspiring ‘yeoman’ farmers who lacked both the skills and resources to avoid poverty,

55 Gympie Times Special report 1905: 2
aspects of the project eventually labeled a ‘myth’, an ‘agrarian dream’ and ‘ignominious failure’ (Fry 1985, Cameron 2005, Johnson 2005: 1, c.f. Tutt 2000). Given the experimental circumstances and risks, early farming was above everything else characterised by diversity and adaptability. Food crops were varied and grown both for local markets and private consumption. The earliest local forms of such food production had been established along the creek flats outside Gympie by the Asian market gardeners who supplied and worked the goldfields in the late 1800s (Pedley 1979: 106), some of their Brassica vegetables (mustard and the like) still visible as hybrid weeds along watercourses today.\footnote{Interview 12 January 2009, FN# 2, and personal communication (e-mail) 02 August 2010. Eight species of the genus Brassica have been recorded as weeds in Western Australia, see ‘Plant Protection Society of WA’ website at: \url{http://members.iinet.net.au/~weeds/western_weeds/brassicaceae.htm} (accessed 01 August 2010). For an interesting archaeological study of a Chinese market garden site on the Palmer River Goldfield in north Queensland, including methods of irrigation, see Jack, Holmes and Curr (1984).}

At many farms in the Mary Valley the news reporter found maize and potatoes, the staple crops of the area, as well as dairy cows, pigs, chickens, horses and possibly some beef cattle too. A move towards more agriculture was already occurring, particularly because of the devastating effects of ‘redwater’, the disease caused by cattle ticks said to have reached northern Australia with a shipment of cattle from Java in the 1870s. The disease spread particularly fast during another natural hazard in Australia: drought. Following 1901-1902, known as the years of the Federation Drought, and as infected herds from the north were driven south to uninfected greener pastures, the disease had ravaged through the early farms of the Mary Valley leaving entire herds destroyed or decimated (Pedley 1979: 48; Gympie Times Special Reporter 1905).

And then there were the periodically occurring disastrous floods of the Mary River and its tributaries, so devastating to the early farmers that entire areas had to be abandoned in favour of higher ground (e.g. Johnson and Saunders 2007: 27). As a result, infamous floods such as those in 1893, 1898 and 1955 provide a persistent theme in local histories (e.g. Holthouse 1973, Pedley 1979).

By 1911 however, as a tribute to what had been achieved notwithstanding the socio-economic upheaval that followed such events, the local newspaper in Gympie decided another survey of the farming industry was warranted. By then the Mary Valley had gained such a reputation that it was no longer merged with others, as in the 1905 survey mentioned above, but accepted as an identifiable district of analysis. Importantly, work had that year started on a Mary Valley branch railway line from Gympie to Brooloo, paid for by both the State Government and Gympie City Council, and, able to transport people and products in quantities previously unthinkable, crucial to...
the further development of the area. In general, as noted by the historians Johnson and Saunders (2007), branch railways were highly regarded government initiatives to stimulate closer settlement and agricultural development; so much so that the railway portfolio was often held by the Secretary of Agriculture and Stock (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 35). The reporter therefore started his tour report of individual farms with the promise of advance:

No district round Gympie will excite the same interest during the next few years as that through which the Mary Valley railway line is now being built. Containing as does an immense area of agricultural land ready to put under the plough, valuable grazing and dairying lands, and untold timber wealth in its virgin forests and scrubs, it has all the requisites that make for progress and a prosperous settled agricultural community (Woolgar 1911: 1).

While the timber wealth was hardly untold, the economic possibilities associated with the railway line were significant indeed. The cattle barons, applying their business mentality, capitalised on the potential and subdivided areas of their land through which the railway was to be constructed and sold for closer settlement purposes the towns of the Mary Valley in existence today. On the 17th of March 1914 the Imbil Estate went up for auction, including fourteen thousand acres in fifty-seven farms. The Imbil township itself, about one hundred quarter-acre blocks, was also for sale. Its location was determined by infrastructure, yet couched in terms of natural progress:

The location seems an ideal one for the purpose, and as has already been observed, this central point in the estate on which the railway station is situated, could not have been better chosen to afford the facilities which close and comparatively close proximity to the iron horse, must render a valuable asset of any extensive area of country that is designed by nature for the purposes of closer settlement.57

In the same year the townships of Amamoor and Brooloo, railway stations along and at the end of the line respectively, were also created through subdivisions of larger properties, the town of Dagun a few years later in 1917 (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 39-42). Kandanga has a similar history although it was created at the cost of Bunya Creek’s demise, an earlier settlement nearby which was circumvented by the railway line even though a butcher, blacksmith and saddler had businesses there.

57 Gympie Times, 23 December 1913
The increased permanent presence of a labour force provided further impetus to the agricultural development of the area, as well as the timber industry. As Pedley (1979: 191) concluded ‘[t]he advent of the Mary Valley railway line sparked a period of almost feverish land development.’ Yet, in light of the agricultural and environmental difficulties it is likely that such developments, at least for the first few decades, did not lead to what we might consider as social stability. In other words, while the underlying freehold titles were gaining historical depth, the owners of such tenure were still relatively transient.\(^{58}\)

That the railway from Gympie terminated at Brooloo was a major blow to the farmers at Kenilworth, some twenty-five kilometers to the south. They had lobbied against Gympie for an extension of the railway line to develop their existing orientation to the southeast through the Caboolture-Kilcoy line. The Brooloo terminus ensured the exclusion of Kenilworth from those five towns unified through the line, and, importantly, it ensured the continuation of a socio-economic focus on Gympie of the area so defined (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 35)\(^{59}\).

Yet, that people from upstream Kenilworth were also connected with downstream communities was clear; they shared both the benefits and destruction of the Mary River. Floating cedar logs had long connected them and after the catastrophe of the 1893 flood Kenilworth Station had became an early warning base for settlers downstream, an effort reportedly frustrated by Government red-tape procedures (Woolgar 1904: 79). Farmers today, so they told me, expect floodwaters to take approximately twelve hours to reach the Tuchekoi-Kandanga area after heavy rain in the upper reaches south of Kenilworth.

Apart from such practical cooperation between farmers along the river, the development campaign for the railway, which had started as a local initiative by the Kandanga Farmers’ Association in 1901 (Towner 1994: 17), had resulted in the postulation of a regional Mary Valley agricultural identity, consequently in need of promotion and social confirmation:

> In the prevailing air of optimism a group of public-spirited valley residents came together in December 1918 and formed the Mary Valley Pastoral, Agricultural and Industrial Association. Discussion in early 1919 focused on the possibility of organising an annual show, with the inaugural event held in November the same

\(^{58}\) I have been unable to find relevant demographic data for the period described however.

\(^{59}\) The extension to Kenilworth was approved in 1920 but never built due to financial difficulties (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 35).
year. Henceforth, the Mary Valley Show loomed large in the district calendar.

(Johnson and Saunders 2007: 47)

2.8 Bananas, Pineapples and Dairies

Expanding agricultural production in the Mary Valley during the early 20th century was focused on bananas, pineapples and dairies. The small farmers and the numerous returned soldiers engaged in the banana industry however soon found themselves in difficulties with the emergence of devastating banana ‘rust’ infection caused by insects in the mid-1920s (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 47). Many of the frost-free hills used for bananas were subsequently replanted with pineapples, the demographic and social consequences of this disaster relatively absent from local agricultural histories that recorded simply that farmers changed crops after the banana industry ‘got it in the neck’ (Buchanan n.d.: 9, c.f. 15). The soils were still fertile and the next twenty years provided for enormous growth in ‘pines’, the dairy industry and other agricultural pursuits. By the early 1940s pawpaws, cucumbers, peas, cabbages, cauliflower, potatoes and oranges were also grown (Ibid: 48).

Much of the increase in agricultural production has historically been due to significant innovations such as the introduction of tick resistant cattle varieties, exotic grasses for cattle feed, the cream separator, agricultural chemicals, and, particularly post World War Two, the increasing availability of motorised transport and machinery. ‘Improved pastures’ for example, original grasslands into which African or South American grasses such as Rhodes Grass (Chloris gayana)60 or Paspalum (Paspalum dilatatum)61 and associated nitrogen-fixing legumes were introduced, were stimulated by the Queensland Government’s Pasture Improvement Committee, and were essential for the growth of the dairy industry in subtropical conditions (Ibid: 33 and Statham 1995: 16). Tellingly, one cultivated variety of Rhodes Grass is still referred to by the name ‘Pioneer’:

‘[i]t covers bare ground quickly and this ability makes it useful for combating soil erosion and as a pioneer pasture variety following the clearing of scrub land.’62

Local erosion nevertheless, of both river and creek banks but particularly of the steep bare soil in between rows of pineapples or macadamia trees, has remained a problem to today.63


63 E.g. Interview with a representative of the Department of Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), 16 June 2009, FN# 10.
The water supply needed to support the increasing number of crops and people too was of concern. The two biggest towns, Imbil and Kandanga, did not build weirs (small dams) in their creeks for drinking supplies until 1954 and 1960 respectively, but the introduction of electricity and the resulting increase in private water pumps in the mid 1940s undoubtedly put noticeable strain on the available water resources, particularly during drought, which was an immediate threat to the further agricultural development of the area. For that reason, in January 1945, the Gympie Times newspaper reported that local Widee Shire Council representatives had met in Gympie with the State Co-ordinator General and other members of Queensland’s Bureau of Investigation for Water Conservation and Irrigation. The Co-ordinator General, in agreement with the local representatives, was ‘very much impressed with possibilities for intense agricultural development in the Mary Valley which could be achieved by use of irrigation’. This meeting, and the inspection of the Mary Valley that had preceded it, were to have a lasting legacy in the region.

… [t]he inspection had been general but … certain possible weir sites on the headwaters of the Mary River at Conondale and Yabba Creek had been specially investigated. For the present, catchment areas were being sought where water could be impounded by use of low weirs… Both the above sites appeared ideally suited for the purpose. Although it was intended to start on the headwaters of the feeder streams, the weiring of the Mary River could be expected to follow.

Apparently due to sufficient rainfall the initiative lost traction subsequently, but when a serious drought caused three months of water restrictions to be applied to irrigation along the tributaries in 1951-1952, the urgency to build infrastructure for ‘water conservation’ was again dominating the local agenda. In support of the vocal Kandanga dairy farmers, the Gympie Times therefore ran the headline: ‘Weiring Mary River Tributaries: Scheme Would Provide Vast Food Bowl’. The development of primary industries and the extraction of natural resources, this time water, were again couched in ideological terms associated with natural human development:

It is a crime against nature that an article more precious than gold – as the present drought has unquestionably proved – has been allowed for so long to run to waste into Hervey Bay. … One only has to travel to Yabba Creek road (above Imbil

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64 Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines 2005: 19.
65 Gympie Times, 27 January 1945, p. 4
66 Gympie Times, 27 January 1945, p. 4
67 Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission 1959: 1
68 Gympie Times, 02 February 1952, p. 2
township) to realise how easily tributary waters, such as in that stream, can be locked and reserved as a servant of man and not allowed to remain an overflow of Nature running to the discard.69

Practically, the lobby group was in favour of rigorous alterations to all the tributaries in the Mary River catchment:

Thousands of three and four farm weirs could be constructed on the Mary’s tributaries for a fraction of the cost of these enormous dams [such as the Burdekin and Somerset dams]. 70

As a result, in defence of their decentralised and locally applied creek scheme, they resisted calls for a single large Government initiative they were likely to benefit little from:

A big dam on the Mary would submerge more richly productive land than it would serve with irrigation.71

A local campaign committee was set up, comprising farmers from Kandanga, Upper Kandanga, Amamoor, Bergins Pocket and Goomong, to lobby Gympie’s Chamber of Commerce and the Government’s Irrigation Commissioner. Despite their work and the appeal by the President of the Kandanga branch of the Queensland Dairyfarmers’ Organisation that ‘[e]very man and woman in the Mary Valley should see that he does all in his power to make these politicians to regard this scheme as a major project’, 72, a significant dam on a tributary in the Mary Valley was not completed until 1964 (Pedley 1979: 90). Nearly twenty years after it was first raised locally, and on the basis of which the State Government had funded several surveys, including one of thirty local dam and weir sites in the late 1950s, 73, the upper reaches of Yabba Creek west of Imbil were flooded to form Lake Borumba, the reservoir for the Mary Valley Irrigation Project.

The completion of the Borumba Dam on Yabba Creek in September 1964 allowed for irrigation to be increased to 18,000 acres in the Mary Valley alone. In November 1959 there had been 46 licensed pumps drawing water from the river system. With the new dam the number permissible now rose to 70, with bean growers among those

69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Gympie Times, 01 May 1952, p. 4
73 Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission 1959: 1, 7
who reaped the benefits. Large-scale irrigation at an unprecedented level also saw the emergence of new marketable crops such as eggfruit, avocados, rockmelons, capsicums and passionfruit. This was the high point of production (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 48).74

The dairy industry however, as the main proponent of the irrigation scheme for nearly twenty years, only had a handful of additional years to enjoy the reliability of the new supply. In her history of the Queensland Dairyfarmers’ Organisation (QDO), Statham (1995: 70) concluded that by the early 1970s again

[a]t least two-thirds of Queensland suffered crippling drought and many farmers were still on their knees, there was no remedy in sight for the cost-of-production-versus-returns problem, delays with federal dairy reconstruction plans added to farmers’ despondency and insecurity, Britain was making a determined bid to enter the EEC, production in Victoria was getting out of hand, federal government demands for controls on mounting butter production became more insistent and the domestic butter market remained under massive pressure from margarine.

The market in Britain, the dairy industry’s most important and secure trade relation for over a hundred years, ended with Britain’s entry into the European Economic Community (EEC); the last Australian shipment of butter and cheese taking place in 1972 (Statham 1995: 75). Thirty-eight per cent of all southeast Queensland dairy farms ceased operations between the years 1970 and 1974. It therefore appears many farmers decided, already motivated to do so through the Federal Government’s Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme of 1970, which subsidised the amalgamation of unprofitable dairy farms, to opt for the latter option in the prevailing push to ‘get big or get out’ (Ibid, p.70, 71, 82). Statham (1995: 82) further reported that 52.6 per cent of the dairy farmers moved into beef production, and almost twenty per cent into non-agricultural work in the cities. As in other Australian dairy regions, the industry’s collapse caused another period of major socio-economic upheaval in the Mary Valley, introducing a period in which agricultural enterprise as a whole would become increasingly difficult, a situation exacerbated in particular by the attraction of financial security and retirement offered to those landholders willing to subdivide

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74 On pump numbers, the Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission (1959: 5) reported significantly higher than this. It said that there were ‘at present some 132 pumps licensed to irrigate an area of some 2,800 acres. Of these 86 pumps licensed to irrigate 1,700 acres are below the junction with of Yabba Creek. On Yabba Creek itself a further 22 pumps licensed to irrigate 400 acres are located.’
and sell their agricultural land for rural residential purposes (c.f. Statham 1995, O’Keeffe & McDonald 1994).

2.9 Industry Decline and Rural Residential Development

The Mary Valley beef industry initially profited most from the dairy industry’s demise (c.f. O’Keeffe & McDonald 1994: 4). It too however was about to contract as a result of the collapse of the main beef market in Japan in 1974 (Barry, Topp and Reynolds 1993). The local results of subsequent (grazing) property transactions were often some type of land use change. Rural residential developments increased, but it also allowed for new forms of horticulture to be introduced to the Mary Valley and surrounds, often in corporate ownership, particularly in the form of macadamia plantations.

The socio-economic trend set in the Mary Valley of the late 1960s therefore continues in the 1970s, one in which areas of agricultural land, worked since the progressive clearing of fertile ‘scrub’ land during the preceding century but in places already much exhausted, were subdivided into rural residential blocks too small for profitable farms. Starting in the 1970s, for the first time in the history of the area newcomers largely had urban backgrounds and were drawn to the region not for reasons associated with local primary industries, but for a rural ‘lifestyle’ and/or retirement (for industry details see e.g. Barr 2004, Barr, Karunaratne and Wilkinson 2005, National Land and Water Resources Audit 2001). In their Mary River catchment land-use study which critiques that development from an environmental planning perspective, O’Keeffe and McDonald (1994: 12, 13) described the results of their mail survey of landholders and understood the reasons to be as follows:

The rural residential trend is a result of a number of factors, including changing social aspirations and values of the community, increased mobility from the car and telecommunications, which allow these aspirations to be pursued. Commonly cited factors which influence people’s decisions to purchase and live on rural blocks include the notion of the ‘Australian Dream’ (large house on large block); avoidance of problems of suburban and city life; natural surroundings; and self-sufficiency (SEQ2001, 1993: ii; Scarpato, 1993). … [It is about] the prospect of realising a dream regardless of the rural residential position taken by the local government.

75 Interview with a representative of the Department of Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), 16 June 2009, FN# 10
76 This entailed a random sample of 398 landholders who owned a rural block in the Mary River catchment between 4000² and 30 hectares in size (total population size 6964). They received 252 valid responses to the questionnaire; a response rate of 63.32% (O’Keeffe and McDonald 1994: 20-21).
Rural residential living allows a lifestyle which expresses personal philosophies, diminishes constraints associated with townlife, and the promise of greater freedom of choice.

While I am supportive of such cultural viewpoints, the use of such references as ‘philosophies’ and ‘the Australian Dream’ could form the bases of further qualitative research. This could focus, as I attempt to do here, in more detail on such matters as local motivations and practices, and, in particular, on the manner in which the observed changes in engagement with the natural environment can be understood within culturally contested visions of land use and nature, historically based in both the broader society and local circumstances.77

2.10 The Mary Valley: Land Use, Identity and Place

As the white settler population in the upper reaches of the Mary River obtained a more permanent and sedentary character in the 1910s, organised efforts by local entrepreneurs to lobby the local and State Governments for further development, particularly for the Mary Valley Railway, provided an early articulation of regional identity placed in the local physical environment. In an early sketch of the railway route the term ‘Valley of the Mary Railway’ was still offered78, but by 1912, when town blocks at Kandanga were for sale, the local newspaper referred to the nearby ‘Mary Valley Railway’ as the main drawing card.79 After the name Mary Valley had become firmly associated with the railway through local campaigning, media attention and Government engagement, it was also incorporated into other forms of regional development initiatives, the most notable being the annual celebrations of agricultural achievement at the Mary Valley Show, organised by the Mary Valley Pastoral, Agricultural and Industrial Association, established in 1918. Held in Imbil, the annual Show remains to today.

The Mary Valley as a socio-economic ‘campaign’ thus became an area identified as that encompassing the group of closer settlement towns along a forty-five kilometre long railway line, distinct enough from the rest of the river’s course to be recognised. As noted at the start of this chapter, place is defined socially as well as physically. Kenilworth, separated by hills from Brooloo, excluded from the railway, historically part of a different local government area, and socio-economically oriented towards a different regional centre (Nambour), yet sharing the natural


78 Towner 1994: 18

79 Ibid: 25
resources of the river, forests and agricultural flats, remained to a large degree excluded from the *Mary Valley* definition of place. Downstream from Gympie however, the distinctions with the Mary Valley were much easier recognised. Regionally focussed on beef, less fertile, but with sugar cane along the river north of Tiaro to Maryborough, it is the driest, least undulating part of the Mary River catchment. Most of it is in a different local government area and historically focussed on the regional centre of Maryborough. Distinctive downstream economic activities further include commercial fishing in the saltwater part of the Mary River and, most importantly, the trade, transport and manufacturing industries associated with the port.

In terms of distinction and similarity, the road officially gazetted as the *Gympie-Brooloo Road*, which is the northern section of a one hundred kilometre long road connecting Gympie with Maleny in the south, locally referred to as the *Mary Valley Highway*, and with street signs saying *Mary Valley Road*, is also worthy of attention. In many ways the road provided the Mary Valley with an opportunity to symbolically confirm its regionally placed identity first articulated through the railway line. Poignantly, near the Range that separates Brooloo from Kenilworth, the road sign changes from *Mary Valley Road* into *Kenilworth-Brooloo Road*. 80 Such a naming practice articulates physical boundaries to an emplaced regional identity, making explicit at the Range the exclusion of the upper reaches south from Kenilworth. Frustrated, the Kenilworth Centenary Celebrations Committee concluded in its booklet of 1950:

> [The Upper Mary Valley District's] fertility is of a very high standard, and the total of it production of cattle, farm and dairy produce, fruit and vegetables and minerals etc. will compare in value per acre with most places; but is not credited with its production, there being no rail or main road connection to anywhere. ... For if this country was connected by good road or rail, the public would know of the existence of such good country; and the hue and cry of a land-hungry population might force the Government to alter its policy. 81

Other important regional infrastructure developments that further confirmed the symbolic definition of place included the forestry plantations in the western ranges and Borumba Dam on Yabba Creek. Borumba was the centre piece in the State Government’s firm commitment to the ‘*Mary Valley*
Irrigation Project\textsuperscript{82}, in which regions upstream from Yabba Creek were not included. The \textit{Mary Valley Forestry Management Area} in contrast spans an enormous area covering parts of several local government areas, including Jimna in the south and the Brooyar forest in the northwest, but has an office in Imbil.\textsuperscript{83} Local forestry districts may also be referred to by using town names; as in the relatively recent (1992) Government forestry ‘Management plan for the Imbil District of the Queensland Forest Service (excluding the Conondale Range)’ (italics added)\textsuperscript{84}.

Such titles hint at regional administrative categories drawn onto the landscape, in the case of the \textit{Mary Valley} locally supported and externally mostly accepted, but also to more localised, co-existing place related relationships centred around townships such as Imbil or Kandanga, or even a particular river or creek flat. Historically, closer settlement schemes had resulted in small towns, each in a separate catchment along one of the tributaries of the Mary River (see Map 7). Within those smaller creek catchments and valleys, the towns developed their own sets of services: sawmills, retail outlets and community organisations involved in churches, schools, sports clubs and hall committees. On a smaller level yet, there were, and continue to be, further identified localities of agricultural flats along the main river, such as Moy Pocket, Bollier, Tuchekoi, Bergins Pocket, Goomong, Lagoon Pocket and Long Flat, some of which had a school or community hall at some stage in their history.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map7.png}
\caption{Map 7 Mary Valley towns separated in creek catchments\textsuperscript{85}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{82} Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission (1959)
\textsuperscript{83} Forestry Plantations Queensland and Forestry Plantations Queensland Office 2007: 8-9
\textsuperscript{84} Queensland Department of Forestry (1992)
\textsuperscript{85} Drawings by author.
Compared to the transient and scattered presence of early white settlers, closer settlement schemes provided for more permanence and local initiatives beyond the hotel, post office or blacksmith previously based at cattle stations. The town halls, often donated by local notables, were erected with a sense of social responsibility and town-based community organisations soon flourished. In 1914 for example, as a creek-catchment lobby group, the ‘Kandanga District Progress Association’ was formed (Towner 1994: 28) while by 1920, Kandanga, much like the other settlements in neighbouring catchments, had its own school, rugby team, Church, cemetery, war memorial, ‘minstrel group’ and so on (Towner 1994, Johnson and Saunders 2007). The amount of schools which ‘sprouted throughout the district’ (Johnson and Saunders 2007: 41) fluctuated according to population levels, but at its peak in the 1960s, in another symbolic expression of regional identity, the Mary Valley Primary School’s Sporting Association was formed which initially included twelve schools within a twenty kilometre radius from Kandanga: Traveston, Borumba Dam, Lagoon Pocket, Brooloo, Amamoor Forest Station, Carters Ridge, Dagun, Amamoor, Calico Creek, Kandanga Creek, Imbil and Kandanga, but which by the 1980s had been reduced to the five from Imbil, Dagun, Amamoor, Kandanga Creek and Kandanga itself (McKay and Towner 1990: 30).

That by the 1980s many of the region’s schools had closed was the result also of changes in population and land use that had started to appear from the late 1960s and early 1970s. As primary producers sold out to avoid or repay debts, rural residential subdivisions were often bought by urban retirees without school-aged children (c.f. O’Keeffe and McDonald 1994). In contrast to the earlier landholders who were progressively retiring or relocating, local town affiliations were less important to those new landholders with urban social networks and not involved in agricultural or forestry activities.

Environmentally, this was a time in Australia’s history also characterised by the public incorporation of more non-utilitarian, ‘ecological’, concepts of the endemic natural environment through well-covered events such as the Fraser Island Defenders Organization and the Save the Barrier Reef campaigns in Queensland and the anti-dam campaign by the Save Lake Pedder National Park Committee in Tasmania in the late 1960s and early 1970s, culminating in the socio-
political spectacle of the anti-dam *Let the Franklin Run Free* campaign in Tasmania from 1978 to 1983 (Hutton and Connors 1999: 103, Haynes 2003, 2006)\(^90\). In that backlight the Mary Valley, not only as an expression of historically emplaced identity and as a symbol for regional economic development, but also as a new reference to nature and lifestyle, set in a particular rural residential environment including a river, slowly gained a renewed appreciation. In April 2006, when people supporting such views had locally grown up or gradually moved into the valley over the past three to four decades, the Queensland Government announced its proposal to flood the majority of the Mary Valley by building the Traveston Crossing Dam near Kandanga on the Mary River.

While up until at least 1952 the failure to build thousands of weirs on the Mary’s tributaries was reported ‘a crime against nature’, by 2006 local environmental attitudes and visions of nature had clearly changed drastically. About eight months later, a regional economic scoping/impact study completed for the State, perhaps because it ignored local reactions that had been apparent since the day following the announcement, concluded mistakenly: ‘[t]here are a number of hobby farmers whose main income is derived off-farm, and their intentions are unknown.’\(^91\)

\(^{90}\) See also: [http://www.lakepedder.org/resources/reports/GovernmentBackgroundFranklin.htm](http://www.lakepedder.org/resources/reports/GovernmentBackgroundFranklin.htm) (accessed 23 July 2010).

\(^{91}\) ACIL Tasman 2007: 22
Chapter 3  Save the Mary: A Socio-cultural Analysis of the Anti-dam Campaign

3.1  Introduction

On Thursday 27 April 2006, during a drought that was causing increasing levels of water restriction and a sense of water crisis in the metropolis of Brisbane (Troy 2008), the former Queensland Premier Peter Beattie and his Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water Henry Palaszczuk, released a topical joint ministerial statement. In it they announced they had visited the nominated ‘Traveston district’, about one hundred and seventy kilometres north of Brisbane, for the location of a ‘Mary River Dam’. The proposal was described as ‘essential for the south east corner of our State – especially the Cooloolaa region as well as the burgeoning Sunshine Coast’92. By the time of the release telephones were already ringing frantically on the farms and residential properties in the Mary Valley. Local radio had brought news of the unexpected visit by Peter Beattie and his helicopter tour above the Mary River with the local Mayor. The message of a large dam on the river in the ‘Traveston district’, even though that name was confusing because the town of Traveston is a number of kilometres to the east of the river and not generally associated with it, was quickly translated as a reference to one of only a few publicly accessible places on the river, Traveston Crossing, locally also known as ‘Travie Crossing’ or just ‘Travie’, the old river crossing and swimming hole long used by Mary Valley residents for recreation and public enjoyment. The exact location however was unclear.

One of the farm residents close to what was later interpreted as the planned site of a sixty meter high and one kilometre long concrete wall93 heard about the proposal for the first time while at work.94 It is fair to conclude on the basis of the available public record, and also my later interviews and general conversations with people affected, that there was local bewilderment and disbelief after an announcement of such magnitude was made so suddenly and with so little detail relevant to landholders. Politically, the government’s choice of the site included little risk, with the electoral seat of Gympie, in which the dam wall was to be built, held since 2001 by the ultra-conservative former One Nation Party, turned independent, Elisa Roberts. Beattie’s Labor government was unlikely to win this seat in the next election, and something needed to be done about the blatant, and

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93 SunWater (2007a: ii) later indicated a height of 52 meters above its lowest point and a length of 760m.
94 Interview 12 January 2009, FN# 2
politically hurting, lack of urban water security (Spearrit 2008). That election, an early one held in September that year, was not announced until the 15th of August. These political circumstances became persistent themes in local explanations for the dam proposal (Hales 2009).

Beattie’s subsequent election campaign included a strong focus on water issues and saw, for instance, the release of a Government strategy entitled ‘Water for Queensland: a long-term solution’, to be realised with the involvement also of the Queensland Water Commission created two months earlier. Tellingly, Beattie’s initiatives promoted a water management system referred to with an almost utopian pro-development phrase as the ‘water grid’. We might interpret this terminology as encompassing latent assumptions about the ultimate large scale human domestication of nature’s essential fluidity (Strang 2004, 2006). Beattie eventually went on to win the election for a momentous fourth consecutive time.

The immediate local questions about exact locations, flood maps and impacts on livelihoods were unsurprising, but the joint Ministerial Media Statement added only information of a mechanical-engineering nature with the comment that the dam’s ‘projected storage capacity’ was estimated at 660,000 megalitres, possibly covering an area of 7,600 hectares, and intended to ‘boost Queensland’s water supply system’. As a result, the expressed commitment that the State would ‘obviously work closely with the local community throughout any process’ had in the view of locals already been undermined (Hales 2009).

Echoing provocatively, but perhaps unwittingly, the history of nearby Gympie, ‘the town that saved Queensland’ when its goldfield had provided much needed finance to the struggling young State in 1867 (Edwards 2008), and the words of the local Kandanga dairy farmers in 1952, who spoke of water as ‘an article more precious than gold … [to] be locked and reserved as a servant of man’.

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95 In the worst drought on record to that date, the combined dam levels which provide the main source of drinking water in southeast Queensland dwindled to below 17% in August 2007, with Wivenhoe Dam, the largest by far, at a historic low of 15.2% (see media reports at e.g. http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/features/dams-reach-record-lows/story-e6freoyo-1111114148949 accessed 09 August 2010). In terms of the Gympie electorate, the conservative block, Elisa Roberts (independent, 33.44%), the National Party of Australia (24.88%) and the One Nation Party (5.58%) held 63.86% of the votes, compared to 25.72% for the Labor Party and 3.88% for the Greens Party (Electoral Commission Queensland 2004: C37). The Gympie seat, inter alia because of its support for the One Nation Party established by the notoriously xenophobic Pauline Hanson, was by then described in the national media as ‘the home of opposition to tightened gun laws, and as the birthplace of right-wing political parties’ (ABC Election News online at: http://www.abc.net.au/elections/qld/2004/background/gymp.htm accessed 09 August 2010).

96 The day after he announced the election Beattie promised $500 million worth of water projects, indicating the water grid was envisaged to become an infrastructural system of pipelines and dams covering the entire State. See: http://abc.gov.au/news/stories/2006/08/16/1716729.htm (accessed 09 August 2010).


98 Gympie Times, 02 February 1952, p. 2
Beattie referred to the need for ‘liquid gold’ (see also Hill 1946 on irrigation history and turning ‘water into gold’). More water was needed because ‘ensuring we had adequate supplies to support population growth and development was one of the great challenges the [Queensland] State faced’. 99 This challenge to simultaneously support development and manage the available natural resources was hardly new. Rather, as argued in Chapter 2, the Mary Valley is physically and socio-economically best understood within this important historical theme of the region and Queensland more broadly. The frontier metaphors of development however carried little weight with those residents who had moved into the region for lifestyle purposes since the 1970s.

Picking up their address books after they heard the news, local residents called those they knew best first: neighbours, close friends and family. That day, it seems, everybody knew; the time and place of receiving the news graphically etched into many minds like a ‘JFK’ or ‘9/11’ moment. 100 Existing social networks were called upon and groups of people met separately the next day. A rally was held at the Kandanga Oval a few days later - the best attended event in Kandanga’s history - and in a short time the Save The Mary River Coordinating Group Incorporated (STMRCG) was formed. 101 Locally referred to as ‘Save the Mary’, the scene for a conflict that was to last three and a half years was set.

This chapter discusses various socio-cultural aspects of the campaign to stop the dam proposal. It provides the descriptive and analytical context for the analysis of further issues such as artistic and scientific representations of the river, local naming practices and the role of various kinds of knowledge in the following chapters. It is impossible to include all important details of the conflict - personal, practical or otherwise. I focus on fieldwork examples most pertinent to the topics of anthropological interest: community identity, emplacement, belonging and the mobilisation of symbols as part of a political strategy. I also hope to convey in my writing about the campaign those important aspects more difficult to describe: a sense, for example, of complexity and novelty, of uncertainty, opportunism and suspense, emotions and commitment, the adequate integration of which I find challenging to achieve. My notes and memories of the campaign certainly include all the above, made tangible particularly as a result of longer term fieldwork and participant-observation.

99 Queensland Government Ministerial Media Statements, 27 April 2006
100 For interesting work on the relationships between place, memory and trauma, see e.g. Dawson (2005) and Osborne (2001).
101 For some of the early details see Rob Hales’ PhD (2009) on the campaign in the context of political performativity, local empowerment and environmental change, based on research during 2006-2008.
For example, the commitment and sacrifice non-verbally expressed when quietly walking through a deeply cherished but, because of campaign commitments, completely wilted vegetable garden of twenty years with a saddened but persistent activist were important to my understanding of the campaign. Other salient examples included the case of semi-retired newcomers on a bush block, who had continued to voluntarily mow the grass at a small and since the announcement unused nearby public park ‘in defiance of what’s going on here’. Or a woman in her mid fifties who had grown up on a local dairy farm, and who pointed out the ‘golden tree’ and the ‘treasure tree’ there, named when she planted them with her godson’s little brother twenty years ago and which were ‘the first thing I thought about’ when she heard the dam announcement, and how she suddenly cried when we walked back over the flats, away from the specific rocks, ‘the bend’ and the trees along the river, the ‘lovely’ places she used to wander as a child. These were poignant observable examples both of the ways in which people reacted to the dam proposal, and the ways in which activists and other local residents in the Mary Valley may engage with the natural environment, practice a sense of community, or express an emplaced form of identity.

I attempt, in other words, to write an account of the campaign which is informed by general analytical concepts and social categories, statistics even, but which also portrays the variety and meaningful details of expressions and practices encountered during ethnographic fieldwork.

Another important introductory comment to make is that, given the focus of this chapter on activists involved in the campaign, it might implicitly be concluded that local reactions to the dam were uniform or consistent. This was not the case. There were supporters of the dam, particularly in the city of Gympie, who interpreted the proposal as an economic opportunity to change the socio-economic ranking of the region, which by 2007 was the worst in terms of poverty in Queensland (Mangan and Stephen 2007: 22). In these circumstances there were also those primary producers close to retirement but without the funds to support it (see Chapter 2). Selling land, although preferably not for this reason, was always an important option to them. Then there were those in the surrounding region who remained undecided and inactive, in the process accepting preparations for the dam to proceed. There were also those who opposed the dam but sold their properties regardless because it made sense, emotionally, economically or otherwise.

These variations, while not an exhaustive list of local reactions, may serve to introduce my argument that the campaign was not only a scientific debate about the environmental impacts of the

102 The region referred to here is the Wide Bay federal electorate, which includes the area from Moy Pocket in the south, to Fraser Island in the north (including Maryborough but excluding Hervey Bay). See Map 9 at page 151.
proposal. As a form of locally organised protest, in the context of socio-economic diversity and the variety of reactions to the proposal, it was also informed by the delicate symbolic politics surrounding notions of community identity, emplacement and belonging.\textsuperscript{103} Additional to the dominance of a scientific approach is the symbolic mobilisation during the campaign of iconic endemic species such as the Australian Lungfish (\textit{Neoceratodus forsteri})\textsuperscript{104}, which is accorded Aboriginal ‘totemic’ and ‘sacred’ significance by some. Such aspects of this conflict can usefully be understood within a socio-cultural analysis of the campaign.

On a weekly basis campaign strategies and actions were formally discussed by a core group of about a dozen activists who together formed ‘the Committee’. When Kevin Ingersole, a retired Sydney business manager and President of the organisation from 2006 to the end of 2008, briefly spoke to co-campaigners at \textit{Travie Crossing} in preparation to go live on State television in November 2008, he reiterated his focus on evidence capable of convincingly, and, importantly, respectfully, speaking to the ‘mums and dads in Brisbane’. He was reminding the activists of what he later described as ‘the rule of engagement’\textsuperscript{105}.

