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### Social Enterprise and Wellbeing in Community Life

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## Social enterprise and wellbeing in community life

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## Social enterprise and wellbeing in community lifeIntroduction

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 in/by a setting that has material, cultural and social aspects. In this case, the originality of this paper lies in using relational methods to explore if and how, a social enterprise might have wellbeing impacts on people's lives in a community. The paper seeks to explore the added value of social enterprises which Hazenberg (2014) suggests has been insufficiently explored, to date, in academic research.

Much of the promise of social enterprises for socio-economically disadvantaged people is based on their purported capacity to realise wellbeing (e.g. Lysaght *et al.*, 2012; Teasdale, 2010). We understand individual wellbeing here, from Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), as comprised of elements of integration, security, capability and therapy, fluid and relative rather than fixed (Atkinson, 2013); but we acknowledge that wellbeing is multiply interpreted.

In a previous study conducted in 2011 (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we applied a relational geography approach to explore how wellbeing was realised for individuals engaged in GreenShed, a social enterprise in a regional Australian town. In that study we found that applying Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) Spaces of Wellbeing Theory helped to identify wellbeing realised in a social enterprise and how wellbeing realisation occurred. Therapeutic assemblage, another concept from relational geography (Foley, 2011), was helpful in understanding how material things, stories and practices come together to realise wellbeing in places. We provided quotes from social enterprise participants that showed their experiences of wellbeing in a social enterprise, and these developed. From relating participants' discussions to spaces within and associated with, the social enterprise, we were even able to show different aspects of wellbeing built in productive and social spaces. This enabled a micro-geography of wellbeing realisation in a social enterprise, to be portrayed.

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3 From the 2011 study, we were intrigued by participants' discussions of their social  
4 enterprise experiences in relation to 'life in the community'; for example, discussing how  
5 social connections formed in the social enterprise, extended into, and affected experiences  
6 in, community life. This led us to wonder if and how, the social enterprise impacted on  
7 participants' lives in the community and whether impacts were more widely felt – like  
8 ripples on a pond – by others in the community.  
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14 This paper discusses a further small, exploratory study we conducted, again with  
15 participants of GreenShed, but in 2014-15. It builds on the 2011 study and largely involves a  
16 different group of participants. The goal was to explore if and how the wellbeing realised  
17 by/in a social enterprise impacts on participants' 'everyday' community lives – and the lives  
18 of others in the community. We ask - are there wellbeing benefits that are experienced  
19 beyond the boundaries of engagement at/ in a social enterprise? We understand  
20 community as comprising a geographical location, the built/natural environment there, and  
21 the people that live and/or work there. We view community as constructed through  
22 ongoing interactions between these aspects. We understand community here as associated  
23 with a meaningful location (Cresswell, 2004 p.7), but fluid and composed of networks and  
24 flows between relations (Massey, 1997), experienced differently by diverse participants and  
25 at different times, alone or together (Doughty, 2013). In this respect, while recognising that  
26 community is variously understood (e.g. McGregor, 2012), our concept of community is akin  
27 to relational understanding of place. Cresswell (2004) describes: place as "an embodied  
28 relationship with the world. Places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense  
29 are never 'finished' but are constantly being performed."(p.37) We use the term 'everyday  
30 life' from de Certeau (1984), to signify that we are talking about the ordinary, rather than  
31 special, workings in communities of "practices, mixtures of rituals and makeshifts" (p.xvi)  
32 which are "all in general circulation and rather drab" (p.xviii).  
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49 Community wellbeing has been depicted as involving citizen safety, empowerment, socio-  
50 economic security, social cohesion and social inclusion (Miles *et al.*, 2008). Here, we do not  
51 consider what social enterprise contributes to a pre-defined concept of community  
52 wellbeing; rather we present a beginning exploration of how social enterprise might  
53 influence wellbeing of participants and others in everyday community life.  
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3 As a social enterprise, GreenShed might be regarded as a 'work integrated social enterprise'  
4 (WISE), intended to provide social support, build social capital and provide supported  
5 employment for vulnerable people (Barraket, 2014). On the surface, GreenShed appears to  
6 be a 'men's shed' i.e. a type of organisation popular in Australia and aimed at providing men  
7 with traditionally male-oriented, productive activities like woodworking (Ballinger *et al.*,  
8 2008). GreenShed is more than this and is open to all genders and incorporates activities  
9 such as art classes. GreenShed was established originally by a religious group following a  
10 natural disaster in the early 2000s. Its intention is equity and providing purpose through  
11 meaningful activity. GreenShed generates funding from sales of wood products, contracts  
12 with disability organisations and the Correction System, and community grants. We propose  
13 it is a social enterprise because it has a social mission, makes goods for sale and provides  
14 services for contract (Barraket *et al.*, 2010). Geographically, this study is located in a  
15 relatively disadvantaged and historically distinct suburb of a regional town in Victoria,  
16 Australia. The suburb is distinguished from the larger town by a boundary formed by a creek  
17 which acts as a physical and emotional barrier for connections with the rest of the town.  
18 Both the regional town and this suburb grew out of intense gold-mining in the 1850s-1870s,  
19 followed by later development of rural industries and services.  
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35 The study involved nine purposively-selected social enterprise participants, and four  
36 interviewees with knowledge of the social enterprise and the community (depicted here as  
37 boundary spanners (Richter *et al.* 2006)), identified from participant data collection. Data  
38 were collected from social enterprise participants using mental mapping and walking  
39 interviews; and from others using face-to-face interviews.  
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## 45 **Background**

