

Social enterprise and wellbeing in community life

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Social enterprise and wellbeing in community life

Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores the wellbeing impacts of social enterprise, beyond a social enterprise *per se*, in everyday community life.

Design: An exploratory case study was used. The study's underpinning theory is from relational geography, including Spaces of Wellbeing Theory and therapeutic assemblage. These theories underpin data collection methods. Nine social enterprise participants were engaged in mental mapping and walking interviews. Four other informants with 'boundary-spanning' roles involving knowledge of the social enterprise and the community, were interviewed. Data were managed using NVivo, and analysed thematically.

Findings: Wellbeing realised from 'being inside' a social enterprise organisation was further developed for participants, in the community, through positive interactions with people, material objects, stories and performances of wellbeing that occurred in everyday community life. Boundary spanning community members had roles in referring participants to social enterprise, mediating between participants and structures of community life, and in normalising social enterprise in the community. They also gained benefit from social enterprise involvement.

Originality: This paper uses relational geography and aligned methods to reveal the intricate connections between social enterprise and wellbeing realisation in community life. There is potential to pursue this research on a larger scale to provide needed evidence about how wellbeing is realised in social enterprises and then extends into communities.

Introduction

This paper explores the relationship between social enterprises, their participants, wellbeing realised in/from social enterprises, and the experience of wellbeing *outside* of social enterprises, in community life. We used a relational, geographical, approach (Cummins *et al.*, 2007) to collect and consider data. We concluded from a previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015) that this provides a useful methodology to assess how and why wellbeing is realised

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3 in/by a setting that has material, cultural and social aspects. In this case, the originality of
4 this paper lies in using relational methods to explore if and how, a social enterprise might
5 have wellbeing impacts on people's lives in a community. The paper seeks to explore the
6 added value of social enterprises which Hazenberg (2014) suggests has been insufficiently
7 explored, to date, in academic research.
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12 Much of the promise of social enterprises for socio-economically disadvantaged people is
13 based on their purported capacity to realise wellbeing (e.g. Lysaght *et al.*, 2012; Teasdale,
14 2010). We understand individual wellbeing here, from Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), as
15 comprised of elements of integration, security, capability and therapy, fluid and relative
16 rather than fixed (Atkinson, 2013); but we acknowledge that wellbeing is multiply
17 interpreted.
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22 In a previous study conducted in 2011 (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we applied a relational
23 geography approach to explore how wellbeing was realised for individuals engaged in
24 GreenShed, a social enterprise in a regional Australian town. In that study we found that
25 applying Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) Spaces of Wellbeing Theory helped to identify
26 wellbeing realised in a social enterprise and how wellbeing realisation occurred. Therapeutic
27 assemblage, another concept from relational geography (Foley, 2011), was helpful in
28 understanding how material things, stories and practices come together to realise wellbeing
29 in places. We provided quotes from social enterprise participants that showed their
30 experiences of wellbeing in a social enterprise, and these developed. From relating
31 participants' discussions to spaces within and associated with, the social enterprise, we
32 were even able to show different aspects of wellbeing built in productive and social spaces.
33 This enabled a micro-geography of wellbeing realisation in a social enterprise, to be
34 portrayed.
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39 From the 2011 study, we were intrigued by participants' discussions of their social
40 enterprise experiences in relation to 'life in the community'; for example, discussing how
41 social connections formed in the social enterprise, extended into, and affected experiences
42 in, community life. This led us to wonder if and how, the social enterprise impacted on
43 participants' lives in the community and whether impacts were more widely felt – like
44 ripples on a pond – by others in the community.
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3 This paper discusses a further small, exploratory study we conducted, again with
4 participants of GreenShed, but in 2014-15. It builds on the 2011 study and largely involves a
5 different group of participants. The goal was to explore if and how the wellbeing realised
6 by/in a social enterprise impacts on participants' 'everyday' community lives – and the lives
7 of others in the community. We ask - are there wellbeing benefits that are experienced
8 beyond the boundaries of engagement at/ in a social enterprise? We understand
9 community as comprising a geographical location, the built/natural environment there, and
10 the people that live and/or work there. We view community as constructed through
11 ongoing interactions between these aspects. We understand community here as associated
12 with a meaningful location (Cresswell, 2004 p.7), but fluid and composed of networks and
13 flows between relations (Massey, 1997), experienced differently by diverse participants and
14 at different times, alone or together (Doughty, 2013). In this respect, while recognising that
15 community is variously understood (e.g. McGregor, 2012), our concept of community is akin
16 to relational understanding of place. Cresswell (2004) describes: place as “an embodied
17 relationship with the world. Places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense
18 are never ‘finished’ but are constantly being performed.”(p.37) We use the term ‘everyday
19 life’ from de Certeau (1984), to signify that we are talking about the ordinary, rather than
20 special, workings in communities of “practices, mixtures of rituals and makeshifts” (p.xvi)
21 which are “all in general circulation and rather drab” (p.xviii).

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Community wellbeing has been depicted as involving citizen safety, empowerment, socio-
economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion (Miles *et al.*, 2008). Here, we do not
consider what social enterprise contributes to a pre-defined concept of community
wellbeing; rather we present a beginning exploration of how social enterprise might
influence wellbeing of participants and others in everyday community life.