The first section below discusses the manner in which the campaign was initiated, subsequently managed, and locally interpreted. This serves to introduce the main organisational aspects of the campaign in light of the area’s social diversity. The internal workings of the campaign, I argue, reflect the broader changes in socio-economics and environmental engagement that had taken place in the region since the 1960s-70s. In line with the decline of agricultural businesses in Australia more generally (Barr, Karunaratne and Wilkinson 2005), but in the absence of substantial local economic diversification beyond the subdivision of paddocks, by 2007 the once exceptional agricultural region became statistically characterised as ‘an area of particular [socio-economic] vulnerability, poorer health, a higher than Queensland average level of unemployment, and modest level of economic resources across the region’ (SKM 2007: 15-32)\textsuperscript{106}. In terms of the ‘Socio-Economic Indices for Areas’ employed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the rural residential


\textsuperscript{104} See e.g. the website of the Australian Museum in Sydney at: \url{http://www.austmus.gov.au/fishes/fishfacts/fish/nforsteri.htm} (accessed 14 August 2008).

\textsuperscript{105} Observation 25 November 2008, FN\# 1, and Interview 29 January 2009, FN\# 5

\textsuperscript{106} The Environmental Impact Statement by the dam proponent included a Social Impact Assessment. The relevant statistical analyses contained in the supplementary report are based on the 2006 national Census of Population and Housing by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Despite the misalignment of the ABS Census Collection District (CCD) boundaries and the area of the Mary Valley (or the area impacted by inundation for that matter), and some possible discussion about which CCD’s to include in statistical analyses, I found the data to compare well with my own analysis of the census material. Both the initial report and the supplementary report included the error however that the average employment rate in the area was higher than the Queensland average (compare SKM 2008: C20-22).
areas around Imbil and Brooloo were of particular concern because it was found to be a ‘locality in the lowest ten percent for Queensland and indicating the potential for areas of severe disadvantage’ (SKM 2008: C20-21). The statistics in the proponent’s Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) however are not used, by and large, to speak to the quality and dynamics of locally emplaced identity and social interaction.

Generally speaking, (urban) newcomers not involved in primary industries had maintained a degree of social separation from multi-generational local families and the remaining farmers around them. They were part of what geographers have aptly described in a largely peri-urban context as a process of ‘counter-urbanisation’ (c.f. Mitchell 2002; Walmsley, Epps and Duncan 1998), or ‘amenity migration’ and the development of ‘exurbia’ (c.f. Taylor 2009, Cadieux & Hurley 2009). Social diversity had to be recognised and drawn upon for the campaign to enjoy wide local support. It also had to overcome varying degrees of distrust and suspicion among long term residents towards those urban newcomers now campaigning on behalf of ‘the community’.107 This was particularly evident in the elaborate narratives that had developed two years later about a couple involved in the establishment of the campaign.

The second part of this chapter deals in more detail with the symbolic politics involving the negotiation of community identity. Attention is paid to the latent tensions surrounding local politics and relationships to land, which contributed to the need for a multifaceted approach to the campaign’s organisation. Generally, a degree of responsiveness and improvisation was required to adapt the tone and appearance of the campaign according to the audience (Peace 1999, Checker 2001). In practice, it was a much debated exercise to avoid what were regarded as alienating, too radical and emotive images: ‘Greenies’ too far to the political left and ‘Rednecks’ too far to the right. In that attempt the organisers adopted bureaucratic processes to assist in the creation of a degree of impersonality and political neutrality, a sense of respectability that could appeal to those on all sides of politics (c.f. Hutton & Connors 1999). Notwithstanding their resistance to the Queensland Labor Party initiative to dam the river, many activists publicly maintained the campaign was non-political. Remarkably, and this was a key to its success, the more noticeable threat to this suspension of disbelief caused by the two State elections held during the course of the

107 See Strang (2006b) for a discussion of the shift from farming to residential development and recreational land-use and the consequences of this shift for the social and cultural landscape along the Brisbane River to the south of the study region.
campaign did not cause irreparable damage to the campaign. Only once did I see a seriously frustrated fist hit the meeting table in Kandanga.  

The rational bureaucratic approach simultaneously supported a scientific, legalistic focus. The adoption of bureaucratic procedures itself can also be interpreted, as per Harrison (1999: 245), as ‘acts of subversion, defiance and resistance, in which the marginalised seek to adopt the practices of the powerful in such a way as to challenge or undermine their dominance.’ While this was broadly true, this approach did not exclude or ignore the role of emotion, as will be shown in the third part of the chapter, nor were the activists necessarily marginalised. The importance of bringing structure to local diversity and the ways in which local skills could be brought to bear were arguably recognised from the start, for the inclusion of the word ‘coordinating’ in the organisation’s name can be seen as an implicit recognition of those circumstances.

Following a discussion of the role of emotion, attention is turned to the manner in which questions of belonging became evident in the context of the campaign. Certain criteria were implicitly employed when such issues were at stake, criteria mostly based on ancestry and practical experience, and which give substance to the meaning of ‘being local’. Within the campaign these were also linked to questions of emplaced authority and the ways in which people could speak on behalf of the affected area, particularly noticeable at small town-hall public meetings during which local interactions were most immediate and personal. In Australia generally, with a history of indigenous dispossession and contemporary Indigenous land issues such as native title, land rights and cultural heritage protection, the assertion of emplaced moral authority by settler-descendants also speaks to the meaning and practice of indigeneity more broadly (e.g. Dominy 1995, 2001; Mulcock 2008; Trigger 2008a, 2008b), a topic discussed in the final part of the chapter.

In the context of the campaign and Aboriginal participation, the signing of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) by an Aboriginal party in 2008, which gave approval for the project to proceed by those who asserted native title interests, provoked tension not just between campaigners  

108 Although internal conflicts occurred intermittently, with one informant for example reporting that on the way to the Brisbane protest at the Queensland Labor Party’s State Convention in 2007 ‘there almost was a fight on the bus between a farmer and a homosexual guy about [the derogatory comments made by the farmer about] Aboriginal people’; a pertinent description of social difference indeed.

109 See the general details of the ILUA, though not the terms of the actual agreement which always remain confidential, on the website of the National Native Title Tribunal at: http://www.nntt.gov.au/Indigenous-Land-Use-Agreements/Search-Registered-ILUAs/Pages/Traveston_Crossing_DamILUA_QI2007_003.aspx (accessed 15 September 2010).
and the Aboriginal party, but also among Aboriginal factions. The dam proposal in that sense confronted settler-descendants including both long-term residents and newcomers to the area, as well as Aboriginal people with the need to negotiate novel and contested forms of community, emplacement and belonging.

3.2 Organising the Campaign: Community Activists and Strategies

Establishment Stories
At the start of my fieldwork in 2008 the campaign had been active for just over two years. Over those two years local residents had had time to reflect on the organisation and conduct of the campaign by the Save The Mary River Coordinating Group. The majority of landholders in the ‘footprint’, about seventy per cent, had by then voluntarily sold their land to Queensland Water and Infrastructure (QWI). 112

It became apparent to me early on that there were differing views about the origins of the campaign, and especially about the motivations of those who had set it up. In light of the campaign against a large Government initiative, it was unsurprising that ‘the Government’ had become a symbolic identity the focus of opposition, anger and suspicion. That such suspicions were also levelled at the local campaign organisation however was more surprising. The suspicions were based in particular on the prior but reputedly continuing Government relations of a particular couple involved in the establishment of the organisation. The man was the first President of the group. That the campaign was set up so quickly and efficiently, and focussed on scientific and bureaucratic forms of engagement rather than emotion, was explained as a major contributor to the suspicions. Moreover, when the couple unexpectedly sold their property to ‘Kwippel’ – the local acronymic name used for Queensland Water and Infrastructure Pty Ltd so strange to daily language it effectively reduced the dam proponent to an impersonal almost alien ‘Other’ – and moved far away to the southern State of Victoria only a number of months later, local explanations were at hand: the campaign had been sabotaged by Government ‘plants’ who were now rewarded for their efforts. Although many disagreed, this explanation had surprising currency.

110 A subsequent application in the Federal Court of Australia for a judicial review of the decision to register this agreement was unsuccessful. The application was made by three Aboriginal people. See: Fesl v Delegate of the Native Title Registrar [2008] FCA 1469 (1 October 2008).
111 The term ‘footprint’ was used by the proponent to denote the area directly impacted by the proposal proposed, see e.g. Queensland Government 2007: 23.
112 QWI 2008a: 7
I was unable to discuss this with the couple involved, but, based on accounts from other activists closely involved with them during the few days after the announcement, I regard these views as unlikely, reflecting more fear than reality.\textsuperscript{113} Rather than pursuing this question directly however, I found more revealing the consistent references to community and belonging as the context in which feelings of trust and suspicion were explained. As a long-term dairy farmer said:

[I] went to [the first] protest meeting in Kandanga. The bloke on the podium I had never seen before. … He had bought a place near [the dam]. It was a classic set-up. My colleagues were too blind. [He said he protested] out of concern for the community. A former Governor was appointed [by the State Government as Chair of the newly established Community Futures Taskforce]. [He], Major General Arnison, had to have a secretary; the bloke's wife. No concern in Brisbane; they went there … to waive a candle. Once the election was won he packed up and left. Went to Tasmania I think. A lot of this is allegorical. I understand this guy got $1m for 60 acres, the bloke next door $600k. It was a golden handshake. This Labor guy was a pro.\textsuperscript{114}

Not only did the prominent couple have perceived associations with the Queensland Labor Party, colloquially known among farmers as ‘the Gah 'ment’, much despised even before the announcement, they were new and therefore personally unknown. He was ‘the bloke on the podium I had never seen before’; a combination poised to attract comment. Two years later many explained the two simply were not, or could not possibly have been, part of the Mary Valley community.\textsuperscript{115}

Because the dam conflict brought with it a large increase in new oppositional forms of social classification, such as those who were in the footprint versus those who were not, those who still engaged with forms of Government and those who did not, those who had sold versus those who had not, and so on, the issue of community cohesion and belonging was of fundamental importance to the local support base of the campaign. The prominent figures of the campaign in particular, as highlighted in the case of the first President, were vulnerable in that respect. As will be shown

\textsuperscript{113} As confirmed also by the mental health councillors in Kandanga, the level of social reticence – dangerous mental depression and anxiety in the worst cases - certainly increased as a result of the dam proposal. The proposal was widely regarded as unplanned, deceptive and secretive, hiding both facts and motivations, and had led to an influx of strangers associated with it in unknown ways. It also resulted in reports of covert police surveillance and widespread intimidation by QWI, not just of local landholders but also of public servants and scientists, which added another layer of cynicism to an otherwise already taxing campaign.

\textsuperscript{114} Interview 24 June 2009, FN# 10

\textsuperscript{115} A number of reliable informants however commented on the unsympathetic local treatment reportedly received by the couple, particularly the woman, their reasons for leaving said to be related to that treatment rather than any hidden motives.
below, despite these early difficulties the two subsequent Presidents became successful leaders, known by their full personal name and capable of developing and maintaining local support in their own unique ways.

By 2008 therefore, notwithstanding the issues of distrust and suspicion concerning its establishment, the campaign was often characterised by activists as ‘grassroots’. It is an interesting and much-used metaphor containing a human-environment link, indicating a realistic, localised representation of a place and the people related to it.\textsuperscript{116} The local support base was indeed, as far as I could ascertain, large. While the number of paid members declined from 377 in 2007 to about 150 during the next years, the organisation was well funded by public donations, with amounts of up to $10,000 reportedly received, some from farmers who had voluntarily sold their properties to QWI.

**The Committee**

The campaign was led on a voluntary basis by a small group of activists who together formed ‘the Committee’. As a legally incorporated entity, the organisation’s formal members also elected a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at Annual General Meetings. The Committee apparently changed somewhat in the first two years but during the course of my 18 months of fieldwork it was remarkably stable in personnel.

The list of committee participants below, including their backgrounds, serves to illustrate the social diversity in the committee, the reason former President Kevin Ingersole referred to it as ‘the coalition of the willing’\textsuperscript{117}. Most strikingly, of those seventeen people listed below only two had grown up in the Mary Valley themselves. The average age of the committee members is about fifty-five, with nearly half of the group at or close to retirement.\textsuperscript{118} The average length of local residency by those not raised there as children is just under fourteen years. Interestingly, sixty-five per cent of the members did not reside on a property directly affected by proposed inundation or buffer-zoning, and although just over half the Committee had backgrounds involving some form of primary production, none were full-time farmers unsupported by off-farm income. Apart from Sally and Ian Mackay, none had extensive prior experience in community activism of this kind.

\textsuperscript{116} But see e.g. O’Lear (1999) on grassroots environmental activism and the activist networks of engagement that go beyond discrete localities through the use of electronic communication technologies.

\textsuperscript{117} Interview K. Ingersole, 29 January 2009, FN\# 5

\textsuperscript{118} The area has fewer young adults (who may have left for opportunities elsewhere) and significantly more older adults than the Queensland average (see SKM 2008: C20-5, 6). ‘Baby boomers’ are the largest age group at nearly 33\%, compared to the Queensland average of 25\. The authors of the Environmental Impact Statement understood this broadly, but correctly, as ‘the inflow of older ‘tree changers’, and a recent trend of ‘baby boomers’ looking for affordable retirement options’ (SKM 2008: C20-8).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glenda Pickersgill</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Born in Gympie, raised in the Mary Valley, environmental scientist, canoeist and grazier, bought her parents’ 170ac Kandanga grazing property, inside the footprint, in 1985. Age [at the time of interview]: 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Sims</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Retired saw mill maintenance manager, born in Narrabri (NSW), resident on a hobby farm outside the footprint between Kandanga and Amamoor since 1976. Age: 65+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kreutz</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Former long-line fisherman born in Manly (NSW), now consultant on sustainable fisheries management, resident on a small acreage hobby farm at Belli Park outside the footprint since 2005. Age: 46.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndall Ensbey</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Business teacher at TAFE in Gympie, grazier, born in Gympie, resident on a 110 ac grazing property partly inside the footprint at Bergin’s Pocket since 1994. Age: 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Burgess</td>
<td>Science and communication</td>
<td>Mary River Catchment Officer, born in Brisbane, Science and Mathematics teacher, ecologist, hydrologist and musician, resident on a 21ha property outside the footprint at Dagun since 1994. Age: 48.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzi Smith</td>
<td>Science and communication</td>
<td>Doctoral candidate at the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology in Sydney (suspended for the campaign), born in Maryborough, resident on a small acreage permaculture farm owned by friends, just outside the footprint near Kandanga since 2008. Age: 34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Mengel</td>
<td>Info Centre Coordinator</td>
<td>Born in Gympie, resident in Maroochydore, formerly in administration work, raised on a farm outside Kandanga where her mother and brother still live. Inside the footprint. Age: 55.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor and Helga Hill</td>
<td>Sign writing</td>
<td>Retired farmers, born in England and Brisbane respectively, resident on a grazing/timber property, partly in the footprint, at Ridgewood since 1970. Age: 69 and 66.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian and Sally Mackay</td>
<td>Communication, arts and Info Centre</td>
<td>Born in Brisbane, school teacher in Gympie (Ian) and artist (Sally), resident on a 20 acre property outside the footprint at Moy Pocket since 1981. Age: 63 (Sally).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adele Coombs</td>
<td>Arts and communication</td>
<td>Born in Sydney, School Guidance Officer/Councillor in Gympie, resident on a small acreage property outside the footprint at Pie Creek since 2000. Age: 45.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Paton</td>
<td>Signs and business</td>
<td>Born in Launceston, Tasmania. Self-described ‘gofer’ (go for this, go for that), farmer, Company Director, retiree, ‘possibly all of the above’, resident on a 75 hectare cattle farm outside the footprint at Kandanga Creek since 2006. Age: 58.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Hall</td>
<td>Signs</td>
<td>Strawberry farmer, born in Toowoomba (QLD), resident on an 80ac strawberry/cattle farm outside the footprint at Kybong since 1999. Age: 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iain Watt</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Minister of Religion (Uniting Church) born in Lautoka (Fiji), resident on a small acreage hobby farm outside the footprint at Imbil since 2004. Age: 52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrienne</td>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Born in Palmerston (New Zealand), nurse, resident on a 40 acre hobby property.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By 2008, the Committee had developed into different ‘teams’ based on individual interests and skills: the website team, media team, sign writing team, Info Centre team, technical team, legal team, election team (when relevant), and an events coordinator since 2009. This was a significant organisational aspect of the campaign, for it allowed a variety of local skills to be utilised. It also separated, as one retired hobby farmer on the committee put it, the ‘workers’ from the ‘brains’; those who applied scientific reason and those who ‘just wanted to shoot the bastards’.

Once a week the Committee held evening meetings around a large table on the concrete slab veranda of the Kandanga ‘Info Centre’, a former pineapple storage shed at the railway station, owned by Gympie Regional Council and offered to the organisation by the lessee ‘Friends of Kandanga’ free of charge. It was termite affected and roofed with asbestos, issues the ‘workers’ through their local contacts in the building industry eventually had to take care of in 2009. The ‘Info Centre’, staffed and open to the public seven days per week, was the headquarters of the campaign with most space effectively used to display information about the dam proposal and the detailed arguments of the campaign against it. It included a small office, kitchen, and an area with merchandise such as books, stickers, T-shirts and so on. It was also where tourists on board the Gympie steam train, the Mary Valley Rattler, were welcomed and informed, very effectively as I witnessed on numerous occasions, about an array of possible letters and petitions to sign during their stop-over (see Plate 4).

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119 STMRCG, GMA and Brisbane Group Strategy Meeting, 07 February 2009, FN# 6, and STMRCG Committee Meeting, 28 May 2009, FN# 9. In earlier documentation such as those for the Senate Inquiry some members of the teams are also described as ‘officers’, e.g. Stephen Burgess as the research officer (http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/Committee/rat_ctte/completed_inquiries/2004-07/traveston_dam/report/e02.pdf) and Glenda Pickersgill as the environmental officer (http://www.mysunshinecoast.com.au/events/events-display/kandanga-1000_36312 (accessed 12 August 2011).
120 Interview 07 January 2009, FN# 2
During summer days it could be oppressively hot inside, while in the winter of 2009 a number of outside committee meetings were conducted in below-zero temperatures. Yet at every meeting I attended, in a friendly but determined fashion, the minutes of the previous meeting were discussed and ‘moved’ as an accurate record, subsequently seconded, and followed by a raising of hands from all those in favour. The minutes and meeting agenda were generally distributed via email by the President during the day of the meeting121 and the agenda was followed strictly, with interjections regularly deferred to later agenda items in which they could thematically be discussed. Personally, I was struck by this defined conduct, which may well have compared favourably with most management meetings in a random Australian corporate centre (e.g. Davidson 1997; Nixon & Littlepage 1992; Ward & Handy 1988). Moreover, the former President Kevin Ingersole, a retired Chief Executive Officer previously based both in Sydney and Melbourne, and much experienced in the conduct of the corporate management world, regularly received corrective comment if, as the Chair of the meetings, he did not accurately follow the required procedures to avoid the possible liabilities described in the organisation’s Constitution.

Shortly after the establishment of **Save the Mary** a number of people joined the committee as formal representatives of smaller localities in the Mary Valley. Following the announcement, small meetings about the dam had been independently held at various local halls in the district. Though a

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121 The role of information and communication technologies was important indeed, allowing for the fast dispersal and analysis of news, announcements and data. A few hours after the public announcement of ‘the delay’ by Premier Anna Bligh on the 25th of November 2008 for example there were about fifty jubilant campaigners at Traveston Crossing. Other pertinent examples include the hydrological computer models built by activists qualified in engineering and mathematics.
few individuals later became prominent activists, at that early stage some had regarded the area represented by the organisation as too limited. Among them was a retired cattle farmer originally from England, but by then a resident of Ridgewood for about forty years:

We had to be speaking with one voice. The Kandanga group didn't want to know about us. [The former leader] was possessive of power. I asked ‘can we have a delegate on your committee?’ I sent a lady there but she found it too much. So we went. But I wanted to join the committee. I was infuriated to see the lack of organisation. We are a group of different people with a common cause. Anything could explode it. There are radical Greens. I always thought to be careful with them. … The only clash happened when … [the leader] queried somebody about qualifications when seeking to become a member.

The early approach therefore led some local farmers to perceive of the Committee as an ‘elite group [with a] hierarchy. You couldn't have a voice. It wasn't friendly.’ This perception of exclusion was a threat to the support base, especially given the suspicions already held regarding the motivations of certain individuals. Meeting procedures, strategies and the formulation of objectives were to alleviate those concerns to a large extent.

Two other community organisations joined the campaign later, the Greater Mary Association (GMA), established in downstream Maryborough in October 2007, and the Save the Mary River Brisbane Chapter established in Brisbane’s suburb of West End in August 2008. Both were also incorporated and thus had their own elected leadership. They both operated relatively independent from the Kandanga based group, the Brisbane group much more so than GMA, and focussed their efforts on garnering support in the Fraser Coast and Brisbane areas respectively.

**Strategies**

The objective of the campaign was argued and defined most prominently by Kevin Ingersole, the retired business manager and second President. From the first planning meetings immediately after the announcement he had stressed the need for a concise objective, particularly in order to retain focus and to enable a differentiation between those proposed actions directly linked to the objective,
and those unworthy of precious activist time.\textsuperscript{125} His formulation of the objective was often read out at public meetings: ‘to benefit the South East Queensland community and the environment, cause the Queensland government to overturn its decision to build a dam on the Mary River now or at any time in the future’\textsuperscript{126} Such a formulation was part of his strong assertion that the organisation should follow the ‘rule of engagement’ he had used as a Chief Executive Officer and business management consultant:

I like objectives and strategies. … I sensed in the Valley a lot of tough smart people; but they didn't understand the rule of engagement. People were calling for blood. If I had been a fourth generation farmer I'd want to drive a cattle truck over the top of them [i.e. the proponents]. [But] I'd seen bureaucrats [before]. … I wanted from day one to be credible: dispute facts, [undertake] analyses, recruit independent experts, always tell the truth, no forbidden topics.\textsuperscript{127}

This position led him and other prominent activists to regularly use their revealing but partly tautological slogan: ‘we are about facts and data’. The reliance on science and claims of impartial truth so expressed worked to avoid an emotional and subjective charge feared of creating ‘redneck’ or ‘NIMBY’ (not in my backyard) public images. It also facilitated engagements with bureaucracies, both governmental and otherwise, since it followed defined processes of submissions, petitions and inquiry, particularly those related to the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. Against the regulations of this Act the proposal would ultimately be weighed by the federal Environment Minister. In that sense I concur with Hutton and Connors’ (1999: 264) conclusion that by the 1990s the Australian environmental movement, in contrast to earlier protests, had ‘become more of a lobby group within a well-defined institutional framework for policy development.’

The reliance on scientific knowledge however was hardly accepted without local comment. Rather, as the dam proposal and the campaign against it developed, ‘the best science’ was claimed by both sides, such claims bringing into doubt the integrity of scientific knowledge itself (c.f. Yearley 1996, 2000). The important role and socio-cultural dimensions of scientific and other forms of knowledge will be discussed in later parts of the thesis.

\textsuperscript{125} Interview, 29 January 2009, FN# 5
\textsuperscript{126} STMRCG (2009) Draft Objectives and Strategies, updated. Unpublished document. C.f. joint strategy meeting STMRCG, GMA and Brisbane Chapter, 07 February 2009,
\textsuperscript{127} Interview 29 January 2009, FN# 5
Notwithstanding Ingersole’s focus on managerial aspects and objectives, a ‘joint strategy meeting’ involving individuals from all three campaign groups was not held until February 2009. Part of the meeting’s objective, apart from discussing strategies, was for people to personally meet co-activists from other regions for the first time. With an attendance of just under thirty people, it was to the first of only two meeting of such kind, held at the Kandanga Hall on a Saturday.\textsuperscript{128} The resulting document which prioritised the strategies and actions, written on a white board during the meeting and subsequently e-mailed around for comment and periodic updating, demonstrates succinctly the manner in which the campaign was approached by its leaders at that time. I have reproduced the document in full, in original format, in Appendix 1. Included in the document are those teams charged with carrying out the respective tasks, of which there were many.

The document also demonstrates, as reported elsewhere by for example Berglund (2001) for an environmental activist group in Germany, the influence of prominent individuals on the conduct and course of a campaign, in this case of people such as Kevin Ingersole and Glenda Pickersgill. The poignant absence of emotive language is characteristic of the manner in which the leaders of the campaign consistently presented their case. After three years of campaigning, the organisation’s official, yet marginal, reference in the document to ‘blockades’ was a complete novelty as far as I am aware, and an indication that the bureaucratic avenues of resistance were all but exhausted. Unlike in other reported environmental conflicts in Australia over the past few decades (e.g. Peace (1999) on logging in New South Wales, Hutchins and Lester (2006) on the Franklin River dispute, Trigger & Mulcock (2005) on the southwest forest disputes), during my fieldwork I never heard a serious public discussion about such possible action. There was hesitation to entertain such ideas since it was thought to allow the more confrontational attitudes, which had been carefully managed so far, to dominate and radicalise the course of the campaign. Reflecting sentiments in the Valley however, the Committee itself was divided on the topic, with some members of the opinion that ‘you need facts and cattle trucks’\textsuperscript{129}.

\subsection*{3.3 Avoiding Rednecks and Greenies: The Symbolic Politics of Community Identity}

Apart from the Queensland State elections in 2006 and 2009 - external events during which the different political preferences among individual committee members became most obvious - one of the clearest examples involving the negotiation of socio-political diversity was the dilemma regarding the core slogan ‘No Dam’. Echoing the calls made by the Tasmanian Wilderness Society

\textsuperscript{128} The second joint meeting took place at Tiaro on 11 October 2009 (personal comment informant, e-mail 14/09/2011).
\textsuperscript{129} Interview 09 June 2009, FN# 9
during the anti-Franklin Dam campaign in the early 1980s\(^{130}\), various environmentalists used the plural form ‘No Dams’ to express their unconditional opposition to the construction of dams. Many farmers however were not necessarily against dams, with the nearby Borumba Dam on Yabba Creek in fact widely supported (see also Chapter 2).

Merchandise such as drink (‘stubby’) holders accidentally printed with the slogan ‘No Dams’ were therefore debated and declared inappropriate. These issues were perceived with some anguish by those against all forms of dam building:

There is a concerted effort to be extremely tolerant. … I am delighted by some of the people I met who normally wouldn't have given me the time of day because of differences of lifestyle. … A lot of people were disappointed there wasn't any bloodshed. Rather, there was increasing academic language. They [STMRCG] have lost numbers because of that locally but increased numbers from outside. … The divisive thing was the range of responses. [E.g.] this dam not here but anywhere else is OK. But NIMBY works for issues. People don't believe in desal[ination]. Can't do inter-catchment transfer; some are pro- Borumba. I was not involved in Borumba; it was there already [when we moved here].\(^{131}\)

The same informant commented on the protest signs along the Highway that state ‘Borumba good, right place’ and ‘Traveston bad, wrong place’:

I don't like it but I have to accept views to be expressed. Political views differ too. David Gibson [Liberal National Party, local Member of Parliament] has more issues than that. The LNP has a long standing tradition of dam building. There is pressure to ‘fall into line’ and vote LNP. I felt lately to join the Greens to show support, but I don't want to do the work [laughs].\(^{132}\)

Conversely, more conservative residents were reticent about the ‘Greenies’, a female representative of which was sarcastically referred to by one local dairy farmer as ‘Starlight, Queen of the Greens’.\(^{133}\) Mostly however these sentiments were actively suspended during the campaign, an activity to which, very importantly, almost all participants were new. There was in that sense a great

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\(^{131}\) Interview 15 January 2009, FN# 3

\(^{132}\) Interview 15 January 2009, FN# 3

\(^{133}\) Interview 24 June 2009, FN# 10
deal of unforeseen contact, as one politically progressive activist described in an account of a local farmer with whom she had travelled to Canberra for the campaign:

His family has been on the Mary River for over one hundred years. I wouldn't be surprised if he supports One Nation, but, [his family has] close relation with Aboriginal people working for them [in the past]. We set up a stall in Canberra next to Greens. He then said: ‘I’m not one of these Greenies, we’re surrounded by Greenies. Bob Brown is a poofter.’ [Since he had apparently not given the event much thought prior to arriving], it slowly dawned on him it was a Climate Change [i.e. environmentalist] rally.

Yet in September 2008 Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown, the most public progressive politician participating at the national level, came to Travie Crossing for the second time. This time it was to support the anti-dam campaign as part of the national GetUp Torch Relay, itself part of a campaign to raise awareness about climate change. With the torch in his hand and local media present, he was guided down to the Mary River by protestors dressed as an Australian Lungfish and a Mary River Turtle.

Plate 5 Senator Bob Brown with the GetUp Torch, accompanied by the Australian Lungfish and Mary River Turtle.

134 Interview 30 January 2009, FN# 5
After a short kayak trip on the river, accompanied by loud applause and ‘No Dam!’ shouting from several hundred protestors on the bridge, he spoke to those present and ceremoniously passed the GetUp Torch over to Eve Fesl, an Aboriginal anti-dam campaigner he introduced as ‘the custodian of this land with a lineage going back beyond our imagination, and whose heart is wrapped in this land’. His central message explicitly linked, among other things, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interests:

This is a centre of magnificent species diversity, longevity, security, and it should be there for our children, our grandchildren; a thousand generations from now as it was there a thousand generations ago for the Kabi Kabi people. And that’s our task, that’s our job. [loud applause] … Yes for keeping these farmlands, yes for respecting the Kabi Kabi heritage, and yes for respecting ourselves as human beings and our obligations to the fascinating other creatures, habitats and this beautiful environment we all experience here in the Mary Valley, in Queensland, Australia, on Planet Earth [loud applause].

It was not without significance however that he had arrived in a horse drawn cart, a symbolic representation of rurality, and also referred to the Mary Valley with such terms as ‘farmland’, ‘food basin’ and ‘prime productive land’, while contrasting the (rural) Mary Valley residents with ‘the [urban] people in Brisbane’. In other words, symbolic representations of ‘wild nature’ were mixed with other symbolic values made commensurate, namely those connected to rural Australian life and productive labour, in order to create ‘a sense of “community-ness”’ - a measure of unity and coherence, a sense of direction and purpose’ (Peace 1999: 152). This ‘sense’ however was contested and fluid. In a later interview for example, one retired farmer described the reason for his stoic acceptance of this event, at which ‘some people thought God had arrived’, as ‘media attention that furthers the cause’. The symbolic politics of community identity in other words included, but was not limited to, the construction of ‘rurality’ (self) as opposed to ‘urbanity’ (other), and a simultaneous de-emphasis of the divides between conservative ‘rednecks’ and progressive ‘greenies’.

The social construction of the Mary Valley community was also influenced by the historical dynamics in Australian environmental politics. Broadly speaking, the arguments raised against the dam proposal ranged between those related to people and those related to non-human species, although serious questions were also raised about the geological suitability and

136 Observation 08 September 2008, FN# 1
137 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
hydrological/economic rationales of the proposal. Worryingly for the environmentalists in the campaign, the majority of residents in the region had generally supported Bjelke-Petersen's conservative Queensland Country Party government from 1968 to 1987, which, as Powell (1991: 303) reminds us in his history of Queensland water management, ‘was usually prepared to brand the mildest environmental protest group as a communist-inspired, homosexual, drug-pushing threat to the security and prosperity of ordinary Queenslanders.’138 The leading activists were sensitive to the divisive potential their environmental approach included, as one member of the Committee explained:

Farmers are much more about land than species, definitely. We informed people about the facts, on how to win. Some people have said to me: ‘I don't give a shit about lungfish’. [But] critters are like children; they need our help, they don't have a voice. Farmers should support species; a duty of care; compassion too. Some people who don't care about species are involved. They’ve seen them on the river. I didn't know much about lungfish before, and little about turtles and cod.139

Notwithstanding Bjelke-Petersen’s view of environmentalists in Queensland only ten years earlier, in 1996 the conservative Australian Prime Minister John Howard claimed ‘we're all Greenies now’, a national poll in 2000 confirming most Australians by then felt ‘a bit of a ‘Greenie’ at heart’ (Hutton & Connors 1999: 2-3, Davison 2008: 1287).

Shortly after its establishment the anti-dam organisation had adopted the protected and endangered Australian Lungfish, which is endemic only to a few rivers in southeast Queensland, including the Mary River, as its mascot. The lungfish was one of the last unusual Australian animals to come to the attention of European scientists (Robin 2005). Promoting a view of this fish as ancient, respectable and semi-human, the mascot was called ‘Wheezer the Wise Lungfish’140.

138 For no less than twenty-two years, from 1979 to 2001, the Gympie representative in the Queensland Legislative Assembly was the National Party member, and colleague of Bjelke-Petersen, Mr. Len Stephan (Queensland Parliamentary Library 2009: 336).
139 Interview 16 January 2009, FN# 3
Two other endemic species, the endangered Mary River Turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) and the endangered Mary River Cod (*Maccullochella peelii mariensis*), figured as anti-dam symbols, but not as prominently. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists also referred to the lungfish as ‘Dala’, said to be the local Aboriginal name of the species accorded totemic and sacred significance by some. Aboriginal religious beliefs and non-Aboriginal interests in the river, and the species that inhabit it, are thus implied as coalescing.

By the time I started my fieldwork in 2008 the campaign’s focus on endemic species such as the Australian Lungfish had all but excluded a human focus. This did not go locally unnoticed. A woman who had grown up locally and operated a plumbing business with her husband in the Mary Valley, expressed feelings that were more broadly held about the use of this symbolic icon, particularly among those refusing to sell their property:

Dala; [I] heard about it. Shame it's vulnerable species that have to save us. Shouldn't the community save us? Other than the Senate Inquiry [there was] no attention to social impacts. The environmental thing can stop this thing. It’d be terrific if lungfish, turtle and cod can stop this. A lot of people have sold, that's not going to

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144 [http://www.savethemaryriver.com/_mgxroot/page_10786.html](http://www.savethemaryriver.com/_mgxroot/page_10786.html) (accessed 14 August 2008). Whitley (1927: 51) notes that lungfish were known among Aboriginal people as ‘Djelleh’ (recorded by Richard Semon in the late 19th century) or *Teevine* (recorded by George Masters). The historical record includes photographs of Aboriginal people with lungfish and early settler references to the consumption of lungfish by Aboriginal people. These records appear inconsistent with some of the contemporary references to Aboriginal taboos regarding lungfish consumption.

save us. … The dam should have been stopped on social grounds. I feel at the mercy of environmental scientists. You can't fight what scientists say. We've got to leave it up to them; we don't have those backgrounds. … All you can do is put your money towards it, hope someone else has got the answer.  

She was reluctant in her acceptance of the situation, an acceptance more or less enforced through the organisation’s engagement in lengthy bureaucratic processes. These processes involved, most prominently at least, a Senate Inquiry, the production by the proponent of a scientific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), public submission periods, reviews, supplementary reports, supplementary reviews, and federal assessments against the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. The EIS materials produced by the State-owned company QWI eventually comprised many thousands of pages. This process had the ability to seriously alienate local residents, particularly those with a long conservative tradition of Government aversion: the local primary producers and self-funded urban retirees. It is in that context that the idiosyncrasies of the campaign were also important, for additional to the benefits of concise objectives it was the personal charisma of the leaders, Kevin Ingersole, but in particular the third President Glenda Pickersgill, which avoided this alienation from taking on too problematic proportions.

Especially as a result of the campaign, Glenda is now widely known to be a second generation local cattle farmer on the river flats outside Kandanga, in the heart of the proposed inundation zone. She would generally introduce herself as such at public meetings. Yet she would also add her experience as an environmental scientist involved in the mining industry of Western Australia, allowing her to present both the academic skills and social background to effectively support the ‘suspension of internal distinction’ within the activist community under her leadership (Edwards 1998: 154). In other words, Glenda herself symbolically embodied the two major social categories in the Mary Valley: the long-term residents with interests in primary industries and the newcomers with non-productive lifestyle interests. This encouraged broad local support for those representing the community, even though most of the leading activists had never met each other before they became involved in the campaign. Rather, some were previously so unfamiliar with the Mary Valley they got lost on the way to their first campaign meeting. 

146 Interview 02 February 2009, FN# 5
147 E.g. STMRCG Public Meeting, Cooran Hall, 17 February 2009.
148 Interview 16 January 2009, FN# 3
The politics of the Mary Valley community required the ongoing negotiation of identities to accommodate socio-political diversity. The activists consciously sought to de-emphasize the most divisive oppositions of the political continuum: the ‘rednecks’ on the extreme right and the ‘greenies’ on the extreme left. Effective leadership, capable of symbolically managing activist diversity and maintaining support for the focus on endemic iconic species, was essential in this regard.