### 46 *Social enterprises and wellbeing*

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

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11 Roy and others (2014 p.190) suggest social enterprises could provide "a window of  
12 opportunity for mutual understanding and interaction with the community", but again there  
13 is little evidence that probes micro-scale social enterprise-community inter-relationships.  
14 Our study moves understanding away from viewing individual wellbeing as a fixed stock, to  
15 understanding how wellbeing assets, realised from interactions with social enterprise as a  
16 space of wellbeing, inter-relate with aspects of everyday life, giving opportunities for  
17 affecting wellbeing in the community.

### 28 29 *Space, place and wellbeing*

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

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38 The study described here used methods consistent with relational geography; that is,  
39 mental mapping and walking interviews; and incorporated technologies including  
40 geographical tracking and photography. The methods were intended to capture places  
41 significant to participants and locate what was said and expressed there, recorded in  
42 photographs and observed in the action of taking photographs. The methods were intended  
43 to facilitate participants to steer researchers where participants wanted to go, associated  
44 with what researchers asked them. Walking in the locale allowed us to capture feelings  
45 expressed and incidental events that happened as participants encountered other people,  
46 things and locations. Emotions as expressed in smiling, language tone and body language  
47 were aspects observed and recorded. Walking interviews have been discussed as helpful for  
48 vulnerable participants because they address the norm where researchers lead the agenda,  
49 affording elements of empowerment to the study subjects (Evans and Jones, 2011). Doughty  
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3 (2013) notes this equalising quality suggesting “walking-with” provides a “temporary form  
4 of companionship” (p.145). She explains that walking interviews capture the reality of our  
5 mobile lives performed in meaningful, but incidental interactions with others.  
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9 GreenShed was our study setting because we had researched there before, had contextual  
10 understanding and established relationships with staff. GreenShed produces wooden  
11 products from recycled timber, and services related to planning, building and installing  
12 these. GreenShed participants are unpaid and deal with the range of life challenges  
13 described by Borzaga and Depedri (2014, p.91), including long-term unemployment and  
14 disability. They are referred from within the local community, by the Correction System and  
15 by disability services and organisations. GreenShed also has a paid manager and inputs from  
16 other paid workers. GreenShed is difficult to precisely typologise as a social enterprise  
17 (Borzaga and Depedri, 2014). It appears to focus most on the production of social  
18 integration outcomes produced through engaging people in productive activities, but it also  
19 has elements of work/business integration because goods are produced for sale. Our  
20 previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015) showed that engagement in work that produced goods  
21 for sale was significant for GreenShed participants. GreenShed participants are mainly men,  
22 although there are some female participants.  
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35 Nathan is the manager of GreenShed. We received his consent to undertake this study.  
36 Formal ethical approval was from La Trobe University Ethics Committee (FHEC 14/178  
37 01/08/2014). We asked Nathan to identify social enterprise participants for mental mapping  
38 and walking interviews based on his assessment of their capacity to participate. Ultimately,  
39 nine male participants were involved, eight chose to map/walk in pairs (i.e. with a  
40 companion from GreenShed) and one was involved on his own. All were between 20 and 65  
41 years old.  
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49 Participants received an information sheet. This was read out as some had literacy  
50 problems, with Nathan and/or another paid staff member present. Care was taken that  
51 participants did not feel obliged to be involved. We tried to make the experiences as  
52 unthreatening as possible. Members of the research team spent some time informally at  
53 GreenShed getting to know participants beforehand and during the time the study took  
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3 place. Participants were welcome to participate in the mental mapping and walking  
4 interviews with a companion, as was requested by some participants.  
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8 Following data collection with participants, we decided to interview 'boundary spanners'  
9 (Long *et al.*, 2013) as Nathan, a student volunteer and two community members were  
10 mentioned, by more than one participant, during walking interviews. We understand  
11 boundary spanners as people with connections and roles in community life, as well as  
12 knowledge of the social enterprise. These four consented to participate in face-to-face,  
13 audio-recorded interviews. A total of 13 subjects were thus involved.  
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19 Social enterprise participants were first asked to draw a mental map (Brennan-Horley,  
20 2010), using marker pens and paper, of places they might visit in the locale during a normal  
21 day (open to them to interpret), and to describe how these places made them feel and what  
22 they did there. Some participants found this challenging. We did not probe this, but it  
23 appeared related to literacy and/or confidence, challenges. In most cases, therefore,  
24 researcher TdC talked with participants about an imagined journey around the community,  
25 sometimes drawing what they described, but sometimes not – as thought appropriate.  
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33 Following this, participants led TdC on a walk from GreenShed around the locale. TdC wore a  
34 geographical positioning system (GPS) tracker and TdC and participants wore lapel  
35 microphones to record conversations. Walks lasted around one hour. Participants were  
36 asked to walk and talk about places in the community, following up the earlier mental  
37 mapping experience. Participants were encouraged by ongoing conversation from TdC to  
38 talk about, and photograph, places that they related to their social enterprise experiences.  
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44 Interviews were transcribed and thematic qualitative analysis was carried out using Nvivo,  
45 coding to the wellbeing dimensions of Spaces of Wellbeing Theory, and highlighting material  
46 objects, social interactions, practices or stories according to therapeutic assemblage.  
47 Analysis was open to new themes. Study subjects were given pseudonyms to preserve  
48 anonymity. Rounds of discussion of data were conducted among the research team, to  
49 explore what had been found.  
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55 Using GPS tracking and timestamps, we were able to align discussions with locations in the  
56 community. In a future, larger study, we would like to identify if there are key interaction  
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3 points (locations of consistent significance), but this study largely tested the methods and  
4 approach, for feasibility. Interacting with the technology proved engaging for participants  
5 and maps of each participants' journey were produced, by overlaying it with a picture  
6 captured from Googlemaps. These are not included here, but again the idea was tested for  
7 feasibility in a larger study.  
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## 11 Findings