As a social enterprise, GreenShed might be regarded as a ‘work integrated social enterprise’
(WISE), intended to provide social support, build social capital and provide supported
employment for vulnerable people (Barraket, 2014). On the surface, GreenShed appears to
be a ‘men’s shed’ i.e. a type of organisation popular in Australia and aimed at providing men
with traditionally male-oriented, productive activities like woodworking (Ballinger *et al.*,
2008). GreenShed is more than this and is open to all genders and incorporates activities
such as art classes. GreenShed was established originally by a religious group following a

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3 natural disaster in the early 2000s. Its intention is equity and providing purpose through
4 meaningful activity. GreenShed generates funding from sales of wood products, contracts
5 with disability organisations and the Correction System, and community grants. We propose
6 it is a social enterprise because it has a social mission, makes goods for sale and provides
7 services for contract (Barraket *et al.*, 2010). Geographically, this study is located in a
8 relatively disadvantaged and historically distinct suburb of a regional town in Victoria,
9 Australia. The suburb is distinguished from the larger town by a boundary formed by a creek
10 which acts as a physical and emotional barrier for connections with the rest of the town.
11 Both the regional town and this suburb grew out of intense gold-mining in the 1850s-1870s,
12 followed by later development of rural industries and services.
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22 The study involved nine purposively-selected social enterprise participants, and four
23 interviewees with knowledge of the social enterprise and the community (depicted here as
24 boundary spanners (Richter *et al.* 2006)), identified from participant data collection. Data
25 were collected from social enterprise participants using mental mapping and walking
26 interviews; and from others using face-to-face interviews.
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32 **Background**

33 *Social enterprises and wellbeing*

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37 Social enterprises could be interpreted as part of a broader economic social and solidarity
38 movement, an alternative to mainstream capitalist enterprise, that aims to combine
39 economically viable business for wealth creation, service provision, and improving
40 wellbeing of individuals and places (Amin *et al.*, 2003). This acknowledges the contribution
41 of diverse economic enterprises to social and cultural life. To be successful in such a
42 paradigm, an enterprise should be commercially viable and strive to make positive impacts
43 on society, addressing individual and collective wellbeing of local people; for example,
44 through providing work experience and/or training (Ferguson and Islam, 2008; Fioritti *et al.*,
45 2014).
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53 We suggest that GreenShed, the social enterprise in this study, might be understood as a
54 WISE. Borzaga and Depedri (2014) typologise WISEs, suggesting categories of: 1) social
55 support (supplying vulnerable people with mainly social integration opportunities and social
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3 capital building); 2) sheltered employment (employing vulnerable people to produce
4 goods/services for public administration); and 3) supported employment (integrating
5 vulnerable people into market-oriented enterprises). They suggest that “over the past 20
6 years, work integrated social enterprises have increasingly become a solution to the issues
7 of work placement of vulnerable persons” (Borzaga and Depedri, 2014; p.97) and note that
8 WISEs provide opportunities for those “with psychological and physical disability, people
9 with substance abuse, other disability, longterm unemployment, disadvantaged young
10 people, immigrants, women and those with low education” (p.91). Barraket (2014; p.105)
11 says that, in Australia, WISE “typically combines the work integration objective with the
12 delivery of specific goods and services that serve the unmet needs of the beneficiary group”.
13 This resonates with Spear and Bidet’s (2005) analysis of the rise of WISE to provide welfare
14 services, coinciding with the de-institutionalisation of social care and with policies focusing
15 on welfare to work.
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27 Benefits for individuals and communities are claimed to arise from social enterprise
28 activities (Williams *et al.*, 2008). Recently, attention has turned to instrumentally applying
29 social enterprise as a form of public health intervention, although evidence to support this
30 remains sparse (Roy *et al.*, 2013). Benefits for individuals are linked to attaining a sense of
31 coherence (Antonovsky, 1979) and/or gaining “the skills and confidence to manage the
32 demands of life, to respond to an environment that is both comprehensible and
33 manageable” (Roy *et al.*, 2013 p.61). Collective benefits identified in the literature include
34 the rehabilitation and increased inclusiveness of civic spaces resulting from social enterprise
35 operations in rural communities (Barraket and Archer, 2010). Proponents note that the
36 impact of social enterprise on wellbeing development is difficult to measure and quantify. In
37 particular, there is poor understanding of causal mechanisms (Roy *et al.*, 2014). A systematic
38 literature review of the impact of social enterprise-led activity on health and wellbeing
39 found few quality studies (Roy *et al.*, 2014); those found indicated improvements in mental
40 health, self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation and life satisfaction. Our case study here
41 presents evidence from a social enterprise that aligns, to an extent, with the Men’s Shed
42 concept. Milligan and others (2015) have investigated wellbeing benefits from Men’s Sheds,
43 but suggest challenges with causation, questioning if those who are most healthy or who
44 have best capacity for improved health, are most likely to participate.
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3 Roy and others (2014 p.190) suggest social enterprises could provide “a window of
4 opportunity for mutual understanding and interaction with the community”, but again there
5 is little evidence that probes micro-scale social enterprise-community inter-relationships.
6 Our study moves understanding away from viewing individual wellbeing as a fixed stock, to
7 understanding how wellbeing assets, realised from interactions with social enterprise as a
8 space of wellbeing, inter-relate with aspects of everyday life, giving opportunities for
9 affecting wellbeing in the community.
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15 *Space, place and wellbeing*

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18 In this paper, we apply ideas of spaces of wellbeing and therapeutic assemblage to develop
19 understanding of how wellbeing is (re-)realised through inter-relationships between people,
20 material objects, stories, practices and performances (Foley, 2011). The geographical
21 theories employed align with the idea of therapeutic landscape, defined by Kearns and
22 Gesler (1998 p.8) as places that have achieved “reputations for providing physical, mental
23 and spiritual healing”. This view has evolved into contention that a therapeutic landscape is
24 a place with the potential for health, but its realisation is contingent (Conradson, 2005).
25 People will experience places differently, depending on their personal situation,
26 environmental conditions and over time. Thus places are not fixed in their potential to
27 benefit. If a place is culturally understood as linked with health, people will approach it with
28 expectation of benefit. This is likely to influence the realisation of benefit. Foley (2011)
29 highlighted that participants will, in a sense, ‘perform’ health to participate in the implicit
30 potential. Since social enterprises are promoted as beneficial, society already regards them
31 as a space where people and ways of organising are part of a landscape that has therapeutic
32 intent. Participants need only to go along and perform health, perhaps, to realise benefits
33 for themselves.
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48 Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) conducted a multidisciplinary literature review of relationships
49 between wellbeing and spaces. Acknowledging that “wellbeing is a notoriously abstract and
50 unstable term” (Atkinson, 2013), they identified four key perspectives: capability,
51 integration, security and therapy. Rather than delimiting wellbeing to one philosophical
52 viewpoint, Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) suggested that embracing diverse perspectives on
53 wellbeing beneficially produces an encompassing concept that understands wellbeing
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3 realisation as therapeutic assemblage. Atkinson (2013) views wellbeing as fluid and
4 dynamic, situated and relational, and realised by interaction between material, organic and
5 emotional dynamics of places. Thus the spaces of wellbeing approach proposes that
6 different social and spatial contexts may be facilitative of wellbeing. In a previous paper
7 (Munoz et al, 2015), we applied thinking about spaces of wellbeing and therapeutic
8 landscape to suggest how wellbeing was realised in a social enterprise. In this study we used
9 the same thinking to explore if/how wellbeing realisation from social enterprises might
10 come together with aspects of everyday community life, to help realise wellbeing in the
11 community.
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20 **Methodology**