3.4 ‘FUBT’ and ‘Love, Mary’: The Role of Emotion

The campaign however, while publically focussed on ‘facts and data’, was not void of emotionally charged, human objections (c.f. Satterfield 2002). This was understandable because the human impacts reported by the mental health service Lifeline in their Kandanga office for example, a service underutilised by affected residents because it was distrusted and regarded as a cynical Government response to the emergency, were considerable indeed.\(^{149}\) Rather, as Milton (2002: 24) also found in discussions about environmental protection generally, ‘[w]hat we see is not a consistent opposition between emotion and rationality, but an ongoing debate about the role of emotion in decision making’.

Notwithstanding many locally shared examples about negative human impacts, socially, mentally and physically, the public outcomes of these debates were invariably informed by notions of decency, politeness and emotional constraint. ‘We are not ratbags’ many explained when questioned about the relative invisibility of emotion during 2008 and 2009.\(^{150}\) Such explanations also echoed the public message of the Committee through which restraint, respectability and bureaucratic engagement were promoted. Early forms of protest immediately after the announcement had included what many regarded as too explicitly ‘rude’ or ‘vulgar’ messages. The later leader of the sign writing team, Victor Hill, produced signs in a different protest tradition; that of humour (for studies on the role of humour in conflict situations and social activism see e.g. Branagan 2007; Norrick & Spitz 2008; Smith, Harrington & Neck 2000; Stephenson 1951).

A number of his signs for example referred to the Australian comedy film ‘The Castle’ in which a caricature of a working-class family successfully avoids the compulsory acquisition of their home

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\(^{149}\) Interviews with Lifeline mental health councillors, 28 April 2009, 02 July 2009 and 17 July 2009. C.f. Hales 2009. The Kandanga Lifeline office was funded by the Community Futures Taskforce (a government initiative to mitigate the social impacts of the dam proposal). The Lifeline office however was located immediately behind the Government’s ‘One-Stop-Shop’ (the local dam information centre) and was therefore regarded as associated with the Government. Numerically Lifeline assisted more newcomers than farmers, although Lifeline was apparently not required to keep a detailed set of clinical data about reported mental health impacts.

\(^{150}\) Hales (2009) describes matters of emotion in the earlier phase of the campaign, a phase which saw the largest protest gatherings such as the one during the Queensland Labor Party State Convention in Brisbane on 21 June 2008.
in the High Court. These signs drew on aspects of popular culture in which the local community was represented as the ‘little Aussie battler’ (Sekiya 2008; Stollznow 2003). They asserted opinions often implicitly and with a sense of humorous intellect, particularly the more cryptic ones that could be understood only by those knowledgeable about the details of the dam proposal:

\[
3+SKM = \sqrt{UR/EIS}
\]

Plate 7 Anti-dam road sign

3+ (Three Plus) is a marketing and communications company contracted by QWI, SKM (Sinclair Knight Merz) is an engineering firm contracted by QWI to produce the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), making the solution to \( \sqrt{UR/EIS} \) ‘you are rooted [i.e. defeated] by the Environmental Impact Statement’. While unusual and undoubtedly puzzling even to many locals unaware of the relevant details, the signs were characteristic of the campaign itself for they ingeniously combined, in this case through humour, strong emotion and rationality. They were the denser and more esoteric versions of earlier more direct but ‘vulgar’ road signs, most of which had been removed by activists by the time I started my fieldwork. The only ‘strong language’ road sign allowed to remain by campaigner at that time was bordering the acceptable, but with its mischievous rural encryption and solid construction, said to be typical of the wood sculptor and early sign producer Keith Gall who had since relocated to the United States, it was the largest one just outside Kandanga:

Plate 8 ‘FUBT’, locally pronounced as Fuck You Beattie (the former Premier).
Another creative expression containing emotional motifs was a Save the Mary publication produced in late 2008 entitled ‘Love, Mary: a love letter from the Mary River’. The product of two artistically interested activists from Gympie, a writer and a photographer, the booklet was introduced with an Aboriginal religious claim of undescribed provenance, on the basis of which a holistic understanding of the river was further elaborated:

Inland waterways are sacred to women in Aboriginal cultures; coastal estuaries and beaches are sacred to men. Rivers are the sacred flow between the feminine and masculine, arteries from the heartland to the sea, sustaining life at every bend of their journey to the coast. Mountain freshwater winds through the land, nourishing a myriad species including human communities, before entering saltwater to renew life in the sea. The Mary River is such a river, one of the last remaining rivers still flowing relatively freely in south-east Queensland. Here its story is told, for all to know its incredible value to Australia and to the planet. Here is a love letter from the Mary River (Coombs and Craig 2008: 1; original italics and bold).151

While the prominent environmental section of the booklet comprises the first twenty-five out of sixty-five pages, the human and emotional impacts of the dam proposal are given significant attention. The book has a strong visual character, and the human stories start with a photograph of Dawn Gill, a well-known local resident with multi-generational ties to the area, touching what is most likely a relative’s headstone at the Kandanga cemetery, which was under threat from inundation. Sixteen pages are then devoted to the negative dam related experiences and opinions of families and individuals ‘on the land’, including four Aboriginal people who assert cultural connections to the river (though not by replicating the assertions with which the booklet was introduced). Since they either live near the mouth of the river, near the headwaters or even further away towards Brisbane, none of these Aboriginal people were unambiguously regarded as local to the Mary Valley. Given their lack of personal contact and cultural insights, coupled with the tension between Aboriginal factions as a result of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (see further below), local settler-descendant activists were anxious in their representation of Aboriginal perspectives. One activist described a sense of unease which was shared with many others:

Dala came from [A]. She said Dala was a totem for her people. There’s a conflict between [A] and [B]. … [A] thinks [B] comes from up north. [A] reviewed her info [for the book]; saw [B’s] page [and] wouldn’t approve [B’s] listing of ancestors.

151 This quote does not reflect the original indentations.
There are sensitivities. We didn’t want to create World War Three. We accepted them on face value.\textsuperscript{152}

Similar to Bob Brown above, the book nevertheless promotes the coalescence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships with the Mary River and surrounding land. Among the most explicit examples of that coalescence from a non-indigenous viewpoint are the expressions used by Tamielle Andreassen, the great-granddaughter of a Danish settler at Tuchekoi (Map 2), when she is quoted as saying (Coombs and Craig 2008: 40):

\begin{quote}
This land doesn’t belong to us – we belong to it. It’s not about money or ownership to us, it’s about living the dream our ancestors had for us when they came to this country all those years ago.
\end{quote}

The historical depth of local presence and activities, and a focus on the capability of the land and river to sustain families over time are common themes that link both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal narratives in the book. For reasons further described below, White settlement history however was hardly included in the latter part of the campaign, which left numerous non-Aboriginal residents, particularly those with multi-generational farming ties to the area, concerned about the recognition of their heritage. In that light, many cynically commented on the perceived ease with which Aboriginal sites of significance can stop proposed developments, in contrast to what they referred to as their own ‘sacred’ places such as the Kandanga cemetery. The book nevertheless represented both perspectives in its aim to honestly portray a variety of emotional ties to the land with productive, environmental, as well as spiritual motives. Importantly, those residents self-identified in a poem as ‘city people through and through’ were also included. They had invested much emotion and money, both in the campaign and in their rural retirement surrounding:

\begin{quote}
Dreams, we had our dreams
In bed at night, we’d plan.
When we’d finished
Child bearing, child rearing,
We’d shoot through
To the Bush
…
We cry for our valley
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{152} Interview 10 July 2009, FN# 12
Additional to the significance of familial relations with the land, this excerpt also reveals some of the emotional aspects of a campaign that was otherwise strongly focussed on science and submissions to the bureaucracy. The focus on nature by urban newcomers was often replete with religious references: *Eden, Paradise, sacred lifeblood*, and so on. The name *Mary* River certainly facilitated religious symbolism, a group of Gympie women for instance becoming known as *The Sisters of Mary*, appearing at events dressed as nuns (see also Chapter 4).

The role of emotion was important, both in the campaign and in local relations with the natural environment, but given the view of emotion as possibly limiting the campaign’s public support base it was seen as equally important to publicly manage it. The book and road signs provided avenues through which emotions could be expressed both strongly and in the preferred polite and edited form.

### 3.5 The Politics of Belonging

#### Being Local

In *Love, Mary* the Andreassen family members represent an important and increasingly rare type of local; those who live on a road carrying their family name. Many residents I interviewed commented that ‘old families’ from the region could be identified through road and street names. Such road names are not only contemporary references to early White settlement histories at specific places in the local environment, they can also be part of them, such as the regionally defining *Mary Valley Road* discussed in Chapter 2. Other public references to settlement history in the region include named features such as the *Zacharia* and *Skyring* Logging Areas in the Amamoor State Forest, planted in 1968, and *Hasthorpe* Park in Kandanga. The first are named after the locally influential early settler and the second refers to a Kandanga farmer who had arrived in 1939 and later donated land for the community park.

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153 Extract from ‘Valley of Tears’ by Pat Duff (Coombs and Craig 2008: 27).
The meaning ascribed to such names was at times imagined in a way that diverged from historical sources that describe official intentions. Newcomers often presumed some considerable historical, multi-generational depth where this was not necessarily the case. For example, ‘the Hasthorpes’ were often included among the old families from the region and one of Hasthorpe’s sons had Hasthorpe Road named after him when he subdivided the 375 acres he had bought in 1947. But he saw the name for the first time when the sign was erected by the local Council. Harvey Hasthorpe, his eighty-four year old brother who told me this story, sold a 150 acre block for subdivision outside Kandanga in 1996 himself, and was later surprised to find a sign with Harvey Road there. After seventy years, Harvey said he now considered himself a local, doubts existing within him for at least forty years because he had not been born there. 156 His son, who had grown up in the area, never had such doubts.

The assumption of settler ancestry is promoted by common yet inconsistent Government usage of family surnames in the naming of roads. Importantly, the Hasthorpe family was not randomly selected, for they had been known for their efforts and generosity, including Harvey’s quintessential community work over many years:

We had our own church in Kandanga. I painted the boards with the Minister; had our own Mary Valley parish: Dagun to Kenilworth. Two representatives, I was one, the other was a school teacher in Kandanga. Done that for twenty years. … [I was a] fireman for fifty odd years (from 1946) and fire warden for thirty-five years. … Member of the Water Board for thirty years. …Member of the Hall Committee and School Committee. … [My] father was chairman of the Hall Committee at one stage. I was the last Trustee of the Public Hall Committee. [We had an incident] when the piano was wrecked; in country areas we really frown on those sort of things. The Detective-Sergeant from Gympie called [to say he had] caught the culprit [and asked]: ‘What would you like to have done to him?’ [I said]: ‘Restitution. Pay for it.’ [And it was] done. … [I was also a] member of the PSGC, the pineapple sectional group committee [and] the QDO (Queensland Dairymens’ Organisation). 157

Such social practices and community histories have thus informed the selection of road names, which has likely facilitated the local perception of such family surnames as equivalent to an ancestral form of emplacement.

156 Interview 22 April 2009, FN# 8
157 Interview 22 April 2009, FN# 8
These infrastructure naming practices by property developers and local Government planners, as references to both recognisable forms of belonging and identity and social history, compare well with what in nearby Gympie are known as ‘Old Gympie’ families, the members of which are said to be treated with respect because at least one grandparent of the current generation is buried at a local cemetery. Multi-generational presence in the area was certainly the most pervasive factor in references to ‘being local’ also in the Mary Valley. Often additional to such biological, ancestral indicators were factors associated with local practice: going to the local school, raising children, participating in the Parents and Citizens’ Association, the Bowling Club, Hall Committee or Show Society. These were the foundational community activities in which the Hasthorpe family above participated and upon which the settlements in the Mary Valley and elsewhere were socio-economically based (see Chapter 2).

Newcomers, often with urban backgrounds, generally arrived with a somewhat nostalgic vision of rural belonging and community participation, that included ‘knowing the mail lady by name’ or joining the local fire brigade. Relative newcomers often expressed views of both community and the natural environment as treasured personal relationships to be (re)gained. With largely urban social networks and non-productive use of their land, such views did relatively little to increase participation in diminishing town-based community activities. Rather, the focus was on the ‘precious patch’ (Coombs & Craig 2008), the locus of a quiet and comfortable retirement among the greenery. Barr, Karunaratne and Wilkinson (2005: 41-2), who looked at the history and future of agriculture in Australia principally from a statistical perspective, made a general but valuable point about the socio-economic changes across Australia that applies accurately also to the Mary Valley:

Existing farms are generally locked into a slow decline in economic power as the terms of trade compress. When farmers cease their occupation, there is little likelihood of an inter-generational transfer. This lack of intergenerational transfer is already apparent in parts of the Australian landscape (Curtis, MacKay, Van Nouhuys, Lockwood, Byron, & Graham 2000a). Subdivision to the statutory minimum block size will be an attractive prospect for many families inheriting land but with no inclination to live on this land. Newly subdivided properties will often be purchased by in-migrants. People will increasingly be choosing to live in this landscape rather than to live off the landscape. … Amenity and statement housing are gradually populating hills. Each house has a view, a long drive and often makes a

158 Interview 17 February 2009, FN# 7
statement about the owner to those looking up from the valley. The flats away from any water bodies may at this stage remain in traditional farming ownership. … Despite the gentle lamentation of the passing of inter-generational transfer of farming in the area, there is no will, even on the part of the farming community, to implement the planning policies that might encourage … a commercial restructuring.

For many farmers in the Mary Valley subdivision was the primary means to a self-funded retirement. As broadly described in Chapter 2, agricultural pursuits had been in decline since the end of the 1960s as a result, most basically, of rising costs and diminishing returns. All the farmers I interviewed talked about the history of their product’s price, milk, beef or otherwise, the regulations, their investments, the size, value and social history of blocks and paddocks, whether their own or their neighbour’s, and so on. Many farmers owned or leased blocks of land in separate areas of the Mary Valley, the result of recognised opportunities arising when others halted operations there in the past. Yet there was indeed a sense of lament about the financial obstacles to inter-generational transfer and the resulting decline of agricultural businesses.159

While the primary industries had economically dominated since settlement, unstable landownership had characterised, with the exception of the most prosperous decades of the 1950s and 1960s, most of the region and its socio-economic history. Regional instability in landownership in 2006 is evident in the census data of population and housing, collected every five years by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Over the period 1996-2006 population mobility for the region, as measured by the percentage of people who lived at the enumerated place of residence for less than five years at the time of the census, is forty three per cent.160 Despite such a large part of the population in constant flux, the Environmental Impact Statement produced by SKM (2007: 15.23) recognised ‘a relatively stable population, with a low level of population mobility compared to Queensland as a whole [at almost fifty per cent]’.

During the campaign I observed poignant examples at public meetings in which newcomers accorded a sense of local authority to the senior multi-generational farmers who represented this notional stability. Prominent activists such a David Kreutz or Kevin Ingersole would often clarify at the start of their public address, either explicitly or implicitly, that they had been in the Valley ‘two

159 As one farmer explained, even when younger people are interested in taking over the business, inheritance practices mean such a person often has to buy the prohibitively expensive shares of siblings. Inter-generational transfer therefore may require a concerted family effort to accommodate it (c.f. Voyce 1994).
160 This number does not equate with the percentage of newcomers because intra-Local Government Area movements are included. Also included are renters who move house more often than home owners (c.f. ABS 2009).
nanoseconds\textsuperscript{161}, that they were ‘more a lifestyler than a farmer in the Valley’\textsuperscript{162} and that previously they ‘didn’t know people from a bar of soap’\textsuperscript{163}. By offering such personal and honest backgrounds face-to-face and by identifying as a newcomer in front of longer-term residents, they acknowledged and deferred publicly to those deemed to truly belong, which in turn assisted in obtaining their support. Such embodied cultural practices resonate with cases reported elsewhere, for example by Checker (2001: 141) among the activists in a multi-ethnic coalition for environmental justice in Brooklyn, New York, who ‘strategically emphasized their diversity, knowing that it had potential to be a powerful political tool (see also Takaki 1987: 4). At public events [they] presented unmistakable physical signs of how their coalition brought together distinct communities.’

Local support was difficult to obtain however if there was a suspicion of Government involvement. The community development organisation \textit{Mary Valley Connect}, referred to as ‘\textit{Mary Valley Inc}’ or simply ‘MVT’ and created during the campaign in late 2008 is an example case. Having come under immediate fire at a public meeting in the Kandanga Hall over its funding by, and perceived relationships with, the ‘\textit{Gah’ment}’, the President of that new organisation tried calmly to alleviate those concerns, but he had already assessed his position: ‘I don’t have social capital. [I’m] always aware I haven’t been here long [i.e. 6 years]’, he said to me later.\textsuperscript{164}

For these reasons it was important to the newcomers leading the campaign that direct and close links were maintained with those involved in rural production. The few committee members who possessed such close links, and who were practically regarded as locals, such as Lyndall Ensbey and David Sims, ensured those contacts were effectively maintained. Lyndall and her family in particular were a driving force behind a successful event that was perhaps of little significance to the outcome of scientific debates, but of importance particularly as a symbolic expression of local endurance and community cohesion. She had realised that one of the few symbols capable of providing a meaningful link between the rural producers and the newcomers was the horse.

Outdone by motorised transport since the Second World War, horses currently have more symbolic and recreational value than utilitarian purpose, but they are nevertheless numerous in the Mary Valley. In fact, the sheer amount of horses kept in rural residential areas has caused the production of State Government information websites, including warnings about the ‘absolute minimum space

\textsuperscript{161} Interview K. Ingersole, 29 January 2009, FN\# 5
\textsuperscript{162} David Kreutz at the David Gibson MP Public Meeting, Kandanga Hall, 27 January 2009, FN\# 4
\textsuperscript{164} Interview 03 August 2009, FN\# 14
of 0.4 ha for each horse\textsuperscript{165}, their environmental impacts particularly exacerbated where rural residential blocks are of an unsuitably small size and newcomers lack any prior knowledge or experience pertaining to the keeping of such animals (c.f. O’Keeffe & McDonald 1994, Buxton & Low Chow 2007). Similar to Rikoon’s (2006: 200) description of local sentiments expressed in opposition to their removal as part of the ecological restoration plans by the National Park Service in Missouri:

Horses had critical historical and cultural importance as icons of regional identity, history and personal experience, and as core symbols of communities increasingly politically and economically marginalized.

Horses, particularly the ones considered ‘feral’, have been the subject of considerable debate and conflict also in Australia (c.f. Peace 2009, Cubit 2001, Symanski 1994) but in the Mary Valley there was general agreement about their status as a symbol of both contemporary rural living and previous farming heritage. These two aspects were visually combined into the scenic farm view that adorned the invitation for the 2008 anti-dam Kandanga 1000 horse ride, the contact persons for which were all longer-term residents involved in cattle farming.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{plate9.jpg}
\caption{Plate 9 Flyer for the 2008 Kandanga 1000 Horse Ride}
\end{figure}

The exhibition of agricultural achievement had historically taken place at the annual Mary Valley Show, held in Imbil since 1919. It had its historical roots in the development of early agricultural enterprise and as a regional development initiative it was itself one of the earliest, most powerful expressions of an emplaced Mary Valley identity (see Chapter 2). The campaign could not go unrepresented at such major regional events.

By 2007 however only ‘a handful of large commercial operations interspersed with smaller scale part-time enterprises’ could be discerned (ACIL Tasman 2007: 38). While parts of the agricultural land in the Mary Valley had already been subdivided since the 1970s, the dam proposal resulted in the sale to the State Government of most fertile land along the river, further decreasing agricultural productivity as a result of halted or reduced operations. The future of local agriculture was the topic of much debate among the campaigners, but also among the dam proponents as evidenced by the unprecedented number of publications on the topic (e.g. DPI&F 2006, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, ACIL Tasman 2007, PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007).

Through events such as the Kandanga 1000 and their consistent presence at events such as local agricultural shows, the activists gave voice to a productive ideology in the context of a historically diminishing productive practice, a sense of longing and heritage that could be supported by both newcomers and farmers. Together on horseback, they expressed ways of ‘being local’, their shared but different relationships with animals and the natural environment the basis for a negotiated sense of community among the anti-dam campaigners.

Land, Property Rights and Community
Expressions of a locally emplaced community identity were also underpinned by notions of ownership and property rights. That is, freehold title was often regarded as fundamental to the appropriate maintenance of land and the stability of the rural community based upon it. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, freehold title itself was related to, or conditional upon, mandatory land improvements and agricultural development (Chapter 2). Leasehold on the other hand, with its temporary character, was seen to represent change and fluidity, processes hostile to the notion of social stability even though the majority of land in Queensland and Australia was, and continues to be held under such tenure (Geoscience Australia 2010).166 That freehold title represents durable and personal relationships, particularly where it is inherited from previous generations, is locally expressed through the framed title deeds which adorn, among family

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photographs and other personal items, a number of living rooms I came to visit in the area. The importance of freehold may also be evident in the number of dwellings fully owned. At just under forty-two per cent, it is ten per cent higher in this area than in Queensland as a whole (SKM 2008: C20-32). Conversely, the percentage of rented dwellings is significantly lower, at nineteen per cent compared to a Queensland average of nearly twenty eight per cent (Ibid).

During my fieldwork sentiments about tenure were undoubtedly more explicitly expressed as one of the results of the dam proposal became clear: the large scale conversion and replacement of freehold landholders into renters. A total of 156 out of 494 landowners who sold to QWI leased back their properties, many at a token annual rental rate of $1000. Mostly non-local renters subsequently moved into those properties not rented back by the previous owners. Because of the departure of productive landowners and loss of freehold title, renters and leasehold became synonymous with everything that was wrong about the proposal and its various effects on the Mary Valley.

A poignant set of socio-economic contrasts were expressed in just a few comments by a third generation dairy farming couple, both now in their seventies. When I asked them to repeat a name for renters I had never heard before they replied:

[The woman]: 'Fly-by Nighters'; it doesn't matter where they move.
[The man later also called them]: ‘riff-raffs’, undesirables, ‘no hopers’.
[The woman]: When we were kids we went to [i.e. started] school with kids and finished with them.
[The man]: [my wife] worked for a caring business in Kandanga; knew everyone in the district. …[Kandanga had] 3 saw mills back then [1950s-60s], 3 stores, a picture theatre, butcher, baker, blacksmith, a train every day of the week in the peak pineapple season, sometimes twice a day. In the off-season three times a week. … People didn't move. Now, places [are] cut up, places people used to make a living on are now just a place to live.
[The woman]: They don't value what they've got.
[The man]: non-productive.

167 Owner occupied homes represent about 75% of all homes, compared to a Queensland average of 65% (SKM 2008: C20-31).
[The woman]: [They are] not making a living here - solicitors, school teachers - not making a living from where their house is. So they can sell. If this is taken from us - home, cattle, living, everything wrapped up in one - we would be deeply hurt.\textsuperscript{169}

Another dairy farmer who had long been involved in rural security issues as the President of the Imbil Neighbourhood Watch referred to ‘renties’ through that lens:

'Renties' come in for a time: no commitment. [They are] usually pot growers, almost brothels. My children found pot growing on creeks. They come from cities; low socio-economic. I got bailed up by one.\textsuperscript{170}

His long-term formal and informal cooperation with the Imbil Police Sergeant of seventeen years was reassuring however. The Sergeant agreed, describing the local community as

law abiding, [people are] still prepared to give us information. … I get more info on the bowling green than in the station. [Renters] stand out like a sore thumb. … In the main street in Imbil I can pick the owners and renters. … At Bollier Park, Olsen’s property at the river, Johnson’s old property, six to seven kilometres, you notice degradation [as a result of their sale to QWI].\textsuperscript{171}

Additional then to arguments that the increase in renters had resulted in a decline of social standards and cohesion were concerns about the perceived lack of property maintenance by renters.\textsuperscript{172} As one long-term resident put it:

Government land is weed infested. [There is also a] feral dog problem. Fences are not being taken care of. I put in two complaints: [about] next door and the market garden: a weed problem. Nothing [was] done.\textsuperscript{173}

Kevin Ingersole had made a similar observation among the hobby farms in his street:

\textsuperscript{169} Interview 11 May 2009, FN# 9
\textsuperscript{170} Interview 24 June 2009, FN# 10
\textsuperscript{171} Interview 02 July 2009, FN# 11
\textsuperscript{172} See on the suggested benefits of homeownership e.g. Coulson (2002). However, in addition to what they refer to as ‘rental externality’ (said to be the reason for reduced property care by renters), Harding, Miceli & Sirmans (2000) also offer factors which may negatively influence owner-occupied user care.
\textsuperscript{173} Interview 02 February 2009, FN# 5
Between Ken, myself and Neil [neighbours] we would look after weeds. [But the currently renting] neighbours haven't slashed once. [Instead] their pigs dug up my place. People are throwing rubbish on the street. Rentals: a lot of ferals come into the community. Never seen donuts on the street [i.e. the black marks left by cars driven in circles at speed for fun]. Renters don't participate in anything, with one exception at the meeting.  

This last point was true, the first reported exception to the rule – a female renter who attended a community meeting - was deemed newsworthy enough even to be highlighted by the regional newspaper. Apart from this one person, as far as I know, renters did not participate in campaign events or local meetings. This whole development, in other words, seemed to confirm to locals the social value of what had been held dearly for a much longer time: freehold property rights and the land based maintenance of a stable rural community.

Social and political divides were not felt solely between owners and renters, but also between different settlements in and around the Mary Valley. Since the early naming of the Mary Valley in the context of the railway line there had been tension as to the proper area and community so defined. The upper reaches of the river south of Kenilworth in particular had generally been excluded, both from the economic benefits of the railway and the socio-economic networks associated with it (see Chapter 2). When the Queensland Government through its Department of Primary Industries reviewed the earlier documentation on ways to capture the water resources of the Mary River in the early 1990s (e.g. DPI 1993) and started investigations for a large dam at Camboon, near the town of Conondale to the south of Kenilworth, local residents at Conondale formed the ‘Save the Upper Mary Valley’ protest group (italics added). Except for the seasoned environmental activists of the Mackay family at nearby Moy Pocket, neither their leadership nor active membership included residents from downstream in the Mary Valley ‘proper’. More significantly, when the dam did not proceed despite the 1994 drought, public calls were again being made by local Government officials and irrigators around Gympie to increase the amount of dam sites in the Mary Valley.  

It was therefore not all that surprising that few residents from Kenilworth and surrounds actively participated in the Kandanga-based campaign against the Traveston Crossing Dam. They were content that the Camboon location had not been seriously reconsidered again, the divisive socio-political aspects of that decision reflected in the original Ministerial announcement:

174 Interview K. Ingersole, 29 January 2009, FN# 5
Mr Palaszczuk said the Government had ruled out constructing a dam at Cambroon, on Obi Obi Creek or Moy Pocket that have been previously suggested as possible dam or weir sites in the region. “Building a dam at the Cambroon site would have meant relocating the town of Conondale,” Mr Palaszczuk said. “I would like to acknowledge the strong representations made to me by the Member for Glasshouse Carolyn Male and the Member for Nicklin Peter Wellington on these sites. The Government is acting accordingly by ruling out any water storages on these three sites”.

Additional to the politically exploited divisions between the Mary Valley and the upper-most reaches of the river it was difficult for those in Kandanga even to attract much contribution from the neighbouring town of Imbil, which had long asserted socio-economic dominance in the Mary Valley. Its only active committee member however provided much appreciated moral support, particularly through his surprisingly sarcastic jokes; this was the Uniting Church Minister of Religion but self-identified non-local Iain Watt. Known in the committee as ‘Rev Watt’ or just ‘the Rev’, he is well remembered for instigating a ‘turning of the back’ towards Premier Peter Beattie during the public meeting at Gympie in 2006 (Hales 2009: 355). His charisma was undoubtedly among the reasons some members of his congregation continued to attend his services after they had sold their properties to QWI and moved out of the Mary Valley.

Small town factionalism has always been part of the settlements in the Mary Valley. While most current expressions of rivalry carry little seriousness, there is a sense of urgency to the socio-economic prospects of most towns. That is, how are they to maintain a sense of rural community in light of declining agriculture, less economic activity and a rapidly ageing population? At the small town of Conondale therefore, which escaped inundation several times over the past decades, residents had already held a ‘Community Planning Workshop’ in the 1990s. The urgency was reflected in the summarised proposals for the marketing of the town, which included the desperate need for ‘something to attract people to stop in Conondale’.

The activists against the Traveston Crossing Dam promoted, against earlier sentiments but assisted by the larger size of the proposed inundation zone and the environmental views of many

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177 Interview 16 January 2009, FN# 3
178 ‘Community Planning Workshop: Solutions Proposed’, undated document in the archive of the Save the Upper Mary Valley campaign held by Mr. Sands in Conondale.
newcomers, a broadening of Mary Valley definitions. For this reason they held meetings not just at the public halls in Kandanga, Imbil and Ridgewood, but also in Kenilworth and Cooran, this last town located to the east of the river and only very rarely included in local definitions of the Mary Valley (see Map 2). Except for the large events in Gympie when both former Premier Peter Beattie and the subsequent Premier Anna Bligh confronted protestors there, the campaigners did not meet in Gympie, nor did people from Gympie participate in the Committee.\footnote{179} Gympie city itself, as the urbanised centre of financial, logistical, medical and other essential services for those to the west, across the river in the rural Mary Valley, has always been excluded from Mary Valley definitions. It is where most people in the Mary Valley go when they say they ‘go to town’; the urban downstream centre different to, and physically separated by the river from, the rural valley.

Since the small town of Kandanga was nearest to the proposed dam wall and most affected by proposed inundation, the physical centre of the campaign was understandably located there. This choice however was reportedly criticised by some residents from Imbil who consider their town to be the proper centre of the Mary Valley. Both from Kandanga, the contested centre, and the changing territory of the affected Mary Valley socio-cultural issues of land, property and community associations with place became evident in the campaign.

**Indigeneity**

This chapter has so far attempted to illustrate a variety of socio-cultural aspects of the campaign, particularly the manner in which it involved negotiations of belonging, community and engagements with the natural environment. Though not the focus of this thesis, the preceding has indicated that Aboriginal culture was also relevant in these negotiations. The alliance between farmers, environmentalists and urban newcomers on the one hand, itself already a compromise of sorts, and Aboriginal people on the other, was however far from straightforward.

This was apparent when Aboriginal people prepared to meet in Gympie on the 11th of August 2007 for the ‘Traveston Crossing Dam Authorisation Meeting’, a meeting to authorise the signing of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with QWI that would allow the project to proceed from the indigenous perspective.\footnote{180} Police had some concern not about the gathering of rival Aboriginal ordination

\footnote{179} Although the authors of the *Love, Mary* book reside in and close to Gympie, and a small number of other Gympie residents regularly participated in public campaign events.

factions, but about the White anti-dam campaigners planning to protest against their agreement.181 One activist later commented:

I was disappointed. [The ILUA] knocked a hole in my understanding of their relationship to the land, I thought they'd had these connections with songlines, mystical… thought they wouldn't swap their land for money.182

Applying the idiom of the ‘true Greenie’183 and the notion that those who truly belong could not possibly sell their land with a harshness not equally directed at the local farmers who had sold their properties, the Aboriginal signatories to the agreement were regularly described as ‘fake’, ‘bussed in from Melbourne’ or ‘bought out’ by amounts varying from a few hundred thousand to a few million dollars. This resonated with the critique publicly expressed by those Aboriginal people who were also opposed to the proposal and, within a native title context at least, actively engaged in the politics of Aboriginal representation (c.f. Mantziaris & Martin 2000).

But none of these Aboriginal people were personally known. Dr. Eve Fesl, who most prominently represented an Aboriginal position against the dam, lives outside the region close to Brisbane and was personally unknown.184 But her public speeches expressed sentiments often shared to some degree with environmentalists, and she included references to aspects of indigeneity more broadly recognisable by the non-indigenous campaigners from the area: ancestry and burial sites, named places, families camping on the river, a duty to care, concerns about future generations. After she was handed the GetUp relay torch by Bob Brown as described above, she made a speech which she culminated with a poem dedicated to Dala and Mumabulla, the lungfish and the Mary River. It was a poem tuned to notions of the ancient and the sacred, both cultural and environmental. Given its dense forms of association it is worth including parts of the speech and the entire poem185:

Children will be told the story of Dala, as they lay under the stars and beside the rainforest… The children listened to the story of the beginning of our culture… Dinosaurs and giant marsupials descended from Dala… Groups of Dala always come to us today when our families meet by the Mary River which we called

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181 Comment from a participant.
182 Interview 17 February 2009, FN# 7
183 Interview 09 June 2009, FN# 9
184 Although she previously had contact with some farmers in the Tuchekoi area where some of her forebears had worked (interview 25 November 2009, FN# 18).
185 Transcribed from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM9_v4lm2DQ (accessed 06 December 2010), formatting unknown.
Mumabulla, which means ‘Two Tides’. We had always been told that we must protect Dala and the places where he and she breed and feed from…

Poem dedicated to Dala and Mumabulla:

She is the artery pulsing life through the veins of Gubbi Gubbi [indiscernible Aboriginal word], touching our birthplaces, the sacred pools, our spiritual places as she flows. She gives succour to rainforest and special trees that cradle bones of our past generations. In her womb she bares Dala, who, like a whisper from a long forgotten past, symbolises the wisdom of our elders, directed by the ancestral spirits to bring life from the sea to the vertebrae creatures on the land. Flowing through time our duty is to care for Mumabulla and to care for Dala, and it is your duty too. She is the symbol of our past, our present, and our future. She is Mumabulla, mother of the sacred.

Despite such powerful assertions of cultural authority and duty, which seemed to conform to the characterisation of Aboriginal people often employed by environmentalists as ‘icons of true belonging, role models, holders of superior spiritual knowledge, the real autochthons’ (Trigger and Mulcock 2005: 312), the signing of the ILUA had left most activists despondent and uncertain about the socio-political traction of Aboriginal relations to land.

Similar to Satterfield’s (2002: 121) finding in the conflict over logging in Oregon, USA, Aboriginal relations to the land and river were often reduced to ‘unidimensional strategic and counter-strategic implements caught in the crossfire of the struggle’.^186 Very few local campaigners had had personal experiences with Aboriginal people prior to the dam proposal. General insights could hardly be gleaned from local interaction, for during the last census in 2006 only 0.85% of the adult population (6,338 people) in the area identified as Indigenous (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). Moreover, prior attitudes, particularly towards Aboriginal heritage sites located on farmlands, were often said to have been negative.187 Perhaps because the finalisation of the ILUA in 2007 had taken away that hope, I did not find any farmers who attempted, as they reportedly had in the earlier stages of the campaign, to opportunistically use such sites on their land as a means to stop the dam

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186 Strang (2008: 43) reported on a similar view held by an Aboriginal person in the context of the bi-annual water festival held in Maroochydore, about 80km to the south, at which the Aboriginal participation is described by the person as ‘a further appropriation of indigenous knowledge and land’.

187 None of my interviewees were aware of any indigenous sites on their own land, but numerous other sites, typically with a degree of uncertainty (possible burials, massacres sites and ceremonial sites), were pointed to in the region.
proposal. The topic was not particularly pursued, also because their own non-indigenous listed heritage sites in the area, with the exception of the Kandanga cemetery, had caused relatively little discussion even though they outnumbered the indigenous sites by about a factor of three.\textsuperscript{188}

Furthermore, the divisive actions in the Federal Court pertaining to the disputed identity and authority of those asserting native title rights and interests in the area, the amount of native title applications historically made, and the subsequent dismissal or discontinuation of each, were apparent indicators of deep seated divisions among those Aboriginal people asserting ties to the region. The issue therefore, at least for the campaign leadership, went into the colloquial ‘too hard basket’ and the President later summarised with typical rationality, ‘it was never a show stopper’.\textsuperscript{189} Purposefully it may not have been, but the display of Aboriginal arguments against the dam at the Kandanga Info Centre was in the back corner of the building, marginal and almost out of sight.\textsuperscript{190}

While most local residents came to regard the role of Aboriginal people in the campaign in the limited terms described above, in discussions about relations to land and forms of belonging Aboriginal people did often provide what Mulcock (2008: 184) referred to more broadly as ‘an inevitable point of reference and comparison for non-Indigenous populations in settler societies’. Conversely, that position at times worked to consolidate support for those Aboriginal people politically astute. Eve Fesl for example knew the sensitivities of the crowd, which included some people from the Mary Valley, when she asked about fifty campaigners - gathered with wine, cheese and intermittent cello and guitar music in the rainy courtyard of a progressive inner-city Brisbane bookstore for the \textit{Love, Mary} book launch - to sing an Aboriginal frog song from the Mary Valley with her. They did so with gusto.