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16 In our previous study (Munoz *et al.*, 2015), we identified wellbeing realised in a social  
17 enterprise and we described how it realised, using quotes and examples illustrating  
18 therapeutic assemblage of wellbeing from interconnections of material objects, social  
19 interactions, stories, practices and performances. In this study, we sought to explore  
20 whether this wellbeing from inside social enterprises might impact on participants in their  
21 everyday community life and whether it had any wider impacts on wellbeing in the  
22 community. Below, we explore evidence for these aspects, dividing our discussion into  
23 consideration of participants and then, the wider community. As in our previous study, we  
24 shape discussion by drawing on the idea of therapeutic assemblage.  
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### 32 *Social enterprise participants and wellbeing in community life*

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35 Findings suggest that wellbeing for participants realised inside GreenShed - in a sense -  
36 moves with them into their community life. Doughty (2013) proposes that therapeutic  
37 landscape could be viewed as "a moving space that unfolds within and through interactions  
38 with the environment (including other humans, as well as non-humans), rather than a fixed  
39 geographical location" (p.145). In various ways, during walking interviews, wellbeing  
40 realised within GreenShed could be interpreted as extending and augmenting through  
41 individuals' carrying out their day-to-day activities in the locale. Data suggest the  
42 participants as having developed a sort of mobile 'wellbeing bubble' which could be  
43 construed as having their space of wellbeing, stimulated and nascent in GreenShed, move  
44 with them into the community. Below we illustrate how participants experiences of  
45 wellbeing from GreenShed could be linked with their wellbeing in community life, through:  
46 community locations or material things acting as triggers for participants' expressions of  
47 wellbeing; the telling of stories about how wellbeing from GreenShed has improved  
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3 participants' community life; and, performances of wellbeing (being 'ordinary' (Thrift, 1999)  
4 in the community), which participants attribute to GreenShed participation.  
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7 *-Materiality: community objects as wellbeing triggers*  
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10 Participants led the researcher around the locale, discussing locations and objects that act  
11 to tie together their wellbeing, GreenShed and community life.  
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14 Objects and locations were discussed in relation to social integration; for example, Don  
15 explained, outside the chemist's shop, his difficulties interacting with staff there, in the past.  
16 He tended to get confused about whether or not he had received his drugs and said he  
17 sometimes got upset and angry. Nathan (GreenShed manager) had mediated with the staff  
18 to devise a system for Don to record and sign-off which drugs he had received. This led to  
19 new, cordial relationships with shop staff:  
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26 *Don: "before I came to [GreenShed], I was pretty angry and I was very suspicious of*  
27 *everyone. It was the way that I survived... they were the wrong mechanisms, but they were*  
28 *the only ones I knew. Nathan used to come up with me to the chemist. When I first went up*  
29 *there, I went off because I thought they were trying to rip me off. They were showing me*  
30 *these things and I couldn't work it out. I was getting confused. So I told Nathan what*  
31 *happened, and he said I better come with you, so he came up with me and made them do a*  
32 *list and I had to sign for it..."*  
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39 Another participant, James, led the researcher to a bus stop which symbolised his journey to  
40 becoming an 'ordinary' (i.e. non-disruptive) citizen. James described:  
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45 *"I was hanging out at the bus stops mainly, but I've not done that for ages now. All of the*  
46 *shop owners complained about me. I was yelling at the people and what not. I used to be*  
47 *really aggressive, I still am a little bit – and people used to be intimidated because they'd*  
48 *hear me yelling at people at the bus stop ..."*  
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53 James was referred to GreenShed by Mary who works at a shop beside the bus stop. Mary  
54 contacted Nathan about James. James began participating at GreenShed, and explained, to  
55 TdC at the bus-stop, how that led to an upturn in his life:  
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3 *TdC: "so this is the infamous bus stop you used to hang out at"*  
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5 *James: "yeh that's right, there's the shop owner [Mary] as well – I have to wave now"*  
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8 The incident is significant as occurring at the location associated with James's previously  
9 disruptive behaviour, changed by engagement with GreenShed, arising from Mary's referral.  