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22 The study described here used methods consistent with relational geography; that is,
23 mental mapping and walking interviews; and incorporated technologies including
24 geographical tracking and photography. The methods were intended to capture places
25 significant to participants and locate what was said and expressed there, recorded in
26 photographs and observed in the action of taking photographs. The methods were intended
27 to facilitate participants to steer researchers where participants wanted to go, associated
28 with what researchers asked them. Walking in the locale allowed us to capture feelings
29 expressed and incidental events that happened as participants encountered other people,
30 things and locations. Emotions as expressed in smiling, language tone and body language
31 were aspects observed and recorded. Walking interviews have been discussed as helpful for
32 vulnerable participants because they address the norm where researchers lead the agenda,
33 affording elements of empowerment to the study subjects (Evans and Jones, 2011). Doughty
34 (2013) notes this equalising quality suggesting “walking-with” provides a “temporary form
35 of companionship” (p.145). She explains that walking interviews capture the reality of our
36 mobile lives performed in meaningful, but incidental interactions with others.
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49 GreenShed was our study setting because we had researched there before, had contextual
50 understanding and established relationships with staff. GreenShed produces wooden
51 products from recycled timber, and services related to planning, building and installing
52 these. GreenShed participants are unpaid and deal with the range of life challenges
53 described by Borzaga and Depedri (2014, p.91), including long-term unemployment and
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3 disability. They are referred from within the local community, by the Correction System and
4 by disability services and organisations. GreenShed also has a paid manager and inputs from
5 other paid workers. GreenShed is difficult to precisely typologise as a social enterprise
6 (Borzaga and Depedri, 2014). It appears to focus most on the production of social
7 integration outcomes produced through engaging people in productive activities, but it also
8 has elements of work/business integration because goods are produced for sale. Our
9 previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015) showed that engagement in work that produced goods
10 for sale was significant for GreenShed participants. GreenShed participants are mainly men,
11 although there are some female participants.
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20 Nathan is the manager of GreenShed. We received his consent to undertake this study.
21 Formal ethical approval was from La Trobe University Ethics Committee (FHEC 14/178
22 01/08/2014). We asked Nathan to identify social enterprise participants for mental mapping
23 and walking interviews based on his assessment of their capacity to participate. Ultimately,
24 nine male participants were involved, eight chose to map/walk in pairs (i.e. with a
25 companion from GreenShed) and one was involved on his own. All were between 20 and 65
26 years old.
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33 Participants received an information sheet. This was read out as some had literacy
34 problems, with Nathan and/or another paid staff member present. Care was taken that
35 participants did not feel obliged to be involved. We tried to make the experiences as
36 unthreatening as possible. Members of the research team spent some time informally at
37 GreenShed getting to know participants beforehand and during the time the study took
38 place. Participants were welcome to participate in the mental mapping and walking
39 interviews with a companion, as was requested by some participants.
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46 Following data collection with participants, we decided to interview 'boundary spanners'
47 (Long *et al.*, 2013) as Nathan, a student volunteer and two community members were
48 mentioned, by more than one participant, during walking interviews. We understand
49 boundary spanners as people with connections and roles in community life, as well as
50 knowledge of the social enterprise. These four consented to participate in face-to-face,
51 audio-recorded interviews. A total of 13 subjects were thus involved.
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3 Social enterprise participants were first asked to draw a mental map (Brennan-Horley,
4 2010), using marker pens and paper, of places they might visit in the locale during a normal
5 day (open to them to interpret), and to describe how these places made them feel and what
6 they did there. Some participants found this challenging. We did not probe this, but it
7 appeared related to literacy and/or confidence, challenges. In most cases, therefore,
8 researcher TdC talked with participants about an imagined journey around the community,
9 sometimes drawing what they described, but sometimes not – as thought appropriate.

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12 Following this, participants led TdC on a walk from GreenShed around the locale. TdC wore a
13 geographical positioning system (GPS) tracker and TdC and participants wore lapel
14 microphones to record conversations. Walks lasted around one hour. Participants were
15 asked to walk and talk about places in the community, following up the earlier mental
16 mapping experience. Participants were encouraged by ongoing conversation from TdC to
17 talk about, and photograph, places that they related to their social enterprise experiences.

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20 Interviews were transcribed and thematic qualitative analysis was carried out using Nvivo,
21 coding to the wellbeing dimensions of Spaces of Wellbeing Theory, and highlighting material
22 objects, social interactions, practices or stories according to therapeutic assemblage.
23 Analysis was open to new themes. Study subjects were given pseudonyms to preserve
24 anonymity. Rounds of discussion of data were conducted among the research team, to
25 explore what had been found.

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28 Using GPS tracking and timestamps, we were able to align discussions with locations in the
29 community. In a future, larger study, we would like to identify if there are key interaction
30 points (locations of consistent significance), but this study largely tested the methods and
31 approach, for feasibility. Interacting with the technology proved engaging for participants
32 and maps of each participants' journey were produced, by overlaying it with a picture
33 captured from Googlemaps. These are not included here, but again the idea was tested for
34 feasibility in a larger study.