In the Mary Valley itself however Aboriginal engagement was less involved. Apart from Eve’s appearance at major events and the display at the Info Centre, only two protest road signs included Aboriginal references, both with dot-painted motifs. Because they were located beside the road near Mt. Tuchekoi, the general area containing Aboriginal heritage sites identified in the proponent’s Environmental Impact Statement, they seemed informed but unusual, their form and content unlike those by \textit{Save the Mary}. To my surprise, both turned out to be the work of a non-indigenous teacher from Melbourne on a brief family visit, whose activist parents, a nurse and a genetic engineer, had

\textsuperscript{188} In the cultural heritage report for the dam (Godwin & L’Oste-Brown 2007) about forty Aboriginal sites of various kinds and well over one hundred non-indigenous sites were reported in the wider area surrounding the proposed inundation zone.

\textsuperscript{189} Interview K. Ingersole, 29 January 2009, FN# 5.

\textsuperscript{190} This display was reportedly the initiative of a non-indigenous nurse who had worked in Aboriginal communities.
grown up in rural New Zealand and had from Brisbane bought a forty acre former paw-paw farm (outright) as a ‘weekender’ in 1999. Semi-retired and with a passion for tree planting, they had moved there permanently in 2006, the year the dam was announced (on the day of their other son’s wedding). They explained their son was on a family visit from Melbourne and had indigenous interests that also included the playing of the didgeridoo. With those interests, he had made the road sign simply because ‘they love the Mary Valley and coming here’.

Another instance in which a non-indigenous person explicitly used indigenous artistic style to communicate a sense of attachment was found when among the local paintings at the 2010 Gympie Heritage Art competition, called ‘Celebrate Your Story’, there was a dot-painting by a non-indigenous person which represented her farm, entitled ‘My Place: A Map’. The cultural appropriation was perhaps innocent but nevertheless so blatant it made the local activist with whom I was walking around the exhibition frown questionably.

Both these examples however express forms of attachment said to belong to the ‘real autochthons’ in a much more obvious way than was more commonly the case among non-indigenous people. That is, I found many of their expressions of belonging informed by the more experiential, practised aspects of land and community which are, at least in principal, positively comparable to aspects of indigenous practice (see also Carrier 2003). They include such themes as productive physical engagement with the land, the importance of birth places and emplaced ancestry, the marking and naming of the environment to tell stories both personal and social, knowing the landscape, floods, trees, river flats and so on, the role of family places, personal relationships, and community commitment. These are some of the topics discussed in more detail in the next chapters.

On the basis of those practices, generally underpinned by their long-term engagement with, and deeply emotional ties to, the land, a number of farmers I interviewed expressed a personal sense of indigeneity. ‘I am an Aboriginal’, said a sixty year old White farmer unprompted when we sat down for an interview. ‘I’m a fourth generation farmer, I’ve loved the land since I was a child’, he added in support of this claim. Another farmer pointed to such sentiments more implicitly by indicating that he knew, as a result of the property acquisitions for the dam, ‘how Aboriginal people feel’.

191 Interview August 2009, FN# 15
192 By Nonie Metzler.
193 The importance of ‘practice’ in forms of indigenous belonging, community membership and relationships to land is particularly evident in the context of contested native title claims during which such matters are described. See for general literature on this topic e.g. Sutton 2003.
194 Interview 09 June 2009, FN# 9
195 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
While this statement was an indication of both human compassion and what Trigger (2008a) referred to as an emerging sense of indigeneity, it had reportedly also been made in the presence of an Aboriginal person, who was said to have been deeply offended by it. The dam proposal, in other words, brought out claims and counter-claims of indigeneity, contested in the context of historical and contemporary forms of dispossession, resistance and relations to land.

3.6 Summarising Remarks

The Australian administrative and legal procedures involved in an infrastructure proposal the size of Traveston Crossing Dam are extensive. In this case the Queensland State, through its corporation QWI, was also responsible for the completion of the impact studies which are legally required for a project of that scale to be approved by the Queensland Coordinator-General. When he approved the proposal subject to twelve hundred conditions in October 2009, three and a half years after the initial proposal and a decision characterised by the Queensland Greens as a farcical rubber stamp\footnote{Australian Greens, Media Release 06 October 2009, at: http://qld.greens.org.au/media-releases/traveston-dam-state-approval-a-farce (accessed 06 December 2010).}, the criteria set out in the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act had to be applied by the responsible federal Minister. Any relevant social impacts were also to be considered under this Act.

This incorporation of social issues into an otherwise environmental issue certainly promoted a strong focus of the Save the Mary campaign on the iconic natural species that inhabit the river. More than just a topic under scientific discussion, the lungfish, cod and turtle came to symbolically represent a local sense of nativeness and heritage, shared in multiple novel and often uneasy ways by farmers, environmentalists, urban newcomers and Aboriginal people. There was to that novelty a genuine sense of learning among many local people, the increasing amount of details regarding the global significance of local flora, fauna and ecological processes strengthening a process of attachment and activist resolve.

The focus on the river as a holistic system simultaneously worked to broaden the previously more restricted definition of the Mary Valley. These developments however were hardly uniform for they were the subject of continuous debate, of negotiations that also need to be understood within the potentially debilitating uncertainty about the nature and timing of the ultimate federal decision; nobody knew when the end would come or what it would look like. In terms of the campaign seen as the mobilisation of ‘community’, the definition of that community could politically not be wide enough, as Bob Brown implied when he closed his speech ‘in the Mary Valley, in Queensland,
Australia, on Planet Earth’. The campaign was indeed international, with Glenda Pickersgill attending the World Water Expo as an honouree in Zaragoza, Spain, in 2008. Yet most residents in the Mary River catchment, including those in downstream Maryborough, were aware that the Mary Valley historically meant dairy farming, pineapples and saw mills, the fertile flats and timbered hills south of Gympie. More importantly perhaps, it was now equated with the local area directly impacted; the ‘footprint’ and human face of the campaign. This tension, between a local sense of community identity and emplacement, and the significantly wider environmental relevance of the river and its associated species, persisted throughout the campaign.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty about the campaign’s timeframe and final outcome, the organisation remained remarkably well planned, coherent and efficient. The strategies promoted by the leadership typically engaged with bureaucratic processes and followed Ingersole’s ‘rule of engagement’ to avoid alienating characterisations such as ‘Greenies’ or ‘Rednecks’. The importance of the leadership provided by ‘the Committee’, idiosyncratic as its membership may be, can not be underestimated, and this was particularly true for all three elected Presidents during the campaign.

Only a small minority of the core activists could be regarded as locals on the basis of the criteria locally applied, but the variety of skills and social relationships mobilised by the campaign organisation as a whole was impressive. Newcomers with urban backgrounds, some applying their University qualifications or business management skills, some simply to hold a sign or fold letters at the Info Centre, joined forces with longer-term primary producers educated on the river flats and hills of the Mary Valley. In terms of agriculture however, many farmers sold their properties to the State because the financial realities of commercial farming had been stacked against them for some time. Retirement became a possibility for them after all. Relative newcomers therefore, themselves instrumental in the socio-economic changes over the previous three decades, were the drivers of the campaign and the public articulation of locally emplaced identities.

Their engagements with the natural environment varied significantly from primary producers, although many had arrived with views of rural culture and the agricultural landscape. There was in that sense a tension between the productive socio-economic history of the region, and some of the ideological arguments about stability and rural production employed in the campaign. These and

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other tensions were managed, in recognition of previous rural practice, through personal relationships and face-to-face meetings in small town-halls.

The notion of a stable rural community was, inter alia, founded upon the importance accorded to freehold property rights. The intergenerational transfer of land and the decreasing economic feasibility of that nowadays occurring were important aspects in farmers’ accounts of tenure issues. The focus on freehold title equally served the broader population in its opposition to the sale of land to the State. The QWI leases and associated ‘riff-raffs’ were in no uncertain terms contrasted to the interrelated values of community, freehold title and the proper maintenance of the environment.

Because they were ‘good’ people, they never used such derogatory terms on the radio or television. For example, in August 2008 a local resident painted ‘SCAB’ on the road outside a local B&B because they had accommodated people associated with the dam. The President and Vice-President went there personally the next day to assist in the removal of the graffiti and to sincerely apologise on their supporters’ behalf. Publicly restrained, the role of emotion was nevertheless important. Many expressed their relationships with the natural environment in terms deeply emotional and personal. The youngest but critically important committee member Tanzi Smith for instance had one of the more classical tales to tell, involving her youth on a downstream farm and her first kiss and subsequent marriage on the banks of the Mary River itself. As an environmental scientist with deeply personal relationships to the river she lived on a permaculture farm outside Kandanga, but in inner Sydney when writing her doctoral thesis on sustainable development in Vietnam. With downstream familial connections she was also critical in the operations of the downstream activist group GMA, of which she was both Vice-President and research coordinator. While such personal histories were important in terms of activist commitment, personal relationships and local authority, in terms of bureaucratic engagement they were accorded value similar to issues of cultural heritage: ‘never a show stopper’.

Within the local context then, in which forms of emplacement and belonging were historically founded upon ancestry and practice, both among settler-descendants as well as Aboriginal people, the creatures unique to the Mary River and surrounding land gained previously unthinkable appreciation and socio-political traction. The activists, through their skills and determination were able to guide that development into a community campaign with local reverberations undoubtedly for some years to come.

199 Interview 30 January 2009, FN# 5
In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates the importance of socio-cultural analyses of infrastructure projects and activist campaigns. In this case, attending to senses of belonging and identity is particularly pertinent to a fine-grained understanding of local reactions and the ways in which these senses are contested, negotiated and strategically used to present the local community as a united concern, despite significant socio-cultural diversity and historical change.
Chapter 4  Art, Science and Experience: Aspects of Mary Valley Identity and Epistemology

4.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the mutually constitutive relationships between a regional Mary Valley identity and various ways of knowing the Mary River environment. This discussion must be understood within the context of the preceding chapters on local history and the campaign against the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. My analysis is based on ethnographic fieldwork data collected during the campaign and it was readily apparent that information from local residents concerning knowledge and identity was influenced by, and often part of, this campaign. It was nevertheless also grounded in a longer-term historical process which involved the tenuous development of a regional Mary Valley identity, based predominantly on environmental characteristics, regional socio-economic developments, and the decline of previously more important identities derived principally from the history of settlement in the region (Chapter 2).

The Mary River has always been important to those living along it, even though it occasionally threatens life with floods as well. In the previous chapters I described some of the ways in which the Mary River figures in local life, and I take that relationship further in the chapter below. One of the key aspects of the campaign against the Traveston crossing Dam concerned the role of knowledge, particularly of the river and the broader regional environment. In this chapter, through detailed ethnographic examples of art, engagements with science and the significance of experience, I attempt to make more apparent the interrelated processual aspects of local identity and epistemology within the campaign (e.g. Satterfield 1997, 2002; Ingold 2000; Carolan and Bell 2003; Sjölander-Lindqvist 2008; Williams 2000, Carrier 2003, Checker 2007).

The first section describes artistic engagements with the river. A number of years before the dam proposal some artistic projects, reflecting broader socio-economic processes in the Valley, had started to involve the river. They set important precedents to the myriad of artistic works produced during the campaign. While varied in form and content, many artistic works reflected deeply intimate relationships between the human and non-human environment, reflections which were part of a developing sense of emplaced identity (see also Chapter 3; for an anthropological discussion of art in terms such as agency and intention, see Gell 1998, Kuchler 2002). I refer to such an identity, and its opposite form, as an endogenous and an exogenous identity respectively (see Chapter 1). An endogenous identity can be seen as grounded in what Ingold (2000: 40-41) referred to as ‘an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world’, his ‘ontology of
dwelling’, which is not about ‘making a view of the world [which can be considered exogenous] but of taking up a view in it’ (original italics). In terms of epistemology I further combine this notion of endogenous identity with what Strang (2004: 26) referred to as an ‘epistemic community’ in which forms of knowledge and values are shared, and Delgado’s (2010: 564) recent description of environmental social movements as ‘science-lay hybrid assemblages’. These analytical tools, as I will argue below, are usefully applied in an ethnographic analysis of identity and knowledge during the anti-dam campaign.

Shortly after the dam announcement a large increase in the production of creative works took place, the main themes of which I wish to highlight in the first section on art. These themes serve to introduce the second section of the chapter, which analyses the contrasting imagery of science and protest during the campaign. The contrasts, I argue, were a resource for the protestors, who used them to differentiate between endogenous identity and exogenous forms of identity based on abstraction and non-local science. Rather than the result of a non-responsive, pre-determined activist plan however, this section approaches the use of contrasting imagery as a contested and relational process during which identities and forms of knowledge were socio-politically negotiated (Dominy 1997, Satterfield 1997, Wynne 1992, Yearley 1996).

The third section, building on the preceding analyses of imagery and identity, focuses on the key scientific study associated with the dam proposal: the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Drawing on ethnographic studies of science and technology and the above notions of endogenous and exogenous identity, public engagements with science and examples of the social processes which underpin the creation of trust and ‘valid knowledge’ are discussed (e.g. Satterfield 1997, 2002). These processes are further highlighted with a section on the ways in which floods are locally known in the Mary Valley. Such material enables striking comparisons to be made with hydrological knowledge described in the EIS.

The fifth section will discuss, more or less drawing together the findings thus far, the characteristics of what may be referred to as ‘activist science’. Locally situated but simultaneously engaging with external bureaucracies, activists negotiated such varied aspects as historical forms of environmental use and change, local knowledge and engagements with the environment, and the symbolic role of iconic species such as the lungfish. This was reflected in the promotion of an inclusive and holistic form of scientific inquiry, focussed on the complexity and fragility of the Mary River as a regional ecosystem, and which effectively reduced the relevance of historical environmental impacts while maintaining, although somewhat tenuously, the significance of iconic species.
The last section finally arrives at the Federal decision regarding the dam proposal. I will reproduce sections of publicly available transcripts to discuss the views on science as expressed by both the Federal Environment Minister and Queensland Government politicians. Their engagements with science were remarkably similar to the ways in which activists engaged it, although some differences remained. The relationship between politics and scientific expertise was controversial and, from the day of the proposal’s announcement, the topic of much heated debate in the region. My analysis is restricted to publicly available materials in which political motivations are at best implicit. These materials nevertheless provide useful insight into the public epistemological debates concerning this project, which highlighted the socio-political negotiation of trust and the contexts in which knowledge and experts become regarded as valid and credible.

4.2 Art and Intimacy
In November 2006, six months into the campaign to stop the dam proposal, the Cooloola Shire Council organised a ‘Community Cultural Consultation Day’ to assess the region’s cultural skills and interests. In the report that details the results from that day a recommendation was made to celebrate the Mary River and to organise a Mary River Festival (Cooloola Shire Council 2007:19). This recommendation was in effect an extension of the local artistic projects that had been undertaken in the three years previous: the ‘Bathing with Mary’ (2003) and ‘Farming with Mary’ (2005) environmental art projects.

Both of these projects had been coordinated by an artist born in France but living on a farm at Kandanga, and they were the first with a focus entirely on the Mary River. Their intention was to ‘celebrate the importance of the Mary River for both its human and animal inhabitants [and] brought together artists and mentors to create site-specific art on farming land bordering the Mary’ (Kerr 2007: n.p). They were an expression of the fact that the Mary River had gained values additional to those of human usage; values held by an ever increasing number of environmentally oriented newcomers in the Valley (Chapters 2 and 3). The artistic focus was on a sense of intimacy (e.g. ‘bathing’) and productive engagement. Discussed further below, these were important aspects to the further articulation of a Mary Valley identity, and similarly emplaced forms of environmental knowledge. These early artistic projects were also important precursors to the artistic representations of the Mary River which developed as a direct result of the Traveston Crossing Dam announcement in April 2006.
The first Mary River Festival, called ‘Celebrating with Mary’, was held in Gympie in 2008. That farming and human use of the river were secondary aspects of the festival was most evident in the documentation for the festival held in Kandanga two years later. The aims were described as:

- Raising awareness of the uniqueness and value of the Mary River to our and the earth’s sustainability;
- Engendering the community ownership and cooperative spirit of care for the river;
- Celebrating our wonderful environment and lifestyle together as a community;
- Celebrating and raise awareness of the wealth and abundance the river brings to the region, sustaining rural and urban populations;
- Appreciating the history of the river during and pre white settlement.\(^{200}\)

Such aims, including the use of words such as ‘uniqueness’, ‘spirit of care’, and ‘the earth’s sustainability’ can be seen to reflect the historical decline in local agricultural enterprise and the rise of an environmental ethos among the local residents. While the river had always been described as a source of life for those living along its banks (Chapter 2), the public focus on environmental uniqueness was relatively new. The references to wealth and abundance in both human and non-human terms compare well with Strang’s (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2008) work on the symbolic values of water in the UK and Australia:

> visions of water are heavily encoded with meanings concerned with the generation and regeneration of humans and other species, and the potential to produce and reproduce health and wealth in human and environmental terms (2005b: 377).

This productive and reproductive potential was considered to be under threat from the dam proposal, and it is not without significance that many local discussions of the effects of the dam proposal focused on concerns for health and future generations, both human and non-human (see further below).

Returning to local artistic history, the Mary Valley Show Society in Imbil had since 2000 organised an annual Mary Valley Art Festival. In 2008, in the midst of the anti-dam campaign, and in line with the theme of the first Mary River Festival, one of the art festival’s categories was ‘Celebrating Mary’. It was a reflection of the campaign in which many members of the local community were engaged, and, presumably as a sign of support and significance, it was the category which attracted

twice the amount of prize money compared to other categories (i.e. $1000). The winning artwork in that category, as a further indication of support for the anti-dam campaign, was a clay sculpture of the anti-dam mascot: the lungfish called ‘Wheezer’ (Chapter 3).

The artworks generally promoted what may be regarded as an environmentalist view of the river, largely devoid of humans and depicting, for instance, a river gently meandering through well-vegetated surroundings. They carried titles such as ‘Flowing Gently – Mary River’, ‘Run Mary Run’ or ‘Mary River Blessing’. This last painting however, *Mary River Blessing*, was the only one in which the environmental values of the river were explicitly combined with agricultural scenery and human presence. It uniquely depicted, in Strang’s terms above, the river’s potential to produce and reproduce health and wealth in human, spiritual and environmental terms.

![Plate 10 'Mary River Blessing'. Courtesy Michelle Johns.](image)

Symbolically, the artistic events held during the campaign can be seen in two related ways; one in terms of the art works themselves and the relations between the human and the non-human environment they portray, and one in terms of public activity and the enhancement of a socio-political campaign. They are, in that sense, classical dualistic symbolic models (Geertz 1973: 93): of environmental relationships and value, and for community engagement and protest.

While the Mary Valley Art Festival was not explicitly associated with the anti-dam campaign, the protestors themselves produced many creative works in such forms as music, poetry, film, sculpture
and photography. The use of imagery in environmental conflict is well documented (e.g. Foale & MacIntyre 2005, Franklin 2006, Haynes 2006, Seppänen & Väliverronen 2003, Timms 2005, Vivanco 2002), although the use of theatre, poetry and music has received less attention. Yet these were important performative aspects of the campaign.

Some of the protest music, mostly involving acoustic steel-string guitars which created an association with the genre of ‘country music’, was recorded on a CD called ‘For the love of Mary’ and sold to the public as merchandise. Where it was concerned with the natural environment, the music expressed an intimate integration of productive and environmental values. The music also contained definitions of the Mary River and the Mary Valley which promoted holistic environmental perspectives and a sense of regionally emplaced community identity. Similar to Solomon’s (2000) ethnomusicological study in Highland Bolivia, and Cohen’s (1995: 445) conclusion in Liverpool’s urban context:

The production of place through music [or art more generally] is always a political and contested process and music has been shown to be implicated in the politics of place, the struggle for identity and belonging, power and prestige.

As a musical example of symbolic politics during the campaign, one protest song in particular stood out. It was produced within a month of the dam’s announcement, often performed at public campaign events, and intended as the campaign’s anthem. As such, the song was one of the examples at the interface of art, protest identity and the performative ritual aspects of social cohesion. Its writer was a musically gifted veterinarian in favour of organic food production in the Mary Valley, relatively new to the area, but its lyrics poignantly portray the manner in which the Mary River and a sense of regional connectedness were more widely promoted. Its title was Mary Must Never Be Dammed. I reproduce it here fully for further analysis below:

_Chorus:_

Blessed is our Mary from her home in the mountains.
She tumbles down the Connondales and wanders through our lands.
She is an angel, she is sacred, she is holy,
and Mary must never be dammed, Mary must never be dammed.

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201 Transcribed from the CD For the Love of Mary. Recorded and Produced by Ian Harvey at Bedland Studios, Eumundi, May 2006.
Verse 1:
From the Blackall Range to Fraser Island,
she is the lifeblood of the valleys and the plains.
Past thriving towns and fertile farmlands,
carrying the liquid gold of precious summer rains.

[Chorus]

Verse 2:
She quenched the thirst of megafauna.
She was a baby when the Connondales arose.
And she has witnessed evolution,
the generations, she has watched them come and go.

[Chorus]

Verse 3:
When she is very rarely angry,
She will flood the land to cleanse her aching soul.
But soon she's back to being gentle,
The quiet lullabies, the music of her flow.

[Chorus 2x]

Verse 4:
And on towards the ocean, carrying so much that's vital for the sea
We know her flow is crucial, for survival of the fisheries,
survival of the Great Sandy,
survival of the Great Sandy,
survival of the Great Sandy.

Verse 5:
What of the threatened children,
the lungfish, the turtle and the cod?
We must fight to stop extinctions,
the future of the Mary must flow on and on.

[Chorus]

Similar to the painting ‘Mary River Blessing’ the river is portrayed in terms of female productive and reproductive power, a ‘holy’ entity (see Strang 2004: 83-111 for a salient discussion of ‘hydrolatry’, including gender issues). As many other activist art works did, it promoted a view of ‘the Mary’ in religious terms; as sacred, an object of worship and reverence rather than economics and pragmatism (see also Milton 1999, 2002).

The notion of the sacred also informed a number of artistic protest events which drew on aspects of Aboriginal culture. One such project was a large ‘Art for Earth’ candle installation near the mouth of the river which depicted the Mary River Cod. It carried the name Dok’ku, which the organisers said to be the name for the Mary River Cod in the local Batjala Aboriginal language. Another example involved a mythological rainbow serpent parade at the 2010 Mary River Festival in Kandanga (Plate 11).

While there were a small number of Aboriginal people present during both these events, they can be seen as attempts by non-Aboriginal people to acquire a degree of cultural capital (Satterfield 2002: 133) through the appropriation of indigenous symbolism invariably ‘linked to the sacred or ineffable’ (Brosius 1997: 64). I would argue however that they also expressed an interpretation of settler-descendant identity and belonging as indigenous itself, the result of embodied association and emotionally intimate ties to the ‘sacred’ environment (see also Chapter 3 and Milton 1999).

202 A number of variations on the language name Batjala exist; see e.g. Tindale (1974).
Additional to such artistic representations of settler-descendant indigeneity and belonging, both the Dok’ku art project and the protest song above drew into the sacred realm the downstream areas at the mouth of the river: the RAMSAR\textsuperscript{203} listed wetlands of the Great Sandy Strait and World Heritage listed Fraser Island. These are protected areas with strong international reputations and, in terms of the campaign, an environmental relationship of the Mary River with them was therefore important for the activists to clearly establish. Such aims further stimulated a view of the river as an important holistic system, ‘from the Blackall Range to Fraser Island’, figuring as ‘lifeblood’ to both humans and non-humans in the entire catchment (see also Strang 2004: 73).

In summary, the artistic expressions during the campaign were important public articulations of environmental values and socio-cultural relationships. They were framed in terms of intimacy and engagement, of human-environment relationships that transcended the localised Mary Valley or the proposed inundation zone. While some artistic engagement with the river had taken place previously (see above), the dam proposal resulted in an enormous surge of artistic expressions throughout the catchment. The promotion of such regional connectivity, human and non-human, was partly based on the need to broaden support, and partly based on more emotional and spiritual values, for attachments to the river as a whole, grounded in local engagement and notions of

\textsuperscript{203} The Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty to protect wetlands of international importance. See \url{http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E5E7687_4000_0} (accessed 15 February 2011).
belonging, health, and uniqueness, were powerful drivers for the protest (see also Milton 2002, Strang 2005a).

4.3 Contrasting Images of Science and Protest

Appreciations of the Mary River as ‘sacred lifeblood’ stand in a sharp contrast to those expressed by the dam proponent. As the former Premier Peter Beattie said in his initial announcement of the proposal, the dam was part of a so-called ‘water-grid’ and intended to add 70,000 megalitres (ML) to a State-wide water supply system of dams and pipes (Chapter 3). ‘Megalitres’, not ‘sacred lifeblood’, is the core symbolic expression here.

This contrast between utility and spirituality became more articulate as the preparations for the dam proceeded. The proponent, Queensland Water and Infrastructure (QWI), for instance published Project Updates and in one such update it described, among other issues, a formula to calculate ‘nett evaporation loss from a water storage’ (Queensland Water and Infrastructure 2007b: 2). It was a reaction to widespread local criticism that the dam would be too shallow and lose much of its water through evaporation and seepage. The response reflected an attitude towards water informed by mathematical standards, generalisation and comparability, founded upon the language of engineering. The dominance of this engineering approach to water is common in the water utility industry; weekly employment advertisements in the newsletter of the Australian Water Association (AWA), for instance, demonstrate the vast majority of positions require technical expertise. Symbolically reflecting this approach to water, the AWA aptly registered its ‘careers in water’ website with a reference to chemistry as www.H2Oz.org.au.

In later project updates QWI however focused more on, *inter alia*, a myriad of predicted local economic opportunities, the proposed Freshwater Species Conservation Centre and the planned creation of an ‘outdoor recreation hub’ for hikers, horse riders, canoeists, mountain bikers and so forth. They reflected an attempt to balance the language of abstract science with the use of locally recognisable and more tangible initiatives. The imagery included in such publications was a mixture of coloured text boxes, simplified scientific graphs, photographs of rural scenery and artist impressions of the proposed facilities such as the conservation centre. At times rhetorically utilised in such images were logos of purportedly renowned institutions which, at least by implication, were supporting the overall proposal through their cooperation (see Plate 12).
Interestingly, the images used by both the proponent and those opposed attempted to engage the two main local social categories described in the previous chapters: productive farmers and largely non-productive newcomers. Such images contained, for example, people on horses and men wearing hats (presumably farmers), while the other category of images spoke to those newcomers more engaged with the natural environment and contained, for example, lungfish, turtles, and natural scenery. The proponent, through its use of artist impressions of proposed initiatives, presumably intended to demonstrate its capabilities to deliver aesthetically and efficiently any number of plans. Those opposed on the other hand focussed on the artificiality of plans created in far-away urban offices, and predicted severely destructive impacts of outsider intervention when coupled with ignorance of relevant local ecological processes and details. As a result, the abstract, utilitarian approach of the proponent contrasted sharply with the environmentally specific and emotionally intimate approach of the protestors (see also Satterfield 2002, Milton 2002).

In this contest to engage with the public the protestors had possible modes of expression available to them which far outnumbered those available to the proponent. Beyond the artistic expressions described above, there were campaign events such as canoe flotillas on the river and annual anniversary gatherings near the proposed dam site at ‘Travie Crossing’. This site along the river, already historically significant in terms of recreation and enjoyment (Chapter 3), symbolically reflected human-environmental intimacy, and it became the most important site of public protest. The activists also organised such events as film and culinary music nights, horse rides, a Mary Valley heritage train ride, a knitting initiative (based on the anti-Franklin dam campaign), church
services, newsletters, bush poetry and various related forms of theatre. Adaptive to the context of their conduct, protest activities could shift between highly theatrical and highly formal forms of public representation (see Plates 13 and 14 below).

Plate 13 Mary Valley protestors at Premier Anna Bligh’s office in West End, Brisbane. Photograph courtesy of G. Pickersgill.204

Plate 14 In contrast to Plate 13, formality was preferred during speaking engagements at conferences and with Federal Government officials in Canberra.205

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204 The threatened riverine species depicted here are the lungfish (left), southern barred frog (centre) and Mary River turtle (right). The pro-dam scientists dressed in white are caught up in the EPBC Act’s red tape while holding the sign ‘The End is Bligh for QWI’. The ‘Sister of Mary’ in the centre holds another sign typical of the activists’ wordplay: ‘Holy Mary, Mother of Cod’. This reference to the sacred realm was further supported by the opinion of the Uniting Church (sign held by the other ‘Sister of Mary’ on the left).

205 Local activists at the 2009 Environment Australia Conference, Canberra. Courtesy Tanzi Smith.
In terms of physical community engagement the proponent was limited to the few ‘information days’ held in relation to the production of the Environmental Impact Statement. To counterbalance that limited form of local engagement, which was further undermined by the provocative choice to hold these community information days at the property sold to QWI by the first President of *Save the Mary* (Chapter 3), the proponent also focussed on aspects of community support, with promises of new sporting facilities, upgraded infrastructure, economic revitalisation and financial assistance for community initiatives. These promises were distributed via the project updates referred to above. They were received with great disdain by the protestors, who angrily denounced them as wasteful spin and deceit (see e.g. Plate 15 below). These updates, in other words, figured not just in a contest between detached utility and intimate engagement, they were also part of a dispute about the role and nature of science, knowledge and truth. In this dispute both the protestors and the proponent steadfastly referred to certain documents, while these were utterly incompatible, as ‘fact sheets’.

![Plate 15 QWI Project Updates at the Kandanga Info Centre](image)

**Plate 15 QWI Project Updates at the Kandanga Info Centre**

### 4.4 The Environmental Impact Statement: Science, Trust and Identity.

Under Australian environmental law, large infrastructure developments such as the Traveston Crossing Dam require extensive investigative studies prior to their final approval by the authorities. In this case, given the potential impacts of the proposal on matters of national environmental significance, the approval/assessment process was broadly as follows:
1. The proponent (QWI) produces draft Terms of Reference for the EIS for public comment;
2. The final Terms of Reference and subsequent draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed project are produced;
3. Public comment is taken on the draft EIS;
4. A final EIS is produced in which matters raised during the public consultation period are addressed;
5. The final EIS is submitted to the Queensland Coordinator-General for approval;
6. The Queensland Coordinator-General produces an assessment report and, if the project is approved under State law, with or without any further conditions, all materials are forwarded to the Federal Minister for the Environment for final approval under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act);
7. The Federal minister assesses all available materials, including any additional studies and advice which may be commissioned, and decides whether to grant or decline approval.206

This process took three and a half years to complete and the final study - numerous supplementary reports, responses to reviewers, appendices and addenda included - entailed many thousands of pages. The EIS was completed on behalf of QWI by Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM), a large international consultancy company, with additional consultants contracted for particular specialised studies. The five volumes in the first draft of the EIS reportedly already weighed in at over 20 kilograms207, and, in order of appearance, contained sections on *inter alia* geology, hydrology, hydrogeology, geomorphology, water quality, terrestrial flora and fauna, aquatic environments, Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), air, noise and vibration, waste management, transport and access arrangements, cultural heritage, social impact assessment and economics, hazard and risk, cumulative impacts, and an environmental management plan (QWI 2007d).

It is unlikely any single lay person would have the technical capabilities, or stamina for that matter, to meaningfully engage with the entirety of such a voluminous piece of work, particularly within just the three months available for public comment. It is fair to say that while the large volume may be unavoidable in the context of the regulations, the EIS was locally perceived as an attempt to overwhelm and silence the public through sheer largesse. Given the determined focus by the

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campaign leadership on ‘facts and data’ however (Chapter 3) an organised attempt to dissect and criticise the EIS was made. As one campaigner suggested on the public protest forum website shortly after the EIS was released:

The size of the EIS is not unexpected, given this state's propensity for anything 'big' (and the fact that Bligh [the Premier] seems to believe that size is the only thing that matters). However, in tackling the reading and analysis of the report, may I suggest that we tackle it like eating an elephant - one bite at a time. A good way to tackle the analysis of a written work is through small group discussion, and there's no reason why we shouldn't dissect this report in this way. My suggestion is "to divide and conquer" - break up the report into smaller entities and get together with a few other people to discuss a small component. Then perhaps get together with a few other people on a different aspect, and so on - until the whole lot is consumed.208

The protestors’ approach was to efficiently search for inconsistencies and outright mistakes, many of which were reportedly found throughout the study and which formed the basis of thousands of public submissions made during the public consultation phase.209

Distrust and skepticism had characterised local views of the EIS process from the start, and when mistakes in the official document were reported this attitude seemed to be validated. But given their strategic acceptance of bureaucratic process, the protestors put much emphasis on an analysis of the EIS and the communication of their assessment. On the one hand Save the Mary protested publicly with formal technical submissions that followed the topics in the EIS itself – their submission dealing with water resources, terrestrial and aquatic environments and so forth was 187 pages long - while their ways of communication within the Valley on the other hand were much less formal and intended to maintain the engagement of both newcomers and members of the farming community. For example, when QWI held one of its local community EIS information days at the former property of the first Save the Mary President, protestors installed a symbolically rich display outside the property gates. It was a display which aimed to ridicule what was regarded as the preposterous work by urban scientists and proponents of the EIS and it argued the superiority of locally grounded forms of knowledge based on productive rural engagements with the land and cattle:

209 Based on interviews with activists. A total of 11,261 valid public submissions were received, see e.g. the media report at: http://econews.org.au/2008/04/traveston_dam/ (accessed 10 August 2011) and Walker (2008: 3).
Local critiques of the EIS were often informed by such notions as the ‘rural’ and the ‘urban’: an endogenous Mary Valley identity versus ‘Kwippel’ and the ‘Gah'ment’, the alien and exogenous ‘Others’ (see Chapter 3). However, specific technical critiques were also based on the various backgrounds and professional expertise of the residents themselves.

One local resident for example had worked with big machinery and therefore knew about noise related issues. Based on his practical experience and residential proximity to the proposed dam wall he immediately concluded that the computer modelled noise levels in the EIS data were incorrect for his particular property. The second President of *Save the Mary*, a former corporate business manager, had detailed knowledge of finance and found no trace in the EIS of a so-called ‘Monte Carlo simulation’, the results of which, he asserted, are normally used in large contracts to obtain possible variations in costs. It is, glancing at the literature, a mathematical method to calculate risk and uncertainty (Rezaie *et al* 2007, Shuhmacher *et al* 2001). He interpreted the absence of cost variations and uncertainty as an indication of methodological manipulation to reach pre-determined conclusions (i.e. that the dam was economically cost-effective).

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Such diverse analyses, brought together by the various protestors, valorised both distrust of the proponent and trust in the capabilities of the local campaign group. This process resembles what Delgado (2010) described as the generation of ‘activist trust’ among members of the Landless People’s Movement in Brazil, the sources of which, she argued, were both affective (in terms of personal relationships and shared experiences) and effective (in terms of delivering results). This was especially important in light of the social diversity among the activists and the uncertainty many local residents felt regarding the esoteric nature of the scientific debates (see also Chapter 3).

In this context, similar to Delgado’s (2010: 564) analysis in Brazil, the campaign can usefully be thought of as a ‘science-lay hybrid’ in which the various activists, both technical experts and lay persons, formed what she referred to as an ‘intimate assemblage’.