10 James implies a reversal of the power relationship, suggesting his obligation – now - to wave  
11 to Mary, thus conferring his favour on her. James explained that the bus-stop, and adjacent  
12 shop, is further symbolic of his recovery because, periodically, he is now invited by Mary to  
13 help out at the shop.  
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19 Other locations triggered stories of personal realisation and health improvement that  
20 participants connected with GreenShed involvement. For example, Thad led the researcher  
21 past a gym, saying:  
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26 *"... I want to become a professional weightlifter. I wouldn't if it wasn't for all this*  
27 *community... [gestures involvement]. I wouldn't want to do it. I wouldn't even go to the*  
28 *gym..."*  
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33 A material thing/location in the community could show the value to others of participants'  
34 skills and work. An example was where Rob and Angus highlighted a wooden fence that four  
35 social enterprise participants had built for Sue, a community member who also ran art  
36 classes at GreenShed. Rob and Angus discussed how they had helped to build the fence and  
37 talked enthusiastically and proudly, at the fence, with one photographing the other, his arm  
38 draped over the fence and a smile on his face:  
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45 *Angus: "we put the fence up...just four of us... yeah we got all the stuff delivered, we got the*  
46 *pickets delivered and...Rob oiled them all up ...that's it there [points to fence]"*  
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49 *Rob: stand in front of it and get your picture taken, mate. Hang onto the fence, lean on the*  
50 *fence, that's it, just like that! Get your hand away from the number, that's it! That's it, look*  
51 *at it, aye..."*  
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55 *Rob added: "...it needs a coat of bloody paint on it, doesn't it? Or something? Look at that,*  
56 *that one's split, better get on to her... it needs a coat of something on it..."*  
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3 Adding to the illustration, a passer-by shouted over to Rob, Angus and the researcher,  
4 highlighting his acknowledgement that the men had made the fence.  
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7  
8 In this vein, most participants showed researcher TdC evidence of some work or project  
9 achieved for community benefit; another example was an ArtSpace renovation. Participants  
10 also discussed projects that had been planned, but fallen through, for example, new  
11 benches for a sports club. Although these projects had not occurred, participants had a  
12 positive attitude, suggesting they were resilient about these adverse events.  
13  
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16  
17 Cafes, pubs, sports facilities and shops were highlighted as locations signifying greater ease  
18 with community interactions. Several noted their confidence, now, to try out new facilities  
19 – e.g. a new superstore. Participants often discussed whether they felt welcomed, accepted  
20 or were treated ‘like an ordinary person’ at shops and cafes, showing a relational  
21 connection between locations, participants and others; and tacitly relating these  
22 interconnections to new-found wellbeing. Their discussions suggest wellbeing from  
23 GreenShed plants seeds of confidence to be adventurous, however, other aspects are  
24 necessary for wellbeing transferral to be achieved in another setting. For example, Don  
25 notes that chemist shop staff are welcoming and friendly so he is comfortable going there,  
26 but newsagent staff are not perceived as welcoming, so he does not go there.  
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36 *-Metaphorical: stories reinforcing wellbeing*  
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39 While community locations or objects could stimulate discussion of wellbeing connections,  
40 participants used stories - sometimes linked to locations, but sometimes abstractly – to link  
41 wellbeing from the social enterprise with aspects of community life. All participants  
42 portrayed moving from a dark period of their life, characterised by experiences of  
43 loneliness, disconnection, exclusion, loss of worth and/or mental illness, to a current time  
44 where they experience greater connection to others around them (including other  
45 GreenShed participants), control of aspects of their life, future orientation and a wider  
46 range of connections with people and locations.  
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53  
54 Rob described suddenly losing his capacity to work and drive, through illness - to now  
55 feeling a valued participant in community life, at least partly due to GreenShed involvement:  
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3 *"...I can say to people, bloody-yeah, I was one of those blokes that, with my [illness]...I found*  
4 *out about the [illness] down at the City Hospital four years ago... they reduced me to tears*  
5 *down there. I was one of those blokes that thought Beyond Blue and all that was a load of*  
6 *rubbish...it's not...I had a depression slump...at one stage I was suicidal, been through that*  
7 *sort of rubbish..."; and added*  
8  
9