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 **Findings**

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56 In our previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015), we identified wellbeing realised in a social
57 enterprise and we described how it realised, using quotes and examples illustrating
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3 therapeutic assemblage of wellbeing from interconnections of material objects, social
4 interactions, stories, practices and performances. In this study, we sought to explore
5 whether this wellbeing from inside social enterprises might impact on participants in their
6 everyday community life and whether it had any wider impacts on wellbeing in the
7 community. Below, we explore evidence for these aspects, dividing our discussion into
8 consideration of participants and then, the wider community. As in our previous study, we
9 shape discussion by drawing on the idea of therapeutic assemblage.

16 *Social enterprise participants and wellbeing in community life*

19 Findings suggest that wellbeing for participants realised inside GreenShed - in a sense -
20 moves with them into their community life. Doughty (2013) proposes that therapeutic
21 landscape could be viewed as “a moving space that unfolds within and through interactions
22 with the environment (including other humans, as well as non-humans), rather than a fixed
23 geographical location” (p.145). In various ways, during walking interviews, wellbeing
24 realised within GreenShed could be interpreted as extending and augmenting through
25 individuals’ carrying out their day-to-day activities in the locale. Data suggest the
26 participants as having developed a sort of mobile ‘wellbeing bubble’ which could be
27 construed as having their space of wellbeing, stimulated and nascent in GreenShed, move
28 with them into the community. Below we illustrate how participants experiences of
29 wellbeing from GreenShed could be linked with their wellbeing in community life, through:
30 community locations or material things acting as triggers for participants’ expressions of
31 wellbeing; the telling of stories about how wellbeing from GreenShed has improved
32 participants’ community life; and, performances of wellbeing (being ‘ordinary’ (Thrift, 1999)
33 in the community), which participants attribute to GreenShed participation.

46 *-Materiality: community objects as wellbeing triggers*

49 Participants led the researcher around the locale, discussing locations and objects that act
50 to tie together their wellbeing, GreenShed and community life.

54 Objects and locations were discussed in relation to social integration; for example, Don
55 explained, outside the chemist’s shop, his difficulties interacting with staff there, in the past.
56 He tended to get confused about whether or not he had received his drugs and said he
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3 sometimes got upset and angry. Nathan (GreenShed manager) had mediated with the staff
4 to devise a system for Don to record and sign-off which drugs he had received. This led to
5 new, cordial relationships with shop staff:
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9 *Don: "before I came to [GreenShed], I was pretty angry and I was very suspicious of*
10 *everyone. It was the way that I survived... they were the wrong mechanisms, but they were*
11 *the only ones I knew. Nathan used to come up with me to the chemist. When I first went up*
12 *there, I went off because I thought they were trying to rip me off. They were showing me*
13 *these things and I couldn't work it out. I was getting confused. So I told Nathan what*
14 *happened, and he said I better come with you, so he came up with me and made them do a*
15 *list and I had to sign for it..."*
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19 Another participant, James, led the researcher to a bus stop which symbolised his journey to
20 becoming an 'ordinary' (i.e. non-disruptive) citizen. James described:
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24 *"I was hanging out at the bus stops mainly, but I've not done that for ages now. All of the*
25 *shop owners complained about me. I was yelling at the people and what not. I used to be*
26 *really aggressive, I still am a little bit – and people used to be intimidated because they'd*
27 *hear me yelling at people at the bus stop ..."*
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31 James was referred to GreenShed by Mary who works at a shop beside the bus stop. Mary
32 contacted Nathan about James. James began participating at GreenShed, and explained, to
33 TdC at the bus-stop, how that led to an upturn in his life:
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37 *TdC: "so this is the infamous bus stop you used to hang out at"*
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41 *James: "yeh that's right, there's the shop owner [Mary] as well – I have to wave now"*
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45 The incident is significant as occurring at the location associated with James's previously
46 disruptive behaviour, changed by engagement with GreenShed, arising from Mary's referral.
47 James implies a reversal of the power relationship, suggesting his obligation – now - to wave
48 to Mary, thus conferring his favour on her. James explained that the bus-stop, and adjacent
49 shop, is further symbolic of his recovery because, periodically, he is now invited by Mary to
50 help out at the shop.
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3 Other locations triggered stories of personal realisation and health improvement that
4 participants connected with GreenShed involvement. For example, Thad led the researcher
5 past a gym, saying:
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10 *"... I want to become a professional weightlifter. I wouldn't if it wasn't for all this*
11 *community... [gestures involvement]. I wouldn't want to do it. I wouldn't even go to the*
12 *gym..."*
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16 A material thing/location in the community could show the value to others of participants'
17 skills and work. An example was where Rob and Angus highlighted a wooden fence that four
18 social enterprise participants had built for Sue, a community member who also ran art
19 classes at GreenShed. Rob and Angus discussed how they had helped to build the fence and
20 talked enthusiastically and proudly, at the fence, with one photographing the other, his arm
21 draped over the fence and a smile on his face:
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28 *Angus: "we put the fence up...just four of us... yeah we got all the stuff delivered, we got the*
29 *pickets delivered and...Rob oiled them all up ...that's it there [points to fence]"*
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33 *Rob: stand in front of it and get your picture taken, mate. Hang onto the fence, lean on the*
34 *fence, that's it, just like that! Get your hand away from the number, that's it! That's it, look*
35 *at it, aye..."*
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39 *Rob added: "...it needs a coat of bloody paint on it, doesn't it? Or something? Look at that,*
40 *that one's split, better get on to her... it needs a coat of something on it..."*
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43 Adding to the illustration, a passer-by shouted over to Rob, Angus and the researcher,
44 highlighting his acknowledgement that the men had made the fence.
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48 In this vein, most participants showed researcher TdC evidence of some work or project
49 achieved for community benefit; another example was an ArtSpace renovation. Participants
50 also discussed projects that had been planned, but fallen through, for example, new
51 benches for a sports club. Although these projects had not occurred, participants had a
52 positive attitude, suggesting they were resilient about these adverse events.
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3 Cafes, pubs, sports facilities and shops were highlighted as locations signifying greater ease
4 with community interactions. Several noted their confidence, now, to try out new facilities
5 – e.g. a new superstore. Participants often discussed whether they felt welcomed, accepted
6 or were treated ‘like an ordinary person’ at shops and cafes, showing a relational
7 connection between locations, participants and others; and tacitly relating these
8 interconnections to new-found wellbeing. Their discussions suggest wellbeing from
9 GreenShed plants seeds of confidence to be adventurous, however, other aspects are
10 necessary for wellbeing transferral to be achieved in another setting. For example, Don
11 notes that chemist shop staff are welcoming and friendly so he is comfortable going there,
12 but newsagent staff are not perceived as welcoming, so he does not go there.