Perhaps the critique of the EIS which was most damning and which resonated most with local lay assessments came from those protestors with qualifications in environmental science and engineering, technical experts themselves indeed. A few of them had had prior personal contact with some of the consultants employed for the specialist studies:

There were efforts to pervert the scientific process through the EIS. A lot of scientists in the EIS are good, but they were manipulated through the Terms of Reference [for the EIS] and wrong answers were not published [i.e. answers QWI did not want]. The EIS cod report: conclusions were not published. QWI changed it 180 degrees. … Data referred to in the [cod] rehab[ilitation] plan was perverted in the supplementary EIS. … [The proponent’s actions bring] everyone's work into disrepute.\footnote{Interview 12 January 2009, FN# 2}

Such accusations are very serious indeed and, while it was never my intention to assess their veracity, Fisher’s (2008) work on impact studies indicates that the application of pressure on consultants to produce favourable results for developers (who have contracted the consultant) may be relatively common. It is important to note however that the protestors did not publicly challenge the use of science itself; it was consistently upheld as a valid mechanism to arrive at the truth. Instead, they publicly challenged the ethics, methods and implicit assumptions of the scientists. Internally however, some of the ‘brains’ of the campaign recognised that all forms of science employ certain assumptions, which had the potential to undermine their own positions as well.\footnote{Interview 30 January 2009, FN# 5}
The ‘workers’ nevertheless put trust in them, at least temporarily, and accordingly suppressed their wishes ‘just to shoot the bastards’ (Chapter 3).

Two other visual representations posted on the anti-dam forum website reflected views held by most activists about the scientific process:

Plate 17 Anti-dam cartoons challenging the ethical standards of the EIS.213

In terms of the EIS, recent findings from science and technology studies, which focus on public engagements with science, are particularly salient here. Numerous studies, though not necessarily science and technology studies, are available regarding Environmental Impact Statements and/or the Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) which are generally part of them. Two academic journals are specifically dedicated to the topic since about 1980 (Environmental Impact Assessment Review and Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal). To my knowledge however, few detailed ethnographic studies are available regarding the wider public’s engagement with such bodies of specialised scientific work. Some anthropological studies on the topic include Fisher’s (2008) recent work on the general ethical dilemmas faced by consultant researchers, and Chase’s (1990) earlier work on excluded Indigenous interests during an EIS in Cape York, Australia. Neither of these however

discusses in ethnographic detail the contexts, socio-cultural, political, symbolic, or otherwise, in which such impact studies are locally received and assessed.

An exception in this regard is Checker’s (2007) work in a low-income African-American neighbourhood in Augusta, Georgia, in which the residents contested the environmental science of chemical pollution and related Government assessments of health impacts. Other more general studies of science include those by, for example, Wynne (e.g. 1992, 2008) and Yearley (2000) on the theory of public understanding and engagements with science, Franklin (1995) on science as a cultural framework entailing assumptions, Escobar (1998) on biodiversity and political ecology, and Agrawal (1995) on the ideological divide between science and indigenous knowledge.

Considerable ethnographic interest has been directed towards understanding the role of knowledge in environmental disputes generally. Notable case-studies emerge from varied contexts, such as: Oregon’s old-growth forests (Satterfield 1997, 2002); the rainforests in Kalimantan, Indonesia (Tsing 2005); toxic waste in Germany and Iowa (Berglund 1998, 2001; Carolan and Bell 2003); waste incinerators in Hong Kong (Choy 2005); a pulp-mill pipeline in Chile (Skewes and Guerra 2004); wolf protection in Scandinavia (Sjölander-Lindqvist 2008; Skogen and Krange 2003); animal classification in Papua New Guinea (Sillitoe 2002); farmers’ understandings of nature conservation in the UK or the US (Harrison, Burgess and Clark 1998; Opotow and Brook 2003); fishermen’s knowledge of the marine environment in Puerto Rico and Australia (Garcia-Quijano 2007; King 2005); Australian alpine heritage (Dominy 1997); and the management of grasslands on the inner Mongolian steppe (Williams 2000). These case studies demonstrate how anthropological analyses might usefully contribute to an understanding of wide ranging environmental disputes, the role in such disputes of epistemologies generally, and ‘science’ in particular.

My fieldwork data on the topic generally agree with the role of knowledge described in all those cases. That is, the anti-dam activists recognised both the limitations of science to recognise and take into account emotional attachments to the area and its powerful status in bureaucratic decision-making processes. Science then was used and contested on its own terms, though often supplemented with relevant local knowledge (see also Checker 2007, Davison 2008, Satterfield 2002, Yearley 1996). As Yearley (2000: 107) described it in his analysis of public discontent with expert knowledge:

Since expertise is so commonly related to the experts’ (or the experts’ bosses’) practical agenda, it appears that people evaluate the information in the light of their
regard for the organization disseminating it and of any ulterior purpose which they believe they can spot. Where generalized expert opinion is seen to depart from local knowledge, the motivations of the scientists can be called into question and a cycle of distrust may result.

Such distrust took hold rapidly as basic mapping and modelling errors were reported by the protestors. Local knowledge, in this context, became morally superior and one of the defining characteristic of what Strang (2004: 26) referred to as ‘epistemic community’. It was increasingly regarded as an asset:

common to the people who make up the community, and fundamentally different from the hegemonic external knowledge which legitimates the perceived assaults on rural economy and ‘the rural way of life’ (Skogen and Krange 2003: 318).

Succinct expressions of this ‘epistemic community’ in which local knowledge and a sense of rural identity were intertwined could be found in numerous Letters to the Editor of the local newspaper. One local farmer wrote:

I, like a lot of other country people are sick and tired of hearing all these so called experts telling us why we have got to have the Traveston Crossing dam. … Now, we, with any common sense and power of observation know that in dry times and we had plenty, the Mary River slows to little better than a trickle, and has been known to stop. Now I don’t profess to be an engineer and am not able to pull figures out of the air, I am talking in cold hard facts not average flows over a year.214

The expert studies in the EIS were commonly denounced as misconstrued spin; as hegemonic, external forms of knowledge used to destroy the health of the Mary Valley community (see Sjölander-Lindqvist (2008) for similar local-State dynamics during the wolf controversy in Sweden). Yet, as mentioned, it was not a simplistic dichotomy of pro- or anti-science; the attitudes were much more ambivalent. Satterfield (1997: 444 regarded the activists’ ambivalent relationship with science during Oregon’s old-growth forest dispute as ‘a product of identity negotiations - of lay persons actively constructing social positions in relation to science's hold on what counts as valid knowledge’. My fieldwork data indicate similar processes. The campaign, as per Delgado

(2010), was itself a hybrid assemblage of experts and lay persons. This hybrid identity was important to both external bureaucratic recognition and internal protest solidarity and credibility (Ibid.). The activists, in other words, strategically negotiated as part of a highly unpredictable and multifaceted process, both exogenous and endogenous forms of identity and knowledge to maintain and enhance various relationships of trust.

Local condemnations of the EIS were, in my view, further facilitated by the language of the EIS itself, which was exceptionally mechanical and self-assured. Wynne (1992: 287) described a similar case involving English sheep farmers who had lived in proximity to a local nuclear plant before the Chernobyl radioactive fallout in 1986. After the nuclear disaster, a study was undertaken into the local effects on sheep, but the scientists’:

exaggerated sense of certainty and arrogance was a major factor in undermining the scientists’ credibility with the farmers on other issues such as the source of the contamination. In any case the typical scientific idiom of certainty and control was culturally discordant with the farmers, whose whole cultural ethos routinely accepted uncertainty and the need for flexible adaptation rather than prediction and control.

This was particularly the case with regard to the many flood events which both Mary Valley farmers and other residents have historically experienced. Yet the EIS described those events in terms unrecognisable by the local population. Floods therefore provide succinct events in which to further analyse the interplay of science, knowledge and identity during this dispute.
4.5 Knowing Floods

It is perhaps unsurprising that in the context of a proposal to flood a large part of the Mary Valley, including agricultural lands and residential properties, knowledge of floods became an important topic of discussion. Local histories are replete with the details of historical floods, many of which had been severely destructive (see Chapter 2). Local people often recounted floods when discussing the dam and they did so mainly through environmental referents. Below I have reproduced from my field notebooks a number of accounts which illustrate the manner in which floods were typically discussed:

[An old cattle farmer explains, pointing at the river flats down from the farmhouse, how the land floods through particular gullies first and then up towards the house.]

“One day it rained at 4.00pm and by 1.00am it was flooded. She comes up quick. We haven't had a good flood for a while now.”

His wife: “Pro-dam science is criminal. Scientists don't know the river like farmers. They’ve never been on the land or seen a flood. They haven't been here to have a look. If there's no rain in Gympie or Maryborough then it goes quick. If there is rain there, the flood could stay for a week.”

[A woman who grew up on a former dairy farm outside Kandanga]: “We had floods when going to school every January. We knew how many hours you had before the flood after rainfall. I told new neighbours how many hours [it would take] before the flood would come. It takes 12 hours from Kenilworth to Kandanga and another 12 hours from Kandanga to Gympie. After a big dry the dams need to fill up first so then it takes longer.”

[Another farmer]: “Gully Paddock floods first [on our property].”

215 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 2
216 Interview 12 January 2009, FN# 2
[His wife]: “QWI mapping of floods is wrong. We've seen floods higher.”

[The man]: “The water can't get away: first Gully Paddock, then the flat and just over the top of the road. Twelve inches a night will give us a good flood [he has been keeping rainfall records for many years].”

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[A cattle farmer outside Kandanga]: “The floods bring silt and nutrients. Every nine to twelve years there's a big flood. It comes really quick, within twelve hours. You have to be aware of your pumps and stock locations. I only have two spots out of the flood; near the house and the other block I bought for that reason. People get caught with their pumps; twenty to thirty people one year were caught out.”

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[A dairy farmer outside Kandanga]: “Our property is not in the footprint. But a normal flood backs up to that big gum tree [shows me the single tree in a paddock] and the dam wall is [level with] the road in front of the house. The Government doesn't want to listen to anybody about that [i.e. the suggestion that the flood maps are inaccurate and that additional properties will be affected].”

[His wife]: “As a girl in the 1955 flood I saw no floodwater in the evening, the next morning the water was from the foot of the hill to the old Bruce highway near Carlson's place. A little spillway could never take it [i.e. the dam would cause widespread flooding not appropriately recognised by the proponent].”

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[A resident outside Imbil]: “I got 11 acres; they [QWI] wanted one quarter of the block. They had a map. I said: ‘Wrong. The bottom of the block is level with the roof of the Hotel [in Imbil]’. The 1999 flood went into the school and half way up the petrol bowser at the Imbil garage. People who’ve been here know. So-called experts said one quarter of my block could flood, and not the whole town. They said they wanted the cabins [which are even higher up], not the town. They were treating people like idiots: destroyed their credibility. So-called experts who didn’t know

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217 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
218 Interview 10 October 2008, FN# 1
219 Interview 22 April 2009, FN# 8
what they were talking about. QWI rang me one month later to say they didn’t want
the block.”

[A downstream farmer near Maryborough showed me a big gum tree in one of his
paddocks. He had held on to the lower branch of the tree [a few meters high] while
sitting in a canoe during a flood. He also showed creeks that flood through the
backing-up of the Mary River].

[Conversely, newcomers on the river might acknowledge their lack of knowledge
based on experience]: “We haven’t seen proper floods. The previous owners showed
photos of how it came. We don’t have that knowledge.”

Detailed flood knowledge then, according to many local residents, can only be based on local
observations and experience: water travels at certain speeds under certain conditions and,
furthermore, moves in peculiar ways on specific terrains. This is important also in economic terms,
as one example above demonstrates, for farmers might lose expensive irrigation pumps and cattle if
they lack such knowledge. Transport and supplies might also be restricted for certain periods of
time at particular places, and so on. These peculiarities are likely to be unpredictable for those who
have not previously observed the movement of water on-site.

As a result of such events, specific places in the landscape are shared in discussions and become
part of widely held community knowledge of memorable flood events (up to the bowser at the Imbil
garage, up to Carlson’s place, x meters over a certain bridge, into the school, and so on). Such sites
of reference and measurement may be idiosyncratic but, because they are known by those who live
and work there, they are socially meaningful, practically useful, and easily communicated. Such
forms of knowledge, following Strang (2004), come to define the local epistemic community, and I
observed many discussions of such sites after floods during my fieldwork. As the examples above
indicate, flood knowledge was also an important motivation for local opposition to the dam
proposal, which was seen to have disregarded such knowledge accumulated over many years in
preference of computer models.

220 Interview 27 April 2009, FN# 8
221 Interview July 2009 FN# 11
222 Interview 24 August 2009, FN# 15
It is interesting to note that most flood reference sites are human-made. It appears to me that, while specific features of the natural environment (e.g. a large gum tree) may be used as a reference by those people with detailed local environmental knowledge, mostly the landowners, human-made features are more readily communicated to, and identified by, other members of the community, and they are therefore the preferred sites of reference. Additionally, the use of human-made sites of reference for natural events makes explicit the locally embedded relationships between the human and non-human aspects of the physical world. It expresses, in other words, an endogenous view in the world based on local dwelling and practical engagement (Ingold 2000).

Interestingly, I have seen very few flood levels drawn onto topographic maps either in local histories, newspapers or as documented by informants. Rather, as said, the reports were about bridges going under for a certain amount of days, being isolated for x amount of days, water coming up to certain places, and so on. Apart from the technical expertise required, the reason for the absence of maps, I would argue, is the inability of such maps to easily convey endogenous meaning. They are, broadly speaking, the product of exogenous analysis. For those reasons a simple line painted three meters high on the wall of a particular building, for example, is locally much more evocative.

In contrast to such endogenous ways of knowing and remembering floods, below is an extract from a scientific report in the EIS which deals with flood hydrology at the dam site. It presents statistical analyses and the results of hydrological models, on the basis of which it was proposed that:

The PMP [Probable Maximum Precipitation] Design Flood at the dam site has a peak inflow of 24,600 m³/s for a 24 hour critical duration PMP storm event of 1240 mm rainfall depth. The 36 hour critical duration PMP storm event of 1460 mm rainfall produced a PMP Design Flood with a peak discharge of 24,800 m³/s … IFD [Intensity Frequency Duration] values were adopted for AEPs [Annual Exceedance Probability] of 1 in 2 to 1 in 100, while values for rarer AEPs were derived by smoothing between IFD and CRC-FORGE estimates.223

Such language, while presumably appropriate among hydrologists, is highly esoteric and reflects computer modeling and engineering rather than detailed observations of flood occurrences in the landscape. The literature references in this document too are to the functioning of hydrological models.

models, estimation and mathematics, not to any peculiar characteristic of water flows in the Mary River catchment itself. Such models are based on ‘measuring nodes’ or ‘gauging stations’ rather than locally significant sites such as the Imbil garage or the school, and they talk of water in terms of megaliters or cubic meters per second, rather than ‘lifeblood’, ‘health’ and so on. These analyses, to most people in the Mary Valley, were reflective of an explicitly exogenous identity, deeply unfamiliar with local details and sites of community relevance (see also James Scott’s (1998) work on similar tensions involved in State interventions).

Moreover, immediately after the announcement of the dam proposal the Government, through its Department of Natural Resources (DNR), appeared unable to provide landholders with detailed flood maps. When residents contacted the local DNR office in Gympie and asked for such maps from the officials they had known for several years through personal contact, they were met with apologies for they too did not have the necessary information. The flood maps were not distributed for some time after the announcement, followed by subsequent amendments to correct mistakes and/or reflect changed plans.

Based on the above observations of local residents, it appears very difficult to accurately map and predict flood levels. Save the Mary, characteristically engaging both local knowledge and scientific process, made a poignant submission with regard to the hydrological section in the EIS. The submission also reflected a critical attitude towards what was regarded as the reductionist tendency of specialist scientific studies, and proposed a more holistic view, focused not on median flows, but on a scientific investigation of specificity; of hydrological extremes during which environmental impacts were said to be greatest:

A number of factual and careless errors in this section continue to support the impression that the section on water resources was not adequately checked by people with a thorough knowledge of the surface water patterns in the catchment for the following reasons:

• EIS Figure 6-6 erroneously shows CoonoonGibber Creek as two different creeks, (Coonoon Creek and Gibber Creek), and shows a 1:100 flood line that underestimates the extent of floods within living memory by more than a kilometre in some places (eg. along CoonoonGibber Creek).

224 This is supported by the recent events in January 2011 during which Brisbane and various towns in Queensland were flooded. Flood level predictions by the Bureau of Meteorology changed almost on a daily basis and the eventual flood levels at specific places were often at odds with the official predictions derived from computer modeling.
• Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the surface water flow patterns in the Mary River is the extreme variability of flow rate, water depth, water quality and sediment transport. This is not adequately portrayed in the EIS, yet it is fundamental to understanding the water resource and the environmental impacts of water infrastructure development in the Mary River. A simple mathematical analysis of the flow duration curve presented in EIS Figure 6.8 (based on the data in report 17) shows that more than half the entire flow in the river between 1890 and 2007 was delivered in the top one fiftieth of the days. Most of the time the river is a relatively shallow, low–flow river, and occasionally it is an extraordinarily high flow, deep river. The mean statistics of the river in terms of flow, depth and water quality do not adequately represent either of these two states. Most of the environmental impacts in the river are determined by events at the extremes of the flow regime, and the EIS does not adequately investigate environmental impacts at these extremes of flow.225

The protestors, in summary, both contested and embraced science. They proposed a form of science in which the peculiarities of the Mary River environment could be recognised and in which local experience could be integrated. It was, as I will describe in further detail in the next section, an ambiguous exercise focussed on the truth of uncertainty and a holistic sense of ecological fragility and uniqueness.

Local Mary Valley residents, most of them not scientifically trained, largely assessed the EIS in terms of their own environmental knowledge based on (flood) experience, and their lack of positive regard for the organisation that commissioned it. The generation of trust in the activists, both external and internal, was related to the constitution of the campaign as an intimate and hybrid assembly of lay persons and experts. They mostly questioned not science itself, but the ethical and methodological standards of the scientists involved in the EIS. As a result, accusations of improper conduct, based on a priori feelings of distrust towards the proponent, characterised local responses. These feelings were expressed by protestors in myriad ways, some of which I have described above. Fundamental to such expressions was the juxtaposition of an emplaced, knowledgeable rural identity and an ignorant, preposterous urban ‘Other’. These juxtapositions however should not be seen as formulaic. Rather, they were relatively improvised expressions resulting from recognised opportunities in a process broadly circumscribed by Government legislation but largely


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unpredictable on the ground. The analysis of the EIS and the manner in which it was locally assessed therefore provides an understanding to claims of valid knowledge as situated in relational identity processes and the emplaced practices of a local epistemic community.

4.6 Activist Science: Environmental Degradation, Iconic Species and Ecological Systems.

The historical environmental impact of human activities in the Mary River catchment was a sensitive topic in the campaign. While the dependence of farmers and others on the river was strongly articulated (see above), the effects of that dependence in terms of environmental degradation were largely ignored. Neither the profound pollution of the river by the early gold mines in Gympie, nor historical clearing practices, nor any of the contemporary environmental concerns regarding erosion, water quality, invasive weeds, or off-stream watering points for cattle as expressed by the regional environmental management organisation, the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, were a topic of sustained internal discussion. Some environmental activists in the campaign were actively involved with such issues in their professional or private lives, but they also realised that raising them was unlikely to further the common cause and could potentially alienate their support base among the largely conservative population of the Valley.

While not openly discussed, there was agreement the Mary River could hardly be described as a ‘wild’ or ‘pristine’ river. A photograph of the river which figured widely in the campaign nevertheless had an air of the wild to it. It bore some resemblance to the famous photograph by Peter Dombrovskis called ‘Rock Island Bend’, the photograph which came to define the anti Franklin Dam campaign in Tasmania in the 1980s (Plate 19; Haynes 2003, see also Chapter 2).

Plate 19 The Mary River by Arkin Mackay (left) and ‘Rock Island Bend’ in the Franklin River by Peter Dombrovskis (right).226

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In relation to the Franklin River the application of the term ‘wilderness’ to the Mary River was much more problematic. In 1998 for instance, a land use, vegetation cover and land disturbance survey in the Mary River catchment found that more than 80% of all streams had a poor riparian vegetation rating (Pointon 1998: 42) and that less than 1% of the entire catchment could be described as in a ‘natural state’ (Ibid: 44).

Like most people from the region, Arkin Mackay, the campaign’s most prominent activist photographer, was aware of the historical human impacts on the catchment. She reflected on her photograph above in terms which illustrate most aptly both the sensitive negotiation of the natural and the disturbed, and the ways in which the campaign attempted to represent the broad social categories of the Mary Valley by avoiding a radical public image (see also Chapter 3):

I love Dombrovskis's work, and have employed some of his tricks (like long exposure for the water effect), but this photo wasn't an intentional direct reference. It was taken when [a friend] and I spent 4 days paddling, camping and photographing. My goal on that trip was to capture the beauty of the river, and show what was at risk. However, I was very aware that most of the river is far from a pristine wilderness like the Franklin. Wide angle shots were often difficult to take without including some area of man made intrusion or degradation. Even this photo includes a few noxious weeds & a bank collapse, but fortunately, most people get caught up in the silky water and don't notice these!

During the campaign, I did a lot of reading about the Franklin campaign, looking for ideas, and was very interested in how Dombrovskis's photos seemed to be the catalyst for public opposition in the outside world. Realising this is what sparked the whole 'activism in pictures' thing I did, from the dead dams tour (to counter media hype at the time) to photographing campaigners (to put faces out there in public and show we weren't all a bunch of "long-haired hippies"). I think people will always react more emotionally to a photo than to written words.

So I guess it's a sort of unintentionally intentional reference if you know what I mean?!?227

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227 Personal correspondence (e-mail), 02 February 2011
While the term ‘wilderness’ was considered inappropriate on the grounds of long term human engagement and related changes to the environment, the term ‘beauty’, also used by Arkin above, was not. Beauty, as a subjective term much more loosely applicable, was applied by environmentalists to some of the upper reaches of the river which have remained heavily vegetated, while farmers also applied it to the agricultural landscape of the rich alluvial flats along the river. Another term which was consistently applied was the term ‘uniqueness’. It was used predominantly to refer to certain species in the river and, together with the value of beauty, it came to replace, in a sense, the value of wilderness. In other words, while the Mary River catchment was considered far from pristine, the iconic species such as the lungfish, which continue to inhabit the river, became the focus of environmental concern and symbolic representation despite the dramatic environmental changes since European colonisation, the historical point of reference commonly used for notions of ‘nativeness’ and ‘wild’ nature (see also Trigger, Toussaint and Mulcock 2010, Trigger 2008a, 2008b, Mulcock and Trigger 2008, Trigger and Mulcock 2005, Head and Muir 2004).

Some natural species which live in the Mary River, such as the Mary River Turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) and the Mary River Cod (*Maccullochella mariensis*), occur only in this river. Other notable ‘unique’ species which figured in the campaign and which occur locally are the Australian Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*), frogs such as the Giant Barred Frog (*Mixophyes iterates*), the Cascade Tree Frog (*Litoria pearsoniana*) and the Tusked Frog (*Adelotus brevis*), birds such as the Black-Breasted Button Quail (*Turnix melanogaster*), the Red Goshawk (*Erythrotriorchis radiatus*) and the Coxen’s Fig Parrot (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma coxeni*), as well as the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera richmindai*). All these species are distributed in a limited region beyond the Mary River catchment but, like the cod and turtle, all of them face ‘a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near [or medium-term] future’ (EPBC Act 1999: 267).

The survival of these threatened species, rather than the maintenance of wilderness, became the focus of the campaign. It was however difficult to maintain broad local support solely on the basis of species including somewhat obscure frogs hardly anybody had ever seen. The former President of *Save the Mary* implicitly acknowledged this problem when he addressed a large group of mainly farmers in the local hall at Kandanga. It was not without significance that he made the following statement jokingly, for it was an anticipation of the farmers’ reactions:

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If it wasn't for the frog, lungfish, turtle and cod, we wouldn't be sitting here. The environmental issues are actually very important.\textsuperscript{229}

Another activist made a similar point during a public meeting at the same hall a few months later. After discussing relevant environmental policies and legislation he concluded:

That's why the focus is on lungfish, turtle, cod, giant frogs etcetera. Believe it or not, they've got the most power to stop it.\textsuperscript{230}

The lungfish, with its symbolic connotations of the ancient and primordial, became the core symbol of the anti-dam campaign, but some activists wondered how much public support could be generated by the threatened species of the Mary River. They realised they were competing for public interest through symbolic imagery:

As the activists’ submission on the EIS hydrology demonstrated, their focus was on the peculiarities of the Mary River. These peculiarities were not restricted to the proposed inundation zone for they were seen as ecological characteristics of the entire system. The iconic species were portrayed as dependent on this holistic ecological system which, as I noted above, also brought into play the

\textsuperscript{229} Observation, 29 November 2008, FN# 1
\textsuperscript{230} Observation, 09 February 2009, FN# 6
downstream areas of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Strait. These areas are known publically for other natural species such as whales, dugongs and dingos, and support significant tourism and (recreational) fishing industries.

The downstream activist group *Greater Mary Association* (GMA), which operated in the downstream areas around Maryborough and Hervey Bay, successfully represented downstream opposition to the dam proposal. Media coverage has suggested that the local Member of Parliament, Andrew McNamarra, who was the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, for instance lost his seat in the 2009 election at least partly because of his support for the dam.\(^231\) The promotion of regional connectivity, both environmental and social, in effect broadened the impact zone of the dam proposal. The retired recreational fishermen of Hervey Bay, the Mary River prawn fishermen at Maryborough, the sugar cane irrigators, the dugongs in the Great Sandy Strait, as well as the people and iconic species in the direct inundation zone; given their shared dependence on the river they were all considered under threat.

The impact assessment in the EIS was considered inappropriate because it failed to consider the river as an ecologically complex whole. Satterfield (2002:8) described similar dynamics in her work on activist science in Oregon:

> Environmentalists referred to science in its abstract mode [promoting fragility], while loggers referred to it in its applied mode ["working" rather than wild or recreational places].

Peace (1999: 155) also described activist views of ecology during a blockade to stop logging in rural New South Wales. The activists there:

> took on such attributes as a degree of unity, a sense of purpose, and a shared notion of moral obligation, as the blockade unfolded: and they similarly acquired an elaborate conceptualisation of the forest's ecological complexity. The discrete iconic potential of both forest and community was being constituted and elaborated at one and the same time through the discursive creativity and political resourcefulness of the residents themselves. The fate of community and forest became so intertwined as to constitute them as a symbolic unity. Henceforth, any further destruction of the forest would be an assault on the integrity of the community.

In a similar situation, one in which the health of the community is intrinsically tied to the health of the ecological system as a whole, it is not surprising that local reactions to the dam proposal were replete with references to human disease and poor health. As described in the section on artistic representations above, the river was regarded in terms of both human and environmental health, and the proposal to stop the ‘natural’ flow of water was considered a direct threat to those benefits. The damming of ‘lifeblood’ was therefore unambiguously related to disease and, ultimately, death (see also Strang 2004). Such instances were reported not long after the dam was announced.

This discussion thus indicates that activists engaged with science as a means to advocate the complex nature of regional ecology. It was a view in which the focus lay not so much on averages and statistical probabilities, but on a holistic analysis of interconnected aspects, including human experience, flora and fauna, and a multitude of additional environmental features. Scientific conclusions based on such an approach would, it was suggested, result in the proper acknowledgement of much uncertainty and unknown dynamics, which was typically lacking in the mechanical and arrogant language of the EIS.

As I also described in the previous chapter, the role of iconic species such as the lungfish, the turtle and the cod was important but ambiguous. On the one hand they were subsumed within a regionally complex and interdependent set of factors defining the ecological system, but on the other they were extracted from that context as representative symbols of uniqueness and beauty. Some activists obviously doubted frogs and lungfish were suitable for that purpose. But the symbolic promotion of the iconic species was in many ways necessitated by the environmental history of the region itself. That is, the river could not be portrayed as pristine or wild, for less than 1% of the entire catchment is ecologically considered ‘undisturbed’. This dilemma resulted in the symbolic focus on ‘uniqueness’ and iconic species. This focus was capable of strategically ignoring the enormous environmental impacts which have occurred since White colonisation, and it fitted best with the activist view of science as an effort to understand the complex circumstances underlying that uniqueness.

4.7 The Federal Decision and the Role of the Credible Expert

On the 11th of November 2009, about three and a half years after the dam was first announced, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, walked into a busy Brisbane press room to announce his proposed decision on the dam. Gathered in the local Kandanga Hotel to watch the live broadcast on television, the activists were nervous and, for the most part, expecting the worst. The
section below analyses the role of scientific expertise in the reasoning of the political decision makers, both Federal and State. In order to portray relevant details I have reproduced significant parts of transcripts from both the Federal Environment Minister’s decision and subsequent reactions from the Queensland Government. The Federal Minister started his announcement in a manner which was self-assured, displaying a view of science as certain, a view similar to that which had characterised the EIS and which was approached with distrust by those in the Mary Valley:

I take my duty as the Environment Minister very seriously to protect Australia’s environment on the basis of the best available scientific evidence. And after considering the Traveston Dam proposal and the best available scientific evidence and other materials that is in front of me, it’s my intention to say no to the Traveston Dam.

[Loud emotional screaming, cheering, crying and hugging in the crowded Kandanga Hotel now; the television remained on but what follows could no longer be heard].

My proposed decision is based on science. It’s clear to me that the Traveston Dam cannot go ahead without unacceptable impacts on matters of national environment significance. In particular, the project would have serious and irreversible adverse impacts on nationally listed species such as the Australian lungfish, the Mary River turtle and the Mary River cod, both of those endangered. … I’m not satisfied that the impacts on the long-term survival of these species would be adequately addressed by the mitigation and offset measures proposed. The measures proposed such as fish passage devices and the proposed turtle ramp haven’t been proven, and they can’t be verified until after the dam is built and operating, and sufficient time passed so monitoring can be done. … [T]he economic benefits of this proposal were uncertain, and … under the EPBC Act, I must consider the precautionary principle when making any decision of this kind. … [T]he advice to me from my department was clear, as was the advice from independent and credible experts, that these particular measures that were proposed for the Traveston Dam would not have the effect of improving the survivability or prospects of those threatened, endangered species. And I took this decision on the basis of that advice. … [The species of most concern were] the Mary River turtle, clearly in terms of its capacity to continue to traverse that waterway and to have habitat which would give it some security in terms of prospect –-for breeding and the like. The Mary River cod. These are
important identified species and the lungfish which I think scientists have already made reference to in terms of its unique and extraordinary lineage. All of those were primary focuses for me and the advice that I received about them and the need to protect them was absolutely clear. Thanks very much everybody.232

The next day, the Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, reacted to this outright rejection of the EIS and the State’s initiative when she was questioned in Parliament. She suggested both the Federal Government and the State had obtained the ‘best available science’, but that they were nevertheless different:

When it comes to the science, I draw to the attention of the House some of the material that was provided to the federal government. The first is from Professor Gordon Grigg. He is a world recognized expert in the lungfish and he is from the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Queensland. His letter is interesting. It states: ‘… I have long been concerned about the future of lungfish and have made that concern plain in several forums. It is my opinion that, if the mitigation measures proposed by QWI as part of the construction ... Queensland Lungfish as well as the other three species should end up with their security enhanced, not compromised.’ I draw that to the attention of the House for one simple reason: to show that the government relied upon the best available science from world experts who are recognised in their field. I also recognize that the science on this issue is divided and the federal minister relied upon other science. I think any suggestion that the science on this is settled is wrong, but this was based on rigorous scientific assessment.233

The admission that the science was not settled of course contradicted the documentation in the EIS, the main conclusions of which had been delivered with the utmost certainty. The Federal application of the precautionary principle in light of that uncertainty was exactly what the activists had argued for. The Premier later responded to the opposition’s accusation that, on that basis, QWI’s scientific advisors were evidently frauds, by references to their scientific reputations and organisational backgrounds. As discussed above, lay assessments among the activists had also regarded the experts in terms of their organisational background and the trust they could, or could

not, generate. Such practices therefore could be observed both among the activists who opposed the scientists and among the politicians who defended them:

It is well known in most professions that people can have different professional opinions. That in no way reflects on people’s honesty and nor does it reflect that they are somehow frauds. The member has cast aspersions on Professor Gordon Grigg, the emeritus professor of zoology at the University of Queensland. He has called Professor Craig Franklin, a professor in zoology at the University of Queensland, a fraud. He has said that Dr Jean-Marc Hero from Griffith University has perpetrated a hoax, and he has said that Dr Tom Hatton from the CSIRO has been involved in a fraud and a hoax. We can have our political fights in here, but I would have thought that everybody in this country understands the reputation that the CSIRO enjoys—rightly—not only in Australia but around the world. These people are international scientists of the highest merit, people who we ought to be proud of as Australians, people who provided their best professional advice to a government. Equally, I believe that the federal minister was advised by people who were as well motivated as the people I have just referred to, people who in their own professional judgement made a judgement and provided advice. I do not believe that it helps this debate for those sorts of accusations to be made against people who in good faith gave their professional opinion as part of a legitimate process of assessment and determination. …. I will stand and defend the academic and professional integrity of the scientists of one of Australia’s best universities, the University of Queensland. I will stand and defend the academic and professional integrity of scientists from that great university in Queensland, Griffith University. I will always stand in any forum in the world and proclaim the CSIRO as one of the greatest scientific organisations on the planet. The attack that has just been made on those people from the member for Noosa is a disgrace.234

A similar but more ingenious attempt to regain credibility was later made by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Stephen Robertson, when he applied a tactic of appropriation to generate trust. He first put trust in the Federal Minister’s advisor:

234 Ibid, p. 3356
I think it is useful to note what Professor Stuart Bunn from the Australian Rivers Institute at Griffith University, who was the expert who provided advice to federal Minister Garrett, had to say. I have known Professor Bunn for some time. He is a well-respected individual. … [W]hat I will reflect on is what Professor Bunn said about the experts whom we used. I quote: ‘There is no question that the scientific advisers have experience and expertise in this area in the proposed mitigation measures. Professor Grigg is a noted animal psychologist [sic]235 who has published extensively on a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic vertebrates, including some early work on the biology of lungfish; Professor Franklin is a conservation physiologist with an impressive publication record on the physiology of a range of aquatic vertebrates, including two of the turtles at risk in the Mary River; and Associate Professor Mark Hero is well regarded as one of Australia’s leading scientists in relation to amphibian biology and species conservation and has particular experience with the giant-barred frog.’ That is the view of the person whose advice federal Minister Garrett relied on to make his decision yesterday. What you [the member for Noosa] did just before was an absolute disgrace.236

Following this acknowledgement, Bunn (2009:1-2) however had added his crucial concern, which Robertson strategically ignored, and which the members of the opposition had presumably not read because they did not raise it. It was an ethical concern shared with the activists in the Mary Valley:

It is worth noting in this regard that the three Scientific Advisors are named as advisors for the proposed Freshwater Species Conservation Centre (Appendix G) and are likely to have a significant direct interest in the proposed research program ($28 million over 10 years) funded by QWI. I would hope that the commitment to habitat protection and restoration for these species of concern and associated funding for research is not contingent on the approval of the Traveston Crossing Dam. … [T]he significant question remains as to whether such habitat protection and restoration measures can sufficiently offset the likely impacts of the proposed dam, through loss of habitat, altered flow regimes and associated changes in water quality. The Scientific Advisors and reviewers for the QWI response have much less research expertise or experience in these areas...

235 This should have said ‘physiologist’. This quote contains additional mistakes. See Bunn (2009: 1).
Scientific expertise, in other words, was defined both in the broad terms of organisational affiliation (as Anna Bligh and Stephen Robertson did in the quotes above), and in the narrow terms of specialised experience (as Bunn did). It appears that the Queensland politicians attempted to portray the differences in scientific advice, and therefore the Federal decision, as somewhat arbitrary; an attempt effectively aimed at countering allegations of political mismanagement and scientific error. The differences however were the result of differences in approach: one which to a large degree denied uncertainty based on median and average statistical values (the approach in the EIS), and one in which uncertainty was part of ecological peculiarities and localised characteristics (the approach by the advisors to the Federal Government). It is likely the sustained arrogance displayed in QWI’s responses to the independent inquiries, which were described with a contained sense of frustration as invariably adding little to nothing (Bunn 2009), led to a further deterioration of the proponent’s credibility among the Federal advisors.