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11  
12 *'... Mary at [shop] – she's the one that got me onto this here ... it's a long story...I bumped*  
13 *into her at the shop, had a bit of a chat with her... she suggested about coming down here*  
14 *and meeting Nathan and she sent Nathan an email ..., and sent me down there, you know,*  
15 *and I come down not really expecting too much... I've been there ever since and you can't*  
16 *keep me away from the place..."*  
17  
18  
19

20  
21  
22 As they walk, a car horn honks ...  
23

24  
25 *Rob: "I can't walk down the street without someone knowing me...there you go, hear that!*  
26 *So that's the way it is, you know... that's it, toot toot. Quite often I will call into Mary there.*  
27 *Saturday morning or whatever and quite often I'll call in and if Glenda's going [to*  
28 *GreenShed], I'll pick her up a cup of coffee or whatever"*  
29  
30  
31

32  
33 Engagement with the social enterprise provided some participants with experiences of  
34 productive work, portrayed as evidence of recovery and worth. As described above, James  
35 moved from disruptive behaviour at the bus-stop, to helping at the adjacent shop. That  
36 described:  
37  
38

39  
40 *"I used to play video games, but what GreenShed has done, is everyone knows me. I know*  
41 *how to talk to a lot of people around here. I've got my own little business too...a [name]*  
42 *business ... I make [products]...it's community-based. If you asked me about five years ago, if*  
43 *you want to do something in the community .... I would say no..."; adding: "for me, it's about*  
44 *being part of the community. I never wanted to be treated differently. I couldn't care less if I*  
45 *had a disability or not. I still have to wake up with a disability. It's not going to change so you*  
46 *might as well be treated normally..."*  
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54 Don described his severe mental illness linked to a traumatised upbringing. Now, as well as  
55 amicable interactions with his general medical practice and chemist's shop staff, Don tells of  
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3 a changed perspective regarding his gambling, money and his future , explaining to TdC  
4  
5 outside the bank:

6  
7 *"I'm a bit hot on the horses. I won \$600 when I first got to GreenShed. Nathan said: 'are you*  
8  
9 *going to bank some of it?' I said 'ok I'll bank half of it....last year I had nearly \$400 in the*  
10  
11 *bank and this year I've got nearly \$500."*

12  
13 Participant's recovery stories were often linked to feelings of social integration. For some,  
14  
15 the reach of their activities had extended in nature and geographical scale. James's  
16  
17 involvement in art classes at GreenShed led to him being linked, via Sue (community  
18  
19 member that runs art classes), with an initiative taking socio-economically disadvantaged  
20  
21 people on a visit to UK galleries. Thad and Jules described attending national sports events  
22  
23 and music festivals. They explained that these new adventures stemmed from attending a  
24  
25 national rugby match with Nathan and his friends. Thad said, previous to this: *"we never*  
26  
27 *went to Melbourne on our own...I'd probably go with someone else that made me feel*  
28  
29 *comfortable... now I can do it on my own."*

30  
31 Like the example of James given earlier, Thad suggested a changed power relationship, this  
32  
33 time with Nathan:

34  
35 *"...I'm planning to go to at least one match in Melbourne.... If Nathan wants to come,*  
36  
37 *Nathan's more than welcome to come. I would never do that before. If I knew Nathan*  
38  
39 *[wanted to go]... I wouldn't ask. One thing I would have thought of back then was, if I ask*  
40  
41 *someone from GreenShed, they would think they'd have to look after me..."*

42  
43 Relationships with family members or friends not associated with GreenShed were not  
44  
45 probed. Nonetheless, some participants mentioned family relationships. Rob depicted  
46  
47 positive relationships, but some participants mentioned being unconnected with family  
48  
49 members and some related stories of negative relationships with family members.  
50  
51 Participants' stories of enjoying wellbeing in community life - linked to GreenShed - were  
52  
53 invariably positive, and depicting an upturn in life. Perhaps this is linked to undertaking  
54  
55 walking interviews in pairs, where participants might have felt encouraged to support and  
56  
57 build on each other's positivity.