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22 *-Metaphorical: stories reinforcing wellbeing*

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25 While community locations or objects could stimulate discussion of wellbeing connections,
26 participants used stories - sometimes linked to locations, but sometimes abstractly – to link
27 wellbeing from the social enterprise with aspects of community life. All participants
28 portrayed moving from a dark period of their life, characterised by experiences of
29 loneliness, disconnection, exclusion, loss of worth and/or mental illness, to a current time
30 where they experience greater connection to others around them (including other
31 GreenShed participants), control of aspects of their life, future orientation and a wider
32 range of connections with people and locations.

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40 Rob described suddenly losing his capacity to work and drive, through illness - to now
41 feeling a valued participant in community life, at least partly due to GreenShed involvement:

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44 *“...I can say to people, bloody-yeah, I was one of those blokes that, with my [illness]...I found*
45 *out about the [illness] down at the City Hospital four years ago... they reduced me to tears*
46 *down there. I was one of those blokes that thought Beyond Blue and all that was a load of*
47 *rubbish...it’s not...I had a depression slump...at one stage I was suicidal, been through that*
48 *sort of rubbish...”*; and added

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54 *‘... Mary at [shop] – she’s the one that got me onto this here ... it’s a long story...I bumped*
55 *into her at the shop, had a bit of a chat with her... she suggested about coming down here*
56 *and meeting Nathan and she sent Nathan an email ..., and sent me down there, you know,*
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3 and I come down not really expecting too much... I've been there ever since and you can't
4 keep me away from the place..."

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7 As they walk, a car horn honks ...

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10 Rob: "I can't walk down the street without someone knowing me...there you go, hear that!
11 So that's the way it is, you know... that's it, toot toot. Quite often I will call into Mary there.
12 Saturday morning or whatever and quite often I'll call in and if Glenda's going [to
13 GreenShed], I'll pick her up a cup of coffee or whatever"

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18 Engagement with the social enterprise provided some participants with experiences of
19 productive work, portrayed as evidence of recovery and worth. As described above, James
20 moved from disruptive behaviour at the bus-stop, to helping at the adjacent shop. That
21 described:
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26 "I used to play video games, but what GreenShed has done, is everyone knows me. I know
27 how to talk to a lot of people around here. I've got my own little business too...a [name]
28 business ... I make [products]...it's community-based. If you asked me about five years ago, if
29 you want to do something in the community I would say no..."; adding: "for me, it's about
30 being part of the community. I never wanted to be treated differently. I couldn't care less if I
31 had a disability or not. I still have to wake up with a disability. It's not going to change so you
32 might as well be treated normally..."
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39 Don described his severe mental illness linked to a traumatised upbringing. Now, as well as
40 amicable interactions with his general medical practice and chemist's shop staff, Don tells of
41 a changed perspective regarding his gambling, money and his future , explaining to TdC
42 outside the bank:
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47 "I'm a bit hot on the horses. I won \$600 when I first got to GreenShed. Nathan said: 'are you
48 going to bank some of it?' I said 'ok I'll bank half of it....last year I had nearly \$400 in the
49 bank and this year I've got nearly \$500."
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53 Participant's recovery stories were often linked to feelings of social integration. For some,
54 the reach of their activities had extended in nature and geographical scale. James's
55 involvement in art classes at GreenShed led to him being linked, via Sue (community
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3 member that runs art classes), with an initiative taking socio-economically disadvantaged
4 people on a visit to UK galleries. Thad and Jules described attending national sports events
5 and music festivals. They explained that these new adventures stemmed from attending a
6 national rugby match with Nathan and his friends. Thad said, previous to this: *“we never*
7 *went to Melbourne on our own...I’d probably go with someone else that made me feel*
8 *comfortable... now I can do it on my own.”*

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14 Like the example of James given earlier, Thad suggested a changed power relationship, this
15 time with Nathan:

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19 *“...I’m planning to go to at least one match in Melbourne.... If Nathan wants to come,*
20 *Nathan’s more than welcome to come. I would never do that before. If I knew Nathan*
21 *[wanted to go]... I wouldn’t ask. One thing I would have thought of back then was, if I ask*
22 *someone from GreenShed, they would think they’d have to look after me...”*

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26 Relationships with family members or friends not associated with GreenShed were not
27 probed. Nonetheless, some participants mentioned family relationships. Rob depicted
28 positive relationships, but some participants mentioned being unconnected with family
29 members and some related stories of negative relationships with family members.
30 Participants’ stories of enjoying wellbeing in community life - linked to GreenShed - were
31 invariably positive, and depicting an upturn in life. Perhaps this is linked to undertaking
32 walking interviews in pairs, where participants might have felt encouraged to support and
33 build on each other’s positivity.
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42 *-Performance: practising and communicating wellbeing*

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44 Participants discussed attending GreenShed within a routine of everyday life. Discussions
45 portray GreenShed as a workplace, as in this conversation between James and Nathan:

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48 *J: “I stay here for most of the day, til 3 o’clock sometimes, don’t I Nathan?”*

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51 *N: (joking) ‘til we kick him out*