This deterioration had started in earnest during the debates which had taken place when the proponent’s documents were still before the Queensland Coordinator-General. The Coordinator-General approved the proposal subject to a staggering 1200 conditions, the most serious of which were focussed on elaborate, costly and untried environmental mitigation strategies (including ‘fish passage devices’ such as the lungfish ladder and the restoration of habitat prior to the building of the dam; issues referred to in the Federal Minister’s decision). Anna Bligh, in an attempt to redefine these environmental obstacles facing the project as environmental opportunities, subsequently made a claim which surprised many:

The new environmental conditions that the Coordinator General is proposing mean that this is the greenest dam building proposal in Australian history. Without this project proceeding the sad fact is that these species could become extinct. Farming practices in the region over the last 150 years have degraded their habitat and have resulted in their endangered status. The environmental research conducted as part of the project has confirmed the true status of these species and has presented us with a stark reality. If the current land use practices are allowed to continue they will probably die out.237

While this attack on local practices strategically ignored the role of historical government policies which had enforced early forms of environmental degradation in the Mary Valley (see Chapter 2), it attempted to reword the dam’s objectives, previously expressed in terms of the utilitarian water

grid, into those of environmental concern and species protection. Such a rewording, which involved the symbolic appropriation of iconic species, was locally regarded as a desperate move to regain political credibility and to undermine the concerns of the activists. However, because large dams are not commonly regarded as a mechanism for effective environmental protection, the notion was widely ridiculed in the media and activists responded with characteristic tongue-in-cheek that the dam would indeed be green; as a result of massive blue-green algae blooms.

In summary, scientific expertise figured strongly in the political debates surrounding the proposal. The conclusions of the experts however appeared diametrically opposed and the topic of debate therefore centred on their credibility and the trustworthiness of their employers. The debates were based on both broad interpretations of expertise, which generically associate credible experts with credible organisations, as well as narrow views of expertise, regarded as highly specialised knowledge and experience in a specific field of research possessed by individuals.

The political engagements with science at times appeared political indeed. Both the Federal Minister and the Queensland State claimed their decisions were supported by ‘the best available science’. Yet, they both arrived at contradictory conclusions. Such contradictions raise questions not just about the scientists and their methods, but also about the selection of the experts and whether this had involved a consideration of the experts’ approach and an anticipation of the conclusions they were likely to reach on that basis (see also Fisher 2008 above). The fact that this question remained unanswered effectively undermined public trust in all the experts, and reified public perceptions of them as politically manipulated, even though the activists were delighted with the outcome.

The view of science as absolute and certain, as I have described above, is contradictory to the experiences of local people in the Mary Valley, whose direct experiences, for example of floods, involve unpredictable variation and uncertainty. While the federal decision was celebrated as a momentous victory for the activists, the role of scientific expertise remained ambiguous. The Federal Minister for example rejected any significant downstream impacts, which was a rejection of the interconnected ecological complexity advocated by the activists. From the initial announcement of the proposal to the final decision, the role of scientific experts was strongly contested and perhaps unavoidably tainted by the political implications of a metropolitan water crisis.

238 I recorded such perceptions during the majority of my fieldwork interviews with activists.
4.8 Summary
The campaign to stop the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam involved the articulation of a hybrid epistemic community in the Mary Valley, an analytical concept which aptly describes the mutually constitutive and diverse relationships between identity and knowledge in this case. The first section of this chapter on Mary River art highlighted themes such as reproductive capacity, intimacy and the sacred, which reflected a sense of belonging and intensifying emotional relationships with the river as a whole. Grounded in local engagements with the river, such themes also worked to broaden geographical notions of the Mary Valley beyond those of the proposed inundation zone and promoted a sense regional connectivity, both social and environmental, throughout the catchment.

Such forms of solidarity were enhanced through the use of contrasting imagery. The focus by the proponent on the amount of harvestable megalitres was effectively contrasted with a view of water as sacred lifeblood to humans and non-humans alike. Such contrasts worked to differentiate between an endogenous Mary Valley identity and an exogenous ‘Other’. These contrasts were not just expressed in linguistic terms, but also in forms of physical public engagements and performance. While the proponent remained to a large degree invisible in the Valley, the activists used a multitude of engagements available to them, which included everything from highly theatrical forms of protest, which drew stark contrasts between themselves and the proponent, to highly bureaucratic forms of engagement which challenged the proponent on its own terms. The proponent was subject to limited requirements for public engagement and chose to present its case through a few early information days and intermittent published project updates. These formulaic forms of engagement included such images as artist impressions of the proposed project to promote the proponent’s capabilities and reputation. Imagery, in other words, was used by both the proponent and the activists, and it was responsive to the changing circumstances and particular issues in dispute at the time (although more so for the activists who could adopt the proponent’s language of science and bureaucracy, a language from which the proponent itself could not depart).

An analysis of endogenous and exogenous identities is also applicable to the way in which the activists engaged the voluminous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which highlights the socio-political processes underlying both the development and deterioration of ‘activist trust’. When local experience was contradicted in the EIS, attention turned to the authors and the organisation who commissioned their work. Assessments subsequently no longer focussed just on content but predominantly on context, and accusations of unethical conduct arose. Such accusations were grounded in local epistemology and endogenous identity, for the assault by urban outsiders on local long-term observations and practical experience was perceived as an assault on the treasured rural
ways of life. Such ways of life however strategically ignored the historical impacts on the natural environmental by early logging, farming, gold mining and so forth (Chapter 2).

Detailed local knowledge highlighted the characteristically unpredictable nature of floods. The ways in which floods are locally discussed and remembered – through socially meaningful sites of reference in the local landscape – stand in stark contrast to the ways in which floods were discussed by hydrologists in the EIS. Such differences provide a poignant example of contested epistemology and highlight the difficulties which may generally be associated with public assessments of non-local scientific studies during environmental disputes. The activists argued a particular form of science, one which approached the river as an ecological whole; as an indivisible complex system of interconnected flora, fauna, hydrological characteristics and so on. The focus lay on complexity, uncertainty and unknown relationships, the disturbance of which, it was said, could potentially lead to unforeseen disturbances of the fragile whole.

Because the river’s iconic species – the lungfish, Mary River turtle and Mary River cod, among others – have survived to the present notwithstanding the negative impacts of human exploitation, such human impacts were strategically ignored during the campaign. The Queensland Premier however focussed on these impacts to undermine their cause, and to suggest the dam should be built in order to protect those species. The resulting notion of the ‘greenest dam in Australia’s history’ however was resolutely rejected in the final decision on the proposal by the Federal Environment Minister. In his view, contrary to the conclusions in EIS, the dam would have unacceptable impacts on the capacity of nationally listed species to survive. With both the Federal and State government claiming ‘the best available science’, it was a remarkable situation in which the politics of science were most poignantly displayed.

In the discussions of artistic expressions, science and the role of practical experience I have focussed on the ways in which local engagements and knowledge of the environment are interrelated with the articulation of an endogenous Mary Valley identity in the context of the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal. The campaign to stop the proposal drew on a hybrid epistemic community in which scientific expertise and practical engagements with the local environment overlap. This endogenous identity was differentiated from exogenous identities which were characterised as typically lacking such knowledge and history of practical engagement. The scientific approach in the EIS, through its denial of the uncertainty and variations that pervade local experiences of events such as floods, in effect facilitated such differentiations to be made.
I have also shown that social categories of the expert and lay person should not be seen as entirely exclusive, for the epistemic community which led the campaign was essentially hybrid. Including overlapping categories of ‘experts’, ‘farmers’, ‘environmentalists’ and so on, the activists operated on various internal and external planes simultaneously, both engaging and rejecting external bureaucracies and scientific expertise according to context. The dispute, in other words, is best understood as a relational process in which identities and forms of knowledge were strategically articulated within changing circumstances. Rather than applying the mutually exclusive categories of the expert and the lay-person, the campaign can best be described in terms from recent science and technology studies as an ‘intimate assemblage’ which, in this case, is reflective of both internal human relationships and engagements with the non-human environment of the Mary River.
Chapter 5  Named Places: Exogenous Identity and Abstraction

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I discussed the particular environmental features and related historical socio-economic developments since White settlement which had resulted in the naming of the ‘Mary Valley’. Important aspects of that history included the presence of valuable timber and the fertile alluvial river flats, the early construction of infrastructure such as the Mary Valley railway, as well as other regional development initiatives which symbolically represented an emerging sense of community such as the annual agricultural Mary Valley Show. The steep hills near Kenilworth played an important role in the geographical definition of the Mary Valley. They continue to function, for instance, as the boundary between local government areas, and it is near this location where the Mary Valley Road changes name into the Kenilworth-Brooloo Road (Chapter 2 and Plate 21 below).

Plate 21 Changing Name: the Mary Valley Road does not lead to Kenilworth.239

This chapter and the next will focus on multiple definitions of place and contemporary naming practices in the Mary Valley. Through an analysis of such naming practices I wish to expand on the manner in which notions of place were pertinent to the campaign. While certain criteria were commonly applied in definitions of ‘being local’ to the Mary Valley, criteria mostly related to ancestry and social participation, the campaign against the dam was also characterised by the


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symbolic politics of belonging in which forms of emplaced local authority were negotiated between newcomers and those with longer-term association (Chapter 3). In the previous chapter I applied the concept of endogenous identity to argue that the role of knowledge within the campaign is best understood *in situ*, as meaningful and valid within the particularities of dwelling and social interaction (e.g. Ingold 2000). In this chapter I will provide contrasts to the concept of endogenous identity through a discussion of exogenous naming practices relevant to the Mary Valley and the campaign.

In earlier parts of the thesis I demonstrated a development towards the conceptualisation of the Mary Valley in terms of the river catchment as a whole. While the anti-dam campaign promoted the incorporation of the Mary Valley into a catchment-wide perspective, I argued that more localised forms of place attachment were also important, particularly in terms of community identity and political representation. In this chapter I draw particular attention to the manner in which campaign issues of place and belonging articulated with various exogenous definitions of the region. The campaign negotiated a considerable variety of definitions at varying degrees of scale; from upstream and downstream divisions to larger regions of environmental management, political representation and ecological classification. I approach these definitions as forms of naming the landscape; as different human concepts of the non-human world with a particular provenance. Applying the notion of exogenous identity, this chapter puts the Mary Valley at the centre of multiple, not necessarily consistent, definitions of place.

5.2 Defining Place: Environmental Management

In the context of the socio-political representation of farmers it was important for activist newcomers to publically demonstrate their knowledge of small named Mary Valley localities connected to primary production and endogenous emplaced identity (see further below), but they enhanced their position also through strategic engagements with exogenous definitions of place. One such example is the ‘Noosa Biosphere Reserve’, declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) during the campaign in 2007. Comprising a large area of 150,000 hectares from the coast to the Mary Valley, it includes the south-eastern portion of the Mary Valley around the localities of Ridgewood and Federal.
In recognition of the region’s biodiversity values, it aims ‘to promote harmony between people and nature through education, conservation and sustainable activities’. In terms of the promotion of harmony between people and nature it is pertinent to note that the boundaries of the biosphere generally follow the political, non-environmental boundaries between local government areas in the north and west and those between Federal electorates in the south (see Map 9 and the discussion below). The area west from this reserve to the Mary River itself, and then north to Bundaberg, including Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Fraser Island, was declared the ‘Great Sandy Biosphere’ in 2009. This reserve covers 874,000 hectares of land as well as 542,000 hectares of marine area.

While farmers accepted the position from newcomers that the recognition of regional biodiversity was to be understood as supportive of environmental arguments made during the campaign, the feared prospect of imposed restrictions on primary production meant such naming practices carried little value for them otherwise. Comparable to the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed dam, the declarations were generally regarded as a form of externally imposed administration in opposition to local practices and endogenous identity. As a result, the declarations were met among many farmers with cautious acceptance, to be relieved when the Mayor implicitly

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addressed their productivity concerns in the local newspaper with the reassurance that ‘it won’t change a thing’.  

The declaration of the two biospheres relevant to the Mary Valley brings to the fore a variety of place definitions based on regional environmental management. The Great Sandy Biosphere for example was promoted by the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG), based in the city of Bundaberg some 200 kilometers to the north of the Mary Valley. The defined region covered by this peak management body spans some 50,000 square kilometers including the Mary Valley. But, based on my fieldwork, residents in the Mary Valley appear to know very little about it. Established as a result of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in 2000 and funded by the Federal and Queensland State Governments, it expended close to $6m in projects and operating costs in the year 2009-2010, largely in the northern parts of its region outside the Mary Valley (BMRG 2010a, 2010b). BMRG itself also operates as a funding body for some of the projects undertaken by the environmental management body more directly engaged with the Mary River, the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC). The MRCCC, which comprises representatives from a variety of industry sectors in the region, was one of the first Integrated Catchment Management organisations in the country when it was established in 1993. Based in Gympie, the MRCCC has had a stronger presence in the area through, for instance, farm projects concerning erosion, dairy effluent, invasive weed management and so on. While its region of responsibility covers the entire Mary River catchment, its focus has consistently been on the area upstream from Gympie rather than the downstream area around Tiaro and Maryborough. This focus mostly reflects priorities based on conservation significance. Among those involved in downstream environmental management this was reportedly the source of some resentment towards the MRCCC, and the reason for the creation of a competing management body which subsequently turned into the explicitly separated Lower Mary Land and Catchment Care Group, based in Hervey Bay (my italics). The definition of regions for environmental management purposes has thus resulted in overlapping bureaucracies; complementary in theory but practically and socio-politically contested in terms of upstream and downstream engagements with the land and waters.

5.3 Political Electorates

Additional to such divisions among environmental management organisations with carriage for (parts of) the region, the upstream and downstream areas of the river are located in separate local government areas. At the time of the dam announcement in 2006, the Mary River catchment was

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divided into no less than nine local government areas. After the State Government imposed amalgamations into larger regional councils in 2008 this number was reduced to three. The Mary Valley in between Gympie and Kenilworth is largely located within the Gympie Regional Council area, with those in the southeast around Ridgewood now in the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. The downstream areas in the north are located in the Fraser Coast Regional Council area.

At the boundaries of these areas there may be some dispute regarding the consequences of such socio-political definitions of the region. One farmer at the small locality of Ridgewood for example (see Map 9 above) complained about the practical consequences and symbolic connotations of the names and boundaries applied by non-local administrators:

Somebody in an office in Brisbane decided we live in Tuchekoi, but it really is Ridgewood. They send an ambulance from Gympie [forty kilometres away] rather than Cooroy, fifteen kilometres away. It's [often also] called Carters Ridge but it should be Ridgewood; Carters Ridge is an urban enclave.245

Many of my informants found this particular area around Carters Ridge and Ridgewood difficult to define. When I asked about their topographical understanding of the Mary Valley they often excluded, with some uncertainty, both localities. This uncertainty was caused by the fact that the creeks in this area are eastern tributaries of the Mary River (while the fact that they are nevertheless tributaries was conceived as a possible reason for the area’s inclusion). But definitions of the Mary Valley are commonly informed by a consideration of the catchment geography and daily social interactions regarded as essential to regional definition. In arguments leading to their exclusion then they were said to be not just ‘on the other [i.e. eastern] side of the river’, for daily purposes the residents there are oriented towards the Sunshine Coast service center of Cooroy instead of Gympie and this became the dominant consideration in their exclusion.

In contrast to the ‘rural’ Mary Valley, a further reason indeed related to the purportedly out-of-place ‘urban’ character of Carters Ridge, where the residents are predominantly non-productive newcomers on small, higher density subdivisions. Among some of my informants, who by implication consider themselves to be ‘proper’ rural people - people who were typically said to ‘know the mail lady by name and don’t just mow the grass’246 - the ‘urban refugees’247 at Carters Ridge were said to have no strong attachments to their place of residence, and this was believed to

245 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
246 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
247 Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
be the chief reason most properties there were sold to QWI relatively soon after the announcement. ‘They are not making a living from where their house is, so they can sell’, one particular farming couple commented. While such statements were stereotypical and certainly did not apply to the numerous non-farming newcomers active in the campaign, I found no residents of Carters Ridge to be heavily involved in the campaign against the dam.

Obfuscating these asserted divisions in terms of place, attachment and community participation is the unification of all these areas into the federal electoral division named ‘Wide Bay’ (see Map 10). As a reference to the Mary River, initially called the Wide Bay River (Chapter 2), the Wide Bay federal electoral division incorporates the Mary River from the mouth near Maryborough upstream to Kenilworth. The region of Carters Ridge and Ridgewood is included but Kenilworth and the areas further upstream remain excluded, incorporated as they are into the Fairfax (Kenilworth) and Fisher (Conondale and Maleny) electoral divisions. The name ‘Wide Bay’ itself reflected the physical nature of the river mouth near Maryborough, and it bears no relationship with the much narrower part of the river upstream from Gympie.

Federal electoral boundaries are based on the legal requirement that the amount of electors in each division not be ‘less than 96.5% or more than 103.5% of the average divisional enrolment of the state at that time’ (AEC 2009: 6). These defined areas are thus administrative constructs of place based on population numbers, ignoring, as both Wide Bay and the local government areas do to varying degrees, more localised practices of community and a sense of place. Notwithstanding the inclusion of disparate communities into a single named region however, the Wide Bay division as a whole is consistent in its conservative political orientation, for over the last twenty-one years it has been represented in the federal House of Representatives by the current Leader of the National Party, Warren Truss.

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248 Interview 11 May 2009, FN #9
Map 9 The Wide Bay Federal Electoral Division (Local Government Area boundaries in green).\(^{251}\)

The name ‘Wide Bay’, given to the electoral division when it was created at the time of Federation in 1901, is to be understood as a reference to the early history of White settlement in the region (Chapter 2). For the naming of any new divisions an interesting set of guidelines was developed by the Inquiry of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 1995. It is worth reproducing parts of the guidelines here, for they are relevant to my analysis of naming practices further below and in the next chapter:

**Naming after persons**
In the main, divisions should be named after deceased Australians who have rendered outstanding service to their country. When new divisions are created the names of former Prime Ministers should be considered.

**Federation Divisional names**
Every effort should be made to retain the names of original federation divisions.

**Geographical names**
Locality or place names should generally be avoided but in certain areas the use of geographical features may be appropriate (e.g. Perth).

**Aboriginal names**
Aboriginal names should be used where appropriate and as far as possible existing Aboriginal divisional names should be retained.252

While Aboriginal names can be used ‘where appropriate’, in practice such names have been used infrequently: they constitute just twelve percent of all named electoral divisions in Australia (nineteen out of one hundred and fifty), with about fifty percent of those in the State of Victoria and thirty percent in New South Wales. Rather, in accordance with the first guideline, the names are dominated by references to colonial explorers and deceased White persons of historical political influence.253 This dominance resonates with what Koch and Hercus (2009), in their introduction to the work of Kostanski and Clark (2009) on ‘Anglo-Indigenous’ toponyms and the Australian

landscape as a ‘palimpsest’, described as ‘the imposition of the colonisers’ understanding of geography on top of a land populated with prior Indigenous names’ (2009: 2).

While regional names such as ‘Wide Bay’ and the later renaming of the river by Governor Fitzroy in honour of his wife Lady Mary, can be understood as forms of colonial imposition, Aboriginal names were frequently used in the early naming of places in the Mary Valley (see also Chapter 2). The names of townships such as Kandanga, Imbil and Amamoor, as well as Yabba Creek, are all Aboriginal in origin, but they are more appropriately understood, in Kostanski’s (2009: 175) term, as Anglo-Indigenous: ‘Indigenous names … captured by colonial powers and used for their own means of identifying the landscape’. I will briefly return to the use of Aboriginal names in the next chapter.

Thus far I have described a number of place related definitions of relevance to the Mary Valley: from upstream and downstream areas as reflected in the regional and international environmental management, to local government boundaries and federal electoral divisions. A number of additional definitions are yet to be mentioned, particularly those relevant to the assessment of the proposed dam’s environmental impacts based on ecological classification and comparability.

5.4 From Ecoregions to ‘RE 12.3.1’: The Role of Exogenous Ecology
In the Mary Valley definition employed by the Save the Mary group, the catchment is important. The catchment however, as I demonstrated above, is subject to varying definitions. It is divided into two separate biospheres and separate regions of responsibility for a number of not necessarily congruent environmental management organisations. The catchment is also subject to a variety of definitions based on hierarchies of ecological classification. Most broadly, in my reading of ecological documentation, the Mary Valley is part of the ‘Temperate Broadleaf and Mixed Forest Terrestrial Ecoregion’ of Australia. Ecoregions, of which there are fourteen in the world, are classifications employed by the Australian Government and developed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) ‘as a more comprehensive conservation tool than simply looking at ecosystem types, or biomes, based on climate and vegetation. Each ecoregion contains several biomes and biomes may transcend ecoregion borders’.255

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254 See the toponymic typology by Tent and Blair (2011) and Bender (1999) on western maps as an expression of ‘the Western Gaze’, described as a ‘top-down hegemonic discourse’ (p.31), and which may be challenged by ‘alternative’ maps as metaphors of local resistance (p.42).

More specifically, the National Land and Water Resources Audit from 2000 to 2002 considered the Mary Valley part of the ‘South Eastern Queensland Bioregion’, one of thirteen identified bioregions in Queensland (see also Accad, Neldner, Wilson & Niehus 2008). More specifically again, the Mary Valley is located within the ‘Gympie Block’ sub-bioregion, an oddly shaped area which includes parts of the Mary River and parts of the Burnett River far to the north, but excludes the downstream areas of Maryborough and Hervey Bay, as well as those upstream areas south from Kenilworth (see Map 10 below).

Bearing little resemblance to a local sense of place or community, sub-bioregions are ‘a landscape-scale approach to classifying the environment using a range of attributes such as climate, geomorphology, geology, soils and vegetation’. Within the Gympie Block sub-bioregion there are six further (river) sub-basins, one of which is referred to as the ‘Upper Mary River’ and which

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includes the river and tributaries upstream from Gympie to Kenilworth.\textsuperscript{260} It is this region, although it includes the township of Cooran and tributaries to the east of the river, which most closely resembles local definitions of the Mary Valley.

Curiously, those Mary River catchment areas upstream from Kenilworth to the source of the river are also referred to as the ‘Upper Mary River’ sub-basin, but, rather than belonging to the Gympie Block, it is the most northern part of the ‘Southeast Hills and Ranges sub-bioregion’ which, as a narrow strip, extends as far south as the New South Wales border (see Map 10 above).\textsuperscript{261} It appears this separation is based on geological differences, overriding shared hydrological relationships specific to the river.\textsuperscript{262} In scientific ecological terms then, based on various classifications, the Mary Valley is part of the Upper Mary River sub-basin of the Gympie Block sub-bioregion of the South Eastern Queensland Bioregion in the temperate broadleaf and mixed forest terrestrial ecoregion of Australia.

In the context of the dam, these definitions were relevant to the assessment of environmental impacts, combining aspects of geology, climate and ecosystems. I recorded however not one instance in which these concepts were debated during public campaign meetings; a reflection, I argue, of their exogenous nature. More conducive to local discussion was the view of the Mary Valley in terms of ‘ecological communities’. Such a view interprets ‘the freshwater aquatic ecosystems of the Mary River floodplains as a threatened ecological community’ (MRCCC 2009: 5). This community is characterised by ‘riffle, pool and sandbank sequences’ (\textit{Ibid.}). Such sequences are features indeed recognisable to anyone who has been on the river. ‘Ecological communities’ are recognised in the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act as ‘an assemblage of native species that inhabits a particular area in nature’.\textsuperscript{263} It nevertheless leaves open how ‘a particular area in nature’ ought to be defined. It is likely such...

\textsuperscript{260} I have been unable to find a definition of the term ‘sub-basin’. Hydrologists appear to equate this terms with ‘sub-catchment’, referring to a division within a river catchment including one or more tributaries, but it is unclear to me on what basis boundaries are drawn (Kinsey-Henderson, Post & Prosser (2005) for example refer to a ‘paddock size’ in north Queensland while Romanowicz \textit{et al} (2005) suggest the size is dependent on the aims employed by the users of particular hydrological models). See the map by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, at: \url{http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/wetlandinfo/site/MappingFandD/WetlandMapsAndData/hydro-climate/grids/12701381.html?DataType=ra&Timescale=y&EndDate=31/12/2006&IncludeShortTimeSeries=false&PeriodCount=10&reflongtermmean=true&refmean=true&refq95=false&refmedian=true&refq05=false} (accessed 27 April 2011).


\textsuperscript{262} Personal comment informant, 29 April 2011

\textsuperscript{263} EPBC Act 1999, Volume 2, Section 528, p. 460
exogenous ecological definitions of place, similar to those above, are divorced from emplaced human identities and historically rooted socio-economic relationships with the environment.

In Chapter 2 I also touched upon the emergence of ecological classifications when I gave examples of the ways in which local forests have been named historically. Invariably referred to in the context of (closer) settlement and timber-cutting as Vine Scrub, Tall Scrub or Bunya Scrub, some forests in the upper regions of the catchment became widely known as rainforests in the context of increasing environmental management and public recreation after World War Two. While the term rainforest remains widely used, they are now referred to by ecologists in such terms as ‘semi-evergreen vine thickets’ (e.g. McDonald 2010; Fellows et al 2006), ‘subtropical notophyll vine forests’ (e.g. Greening Australia 2003) or ‘Complex to simple, semi-deciduous mesophyll to notophyll vine forest, sometimes with Araucaria cunninghamii’ (Accad, Neldner, Wilson & Niehus 2008: 47). These naming practices do not just reflect specialised engagements with the environment; they are also related to increasing Government regulations and restrictions, and as such they have practical consequences for those people living there. The Queensland Vegetation Management Act of 1999 for example includes people in its definition of the word ‘environment’. It is said to include:

(a) ecosystems and their constituent parts including people and communities; and
(b) all natural and physical resources; and
(c) those qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas, however large or small, that contribute to their biological diversity and integrity, intrinsic or attributed scientific value or interest, amenity, harmony and sense of community; and
(d) the social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions affecting the matters in paragraphs (a) to (c) or affected by those matters.  

This I regard as a rather confusing definition, for the purpose of this Act is to conserve vegetation and to minimise the environmental impacts of future development, not to assess places in such unexplained terms as harmony, sense of community or cultural conditions. As an attempt to regulate development and to manage the available natural resources it was one of the last in a long history of less than successful legislation (see Chapter 2), but the terminology it employed was relatively new. The proposed construction of the Traveston Crossing Dam for example was to inundate a considerable area of vegetation. The Vegetation Management Act provided the context for the following statement in the supplementary EIS, a statement I use to demonstrate the way in which it

requires places to be conceived of in the terms of the ecological classifications discussed above, commonly added to with the numerical codes of ‘regional ecosystems’ (RE):

The most significant impact of the dam on vegetation will be the loss of nearly 60 ha of the endangered RE 12.3.1 and its constituent vegetation communities (A1b, A1bx, A1c and A1ex). This represents 0.75% of the total extent of RE 12.3.1 in the SEQ bioregion … The Project will result in the loss of approximately 156 ha of Endangered and Of Concern regional ecosystems (REs 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.3.11 and 12.11.14), as well as an additional 102 ha of riparian vegetation (REs 12.3.1, 12.3.2 and 12.3.7). This includes riparian areas that will not be cleared within 1.5 m of the FSL [Full Supply Level of the dam]. In accordance with the VMO [Vegetation Management Offsets] Policy, QWI will provide VMOs to offset the loss of this significant vegetation. There is no legislative requirement to provide offsets for Not of Concern REs. VMOs will incorporate relevant aspects of landform, geology and plant community to ensure the VMO Policy is met (QWI 2008b: 18-9, 18-13).

The codes employed in this quote refer to specific areas of vegetation described in the Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD) maintained by the Queensland Government. In terms of Mary Valley vegetation, the code 12.11.10 for example describes 'Notophyll vine forest +/- Araucaria cunninghamii on metamorphics +/- interbedded volcanics' and 12.3.1 is a ‘gallery rainforest (notophyll vine forest) on alluvial plains (endangered)’. The first number (12) in these codes refers to the bioregion (in this case South Eastern Queensland), the second number refers to the ‘land zone’ (number 3 refers to ‘quaternary alluvial systems’ and number 11 stands for ‘hills and lowlands on metamorphosed sedimentary rocks’), and the third number refers to the specific vegetation community to be found there. In this way the entire Queensland environment is named through no less than 1384 different codes (REDD).

Ecological definitions of place, in other words, are typically exogenous concepts based on abstraction and comparability. They are generally as unrecognisable to local communities as the flood models of hydrologists referred to in the previous chapter. This may present some challenges to landholders when they want to clear certain vegetation covered by the Act, which requires Government approval. Landholders may then be confronted by the codes above, based on the

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265 Queensland Herbarium (2011)
266 Neldner et al 2005: 109
267 Ibid, p. 110
268 Ibid, p. 21
information held in the Government’s database located in Brisbane. Through Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies this information can be used to map, accurately at least in theory, the vegetation on specific properties. These maps are referred to as PMAVs (property maps of assessable vegetation). Property vegetation maps are produced ‘by the spatial extension of site data by using photo-patterns recognised on remotely sensed imagery, usually aerial photographs. … LANDSAT TM [satellite] data have been used successfully for small-scale mapping’ (Neldner et al 2005: 13-14). Where inaccuracies occur (the Government fact sheet itself acknowledges that re-growth vegetation identified through satellite imagery may occasionally be an orchard for example) these may reportedly put a significant burden on the landholder to rectify. The PMAV application form certainly requires considerable effort to comply with.

As a way of looking at the world rather than taking up a view in it (Ingold 2000), the classification of the environment by laboratory-based specialists who analyse satellite imagery and aerial photographs through microscopes symbolically represents one of the most explicitly exogenous identities I encountered during my research. The contrast with endogenous identity and embodied practice, described in the previous chapter and elaborated upon in the next chapter in terms of landholder naming practices, is stark indeed.

270 Personal comment informant, 29 April 2011
Plate 22 Exogenous abstraction and looking at the landscape.\textsuperscript{272}

5.5 Summary: The Anti-dam Campaign Within and Beyond the Mary Valley

The Mary Valley region is defined and classified in numerous terms and contexts. The map below, visually difficult to disentangle but in that sense an adequate representation, depicts some of the definitions applicable to the region: the historically restricted definition of the Mary Valley centred on four townships (Chapter 2), the \textit{Save the Mary} definition which extends that region upstream to include Kenilworth (Chapter 3), the notion of the river catchment which incorporates both upstream and downstream areas, and the Noosa and Great Sandy Biospheres, the Federal electorate and local government areas; all of which incorporate, in different ways and on different bases, certain parts of the Mary River catchment. The map also demonstrates that the south-eastern region of the Mary Valley around Ridgewood and Carters Ridge is consistently at the periphery of regional definitions.

\textsuperscript{272} Image at the front cover of Neldner \textit{et al} (2005).
The exogenous definitions of relevance to the Mary Valley can broadly be understood as categories of administrative and environmental abstraction (such as the regions of political representation and environmental management and those ecological concepts of sub-basins, biospheres, ecological communities, ecoregions and (sub-) bioregions). These categories contrast sharply with endogenous identities and local sense of place (see next chapter). Rather than reifying this dichotomy however, the campaign, to be understood as I argued in the previous chapter as a ‘science-lay hybrid assemblage’ (Delgado 2010), strategically engaged both endogenous and exogenous identities. It is, I argue, through the analyses of such strategic engagements that anthropologists can make important contributions to the study of environmental disputes in which visions of nature, place and belonging are socio-culturally negotiated (e.g. Peace 1999, Satterfield 2002, Trigger and Mulcock 2005). I therefore approach these categories not as mutually exclusive, but as interactive in practice; as overlapping concepts salient in particular contexts and subject to contestation.

In their public campaign to stop the dam proposal, activists sought to develop both internal cohesion and external credibility, both of which were to a large degree interdependent (Chapter 3).
Exogenous identities - explicitly divorced from embodied practice, local history and social relationships - played an important role in the public articulation of arguments that the dam ought not to proceed. Endogenous definitions of place however were negotiated too, for definitions of the Mary Valley itself were subject to debate.

One such example, while it was never seriously debated around Kandanga, came from the downstream activists. In an apparent bid to challenge the notion of the Mary Valley as restricted to the upstream area in between Gympie and Kenilworth - the general area to be inundated by the proposed dam - the President of the downstream activist group repeatedly proposed at meetings in Maryborough that the downstream areas should also be regarded as the Mary Valley. This proposal was based on their shared activism and relationships with the river, and the impacts which were also said to affect downstream communities if the dam were built. The proposal never gained any traction however, mainly because the anticipated social impacts downstream were different and most downstream activists were hesitant to appropriate a place name which had historically never applied to them and which, in the context of the dam, carried specific connotations of emotional hardship and threatened eviction.

Additionally, activists in the upstream Save the Mary group at times condemned what they perceived as misconstrued representations of the Mary Valley. For example, when the historians Johnson and Saunders (2007) completed their potted but excellent history of the region, the fact that it was commissioned by the Community Futures Taskforce, a State Government initiative in response to the impacts of the dam, was reason enough for some to denounce it. The fact that they gave it the name ‘Wild Heart, Bountiful Land: An Historical Overview of the Mary River Valley’ (my italics) was perceived as an outright attack on endogenous identity by ignorant outsiders considered not to belong. As one resident wrote on the activist forum website:

I would like to say...what a waste of money and stress to this community. I won't talk at length about how sick to the stomach it makes me feel to have this book even in existence, because it only upsets me more to dwell there. As a local resident who lives here and loves this Mary valley, this piece of rubbish is one of the worst insults they could've thrown at me.

In what world does one think it socially responsible to contrive a publication on our local history and heritage, and then wipe it all out under a 7800 hectare blanket of water. … [T]he fact that they persist in calling it the Mary River Valley throughout

273 Observational notes from GMA meetings.
the booklet, shows great ignorance on behalf of the writers, as well as a dead give away that they are not from here. It may be a valley, and it may surround the Mary River, but it is the Mary Valley....the Mary's Valley to expound on the difference a little.

Only an impersonal and clinical overview compiled by outsiders would think it endearing to call it the Mary River Valley.......it took some people constant phone calls just to get the Taskforce to stop calling it the Mary River Valley in their newsletters and here we are again with writers who coordinated with the Taskforce.274

Such a reaction is a succinct example of the politics of belonging and the contest between endogenous and exogenous identities. While a casual observer might conclude on the basis of this quote that local identity and belonging formed a relatively unproblematic category in opposition to exogenous identities and concomitant definitions of place, this was not the case. On the contrary, my aim has been to demonstrate the negotiation of exogenous identities as well as localised endogenous practice and expressions of belonging and emplacement. Rather than a uniform and single-sited approach, the activists engaged all the identities and definitions included in Bob Brown’s concluding remarks at ‘Travie Crossing’ in 2008:

Yes for better water alternatives, yes for keeping these farmlands, yes for respecting the Kabi Kabi heritage, and yes for respecting ourselves as human beings and our obligations to the fascinating other creatures, habitats and this beautiful natural environment we all experience here in the Mary Valley, in Queensland, Australia, on Planet Earth.275

275 Observation 08 September 2008, FN# 1
Chapter 6  Named Places: Endogenous Identities and Environmental Engagement

6.1 Introduction
In contrast to the definitions representative of exogenous identities described in the previous chapter, this chapter elaborates on the notion of endogenous identity through an analysis of local place names and a variety of aspects pertinent to forms of local emplacement (for studies on local emplacement see e.g. Creed and Ching 1997, Dominy 1997, 2001, Goodrich and Sampson 2008, Guyot and Seethal 2007, Lovell 1998). In the first section below I describe the role within the campaign of small named localities in the Mary Valley which figured particularly in negotiations of belonging and socio-political authority. I then turn to local definitions of the Mary Valley to illustrate the features through which endogenous identities conceive the region. After this discussion of the region I turn to specific properties and examples of naming practices I recorded among farmers and largely non-commercial newcomers. These naming practices, I will argue, reflect emplaced identities and the particularities of embodied environmental engagements (as argued for other regions by Dominy (2001) and Tilley (1994)). It is in the context of environmental engagements that these naming practices resonate strongly with the discussion of practical knowledge and experience in the previous chapters. They also offer an insight into the deeply personal and emotional investments landholders were standing to lose as a result of the proposed dam.

6.2 Named Localities in the Mary Valley

Plate 23 A road sign which defines the Mary Valley in terms of named townships, environmental features, rural ‘lifestyle’ and primary production.
During the campaign, activists promoted a symbolically holistic view of the river in terms of an ecological system but they conceptually defined the Mary Valley, as a place of community and identity, at varying degrees of scale. In Chapters 2 and 3 I described the historical construction of the Mary Valley in terms of the townships of Dagun, Amamoor, Kandanga and Imbil located between Gympie and Kenilworth (see Plate 23 above). I also referred to various smaller named localities outside those townships. These localities are generally areas of agricultural river flats, often known as ‘pockets’ situated in a major bend of the river. They have a recognisably physical character, and their names are mostly derived from individuals, presumably settlers although documentation is scant, physical characteristics, or Anglicised Aboriginal names. Approximately a few hundred hectares in size each, they carry such names as Lagoon Pocket, Dagun Pocket, Goomong, Bergins Pocket, Peacons Pocket and Moy Pocket. Three contiguous localities are slightly larger areas known as Tuchekoi, Tuncal Flat and Bollier (see Map 12 with most named localities below).