58  
59 *-Performance: practising and communicating wellbeing*  
60



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3 Participants discussed attending GreenShed within a routine of everyday life. Discussions  
4 portray GreenShed as a workplace, as in this conversation between James and Nathan:  
5  
6

7 *J: "I stay here for most of the day, til 3 o'clock sometimes, don't I Nathan?"*  
8  
9

10 *N: (joking) 'til we kick him out*  
11

12 *J: 'til they kick me out, 'til they've had enough of me*  
13  
14

15 Angus notes asking Nathan if he could attend GreenShed 'full-time', rather than three days a  
16 week. Jules discussed his journey to GreenShed, undertaken almost daily:  
17  
18

19 *"I walk, I walk, I drive my chair to Emu Road near Bunnings and then get on the bus and*  
20 *come out here....[person] showed me how to get the bus and stuff...[sometimes]...we go out*  
21 *at night to a pub..."*  
22  
23  
24

25 Each walking interview revealed instances of participants chatting with or waving to, others  
26 in the locale. James waved to Mary from the shop and Rob and Angus got a friendly 'toot  
27 toot' from a passing car. A lady with children chatted to Don and Greg. During their walking  
28 interview Thad and Jules met and greeted various people; for example, a gardener in the  
29 park:  
30  
31  
32  
33

34 *Thad: "when we see the gardener that we know, we talk about other stuff. I would never*  
35 *stop by and talk to someone, from a garden or doing the garden.*  
36  
37  
38

39 *Jules: we'd probably never have done that before, talked to a random...*  
40  
41

42 *Carer: ...but he passes through [GreenShed] though, you seen him when you're there."*  
43  
44

45 Participants discussed interactions with others from GreenShed in community settings. Don  
46 and Greg went to the YMCA to watch Thad and Jules play basketball and Thad and Jules  
47 discussed involving a group of participants in a fun sporting event.  
48  
49

50 All participants discussed feeling more confident and happier while moving about the locale  
51 and interacting, and linked this to GreenShed participation. Sometimes descriptions of these  
52 feelings were reinforced by feedback received at GreenShed. Don noted: "... Nathan said to  
53 me – 'you've come a long way, Don – you've come from an angry person to a happy person."  
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3 In the above section, we have endeavoured to use findings to illustrate how social  
4 enterprise participants found wellbeing feelings stimulated from community locations and  
5 objects, how they used stories to link their community wellbeing with the social enterprise  
6 and how they linked 'healthy' practices in the community with their engagement at  
7 GreenShed. We now move to consider what evidence we gained about relationships  
8 between the social enterprise and community life for others, and how that might affect  
9 wellbeing in the community.  
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### 15 *Social enterprise and wellbeing in everyday community life*

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19 Discussions with social enterprise participants highlighted some key people whose names  
20 occurred more than once, and that appeared active in bridging between GreenShed and  
21 community life. We decided that a way of beginning to understand relationships between  
22 the social enterprise and community life and what that might mean for wider wellbeing,  
23 would be to interview these people that appeared to act as boundary spanners.  
24 Interviewees included Nathan, manager of GreenShed; Sue, a volunteer that runs art classes  
25 at GreenShed; Mary who works in a shop in the community, and who knows about the work  
26 of GreenShed because her parents volunteer there and from her involvement on  
27 community organisation committees; and Liz, a student volunteer.  
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36 One role of the social enterprise in community wellbeing was acting to knit disconnected  
37 people into community life, thus protecting community functionality. In conversation,  
38 Nathan regularly states an active mission to connect participants with community life. For  
39 example, he mediated between Don and chemist's shop staff and discussed connecting  
40 other participants with health and social care services, such as counselling. Nathan called  
41 local police to speak with James regarding his disruptive behaviour. This allowed police to  
42 speak with James as a warning rather than the situation escalating to a formal criminal  
43 proceeding.  
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51 Nathan said: *"the locksmith and the café half way along there used to complain... they all*  
52 *had a bit of a spit and asked me to fix it...I got the police down here...I actually rung the*  
53 *police, not because it was a criminal problem...I got the policeman to come down and have a*  
54 *talk to these guys. That was after they'd started here though. Just about their noise and how*  
55 *that might frighten people, they weren't in trouble..."*  
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3 Mary alluded to how GreenShed's role in maintaining community security might be  
4 misunderstood, suggesting that some local residents actually saw GreenShed as a place  
5 where troubled people gathered, noting:  
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8  
9 *"...initially I was aware of some of the people attending GreenShed, and I had seen them*  
10 *around here ... it was, like...what do they do down there?...I thought it was great what they*  
11 *were doing, but I thought it was a bit dubious about..." [makes hand gesture of collecting*  
12 *together].*  
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16  
17 She highlighted a need for the wider community to understand this 'peace-keeping' role of  
18 the social enterprise, saying:  
19