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54 *J: ‘til they kick me out, ‘til they’ve had enough of me*
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3 Angus notes asking Nathan if he could attend GreenShed 'full-time', rather than three days a
4 week. Jules discussed his journey to GreenShed, undertaken almost daily:
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7 *"I walk, I walk, I drive my chair to Emu Road near Bunnings and then get on the bus and*
8 *come out here....[person] showed me how to get the bus and stuff...[sometimes]...we go out*
9 *at night to a pub..."*
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12 Each walking interview revealed instances of participants chatting with or waving to, others
13 in the locale. James waved to Mary from the shop and Rob and Angus got a friendly 'toot
14 toot' from a passing car. A lady with children chatted to Don and Greg. During their walking
15 interview Thad and Jules met and greeted various people; for example, a gardener in the
16 park:
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22 *Thad: "when we see the gardener that we know, we talk about other stuff. I would never*
23 *stop by and talk to someone, from a garden or doing the garden.*
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26 *Jules: we'd probably never have done that before, talked to a random...*
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29 *Carer: ...but he passes through [GreenShed] though, you seen him when you're there."*
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32 Participants discussed interactions with others from GreenShed in community settings. Don
33 and Greg went to the YMCA to watch Thad and Jules play basketball and Thad and Jules
34 discussed involving a group of participants in a fun sporting event.
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38 All participants discussed feeling more confident and happier while moving about the locale
39 and interacting, and linked this to GreenShed participation. Sometimes descriptions of these
40 feelings were reinforced by feedback received at GreenShed. Don noted: "... Nathan said to
41 me – 'you've come a long way, Don – you've come from an angry person to a happy person."
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46 In the above section, we have endeavoured to use findings to illustrate how social
47 enterprise participants found wellbeing feelings stimulated from community locations and
48 objects, how they used stories to link their community wellbeing with the social enterprise
49 and how they linked 'healthy' practices in the community with their engagement at
50 GreenShed. We now move to consider what evidence we gained about relationships
51 between the social enterprise and community life for others, and how that might affect
52 wellbeing in the community.
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3 *Social enterprise and wellbeing in everyday community life*
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6 Discussions with social enterprise participants highlighted some key people whose names
7 occurred more than once, and that appeared active in bridging between GreenShed and
8 community life. We decided that a way of beginning to understand relationships between
9 the social enterprise and community life and what that might mean for wider wellbeing,
10 would be to interview these people that appeared to act as boundary spanners.
11 Interviewees included Nathan, manager of GreenShed; Sue, a volunteer that runs art classes
12 at GreenShed; Mary who works in a shop in the community, and who knows about the work
13 of GreenShed because her parents volunteer there and from her involvement on
14 community organisation committees; and Liz, a student volunteer.
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22 One role of the social enterprise in community wellbeing was acting to knit disconnected
23 people into community life, thus protecting community functionality. In conversation,
24 Nathan regularly states an active mission to connect participants with community life. For
25 example, he mediated between Don and chemist's shop staff and discussed connecting
26 other participants with health and social care services, such as counselling. Nathan called
27 local police to speak with James regarding his disruptive behaviour. This allowed police to
28 speak with James as a warning rather than the situation escalating to a formal criminal
29 proceeding.
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37 Nathan said: *"the locksmith and the café half way along there used to complain... they all*
38 *had a bit of a spit and asked me to fix it...I got the police down here...I actually rung the*
39 *police, not because it was a criminal problem...I got the policeman to come down and have a*
40 *talk to these guys. That was after they'd started here though. Just about their noise and how*
41 *that might frighten people, they weren't in trouble..."*
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47 Mary alluded to how GreenShed's role in maintaining community security might be
48 misunderstood, suggesting that some local residents actually saw GreenShed as a place
49 where troubled people gathered, noting:
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53 *"...initially I was aware of some of the people attending GreenShed, and I had seen them*
54 *around here ... it was, like...what do they do down there?...I thought it was great what they*
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3 *were doing, but I thought it was a bit dubious about...* [makes hand gesture of collecting
4 together].
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7 She highlighted a need for the wider community to understand this 'peace-keeping' role of
8 the social enterprise, saying:
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11 *"...there's this kind of [suburb] stigma...about GreenShed...people haven't taken the time to*
12 *go...no...they're trying to do something there. There's a little narrowmindedness... I don't*
13 *think the community appreciates fully what is happening down there."*
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18 Having a more subtle and covert role than Nathan in this community security dimension,
19 Mary reflected on her own role - in a sense, triaging disconnected people that she
20 encountered through interactions in her shop as: appropriate for GreenShed, or otherwise.
21 Mary suggests that some people are suitable to become more connected through
22 GreenShed, while others require other sorts of engagement. Here she notes why and how
23 she connected Rob with GreenShed:
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29 *"Rob was a really good fit... I'm like – I reckon he'll fit down there...it's like referring someone*
30 *to your hairdresser, you're really cautious. You go, are they going to be a good client, or*
31 *not....? ...there's a few that are, like, I would not do that to Nathan..."; adding "...I am*
32 *selective about who I say, go down and check it out... it's a higher level of need, versus, the*
33 *one's that I have recommended are the ones that have come into town and they don't know*
34 *people...and they want social interaction, one of the things is how long they come in here*
35 *[the shop], sit in here and talk..."*
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42 While Sue depicted motivation to connect people into community life through her
43 volunteering at GreenShed, her discussions also show that she gains wellbeing for herself
44 from her connections. She appears to gain benefit from: engaging with art (her passion),
45 engaging others with art, and from making social connections for *herself*, in the community.
46 She noted:
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52 *"with my work the idea is to make links in the community, and to identify places that the*
53 *guys can come and do different things...I've been here about three years...there was a little*
54 *group happening here, but it wasn't really much. I said...I can bring these guys out and*
55 *started off the ...all day art class and then just developed it from there. It was just a good*
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3 *space for guys to come and do whatever it was they were wanting to do almost, mainly*
4 *woodwork and art... there is a few that come in from the community, like apart from guys*
5 *from GreenShed ..."*
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9 Sue went on to explain: "...we're going to the MONA gallery...we're taking about six guys
10 *there for 2 nights and 3 days..."* and..."I know a lot more people from being connected here".
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13 Finally, in a concrete way, the social enterprise contributed by bringing new people into the
14 area to act as volunteers, exposing people from different backgrounds to the area and its
15 benefits. This quote from Liz, a student volunteer shows how connection with GreenShed
16 opened up different perceptions:
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21 *"... I'd never visited [suburb] before I came to Uni. It was only, like, those passing*
22 *comments: "You don't really want to go out to [suburb]? You know there's that lower*
23 *socio-economic people that live there." I never really had much to do with it... you*
24 *know you'd get fruit just near [suburb] and different things, but I never really came*
25 *out this way, until actually going to GreenShed and that's when I actually fell in love*
26 *with the area around here..."*
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32 **Discussion**