Map 12 Named localities in the Mary Valley. Locally significant names in red are added by the author.

These localities along the river were, and continue to form, the heart of agricultural production in the Valley. As such they remain important particularly to members of the farming community. Farmers regularly use these named places in discussions of the region, referring, for instance, to the families which own(ed) them, the produce that was grown there, the specific qualities of the land,
memorable events and so on. Since many of the farms have now been subdivided, the newcomers who live there may use these names as their place of residence in discussions with other local residents, but their engagement with other ‘pockets’, because they are not primary producers, is limited. In explaining their residential address to people from outside the region such as myself, anticipating a lack of detailed topographic knowledge, these names are very rarely used in isolation, and to clarify their location residents generally use directional descriptions such as ‘Bollier, outside Imbil, off the Tuchekoi Road’, or ‘Peacons Pocket, from the Bruce Highway along the Kenilworth-Skyring Creek Road, on your right before the Chinaman’s Creek bridge’.

Such examples partly reflect the small size of named localities, many of which are not signposted, and they are further indications that infrastructure - particularly major roads and bridges – play an important role in local conceptualisations of topography and place (see Chapter 2 and further below). While I did not record such additional explanations in conversations among farmers and longer-term residents with detailed knowledge of the region, on the basis of historical records it appears the use of these locality names has decreased as agricultural production and the related socio-economic significance of these areas diminished (c.f. Woolgar 1911, Pedley 1979).

Perhaps related to this diminished significance, I found a surprisingly strong relationship between topographic knowledge and a person’s proximity to the area in terms of residence or occupation: a number of non-farming residents in Gympie, only some twenty kilometres away, had heard of certain named localities along the river but did not know their location; other named localities were at times completely unknown. Gympie residents with occupations in, for example, the agricultural industry or environmental management were more likely to know the details of named localities in the Mary Valley because of their occupational engagements with the region. From the historical records referred to above, it appears such knowledge was indeed more widely shared among residents in Gympie when primary production in the Mary Valley was socio-economically more important to them. Further away, none of the activists I met in downstream Maryborough, just over one hundred kilometres to the north, knew locality names in the Mary Valley, and their knowledge of the townships was very limited; most had visited rarely and some had never been there before the campaign started.

Given their intense engagement with the region, the named localities were known by most members of the Save the Mary leadership, but on the whole they were raised infrequently during their Committee meetings. They were mentioned, for example, when specific farming families or sites of

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276 This observation is based on a range of witnessed events and interviews.
environmental interest on the river such as turtle nesting sites or the location of old fig trees were discussed. At public meetings however it was important for the leadership to demonstrate, at least casually, its knowledge of named localities because it was an acknowledgement of the region’s socio-economic history and related forms of emplacement. As I described in Chapter 3, newcomers in the campaign accorded a sense of moral authority to the farmers with multi-generational ties to the area. This was achieved by declaring their own status as newcomers and by demonstrating knowledge of place names used predominantly by farmers in the past. These forms of acknowledgement worked to suspend the internal distinctions between them and strengthened the position of newcomers as spokespersons for the community as a whole.

On occasions however older residents still felt the need to reiterate their sense of moral authority with references to ancestral belonging and place related knowledge. At one Save the Mary community meeting an elderly woman with an unusual long family history of saw milling and farming in the area for example said:

My family goes back to the 1800s. I’ve been in town since 1932; I’ve seen floods. I know where the water goes. I offered to take them [QWI] to Pickering Bridge, they reckon the Mary River bridge has never been under. Our grandparents fought to open this land up, most people have lived here less than ten years: they don't know. I’ve seen the 1955 flood.277

While this quote echoes the findings of Chapter 4 on knowledge and identity, here I want to point to her assertion of emplaced authority over newcomers who ‘have lived here less than ten years’. Such authority was also expressed through detailed knowledge of named localities and their socio-economic histories, particularly by those who are widely considered to be part of ‘old’ or ‘original’ families (see also Strathern 1982, Edwards 1998). In rounds of personal introductions at small public meetings it was therefore common for all the participants to state how long they, or their families, had been resident in the area so that the authority of each person in terms of genealogical attachment and belonging could be established prior to any discussions. This may be a common practice in the context of increasing social change and population mobility, for during ethnographic fieldwork in 2000 I recorded identical processes during a dispute between local residents and government officials over the use of snow mobiles in Denali National Park in interior Alaska.278

277 Observation 12 February 2009, FN# 6
278 This was fieldwork for my MA thesis in anthropology, ‘Bordering Wildness’, at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands. It was focused on the notion of wilderness and the tension between the utilisation and conservation of natural resources in and around Denali National Park & Preserve.
6.3 Defining the Mary Valley

During the campaign, in an attempt to situate the Mary Valley within the more popular tourist region to the south, the dam was often said to be located in the ‘Sunshine Coast Hinterland’. This asserted association with the Sunshine Coast is based on the geography of the catchment, with the headwaters around Conondale located in the Sunshine Coast Regional Council area. While they had consistently disassociated themselves from that region historically, this was one of the few occasions in which residents around Kandanga and Imbil actively attempted to associate with the areas upstream from Kenilworth. For the reasons I have described earlier, particularly the socio-economic focus by Mary Valley residents on Gympie, the regional centre for goods and services and local government, such an association with the Sunshine Coast was tenuous at best. To reiterate this point, Gympie for example provides or coordinates Mary Valley health and aged care, secondary and vocational education opportunities, agricultural machinery and cattle sales, major food and retail outlets, and so on. When people in the Mary Valley say they ‘go to town’, they generally go to Gympie. A further important service in Gympie is the Gympie Hospital where all multi-generational informants who participated in my research were born (there is no hospital in the Mary Valley). Additionally, the vast majority of deceased persons from the area are buried at the Gympie Cemetery and not at the small cemetery at Kandanga, the only cemetery in the Mary Valley. It appears only those who make the specific request are buried at Kandanga, a request reflecting strong attachments to the area and made, at least among those people I interviewed, exclusively by the few people who have grown up there.

The asserted associations with the upstream areas of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, as well as the downstream areas of the Fraser Coast, were opportunistic attempts by the activists to broaden the historically restricted definition of the Mary Valley. The campaign, in other words, engaged multiple, not necessarily consistent definitions of place; some aimed at widening the geographic region of impact and protest, while others such as the named localities were more restricted and relevant to internal politics and the symbolic negotiation of authority, localised emplacement and belonging.

All these definitions were subject to debate and interpretation. As I indicated with regard to the area around Carters Ridge and Ridgewood, local definitions of the Mary Valley itself were far from consistent. Areas to the north of Carters Ridge, but equally east of the river, were also defined with a degree of uncertainty. In 2008 for example, a local community organisation undertook the so-called Mary Valley Business Expansion and Retention Program (‘MV BEAR’). The report (Parker-
Price 2008: 5) indicated there had been some unease with the definition of the Mary Valley employed during the program:

[T]he geographical area surveyed consisted of the northern end of the Mary Valley, from Lagoon Pocket near Gympie through to the Gympie Regional Council boundary just north of Kenilworth. This is, in fact, only part of the true Mary Valley which follows the Mary River from the Conondale Range and takes in Kenilworth before joining the lower valley region.

It failed to mention however that this definition had also excluded all areas to the east of the Mary River. An entrepreneur in outdoor education on the eastern bank of the river later commented to me in protest:

The Mary Valley is Cooran [township] in the east, Amamoor State Forest in the west, through to Maryborough. It starts from Obi Obi [an upstream creek near Maleny]. When the Mary Valley BEAR project was on they had written to us saying ‘you're not in the Mary Valley’. Only west of the river was classified as the Valley. They said they had to draw a line.279

His far more inclusive definition based on the catchment area was contested too, for Cooran, some ten kilometers to the east of the river, was generally excluded from local definitions of the Mary Valley. Indeed, the Mary River, or the Bruce Highway just two kilometers to the east of it, was commonly regarded as the eastern boundary. Located in between the river and the highway, the protesting entrepreneur found himself in a peripheral zone the people around Kandanga struggled to define.

Many definitions of the Mary Valley were diffuse at the periphery, but they consistently centered on the key infrastructural elements of the Mary Valley Road and the Mary Valley railway. Equally important were particular visual characteristics, for the agricultural river flats are a distinct feature of the landscape between Gympie and Kenilworth. The asserted ‘start’ of the Mary Valley outside Gympie was therefore often determined by the Mary Valley Road and the first view it offered of the river flats when travelling south from Gympie. It is at this location that Gympie Regional Council decided to install the ‘Welcome to the Mary Valley’ road sign (see Plates 23 and 24).

279 Interview 20 January 2009, FN# 4
That the decision to install the sign at this location and to include on it the townships of Dagun, Amamoor, Kandanga and Imbil was far from arbitrary, was explained by a Council representative:

Technically the Mary Valley is the watershed: from Maleny to Maryborough. But the Mary Valley has local connotations: farmlands, flood lands, dairies. Long Flat [a locality closer to Gympie] has no sight of rye grass, the tree line or the river. We wanted it in a location where tourists have a view. A consultant prepared a report and we massaged the words. It was originally planned a few hundred meters closer to Gympie but it was too far from the road. Council put its towns on it as a promotion for this Shire.280

Through such considerations and public displays the relationship between the Mary Valley and the local government area of Gympie Regional Council has become locally entrenched. Mediated by infrastructure and the visual features of the agricultural landscape, the definition of the Mary Valley drew on a distinction between the urban character of Gympie and the rural views to be enjoyed by motoring tourists. Further upstream however the excluded residents at Kenilworth were apparently discontent and counteracted this definition of the Mary Valley with a welcome sign of their own. It is a poignant contemporary example of the contest to define the Mary Valley; an ongoing contest since early settlement (Chapter 2), but which has become particularly urgent over the past few

280 Telephone interview 11 August 2008, FN# 14
decades in the context of socio-economically declining rural townships and the emerging economic benefits of belonging to a region of tourist significance:

Kenilworth was generally supported in this claim by the local community organisation which had ‘drawn the line’ during the business study referred to above, even though at that occasion it was excluded as a result. This organisation was established in Imbil during the campaign against the dam. Locally, it was a highly controversial initiative. Named ‘Mary Valley Inc’, generally referred to with the acronym ‘MVI’, its slogan became ‘one valley, one voice, one vision’ with the aim to be ‘the organisation connecting the communities of the Mary Valley in South-East Queensland’.281 Included in their definition of the Mary Valley - the one they had not employed in their business study - are, from north to south, the townships of Dagun, Amamoor, Kandanga, Imbil, Kenilworth, Conondale and Crystal Waters.

Particularly among the activists it was distrusted and often regarded as an organisation in competition with the Save the Mary group, especially because it was willing to engage with the State Government and accepted State Government funding for such projects as the business retention program. Its definition of the Mary Valley was also contested since it included the upstream communities of Kenilworth, Conondale and Crystal Waters. Crystal Waters above all stands out. While it is located at the headwater of the river, it is an eco-village focussed on permaculture, environmental sustainability, wildlife protection, and so on, created in the 1970s as

an independent and progressive commune rather than part of a regional network of typically conservative agricultural communities. Very few farmers around Kandanga have ever been there.

MVI, in other words, did not represent any existing ‘one valley, one voice, one vision’; it embodied, similar in this respect to the Save the Mary group, the socio-political and economic promotion of that vision. However, when the president of the organisation made an introductory presentation at a meeting of local residents in the Kandanga Hall he was met with rowdy accusations of treason, and one enraged woman walked out in tears as a result. In contrast to the activists, MVI’s notion of unity was indeed much more about a regionally coordinated approach to Government bureaucracies and the socio-economic realities of rural change, than about representing a voice in opposition to the changes proposed by Government through inundation. It therefore resisted calls to take a public position on the dam, but the fact that it remained silent and accepted funding from the State Government was widely interpreted as implicit support for it. Such issues would continue to hinder local support for MVI’s notion of community until the threat of the dam proposal had passed. Indeed, hostilities towards MVI seem to have diminished since the rejection of the dam in December 2009.

Local definitions of the Mary Valley, in summary, are to be understood as contested socio-political constructs informed by both historical and contemporary social practice, ideas of belonging and community participation, as well as environmental features and forms of land use. In terms of endogenous identity, they reflect views taken up from within the region; a sense of place grounded in embodied social and environmental interactions also discernable in the way people assign names to places on their land.

6.4 Names and the Productive Environment of Primary Producers

In this section I describe how farmers interact with their land through the practice of naming places. Such naming practices serve the dual purpose, as Appadurai (1995: 205) argued, to ‘embody locality as well as to locate bodies in socially and spatially defined communities’. Place names, in other words, render the landscape intelligible and they link people to it by imbuing it with human narratives (Goodrich and Sampson 2008, Dominy 2001).

Naming Paddocks

In her ethnographic study of New Zealand’s High Country sheep farmers and their relations to land, Michèle Dominy (2001: 159-160) regarded their naming practices as reflecting:

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282 Observation 27 January 2009, FN# 4
[U]se, perception of physical and constructed features, and the inscription of contemporary events and ownership into a landscape that becomes historicized; like fencing and subdivision, they also serve a referential function. … Place attachment is most powerfully mediated through stock, as sheep shape the toponymic and topographic systems used by these inhabitants to configure their geography and root themselves firmly in country.

The naming practices I recorded among cattle farmers in the Mary Valley bear strong resemblance to those described by Dominy. As a general note of introduction to the topic, I found that without exception all the cattle farmers I met had assigned names to the different fenced-off paddocks on their land. These names firstly serve a utilitarian and pragmatic purpose. That is, to keep records of their activities in terms of, for instance, the amount of fertiliser locally applied, the areas improved with legumes and specific grasses, the location and rotational movement of cattle to and from different paddocks, or which areas have been irrigated, farmers need to be able to identify specific locations. Named areas, in this pragmatic sense, function as administrative units important to the management of land, stock, and finances.

The importance of such named administrative units was underscored by a local Department of Primary Industries ‘extension officer’. Such officers work to improve primary production practices and land management and have direct contact with farmers about such issues. A week before I interviewed him he had visited a farmer who, to his surprise, did not have any names for his paddocks. The extension officer promptly asked him to name them so that a start could be made with monitoring both his activities and the land itself. Reportedly bewildered, the farmer noted his paddocks were located along ‘Bunnies Lane’ and decided to name his paddocks ‘Bunnies 1’, ‘Bunnies 2’, ‘Bunnies 3’ and so on. For the management of a farming business therefore it is important, firstly, to divide the property into identifiable administrative units of land; the name itself may be of less importance and can be, as per the above, rather arbitrary. On the whole however, the names I recorded from farmers were far from arbitrary.

As Dominy noted, names may reflect a perception of physical or constructed features in the landscape. Most farmers I interviewed employed at least some names which refer directly to physically recognisable aspects of the landscape, most of them human-made. Examples of such names include ‘dam paddock’, ‘house paddock’, ‘mill paddock’, ‘green gate paddock’, ‘black gate paddock’, ‘parade paddock’, and ‘silver paddock’. But names also referred to the current events of the farmers’ lives, including their ownership of the land. For instance, ‘Barbaras Lane’ and ‘Barbaras Paddocks’ are named after the wife of one of the farmers.

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283 Interview 15 July 2009, FN# 13
paddock’, and so on. Such names generally have meaning only to those with detailed knowledge of property features, usually members of the landowning family and their immediate circle of friends and acquaintances.

A second group of names links categories of cattle and relevant human activities to particular places. Such names, the most commonly shared among the farmers I interviewed, include names such as ‘night paddock’, ‘day paddock’, ‘bull paddock’, ‘springer paddock’ or ‘dry paddock’. Both ‘night’ and ‘day’ paddock refer to the areas where cattle spend those parts of the day, but implicit in these names is the need to routinely move the animals to and from such places. Such paddock names, as both spatial and temporal devices in terms of stock movement and daily routine, link both land, animals and human labour; a key element in claims of attachment and land ownership (Dominy 2001, Strang 2009).

The ‘bull paddock’ is where bulls, and sometimes some calves, are kept. ‘Bull paddocks’, into which cows may be introduced when the farmer considers it the appropriate time, are to be understood in terms of controlled breeding and the particularities of detailed herd management. A ‘springer’ paddock is where cows about to calve are kept. It may be located close to the farm house to facilitate frequent monitoring of the cows and the progress of calving. ‘Dry’ paddocks are areas where ‘dry’ cows, i.e. non-lactating cows, are kept. Certain areas thus are linked to particular kinds of cattle, each of which is closely associated with a set of related farming activities and plans. As such the named paddocks on a property also reflect different life-stages of cattle, and, as cattle are moved between them over time, these named places come to embody a deeply ‘historicised’ landscape; a development to which forms of place attachment and belonging are intrinsically related. Relationships to land among these farmers in the Mary Valley therefore can be understood, as Dominy (2001: 259) also argued for the High Country sheep farmers in New Zealand, in ‘grounded interactive terms where cultural practices embody socially and geographically situated experience, knowledge, and skill’.

Certain named areas may directly reflect the geography of a property: names such as ‘top flat’, ‘bottom flat’, ‘gulley paddock’, ‘river paddock’, ‘north paddock’ and so on, are frequently used. Most properties are known through named places which reflect a mixture of all the aspects I have discussed so far. A few examples of particular properties will illustrate this point.

One property I visited is reportedly the last remaining cattle station in the Mary River catchment. The current owner, whose family has owned the property since 1907, recently produced at his own
expense a richly illustrated 389 page history of the property. Reflecting a sense of settler-
descendant pride, productive heritage and familial belonging he produced the book ‘to
commemorate the centennial arrival of the Titmarsh family at Tandora on December 16, 1907’
(Titmarsh 2007: i) and gave it the title Tandora: A Pioneer’s Dream.

Currently comprising 11,000 acres, there are thirteen named paddocks. While the size and history of
this property are not representative of the cattle farms in the Mary Valley, the names given to the
paddocks reflect principles applied in all of them. These names can be understood in the context of
the environmental peculiarities of the property and the ‘grounded interactive terms’ referred to
above. I will list the names followed by the explanations given to me:

1. **Cow paddock**: for the dairy, we have some foster cows, six or seven;
2. **Long Pocket**: narrow;
3. **Andrew McMeekin paddock**: after the first settler who had that block;
4. **Susan paddock**: on the Susan River;
5. **Short-cut paddock**: provides a short cut to the house [when travelling along a particular
route over the property];
6. **Fertiliser shed paddock**: where the shed is;
7. **Hill paddock**: the only hill is there;
8. **Dave’s camp**: my cousin Dave has a fishing camp on the creek there;
9. **Cork tree paddock** (we say we go to ‘Cork trees’): Cork trees grow there;
10. **Kingey’s**: Hughie King used to have a fishing camp there on Alligator Creek. He’s a bloke
    from town, died in 1992;
11. **Grass Trees paddock**: I used to dig them up and sell them. I have a license for them;
12. **Blue Gum paddock**: after one big tree there;
13. **New Paddock**: had no feature; we called it the ‘New paddock’ for three years. It became the
    ‘**PD paddock**’ in 1997 after Princess Diana was killed in 1996 [laughs].

These names poignantly demonstrate the multiple ways in which properties are known and imbued
with meaning by their owners. Apart from the environmental references, a number of names relate
to the histories and activities of particular people significant to the owner: friends, family, settlers
and, however unusual, English royalty. The inscription of personally significant narratives,

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284 Interview 12 June 2009, FN# 10
285 However, the interest by many Australians in the English monarchy, as displayed for example in the exceptional
media coverage of Prince William’s wedding in April 2011, appears strong. This raises interesting questions about the
history and social relationships is a common feature of place naming (e.g. Dominy 2001, Goodrich and Sampson 2008, Relph 2008, Tilley 1994). On another farm, while certain place names reflected topographical features on the property, I also found the inscription of the landscape in terms of personal and family history to be particularly strong:

1. **Overback West**: located, from the viewpoint of the house, west on the other side of a hill;
2. **Overback East**: to the east of the above;
3. **Toowong**: the Brisbane suburb where the woman grew up;
4. **Auchenflower**: reflecting in location the Brisbane suburb neighbouring the suburb of Toowong;
5. **Middle paddock**: a geographical reference;
6. **Dam paddock**;
7. **Adam paddock**: The name of our third son. We were planting grass on that paddock when he was born. He was our first child born since living there. The peach trees in *Adam paddock* were planted in the 1970s and taken out a few years ago. The peaches were sold at Eumundi Market and we had 42km of electrical wire horizontal over the peaches against flying fox;
8. **Night paddock**;
9. ** Dwelling Number 2 paddock**: there was supposed to be a dwelling there when we bought it but we never saw it, only the stumps;
10. **House paddock**;
11. **Gulley Paddock**: a natural gulley runs through it.\(^{286}\)

The references to the birth of their son and the woman’s prior history in Brisbane are particularly salient here. They are examples of the manner in which newcomers may inscribe their new surroundings with personal histories and significant events, a practice also reflected in the naming of properties discussed further below. Interestingly, much like the transplanted place names used extensively by early White explorers and settlers (e.g. New South Wales and so forth), the use of place names to reflect prior histories located elsewhere points to the multiplicity of emplacement and attachment in the context of mobility. Emplaced identity is therefore best understood as a developing process; enmeshed within multiple places of significance and the particularities of life histories rather than a singular, fixed state.

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\(^{286}\) Interview 13 January 2009, FN# 3
**Place, Memory and Heritage**

The examples above, including the references to Kingey’s old fishing camp, the peach trees, the market activities and the electric wiring, also point to the relationship between place and memory. That is, places may also be known, or have particular significance, in terms of their histories: the events which took place there, the plants that once did or did not grow there, the buildings that were located there, the people who lived there, and so on (Osborne 2001, Schama 1995, Tilley 1994).

One woman in her sixties, grown up on a dairy farm near Kandanga, for example showed me various paddocks her family had once owned, but which had recently been sold to QWI by the person who had bought them in the past. In our walk across the paddocks and along the river - a walk into her personal history and deeply felt sense of ownership and belonging notwithstanding the previous sale - she pointed out numerous significant places, initially meaningless to me in their undifferentiated physical appearance. They included unmarked burial sites of cherished animals, trees planted and named with family members during family celebrations, the scattered remains of big trees in which she had played as a child, sand and log deposits from particular big floods in the past, the places where fences used to be or where mussels were gathered in the river. She pointed out a solitary dead tree in the paddock, on top of which a large King Orchid used to bloom once per year. The orchid was blown off during a big storm in 2002 and subsequently taken partly to their own house garden and partly to her cousin’s rainforest garden. Reminiscent of the annual cycles at the farm and family relations, the dead tree conjured up vivid memories of previous engagement and the continuation of life elsewhere. We also walked among the scattered stone remains of the pig stall most dairies had in the past, as well as the old citrus trees planted by her forebears. Finally, with quiet reverence and an unspoken sadness at the thought of inundation, she showed a well maintained rose garden in the backyard, close to the house, planted after her father had died: ‘Dad's cousin made the timber edging. People gave us money for the plants. This is dad's garden.’

Other people pointed me to where valued old ‘shade trees’ had once stood along the river paddock, washed away during floods; places thick with the memories of family gatherings and careless childhoods. By contrast, others proudly showed heavily timbered areas that were once bare or weed infested; the result of persistent and challenging manual labour. In such varied ways places are imbued with memories and historical significance, a significance which can be shared within a family, among a few individuals, or relevant just to a single individual. Alternatively, historical significance may be accorded to places by larger groups of people in terms of socio-cultural heritage. Heritage places in the Mary Valley generally reflect the past significance of primary

287 Interview 12 January 2009, FN# 2
production and the manipulation of the environment through constructions built with human labour: old barns, homesteads, community halls, the Mary Valley railway, timber bridges, and so on. As in other rural places in Australia (e.g. Waitt 2000; Winchester & Rofe 2005) primary production heritage in the Mary Valley has been subject to significant commodification over the past decades, particularly the result of reduced primary production itself and the consequent ‘selling of heritage’ to attract tourists (see also Dominy 1997).

Plate 26 Ernst’s Barn, a heritage site at Bollier, often figures in imagery of Mary Valley heritage.288

While townships and localities such as Imbil, Traveston and Kenilworth took their names from the large cattle stations upon which they were built, most farming properties were created as a result of closer settlement policies and returned-soldier schemes after World War One (Chapter 2). Although a number of early farming property names referred to some environmental feature of the property - Beechwood, Cedar Vale, Bluff Plains, Bluff View, Riverstone, and so on - the names to be found in the archival record are hardly consistent and, while I have not undertaken exhaustive research into such names, the meaning of most are idiosyncratic and obscure.289

Property Names
Generally speaking contemporary property names, as confirmed by the agricultural extension officer who visits many farms in the region, are also idiosyncratic and unlikely to be understood without an explanation of the owners. As a result of seeking such explanations I found a significant

288 See also the Cultural Heritage chapter in the Environmental Impact Statement, p. 14-36.
289 See Woolgar (1911) for named Mary Valley farms in 1911.
amount of property names to reflect personal names. I list some examples with the explanations I was given below:

‘Belyngra’: Bel = Belmont cattle. Lyn = from Lyn, wife's name. Gra = from Graham, husband’s name;
‘Heatherview’: A lot of views at the farm and my wife deserves her name to be used [the husband said];
‘Sharing’: mix of the owners’ first name and surname; Sharon and Ingersole.
‘Danaleigh’: mix of the couple’s children’s names: Danielle, Alexis and Ashleigh.

Such property names may be understood as symbolic links between particular families and their land; they reflect what might be called familial emplacement. Such names may not be formally registered and they may not endure as properties are sold and new names are devised by the new owners. They are nevertheless an inscription of land with human genealogical history and enduring intimate relationships within the family. It is perhaps because they are intimate that such names are publically encrypted and meaningful only to those with whom the family is close and familiar. In such terms of social relationships, land ownership and a focus on the family, property names also link to notions of community and ‘being local’ described in Chapter 3. As primary production diminished and farms were subdivided over the previous decades the relationships between known families and land have become weaker. No longer do most local residents, for example, relate the Carlson’s family name with Tuchekoi, and so on, nor do property names figure much in daily conversation. Given increased population mobility and land sales, property names have become too temporary to be relevant within the wider community, and their public usage, if any, is largely restricted to a set of familiar people grouped around the landowning family.

In summary, the practice of naming properties described above is best understood within the context of sustained socio-economic change. While cattle farmers have maintained a detailed system of place names which link cattle, land and human activities in spatial and temporal terms on their properties, regional socio-economic changes have reduced the public relevance of property and locality names in both utilitarian and socio-cultural terms. That is not to say, however, that place attachment and feelings of belonging have become less relevant. On the contrary, it may be argued that the highly personal relationships represented in contemporary property names reflect a strong focus on emplaced identity and belonging, away from primary production, labour and pragmatic engagements towards the locus of intimate family relationships and a more private, personally articulated grounding in place.

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The naming practices of cattle farmers discussed above are intrinsically related to their daily interaction with cattle and the land. Cattle, as Dominy (2001: 160) argued for sheep in New Zealand, ‘shape the toponymic and topographic systems used by these inhabitants to configure their geography and root themselves firmly in country’. The paddock names themselves however may also reflect, in terms of the owners, the particularities of memorable activities or significant personalities (Dave’s Camp, the PD paddock, Adam paddock, and so on). Such names point, in other words, to the interactivity of land, cattle and human experience. This interactivity, I argued previously, is central to the notion of endogenous identity and the understanding of human-environment relationships as grounded in ‘ontologies of dwelling’ (Ingold 2000). Interactivity, I will demonstrate below, is also relevant to the analysis of naming practices by those not involved in primary production.

6.5 Names and the Personalised Environment of Newcomers

Growing Native Roots

The naming practices by relative newcomers in the Mary Valley also mark the land in terms of histories, events and deeply personal meaning. The names applied however bear no relation to activities of primary production and, as such, they are not shared with others in the way names such as ‘bull paddock’, ‘night paddock’ and so forth are shared among farmers. Rather, they are restricted to the highly idiosyncratic reflections of personal interest and history. Interestingly, I found named places to be most numerous and elaborate among those people with ecological interests and progressive political views. These people were also most engaged with their properties through active environmental restoration: soil and plant rehabilitation, invasive weed management, support for wildlife, and so on. As a number of researchers have described for such practices elsewhere, interests in environmental restoration are commonly informed by notions of nativeness and what is regarded to belong in nature (see Head and Muir 2007; Mulcock 2008; Trigger, Mulcock, Gaynor and Toussaint 2008; Trigger, Toussaint and Mulcock 2010). These authors also sought to address a variety of ambiguities associated with the notion of nativeness in the socio-cultural context of settler-descendant societies such as Australia. Where such ambiguities are perceived, they may create some unease for those involved in natural resource management. During a public meeting of the MRCCC one woman for example commented that her suggestions about environmental restoration to landholders were:
layman style talk, targeted to property owners and even urban, semi-urban people. If you look at individual habitats it becomes an all mighty mess, but you have to get money, grants. … Why rehabilitate?

[She offered the following possible reasons]:

- To restore natural balance [although she questioned what that might mean];
- Self-satisfaction; doing something worthwhile; an element of guilt in there.
- To be in contact with natural parts of the world;
- as an example; evangelist
- as a duty (such as developers)

Return to what?

- to a pre-disturbed state (purist), [based on a] neighbouring area or surmise what it was;
- to attract certain flora and fauna;
- to create new systems to please yourself.\(^{290}\)

The information I gathered from local residents regarding their intentions to restore ‘native nature’ generally contained, to varying degrees, elements of all those listed above. It is through such engagement and interaction, physical yet notionally ambiguous, that previously unintelligible areas of land may progressively be transformed into a ‘dwelt-in environment’. These are, in other words, activities through which the inhabitants themselves may grow in time what I refer to as ‘native roots’.

**Named Places**

Dwelling is also reflected in the practice of naming places. Some named places may draw on the prior occupation of the area by Aboriginal people, although the only Aboriginal property name I encountered was taken not from any local records, but from the Brisbane suburb in which the owner had previously lived. Described further below, this extensive example, however unusual in its detail, serves to highlight some of the principles which may be at work when environmentally active newcomers engage their new surroundings:

The permaculture property is called *Kurilpa Cuntree*;

*Muckaloo buckalow*: the dam;

\(^{290}\) Observation 18 June 2009, FN# 10
Steiner: a flat space overlooking the dam;  
Mollison, Holmgren, Cundall, Shiva, Suzuki, French and Johnson: the terraces [on the side of the hill];  
Wallabies, Echidnas, Red Bellies: areas [where these animals were seen] around the borders;  
The Prayer Circle: not that it is a prayer circle, but a place of quiet contemplation and meditation under a beautiful blue gum. We built up a platform with tyres, infilled it, and planted bushy acacias around it so it is a circle. It is a lovely space. Chickens like it for dust bathing too.  
Hal: the name of the train [converted into a house];  
The Seat of Negotiation: A seat that was built by [my husband] and a dear wwoofer [‘willing worker on organic farms’], Morten. It is a seat overlooking the kitchen/dining area. [My husband] likes Latin, and its actual name is in Latin – I don’t know what that is… [It] is a euphemism for how we like to live. All things can be brought to the table.  
The leaf is the area which was earthworked before we bought the property, as a place to build a house. The train was too heavy for the cranes to lift to the leaf so it has remained a blank space. [It is] sometimes used for camping and the header tank is up there. “Leaf” because that’s its shape, and it’s a kinder word than ‘cut’ which is the engineering term for that style of earthwork in the side of the hill. Cut feels aggressive and Baconesque. I couldn’t stand it.

[Reasons:] the terraces and dam were things we constructed. The names of the terraces are all men and women of progressive agricultural practice. They are our heroes. The dam is an aboriginal word meaning the little lake of the full moon, or full moon reflected in the water. Unfortunately it is not local Aboriginal dialect, but [it] resonates with Tibetan Buddhism; not sure which Aboriginal dialect but there are Tibetan quotes and talks about the Dalai Lama being like a reflection in the surface of the water. This really comes from [my husband] so I can’t speak with much more authority on it. The train ‘Hal’ is named after a close friend, and mentor of mine, who died in 2001. [These place names] are used in daily conversation.

‘Kurilpa’ is the [Aboriginal] name of West End [a suburb in Brisbane], where we were living when we purchased the property. We have a business plan and vision, which includes a series of properties that stem from our dreams developed whilst
living on the Kurilpa peninsula (West End). They included Kurilpa home, Kurilpa Dreaming and Kurilpa Cuntree. We did ‘home’ [a flat in West End which was sold] and ‘cuntree’ and are yet to do the ‘dreaming’.

‘Cuntree’: because we are both in favour of reclaiming the word ‘cunt’ from being a thing of derision, to honouring female energy, fertility and potential to bring life to the world. We like that we could abridge the word with ‘tree’ as trees are what we mostly did at Kurilpa Cuntree. It’s funny watching people’s reaction to Cuntree.

[My husband’s] brother made a carving of the word Kurilpa for the front gate, but couldn’t bring himself to write Cuntree. Often we write the word ‘cuntree’ on official documents as the title of the property, and it mysteriously gets dropped in reply post (even in this day and age of auto formatting and mail merging). Sometimes, I too, feel guarded about where and when I use the term. We don’t want it to confront people too heavily. It is meant to be subtle.291

The current residents, a couple who look after the property while their friends are away, added the following:

We use their names, [but] we named some chickens since we’ve been here. … When [they] left we had a ceremony. It was [my husband’s] idea; to help with the leaving thing. We all collected something we thought symbolised ourselves. We tied it all together and threw it into the dam: a mattock, something from all the animals (horse and goose poo and chook eggs), a bit of soil, a rock from the side of the dam, and seeds.292

This example was certainly unusual: the integration of so many named places with personal interests, histories, and organic permaculture practices was not repeated to this extent anywhere else I went. The property name Kurilpa Cuntree was also a poignant reflection of the woman’s academic PhD research in the field described as ‘cultural eco-feminism’. Notions of personal belonging and interest were further expressed through ceremonial practice, unusually involving both the conscious symbolic imbuenment of place with human narratives (leaving personally significant materials in the dam) and the representation of human identity through aspects of place and place-related activities (people represented by seeds, stones, soil etc.). This latter aspect may be regarded as reflecting to

291 Email correspondence 21 April 2011
292 Interview 30 January 2009, FN# 5
some extent an explicitly Aboriginal practice in which individuals not so much name the land (since many place names are regarded as originating outside and prior to the human plane) but in which the land, possessing a form of agency itself, names and imbues individuals with certain traits, rights and responsibilities to it (on the relationships between Aboriginal personal names and place names, see, for example, Bowern 2009 on Bardi place names in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, McConvell 2009 on place names in the Victoria District of the Northern Territory, and Wilkinson, Marika & Williams 2009 on Yolŋu place names in north-eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory).

In summary, the named places at this particular property articulated with a degree of personal creativity and cultural appropriation the emplacement of settler-descendant identity, belonging and spiritual forms of environmental engagement (see also Dominy 2001).