20  
21 *"...there's this kind of [suburb] stigma...about GreenShed...people haven't taken the time to*  
22 *go...no...they're trying to do something there. There's a little narrowmindedness... I don't*  
23 *think the community appreciates fully what is happening down there."*  
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27  
28 Having a more subtle and covert role than Nathan in this community security dimension,  
29 Mary reflected on her own role - in a sense, triaging disconnected people that she  
30 encountered through interactions in her shop as: appropriate for GreenShed, or otherwise.  
31  
32 Mary suggests that some people are suitable to become more connected through  
33 GreenShed, while others require other sorts of engagement. Here she notes why and how  
34 she connected Rob with GreenShed:  
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37

38  
39 *"Rob was a really good fit... I'm like – I reckon he'll fit down there...it's like referring someone*  
40 *to your hairdresser, you're really cautious. You go, are they going to be a good client, or*  
41 *not....? ...there's a few that are, like, I would not do that to Nathan..."; adding "...I am*  
42 *selective about who I say, go down and check it out... it's a higher level of need, versus, the*  
43 *one's that I have recommended are the ones that have come into town and they don't know*  
44 *people...and they want social interaction, one of the things is how long they come in here*  
45 *[the shop], sit in here and talk..."*  
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52  
53 While Sue depicted motivation to connect people into community life through her  
54 volunteering at GreenShed, her discussions also show that she gains wellbeing for herself  
55 from her connections. She appears to gain benefit from: engaging with art (her passion),  
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3 engaging others with art, and from making social connections for *herself*, in the community.

4  
5 She noted:

6  
7 *"with my work the idea is to make links in the community, and to identify places that the*  
8 *guys can come and do different things...I've been here about three years...there was a little*  
9 *group happening here, but it wasn't really much. I said...I can bring these guys out and*  
10 *started off the ...all day art class and then just developed it from there. It was just a good*  
11 *space for guys to come and do whatever it was they were wanting to do almost, mainly*  
12 *woodwork and art... there is a few that come in from the community, like apart from guys*  
13 *from GreenShed ..."*  
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20 Sue went on to explain: *"...we're going to the MONA gallery...we're taking about six guys*  
21 *there for 2 nights and 3 days..."* and *"I know a lot more people from being connected here".*  
22  
23

24 Finally, in a concrete way, the social enterprise contributed by bringing new people into the  
25 area to act as volunteers, exposing people from different backgrounds to the area and its  
26 benefits. This quote from Liz, a student volunteer shows how connection with GreenShed  
27 opened up different perceptions:  
28  
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32 *"... I'd never visited [suburb] before I came to Uni. It was only, like, those passing*  
33 *comments: "You don't really want to go out to [suburb]? You know there's that lower*  
34 *socio-economic people that live there." I never really had much to do with it... you*  
35 *know you'd get fruit just near [suburb] and different things, but I never really came*  
36 *out this way, until actually going to GreenShed and that's when I actually fell in love*  
37 *with the area around here..."*  
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#### 44 **Discussion**