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35 In a 2011 study we applied Spaces of Wellbeing Theory and the idea of therapeutic
36 assemblage, from relational geography, to explore what and how, wellbeing realised *in* a
37 social enterprise (Munoz *et al.*, 2015). Here, we wanted to find out if that wellbeing
38 extended into community life for social enterprise participants; and to begin to consider if
39 the wider community experienced wellbeing benefits.
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45 Our findings in this study are preliminary and exploratory. They suggest that wellbeing from
46 social enterprise can extend into affecting participant's community lives. Social enterprise
47 participants might almost be imagined as moving within a sort of mobile 'wellbeing bubble'.
48 An alternative conceptualisation is to view life *outside* the social enterprise as an extension
49 of the *inside* social enterprise space of wellbeing. This implies a potential role for social
50 enterprises in constructing spaces of wellbeing that bridge 'organisational/institutional' and
51 'everyday community', life. The experience of wellbeing in the community, linked with
52 social enterprise, is contingent, however. It is linked with the opportunity to construct
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3 therapeutic assemblages (Foley, 2011) including the participant and their interaction with
4 material objects, people, practices and stories that stimulate or reinforce wellbeing in the
5 community context. This is exemplified by Don's discussion that he feels comfortable going
6 to the chemists because the staff are welcoming (at least partially based on Nathan's
7 mediation of his relationship with them), while he does not like to go to the newsagents
8 because he perceives the staff as unwelcoming. Findings support Atkinson's (2013) idea of
9 wellbeing as fluid and relational. Participants deploy positive stories that conjoin wellbeing
10 realised in the social enterprise with new-found benefits in community life; for example,
11 confidence and freedom to explore new places and experiences. Participants talk and
12 perform themselves as 'ordinary people' in the community – waving, chatting and working,
13 but often these wellbeing performances are linked to a person or activity associated with
14 the social enterprise. As in Foley's (2011) notion of therapeutic assemblage, and recent
15 studies of therapeutic landscapes (Bell *et al.*, 2015), social enterprise participants appeared
16 to realise webs or constellations of wellbeing, as they moved around. These are composed
17 of people, material things, locations, experiences, stories and performances, and hints of
18 these, that link their wellbeing from social enterprise with community life experiences.

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32 Considering wellbeing in participants' everyday community lives as potentially an extension
33 of the social enterprise space of wellbeing, all of Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) elements of
34 wellbeing were identified. Participants chat and wave, reflecting their *social integration*.
35 They make objects or provide services, on view to the public, showing *capability*. Their
36 enhanced social connections and greater ease with trying new experiences, shows *security*
37 in the environment through which they led the researcher. Their verbal, but also physically
38 embodied expressions of ease, pride, physical mobility, happiness and relaxation exhibit
39 experiences of *therapy*. Manifestations of wellbeing described or seen, connect the social
40 enterprise, wellbeing realised from it, and everyday community life for participants.

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49 A link between employment and health is well established (Barraket, 2014; p. 103), with
50 latent benefits being time structure, social contact, social status, engagement in a collective
51 purpose and meaningful activity (Jahoda, 1982). GreenShed might be understood as a WISE
52 with goals of social support, supported employment and trade. Although it does not provide
53 paid employment, participants do appear to gain wellbeing from the kinds of factors
54 associated with work, e.g. the routine of going to work. While the relative benefits of paid
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3 versus unpaid work may be debated, it is worth considering that paid work was possibly not
4 an option for GreenShed participants, most of whom described or manifested high levels of
5 vulnerability. What this study perhaps points to is that work-like activities in a work-like
6 environment, with certain supports, can result in benefits like those of paid work, even for
7 quite vulnerable people. Simultaneous with Barraket's (2014; p.105) depiction of WISE such
8 enterprises might "simultaneously be sites of economic participation, social connectedness
9 and civic engagement".

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11
12 While we mostly found an upbeat story, scrutiny indicates negative issues beneath the
13 surface. Individuals discussed community organisations' renegeing on contracts. Don noted
14 that workers in some shops were unpleasant to him. Thus, overall, possible abuses to
15 wellbeing were hinted at by participants. These did not appear to faze participants, which
16 could show resilience, or perhaps they were swept along in the overwhelmingly positive feel
17 of discourse and performance expressed in this study. We also found some evidence about
18 people that were not considered to fit with the social enterprise or were not referred. In our
19 previous study of GreenShed (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we found mention of people who did not
20 fit in and who left. In this study, people who were not considered appropriate for referral to
21 GreenShed, were discussed. We do not know what happens to these 'others', where they
22 go and whether they find their place. If they do not, then social enterprise itself could be
23 acting as an exclusionary institution in a community.