**Familial Places**

Place names, as they are commonly employed by many newcomers in the Mary Valley, inscribe land with personal family history and interest. As a result, demonstrated in the example above, the details of such names are highly idiosyncratic and may vary in extent from property to property. The following four examples provide some further cases I encountered:

The [20 acre bush] property was given the name ‘Flitch's Siding’. We built the first [of many] structures here during a six weeks school holiday [in the early 1980s]. It was a demolished a house in Rockhampton [over 500km to the north]; we moved it by truck. We were given a dunny [outdoor toilet] at Emu Park [near Rockhampton] which became the ‘private house’ for the children. We built the first small building here with cladding of flitches [a longitudinal cut from the trunk of a tree], which is also a side of bacon in England which you get when married for a year and a day [note this person was not an English migrant however]. The ‘Siding’ is so called because before there were no windows in the building. We dug a cellar, we had no power. The mudbrick was joined in 1986. [We put in] a little window for the children as if selling train tickets. … The children have their own unfinished buildings. They come here when they want. Keeping this place for the children is our motivation. [One of our daughters] calls this the ‘family home’ [laughs]; that’s very grand. [Her] cottage is the ‘villarette’. I believe this place is important to them. They couldn't bear weeding the bush though [refers to her project of creek restoration and shows the creek, the planted trees and rocks laid in and along the creek bed]. I make
maps of the property. This area [where we were sitting under a tree, near the creek where she undertakes restoration work] is called ‘near side gully’, there's also ‘far side gully’ and ‘middle gully’. It gets confusing at times, but there are three distinct zones defined by gullies.293

A woman in her mid sixties, retired, and living with her husband in a house they had largely built themselves, had also named various features on their property in terms which reflected activities and personal interests:

The [rural residential] property is called ‘Dun Caric’; from the modern novel by Bernard Cornwell. It is Irish/Gaelic, meaning ‘hill by a pretty stream’. There is a stream down the hill that runs occasionally. It’s Arthurian stuff, related to the medieval English I used to teach [at University]. The tractor is called ‘Excalibur’; the mower is called ‘Percival’. Our current dog is called ‘Guinevere’; the French version I like. [Their previous dog Arthur is now buried underneath the big gum tree called ‘Arthur’s Tree’]. ‘Miriam's area’ is near the water tanks; Miriam is a biblical figure associated with water. We planted plants there and I will put a statue of Miriam there when it is finished.294

On a fifty acre hobby-farm I found not as many named places, but the farm itself was part of a life-long aspiration. Temporary work relocation to Saudi-Arabia had been required to gather the necessary financial resources. The property name was 'Pondadoo'. It had no apparent meaning and the name was not registered. It is the name of a song the owner wrote when he was seven or eight years old. From that age he said he would use this as the name for his property.295

Another property name reflected both environmental interests and a former overseas place of residency important to the owner’s personal history:

[Property name:] ‘Fairlierose’. ‘Fairlie’ is my favourite place [township] in New Zealand. It has a view to the mountains. It’s green and semi-rural. [She lived on New Zealand’s South Island from the age of nine to seventeen and is currently planning to

293 Interview 15 January 2009, FN# 3
294 Interview 17 February 2009, FN# 7
295 Interview 02 February 2009, FN# 5
return there]. ‘Rose’: I love roses; [I planted] a hundred varieties of heritage roses here. I had a dream of [establishing] a garden café, but Council is too restrictive.296

While there is much variety in the way properties and certain places on it are named, a number of principles emerge. Deeply personal histories and interests most commonly feature in the names of properties and places on it. Most place names are used only in daily conversations between members and close friends of the landowning family, although those engaged in ecological restoration may also use these names to plan, map and monitor their work in cooperation with environmental management agencies such as Landcare.297 Interestingly, it appears, at least anecdotally, that those temporarily looking after a property may retain the names assigned by the owners and refrain from naming places themselves. On the basis of this anecdotal evidence and the significance locally accorded to freehold tenure (Chapter 3), there appears to be a strong relationship between naming and ownership, but I have not gathered sufficient information regarding named places on other forms of land tenure to be more assured.

In summary, the places named by newcomers reflect personal and familial relationships with the immediate environment. They are markers of dwelling and developing emplacement. Many newcomers are actively engaged with their properties through the cultivation of flowers or trees, forms of ecological restoration, the construction of buildings, some form of food production, and so on. It is through this practical and embodied engagement that places obtain their names.

Property names reflect investments, financial but particularly emotional, in land. Many of the newcomers were once urban residents and they had planned their rural retirement over many years. Their relocation to the Mary Valley was often accompanied by strong and enduring commitments to their new place of residence. As retired couples generally have no children living with them, the names they assign to their properties may involve a focus on the husband and wife, as various examples of mixed names in the previous section demonstrated. They may also refer to a person’s prior history located elsewhere or the specific interests developed during the course of a person’s life. Naming properties and places on it thus form part of a process which transforms relatively

296 Interview 10 July 2009, FN# 12
297 Landcare, which has an office in Gympie, is described on its website as ‘grass roots movement that harnesses individuals and groups under the ethic of caring for the land. It had its genesis in initiatives to improve agricultural productivity through sustainable land management. The movement has grown from this to a broader focus on sustainable management of all of Australia’s natural resource assets and now encompasses individuals and groups across the whole landscape from coastal to urban and remote areas of Australia’ See http://www.landcareonline.com.au/about/what-is-landcare/ (accessed 10 August 2011).
intelligible lots of land into a dwelt-in environment imbued with personal meaning and
significance.

6.6 Named Places, Embodied Practice and Endogenous Identity: Summarising Analysis
Places are named hierarchically at various scales: from groves of trees, gardens and paddocks, to
farms and other types of properties, to a conglomerate of properties at a named locality, to socio-
economically related localities in a named region such as the Mary Valley, and increasingly larger
definitions of place in terms of, for example, local, state and federal politics or environmental
management. Through an analysis of exogenous and endogenous identities I have attempted to
demonstrate the multiplicity of place meanings in a region which is often referred to in a singular,
seemingly unproblematic manner as the Mary Valley. As the geographer Edward Relph (2008: 311)
noted:

Each place is a territory of significance, distinguished from adjacent and from larger
or smaller areas by its name, by its particular environmental qualities, by the stories
and shared memories connected to it, and by the intensity of meanings people give to
it or derive from it. The parts of the world without names are undifferentiated space,
and the absence of a name is equivalent to the absence of place.

There are many named places, and many privately owned properties in the Mary Valley are, in
Relph’s term above, territories of most intimate personal significance. The names people assign to
places on their land reflect both contemporary engagement and personal biography. As I
demonstrated, named places may in fact be references to named places elsewhere, often a
significant place of prior residency. Newcomers, like the early Anglo-European settlers of the
colonial era who also arrived from elsewhere, may thus symbolically ‘re-attach’ to land and imprint
their new surroundings with mnemonic place names; references to the ‘primal landscape’ of their
youth or other places culturally significant in their lives (Trigger 2008a: 302). These mnemonic
features of the named landscape are also developed through practical engagement; by planting trees
for example, an activity prevalent in the Mary Valley and which can be regarded as ‘creating or
‘growing’ memory, history and belonging’ (De Boeck 1998: 26). Dominy (2001: 57) also noted that
planted trees ‘are a way of marking time, of locating events, of reading the history of habitation, of
marking and measuring attachment’. Putting emphasis on the processual, developing nature of
attachment and belonging to place, I referred to such activities under the subheading ‘growing
native roots’. 
Farmers may generally not plant many trees, but the fences, cattle yards, tracks and other forms of infrastructure they construct link landscapes with identities in similar ways. Their named paddocks serve both administrative, spatial and temporal functions, all of which interact in the context of practical daily routine, the topography of the land and the lifecycles of cattle. Naming practices understood within such forms of interactivity, productive or otherwise, reflect endogenous identities; an apprehension of the world in the emplaced and embodied terms of dwelling and skill, reflecting not a view of the world but a view taken up in it (Ingold 2000: 41).

Socio-cultural differences between newcomers and farmers are particularly reflected in their views on the Mary Valley. Among newcomers these definitions are dominated by references to the regional environment. Generally speaking, this group tends to describe the Mary Valley in broad terms such as ‘catchment’, ‘watershed’, ‘from the headwaters at Maleny [a town] to the river mouth at River Heads’, and the like. The Mary River, or the environment more holistically, informs these definitions. In contrast, many agricultural producers focus their descriptions of the Mary Valley on historical productive ties to the river flats and surrounding lands, geographically mediated by infrastructure such as the Mary Valley road and the Mary Valley railway supportive of those ties. Their boundary descriptions are often infused with cultural values such as those related to landownership, responsible land management and community participation (Chapter 3). This may lead to definitions which exclude Carters Ridge ‘because that’s an urban enclave’. Urban enclaves, in this expression, also identify through symbolic dichotomies what are considered proper rural places, which are owned through freehold title rather than rented, and contain open and productive spaces rather than trees on small acreage (as in Carters Ridge). As such they also point to the importance of sensory experience; of open rural vistas which allow an area to be perceived in terms of visual similarities.

When naming parts of their land, most farmers use descriptive and/or production oriented terminology such as ‘bull paddock’, ‘back paddock’, ‘bottom flat’, ‘mill paddock’ and so on. Some farmers however may also use terminology similar to that most often employed by newcomers. That is, pieces of land are frequently named after particular people of personal relevance. These can be considered names of personal tribute; a practice particularly prevalent in the colonial era and maintained in the naming guidelines for federal electoral divisions. Pertinent examples on private properties include naming an area after the first child born at the property, after friends who undertook particular activities there, or using a merged husband-wife name for the property itself. Places thus become personalised; references to events, histories and values (Dominy 2001: 159).
Named places in terms of regional political representation and environmental classification played a more ambiguous role in the anti-dam campaign.

The Mary Valley was the locus of both social impact and resistance, but the campaign leadership also argued that the environmental impacts went beyond the confines of the inundation zone. Local notions of the Mary Valley, largely based on socio-economic history and environmental characteristics, were the subject of considerable variation and debate among the residents, but in order to contrast an undifferentiated endogenous identity with outsiders these internal variations were actively suspended in engagements beyond the region. In those engagements the activists made reference to the Mary Valley in ways that made it appear unproblematic while also engaging largely exogenous concepts of place, such as those relating to biospheres and ecological communities. Definitions of place, in other words, were contextually articulated and adapted to the circumstances and the characteristics of the social actors (see also Chapter 3). The support of farmers for the focus on environmental definitions was, I argued, largely opportunistic. It was, for example, only during the first regional environmental information sessions in 1994, according to one informant involved in them, that some farmers first saw a map of the Mary River catchment. ‘Nobody knew what a catchment was’, he asserted. When he also tried to explain the environmental importance of riparian zones he had to stop: ‘one farmer thought it was a sexual thing’. 298

This is not to say farmers have limited understandings of the environment or relevant regulations. Rather, the explicitly exogenous environmental classifications of place in terms of biospheres, ecoregions, catchments, riparian zones and ecological communities are to a large degree incompatible with understandings of the environment based on daily embodied engagement and socio-cultural relationships. However, the same can be said for newcomers among whom engagement with these notions is nevertheless much stronger. This, I argue, is based on their urban backgrounds and much more limited socio-economic involvement with the region. They arrived with plans of retirement and a sense of retreat; with (urban) visions of rural scenery in which the river and the land are enjoyable features, not a critical resource for family income, irrigation, crops or cattle. They were, in other words, accustomed to looking at the rural environment instead of dwelling in it, which facilitated an appreciation of notions such as the catchment, biospheres, and so forth. It was not without significance that newcomers most strongly articulated a view of the river as ‘sacred lifeblood’, a view based not on resource use, but on spiritual contemplation and interests in the non-human environment. As I argued in the previous chapter, their relationships to the river as expressed through art, and through activities such as kayaking, swimming, environmental

298 Interview 15 July 2009, FN# 13
rehabilitation and so forth are nevertheless deeply intimate. As they engage in processes which transform land into personally named and dwelt-in environments - a sense of endogenous identities in a state of becoming – they express views increasingly taken up from within the region.

While she did not apply the same terms, Dominy referred to a distinction between endogenous and exogenous identities in the Alpine country of southern Australia as those ‘rooted in social experience, in culture as the embodiment of knowledge, and in practical use’ (1997: 248) on the one hand, and those regarded by cattlemen as ‘chardonnay socialists in four wheel drives in search of the wildflower thing’ on the other (1997: 252). As I argued above, this distinction is too strong to be equally applied to the Mary Valley but there certainly remained a sense of tension in terms of environmental relationships and concomitant forms of rural belonging and emplaced identity. This tension, aspects of which I also discussed in the previous chapters, was apparent during the campaign in the socio-political negotiation of trust and ‘being local’. It was inherent to the constitution of the campaign itself as a typically hybrid epistemic community in which emplaced identities and the significance of various forms of knowledge were contextually and relationally articulated. Symbolically, the outcome of this tension between identities based on ongoing primary production and those broadly based on rural environmental heritage was reflected in the replacement of an old ‘Welcome to Kandanga’ sign after the rejection of the dam in 2009. The content of the new sign was an indication that primary production and agricultural heritage have become subordinate to the environmental interests of newcomers which dominated the campaign (see Plates 27 and 28 below).

Plate 27 ‘Welcome to Kandanga’ in 2009: the significance of agricultural heritage, challenged by graffiti.
The analysis by Marilyn Strathern (1982) of belonging in an English village is pertinent here. While I am not concerned with notions of ‘class’ as she was, her description of the relationships between ‘real villagers’ and outsiders (1982: 272) resonates strongly with the practices I encountered in the Mary Valley:

The property connotations of 'belonging', the supposition that the older families represent some prior order, the notion that real villagers all belong to a particular occupational group, that moving away is to better oneself - these do not simply revolve around formulations of status at a local, interactional level. They refer to society at large, which is class-stratified. Moreover, those who come in from the outside concur in the general criteria by which Elmdon is divided into villagers and strangers. ... Belonging to Elmdon may now define the wider 'villager', now the narrower 'real villager'. It can equally place a person within a solidary interest group (e.g. a set of families of common occupational status in the village) or differentiate individuals (who do or do not belong or can point to origins or kin connections in other villages). The notion of the 'real villager' can further mediate between general expressions of egalitarianism and commonality on the one hand and on the other the exclusiveness of the individually oriented families that live there - it has an assertive and closed character ('real') as well as an open and embracing one ('villager').
The negotiation of belonging and emplacement between longer-term residents, some of whom are referred to as members of ‘old farming families’, and newcomers similarly revolved around ‘open’ and ‘closed’ notions of community, variably drawn upon within their joint campaign to stop the dam according to the context, the audience, and the issues at hand (see also Chapter 3).

As a last example, when the dam was finally rejected by the federal Environment Minister in November 2009, open and closed aspects of community and belonging were observable in what happened shortly after. One old farmer, still in tears from the decision he had watched at the Kandanga Hotel, decided the first thing to do was to visit the Kandanga cemetery. There, in the darkness of the evening, he went to the grave of his deceased wife; to assure her there was closure and to tell her she was safe. Others went to Travie Crossing the next day, to stand united in the water at this local site of resistance, to embrace and to celebrate, to canoe for a few hundred meters and to experience this place open to all and free from threat. A lungfish reportedly lifted its head out of the water, seen to be giving thanks to those who had taken up its cause. In those varied embodied ways local residents gave meaning to the notions of the ‘real villager’ and ‘being local’, engaging the named places important to them in the context of the campaign; the historical cemetery which holds the members of old farming families, and the embattled river which would offer new promises for further enjoyment and regional renewal.

Plate 29 Taking up a view in the environment after the rejection of the dam proposal.

7. Conclusion: Environmental Engagement, Emplaced Identity, and the Campaign Against the Traveston Crossing Dam

In this final chapter I will briefly reiterate the main findings of the previous chapters, followed by a consideration of the contributions this thesis makes to environmental anthropology generally and understandings of dispute in particular. In terms of large (water infrastructure) development projects I conclude with a few practical observations about the inherent difficulties associated with the nature of public policy engagement. These observations are brief since those directly involved in such projects, I contend, are better positioned to draw relevant pragmatic conclusions from this study for management purposes.

7.1 Thesis Findings and Conclusions

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the available natural resources of the Mary Valley were an important factor in the social history of the region. Well watered and rich with nutritious plants and animals, the area was inhabited by Kabi speaking Aboriginal people when a small number of European convicts escaped from the penal colony near current-day Brisbane and fled into the thick forests during the 1830s. The available resources - timber, grass, gold and the fertile alluvial flats - provided the early stimulus for White settlement from about the 1850s to the turn of the 20th century. In the absence of effective Government regulation, the timber resources in particular were exhausted rapidly. The discovery of gold at Gympie in 1867 and the need to provide fresh food for the growing amount of miners led to the increased clearing of land along the Mary River for agricultural purposes. Closer settlement schemes by the State Government subsequently stimulated further population growth, eventually leading to the creation in the 1910s of the current townships through the subdivision of the large pastoral stations which had dominated the region for the previous six decades. By that time Government regulations to contain the destructive exploitation of land and other natural resources were increasing but they remained largely ineffective. In the first decade of the 20th century the Mary River was obstructed at Gympie, not by the thousands of red cedar logs that had been floated downstream in earlier decades, but by the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of severely toxic mine tailings dumped in the river since gold mining operations had begun. Instead of the bountiful and lush imagery of the ‘New Arcadia’, attributed to the region by the early settler Loyan (Holthouse 1973: 4-5), the river was by then described as ‘a few inches of muddy fluid unfit for any purpose’ (Ramsey n.d.: 13).
The postulation in the 1910s of the Mary Valley - that region along the Mary River in between Gympie and Kenilworth - was informed by both environmental features and socio-economic initiatives. Topographically bound by the broad river flats south from Gympie and the steep hills near Kenilworth, early local settlers in the area lobbied the local and State Governments for further economic development funding, particularly for the construction of the Mary Valley Railway. The railway, connecting the townships from Gympie to Brooloo, excluding Kenilworth, was an early articulation of regional identity placed in the local physical environment. This definition became further entrenched as the regional Mary Valley Pastoral, Agricultural and Industrial Association was established in 1918. Its showcase event was the annual exhibition of local agricultural achievements through the Mary Valley Show. This annual Show at Imbil continues to today, with a separate annual Show at Kenilworth.

The geographic and socio-economic separation of the Mary Valley from the upstream regions including Kenilworth was instrumental to the symbolic articulation of regional differences. Kenilworth in particular, excluded from the benefits of the railway and other regional developments, consistently contested this definition. Notwithstanding, it remained part of what is locally referred to as the ‘Upper Mary Valley’.

The agricultural developments in the Mary Valley accelerated in the first decades of the 20th century, with pineapple and butter production to become among the highest in the world. As production increased, the demand for irrigation water also increased, which led local farmers following the Second World War to agitate against the perceived ‘crime against nature’ which allowed water to ‘run to waste into Hervey Bay’. Since they were to benefit little from a big dam on the main river, thousands of small weirs on the tributaries of the Mary River were suggested by the Kandanga branch of the Queensland Dairyfarmers’ Organisation. A big dam on Yabba Creek, part of the Mary Valley Irrigation Project, was eventually built in 1964, and took local agricultural production to unprecedented levels. This prosperity was, however, to be short-lived. The new exposure to world market volatility in the late 1960s led to a collapse of the dairy industry and the increasing transformation of farming properties into small rural residential subdivisions. Such subdivisions were bought largely by people not engaged in primary production, often (semi-) retired, from urban backgrounds and with an appreciation of the environment in terms of recreation and personal enjoyment. From the 1960s to the 1980s Australia also saw its first large public environmental disputes such as the Save the Barrier Reef and Fraser Island Defenders Organization campaigns in Queensland, as well as the anti-dam campaigns in Tasmania by the Save Lake Pedder

300 Gympie Times, 02 February 1952, p. 2
National Park Committee and, historically perhaps the most significant in terms of public engagement and political consequences, the Let the Franklin Run Free campaign. In this context of increasing environmental appreciation and protection, agricultural decline and rural social change, the Traveston Crossing Dam on the Mary River was announced in April 2006.

In its arguments for the dam proposal, the Queensland Government made reference to the construction of a regional ‘water grid’: a system of interconnected dams and pipelines to take drinking water from areas of supply to areas of need. Many newcomers in the Mary Valley however had come to regard the Mary River as regional ‘lifeblood’ with productive as well as reproductive potential (Strang 2005b). In cooperation with farmers who stood to lose their productive flats along the river these newcomers initiated the Save the Mary River campaign to stop the Traveston Crossing Dam.

As an unusual alliance between farmers, environmentalists, urban retirees, some Aboriginal people and others, there were considerable internal differences among the activists in terms of political orientation, socio-economic activities and environmental engagements. A conscious and concerted effort was made to contain the tensions these differences implied. Rational ‘rules of engagement’ were agreed upon, with structured meetings, agendas and plans determining the course of action. Teams were devised with responsibility for certain aspects of the campaign, including sign making, scientific analysis, Info Centre work, public events, and so on. This approach, combined with the use of emotive humour to diffuse tension, in effect suspended internal differences and it allowed the postulation of a cohesive Mary Valley community against which outsiders could effectively be contrasted. The notions of community stability, belonging and ‘being local’ were informed by the socio-cultural value of agricultural production and the inter-generational transfer of freehold land tenure. As a result, the QWI land leases and associated ‘riff-raffs’ were in no uncertain terms contrasted to the interrelated values of farming, community, freehold title and what is considered the proper maintenance of the environment. At public campaign meetings newcomers accorded a sense of locally emplaced authority to the senior multi-generational farmers who were posited as representing this notional stability. Through such acknowledgements newcomers strengthened their own position as community spokespersons, allowing a pragmatic accommodation of social difference within the campaign.

Social differences – referred to by some activists as those between the ‘workers’ and the ‘brains’ - were also relevant to the focus of the campaign. That is, rather than the protection of (agri)cultural heritage or the consequences of the dam proposal in terms of social impacts, the campaign was
publically much more focused on scientific environmental issues, particularly the survival of iconic endemic species such as the Australian Lungfish, the Mary River Turtle, and Mary River Cod. Opportunistically supported by farmers notwithstanding their concerns about ‘greenies’ and the esoteric nature of the scientific debates, this also reflected the relevant legislation governing the approval process of the project. This process treats social impact assessment and cultural heritage issues as subsets of the environmental impact statement. Aspects of settler and Aboriginal heritage were thus rationally regarded by the campaign leadership as ‘never a show stopper’. Aboriginal politics and relationships to land were further drawn into question by the campaigners when an Aboriginal party which asserted native title rights and interest to the area signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the proponent for the project to proceed. Many settler-descendants were in that respect confronted with their own ‘reverse Orientalism’ (Guha 1989), including stereotypical imagery which portrays ‘authentic’ Aboriginal people as ‘true Greenies’ and ‘spiritual do-gooders averse to material things’ (de la Cadena and Starn 2007: 3). While previously largely unknown or ignored, the iconic species themselves came to symbolically represent a local sense of nativeness, uniqueness and heritage, shared in multiple novel and often uneasy ways by farmers, environmentalists, urban newcomers and those Aboriginal people also opposed to the proposal.

In Chapter 4 I elaborated further on the mutually constitutive relationships between environmental engagement, knowledge and identity. Through an analysis of artistic expression, intimate engagement and the role of science during the dispute I argued a view of the campaign as a heterogeneous epistemic community which strategically engaged and rejected various forms of knowledge. More precisely in terms of epistemology, I elaborated upon Delgado’s (2010) concept of ‘hybrid lay-science assemblages’ to discuss the ways in which various forms of knowledge were relevant to the campaign. Overlapping categories of ‘experts’, ‘farmers’, ‘environmentalists’ and so on, operated on various internal and external planes simultaneously, both engaging and rejecting external bureaucracies and scientific expertise according to context. I argued the dispute is thus best understood as a relational process in which identities and forms of knowledge were strategically articulated within changing circumstances. As views taken up in the world, I further argued how those forms of knowledge grounded in embodied experience and practice reflect endogenous identity. Assertions in the scientific environmental impact statement were seen to typically reflect exogenous abstraction, divorced from local experience and practical social meaning. Such contested epistemology highlights the difficulties which may commonly be associated with public assessments of non-local scientific studies during environmental disputes.
Chapter 5 dealt particularly with exogenous abstractions and the ways in which the Mary Valley can be seen as a site of multiple, not necessarily congruent definition of place. The exogenous definitions of relevance to the Mary Valley, treated as naming practices, are categories of administrative and environmental abstraction (such as the regions of political representation and environmental management and those ecological concepts of sub-basins, biospheres, ecological communities, ecoregions and (sub-) bioregions). Such categories contrast sharply with endogenous identities and a local sense of place. Rather than reifying this dichotomy however, the campaign strategically engaged both endogenous identity and exogenous abstraction. I thus approached these categories not as mutually exclusive, but as interactive in practice; as overlapping concepts salient in particular contexts and subject to contestation. It is, I argued, through the analyses of such strategic engagements that anthropologists can make important contributions to the study of environmental disputes in which notions of place, nature and emplaced identity are socio-culturally negotiated (e.g. Peace 1999, Satterfield 2002, Trigger and Mulcock 2005).

Chapter 6, the last substantive chapter, brought together the previous chapters on knowledge, emplacement and environmental engagement through the highly particular details of local naming practices and the ways in which the Mary Valley is locally conceived. On the basis of these naming practices I argued how the explicitly exogenous environmental classifications of place in terms of biospheres, ecoregions, catchments, riparian zones and ecological communities conflict with understandings of the environment based on daily embodied engagement and social relationships. I referred to the biographic and mnemonic features of the named landscape, which are developed through practical engagement and labour; by planting trees and ecological restoration activities for example. In the context of emplaced identity and the processual aspects of belonging I referred to such activities as ‘growing native roots’.

I further demonstrated how the names which farmers employ for their paddocks serve both administrative, spatial and temporal functions, all of which interact in the context of practical daily routine, the topography of the land and the lifecycles of cattle. I concluded that naming practices understood within such forms of interactivity, productive or otherwise, reflect endogenous identities; an apprehension of the world in the emplaced and embodied terms of dwelling and skill, reflecting not a view of the world but a view taken up in it (Ingold 2000: 41).

7.2 Reflections
This thesis has drawn substantially from the anthropological literature, particularly those studies concerned with environmental disputes, activist campaigns, emplaced identity and the relationships
between people and the non-human world. It has however taken an approach to the Traveston Crossing Dam dispute somewhat different from other studies: through a detailed historical analysis of socio-economic activity and related natural resources which informed the emergence of regionally defined community identity, to a socio-cultural analysis of the campaign and the ways in which the relational aspects of belonging, epistemology and emplacement informed the symbolic politics of the dispute.

Additionally, this thesis relates to a specific area in Australia under-researched by anthropologists. In that respect, the study contributes to other, but so far limited, anthropological work on the emergence of emplaced identities in peri-urban areas with high levels of population mobility and concomitant socio-economic and environmental change. The study has attempted an understanding of emplaced settler-descendant identities in the interrelated terms of naming practices, epistemology and environmental engagements. It also explored the ways in which disputes may analytically be understood in terms of endogenous and exogenous identities; not necessarily as mutually exclusive categories but as theoretical tools to describe the ways in which activists may negotiate, vary accept, reject, promulgate or ignore, various forms of knowledge, bureaucratic processes, local identity politics and so on. Through such an approach this thesis confirmed and elaborated upon the hybrid character of social movement as referred to by Delgado (2010).

In terms of the campaign itself, this thesis has confirmed the importance, socially and practically, of leading activist personalities; largely idiosyncratic but critical to the accommodation of social difference, the diffusion of tensions and therefore the maintenance of internal cohesion and activist resolve (see also Berglund 1998, Tsing 2005). Particularly the last President, Glenda Pickersgill, a second-generation local cattle farmer and environmental scientist, embodied the campaign’s ability to combine pragmatic, rational scientific debates with emotive, cultural and historical concerns.

The suspension of internal distinctions to create a sense of community has been the topic of detailed research (e.g. Checker 2001, Cohen 1985, Edwards 1998, Satterfield 2002, Tsing 2005) though relatively little attention has so far been paid to the symbolic politics of community identity in areas where agricultural production has declined and where urban newcomers increasingly drive the public articulation of locally emplaced identities during disputes. This study has sought to address the various ways in which socially diverse groups engaged in the cultural politics of difference and similarity during the campaign, describing not just how such politics were conducted, but, equally important, highlighting the issues regarded as salient to the campaign in various contexts. This, based on detailed ethnographic fieldwork, I regard as one of the key contributions anthropologists
may bring to understandings of dispute: a recognition not just of the pertinent differences and similarities at hand, but of the socio-cultural contexts in which such issues come to pervade conflict and motivate behaviour.

In terms of locally emplaced identity and the notion of indigeneity in settler-descendant societies, this study has built on the work by authors such as Dominy (1997, 2001), Mulcock (2008), Strang (2008), Trigger (2008) and Gressier (2008). I demonstrated how settler-descendant articulations of belonging and community in this area draw on the interrelated cultural values of freehold land title and agricultural production, as well as settler heritage. While publically subdued as a result of the campaign’s engagement with regulatory approval processes in which such issues are secondary to environmental concerns, they were internally important particularly in terms of who may authoritatively ‘speak for country’. In that context, the moral authority accorded to multi-generational farmers by newcomers also speaks to issues of Aboriginal dispossession and the confusion felt by settler-descendant activists when Aboriginal people do not conform to stereotypical imagery deemed to be supportive of their cause. I argued such imagery had remarkable currency because settler-descendants had developed little insight into Aboriginal politics or relationships to land; since colonisation the Aboriginal population in the area had been reduced to less than one percent and daily interaction between settler-descendants and Aboriginal people was, at least for the previous five to six decades, largely non-existent. However, as those Aboriginal people also opposed to the dam expressed concerns about the survival of the river and the iconic species that inhabit it, a sense of indigeneity was articulated which focussed on ancestral connections, iconic natural species and the capacity of the river to sustain family life. This focus on what I referred to as ‘familial emplacement’ and the dwelt-in environment could be shared equally, though from a different perspective, both among Aboriginal people and settler-descendants.

In agreement with Dominy’s (2001: 259) description of the High Country sheep farmers in New Zealand, relationships to land among farmers and newcomers in the Mary Valley can be understood in ‘grounded interactive terms where cultural practices embody socially and geographically situated experience, knowledge, and skill’. This thesis has sought to provide insights into those interactive terms and those aspects of experience, knowledge and skill pertinent to the articulation of personal belonging and emplaced identities during the dispute. I argued for a processual understanding of belonging and emplacement, informed by the interrelated aspects of environmental engagements, embodied knowledge and the inscription of the landscape with names of personal and familial significance.
The thesis further demonstrated the mutually constitutive aspects of epistemology and local emplacement, which, grounded in practical living and daily social interaction, can be regarded as reflecting endogenous identities; as views based on dwelling and skill taken up in the world. Such views were subsequently contrasted to what may be regarded as the typically exogenous abstractions offered by the dam proponent. Drawing on this contrast, activists effectively postulated, notwithstanding the region’s socio-economic changes, environmental history and high level of population mobility, a relatively homogenous Mary Valley community, bounded topographically as well as epistemologically. At the same time however, activists strategically engaged exogenous abstraction as a means to undermine the hegemony of science and to bring to the fore the uncertainties inherent in statistical models of what they generally described as complex and fragile ecosystems (see also Satterfield 1997, Wynne 1992, Yearley 1996). This strategic embrace of science and exogenous abstraction was a further indication that the campaign is indeed best understood, as Delgado (2010) argued, as an intimate lay-science hybrid assemblage.

In summary, the thesis has attempted to contribute to academic knowledge in various ways. These include, in both broad and specific terms, the study of the Mary Valley, the anthropology of Australia, the anthropology of settler societies, and the anthropology of environmental disputes. I have paid particular attention to the emergence of emplaced identities in peri-urban areas. In terms of the anti-dam campaign I have further demonstrated how the activists drew on competing identities that may seem contradictory, but in fact are strategically powerful in moments of environmental dispute.

Additional to the socio-economic history of the area and contemporary relations to land among long-term residents, I have attempted to integrate the perspectives and emplacement of urban newcomers to these peri-urban areas. As retirees and others in search of life-style blocks move in large numbers to areas like the Mary Valley, the issues and conflicts that this thesis investigates will be ongoing in other parallel sites. In such terms of changing forms of environmental engagement and emplaced identities the thesis also contributes to a rapidly emerging area in anthropology, cultural heritage studies.

7.3 Observations for Project Management

A focus on strategic engagements, endogenous identities and exogenous abstraction reveals an important understanding of disputes and the inherent difficulties for development proponents who are largely restricted in their dealings with the public to exogenous abstraction. One mechanism proponents nowadays employ to counteract their general detachment from local practice and
endogenous identities is the use of ‘community consultation’. However, as an attempt to engage the local public, typically through a few ‘community days’ held in and surrounding a region proposed to be impacted, such consultations may be received as a further insult by those local residents who feel the proponent is attempting to appropriate endogenous identities based on long-term embodied engagement, knowledge and daily routine over the course of one or two brief on-site visits. Further, the legal approval processes and associated reporting requirements mandate the production of Environmental Impact Statements of rather overwhelming proportions, of which social issues are but a subset, which invariably leads to perverse consequences for constructive public engagement.

This study of the Traveston Crossing Dam dispute has focussed on a number of interrelated topics of interest to environmental anthropology, including emplaced identity in settler-descendant societies, environmental engagement, contested epistemology, water management, attitudes to nature, and environmental activism. While global concerns about water supplies, climatic and environmental changes intensify, and as local communities continue to be impacted by large commercial projects or Government initiatives, these will remain relevant perspectives for the study of human-environment relations and the socio-cultural drivers of disputes.
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9. Appendices

Appendix 1  Filemaker database: Interviews
### SAVE THE MARY RIVER CO-ORDINATING GROUP

#### Objective

To benefit the South East Queensland community and the environment, cause the Queensland government to overturn its decision to build a dam on the Mary River now or at any time in the future.

#### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- **Actively engage the Federal Environment Minister and officials of the Department of Environment & Water [DEHWA] in discussion and debate regarding the consideration of the Queensland Government’s EIS [Environmental Impact Statement].**
  
  **Actions:**
  - Writing to the DEWHA and Peter Garrett on shortcomings of supplementary EIS and concerns about activities occurring before federal approval. **Technical Team**
  - Be prepared for the 10 day public submission period if Peter Garrett calls it after he receives the CG [QLD Coordinator General’s] report. **Everyone**
  - Should Peter Garrett approve the dam with conditions, review the process for legal action. **Technical and Legal Team**

- **Raise public awareness. Ensure that the vast majority of residents of South East Queensland understand the strength and the reasons for opposition to the proposals.**
  
  **Actions:**
  - Visit and write to politicians. **Everybody**
  - Regularly updated website. **Website Team**
  - Active sign writing campaign. **Sign writing Team**
  - Active media presence. **Media Team**
  - Letter generation to Politicians. **Info Centre Team**
  - Info stalls at local shows (Gympie May 14-16th May?, Imbil ?) **Committee**
  - Present at Conferences. **Technical team**

- **Prepare a budget to cover campaign initiatives and conduct fund raising activities. Seek support of the various Environmental Foundations as well as from residents and the general public.**
  
  **Actions:**
  - Seek specific sponsorship for legal action Paradise Dam. Court hearing 7th Sep 2009. **STMRCG Committee**
  - No dam merchandise marketing on line and through outlets. **Info Centre Team**
  - Encourage membership. **Committee**

- **Generate wide spread support for the all time elimination of the proposal by developing**
a clear and concise logical set of arguments in favour of suitable alternatives and the main reasons why the proposal should not proceed.

**Actions:**
- Fact sheets on Alternatives for politicians. **Technical team**

✔ Create a grass roots swell of opinion in favour of overturning the proposal via an effective communications campaign.

**Actions:**
- Regular public meetings-
- Regular updated website. **Website Team**
- Regular update and man volunteer Info centre 7 days a week. **Info Centre Team**
- Publicize the Love Mary book 2nd edition. **Everybody**
- Talkback radio and letters to the Editor. **Everybody**
- Celebrate milestones. eg anniversary. **Everybody**

✔ Cause to have placed on the public record, the studies that underpin the selection of the proposal together with any data that have a material impact on the decision to build a dam.

**Actions:**
- Senate Inquiry into Alternative water supplies for SEQ documented this well. Continue to publicize this information through fact sheets. **Info Centre Team and Technical Team**
- Letters to Politicians and Government Departments. **Info Centre Team, Website team and Technical Team**

✔ Recruit expert advisors (Australian and International) to help us understand the environmental, social, economic and political impacts of the proposal, and the options for legal action.

**Actions:**
- Be involved with River Symposium in Sept 09. Nominate for Theiss river prize Award.
- Participate in downstream impacts workshop. **Technical Team**

✔ Obtain expert advice to understand how to exert maximum pressure on the Queensland government to overturn the proposal.

**Actions:**
- **Put pressure on Coordinator General** to get report to Federal Government for assessment under the EPBC Act by mid May. **Committee**
- Work with other environmental groups with media releases. **Media Team**
- Meet with all political groups. **Committee**

✔ Ensure that the STMRCG operations are both effective and efficient

**Actions:**
- Fortnightly meetings every 2nd Thursday 7pm Info Centre. **Committee**
- Monthly Dambusters newsletter at end of month. **Newsletter Team**
- Regularly update members of upcoming events and press releases. **Media team**
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