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26 This paper provides indicative evidence of potential effects of social enterprise on wellbeing
27 in wider community life. Part of the potential for wellbeing emanates from the chance for
28 disconnected people to experience greater social inclusion through social enterprise
29 engagement. While we portray this as a therapeutic outcome for individuals, it could
30 alternatively be interpreted as acting to mould disconnected participants to fit with
31 community norms, resonating with neo-liberal requirements to 'govern oneself', as Rose
32 (1996) depicts within 'relations of mutual obligation [to] the community' (p.331). Elements
33 in this process are sometimes overt, as when Nathan invited the police to warn James about
34 being a disruptive influence; other times, less so, as when Mary discusses her desire to
35 connect people with others, identifying potential participants because they spend time
36 chatting in the shop. As well as helping participants to 'fit in', Nathan, Mary and Sue each
37 showed aspirations to extend people to reach their full potential; for example, when Nathan

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3 takes Thad and Jules to a sporting event and Sue organises to take art class participants to a
4 gallery.
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7 Mary, Nathan and Sue appear to have significant roles as boundary spanners; first, linking
8 participants to the social enterprise and encouraging their attendance; then, smoothing
9 their access to services and shops and connecting them to networks, with local, national and
10 sometimes even international, reach. Boundary spanners or crossers have been described as
11 “people who move freely between two or more domains and who understand the values,
12 culture and language, and have the trust of both”. (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2008) Boundary
13 spanners have been described, within different disciplinary domains, to transfer knowledge
14 and learning, create innovation and entrepreneurialism, change culture and help to
15 generate social capital (Farmer and Kilpatrick, 2009; Peng and Sutanto, 2012). Here,
16 boundary spanners who are intriguingly able to span the domains of socially excluded lives
17 and community institutions, are acting to socially integrate and include marginalised people.
18 Additionally novel perhaps, they might be viewed as acting to preserve community
19 functionality by absorbing disconnected people into spaces where they will be exposed to
20 community norms and values, shaping them to be ‘appropriate’ local citizens. It is
21 noteworthy that, although the boundary spanners clearly fill an important, literally life-
22 changing role, their boundary spanning is informal. Considering non-governmental
23 organisations, Isbell (2012) notes this as a feature of boundary spanners. As well as their
24 roles for community and participants, Nathan, Mary and Sue, themselves, gain wellbeing
25 from their interactions with social enterprise participants; for example, Sue notes she has
26 met local people through running her art classes at GreenShed.
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43 In this exploratory study, our small sample of non-participant informants provided only a
44 glimpse of how the social enterprise might impact on wellbeing of people in the wider
45 community, but we did gain ideas for further study. We suggest that social enterprises
46 might impact on wellbeing in a community by: generating social enterprise participants
47 (people in the locale) who are more connected, included and ‘well’; transforming
48 disconnected people into functional local citizens that fit with community norms; affording
49 wellbeing for boundary spanning individuals who enjoy making connections and trying to
50 realise the potential they see in others. This is supported by findings of Barraket and Archer
51 (2010), who found that social enterprises can resource civic infrastructure and act as
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3 boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) that integrate community members inside and
4 outside social enterprises.
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7 Contributing to applications of relational geography theory, this study is novel in showing
8 what happens after, outside, or in extension to, an experience of social enterprise as a space
9 of wellbeing. Previous studies have been static, exploring the potential of landscapes (e.g.
10 Foley, 2011) or how a space realises wellbeing (Atkinson and Robson, 2012). This study
11 followed participants from a space of wellbeing to see what happens next. Its findings
12 validate suggestions by Atkinson (2013) and others that experiences and benefits (the
13 potential for wellbeing) can travel with someone (Doughty, 2013). Our findings are new in
14 suggesting this occurs on an ongoing basis only due to therapeutic assemblage including
15 factors amenable to wellbeing. We found largely positive effects and assemblages of
16 wellbeing, but we note the constraints of a study where participants generally walked
17 together, performed positively and visited public, busy (i.e. relatively secure) locations.
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21 In terms of its limitations, the study was small and exploratory. While all of the social
22 enterprise participants were male, there was diversity in age-range and inclusion of people
23 with health challenges. GreenShed's operational model may be distinctive, limiting
24 transferability of findings. Study participants were identified by staff, meaning there is
25 potential for positive bias. Most participants undertook mental mapping and walking
26 interviews alongside another GreenShed participant and, on occasion, with a carer present.
27 This might have affected topics discussed, and mood/tone. Data collection about
28 participants' community life was restricted to walking in participant-selected spaces.
29 Unselected spaces and home life were not included and could be sites of negative
30 experiences that would reveal different findings. The number of non-participant boundary
31 spanners who were included to extend insights about social enterprise participants and
32 community life, was small and it is unlikely saturation of themes about social enterprise-
33 community wellbeing relationships, was reached. Future studies are needed that include
34 more interviews with community members, to provide a fuller picture.
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38 Walking interviews appeared to engage social enterprise participants perhaps because they
39 gave an opportunity to lead researchers, involved walking and talking with a companion and
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3 used novel technologies that interested participants. Walking in the locale involved
4 interaction with objects and people that triggered participant discussion.
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7 **Conclusions**

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10 Our study indicated that participants did 'take wellbeing with them', from their social
11 enterprise experiences, into their lives in community. This could be envisaged as extending
12 the social enterprise as a space of wellbeing which is constantly changing as participants
13 move through community, creating and re-creating therapeutic assemblages. There seems
14 potential for a dark side to this, with material and social inputs disturbing wellbeing, but
15 there was scant evidence of that in this study. More research on this would be valuable.
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21 The people living in the locale gained in several ways, including by the greater social
22 inclusion of engaged, well social enterprise participants. The role of boundary spanning
23 people who are both of the everyday community, but understand the social enterprise, is
24 important in knitting participants into community life. While therapeutic landscape was a
25 useful overlay in revealing relationships between social enterprise participants, wellbeing
26 and community life, it would be useful, next, to explore how theory that is explicitly about
27 understanding how community works (e.g. social capital, community resilience, community
28 development theory), could be added. This would help to further explain what is going on in
29 the relationships studied here, and to conjoin relational wellbeing theory with established
30 theories about community.
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39 We acknowledge this is a small exploratory study and that our approach could be
40 understood as positively seeking for aspects of wellbeing realisation emanating from social
41 enterprise connection. To this end, our findings may well over-simplify the connection
42 between social enterprise, participants, wellbeing and community life. We recognise there
43 is huge complexity in this study field, but suggest we have provided here some early ideas to
44 stimulate further study. We saw tantalising glimpses of what might be going on when a
45 purposed space of wellbeing meets a socio-economically disadvantaged community. We
46 think our findings tentatively support the promise of applying social enterprise as a
47 wellbeing intervention – for individuals and places, but larger scale research is required to
48 improve understanding.
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