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

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46 Considering wellbeing in participants' everyday community lives as potentially an extension  
47 of the social enterprise space of wellbeing, all of Fleuret and Atkinson's (2007) elements of  
48 wellbeing were identified. Participants chat and wave, reflecting their *social integration*.  
49 They make objects or provide services, on view to the public, showing *capability*. Their  
50 enhanced social connections and greater ease with trying new experiences, shows *security*  
51 in the environment through which they led the researcher. Their verbal, but also physically  
52 embodied expressions of ease, pride, physical mobility, happiness and relaxation exhibit  
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3 experiences of *therapy*. Manifestations of wellbeing described or seen, connect the social  
4 enterprise, wellbeing realised from it, and everyday community life for participants.  
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8 A link between employment and health is well established (Barraket, 2014; p. 103), with  
9 latent benefits being time structure, social contact, social status, engagement in a collective  
10 purpose and meaningful activity (Jahoda, 1982). GreenShed might be understood as a WISE  
11 with goals of social support, supported employment and trade. Although it does not provide  
12 paid employment, participants do appear to gain wellbeing from the kinds of factors  
13 associated with work, e.g. the routine of going to work. While the relative benefits of paid  
14 versus unpaid work may be debated, it is worth considering that paid work was possibly not  
15 an option for GreenShed participants, most of whom described or manifested high levels of  
16 vulnerability. What this study perhaps points to is that work-like activities in a work-like  
17 environment, with certain supports, can result in benefits like those of paid work, even for  
18 quite vulnerable people. Simultaneous with Barraket's (2014; p.105) depiction of WISE such  
19 enterprises might "simultaneously be sites of economic participation, social connectedness  
20 and civic engagement".  
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31 While we mostly found an upbeat story, scrutiny indicates negative issues beneath the  
32 surface. Individuals discussed community organisations' renegeing on contracts. Don noted  
33 that workers in some shops were unpleasant to him. Thus, overall, possible abuses to  
34 wellbeing were hinted at by participants. These did not appear to faze participants, which  
35 could show resilience, or perhaps they were swept along in the overwhelmingly positive feel  
36 of discourse and performance expressed in this study. We also found some evidence about  
37 people that were not considered to fit with the social enterprise or were not referred. In our  
38 previous study of GreenShed (Muñoz *et al.*, 2015), we found mention of people who did not  
39 fit in and who left. In this study, people who were not considered appropriate for referral to  
40 GreenShed, were discussed. We do not know what happens to these 'others', where they  
41 go and whether they find their place. If they do not, then social enterprise itself could be  
42 acting as an exclusionary institution in a community.  
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53 This paper provides indicative evidence of potential effects of social enterprise on wellbeing  
54 in wider community life. Part of the potential for wellbeing emanates from the chance for  
55 disconnected people to experience greater social inclusion through social enterprise  
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3 engagement. While we portray this as a therapeutic outcome for individuals, it could  
4 alternatively be interpreted as acting to mould disconnected participants to fit with  
5 community norms, resonating with neo-liberal requirements to 'govern oneself', as Rose  
6 (1996) depicts within 'relations of mutual obligation [to] the community' (p.331). Elements  
7 in this process are sometimes overt, as when Nathan invited the police to warn James about  
8 being a disruptive influence; other times, less so, as when Mary discusses her desire to  
9 connect people with others, identifying potential participants because they spend time  
10 chatting in the shop. As well as helping participants to 'fit in', Nathan, Mary and Sue each  
11 showed aspirations to extend people to reach their full potential; for example, when Nathan  
12 takes Thad and Jules to a sporting event and Sue organises to take art class participants to a  
13 gallery.  
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23 Mary, Nathan and Sue appear to have significant roles as boundary spanners; first, linking  
24 participants to the social enterprise and encouraging their attendance; then, smoothing  
25 their access to services and shops and connecting them to networks, with local, national and  
26 sometimes even international, reach. Boundary spanners or crossers have been described as  
27 "people who move freely between two or more domains and who understand the values,  
28 culture and language, and have the trust of both". (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2008) Boundary  
29 spanners have been described, within different disciplinary domains, to transfer knowledge  
30 and learning, create innovation and entrepreneurialism, change culture and help to  
31 generate social capital (Farmer and Kilpatrick, 2009; Peng and Sutanto, 2012). Here,  
32 boundary spanners who are intriguingly able to span the domains of socially excluded lives  
33 and community institutions, are acting to socially integrate and include marginalised people.  
34 Additionally novel perhaps, they might be viewed as acting to preserve community  
35 functionality by absorbing disconnected people into spaces where they will be exposed to  
36 community norms and values, shaping them to be 'appropriate' local citizens. It is  
37 noteworthy that, although the boundary spanners clearly fill an important, literally life-  
38 changing role, their boundary spanning is informal. Considering non-governmental  
39 organisations, Isbell (2012) notes this as a feature of boundary spanners. As well as their  
40 roles for community and participants, Nathan, Mary and Sue, themselves, gain wellbeing  
41 from their interactions with social enterprise participants; for example, Sue notes she has  
42 met local people through running her art classes at GreenShed.  
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3 In this exploratory study, our small sample of non-participant informants provided only a  
4 glimpse of how the social enterprise might impact on wellbeing of people in the wider  
5 community, but we did gain ideas for further study. We suggest that social enterprises  
6 might impact on wellbeing in a community by: generating social enterprise participants  
7 (people in the locale) who are more connected, included and 'well'; transforming  
8 disconnected people into functional local citizens that fit with community norms; affording  
9 wellbeing for boundary spanning individuals who enjoy making connections and trying to  
10 realise the potential they see in others. This is supported by findings of Barraket and Archer  
11 (2010), who found that social enterprises can resource civic infrastructure and act as  
12 boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) that integrate community members inside and  
13 outside social enterprises.  
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23 Contributing to applications of relational geography theory, this study is novel in showing  
24 what happens after, outside, or in extension to, an experience of social enterprise as a space  
25 of wellbeing. Previous studies have been static, exploring the potential of landscapes (e.g.  
26 Foley, 2011) or how a space realises wellbeing (Atkinson and Robson, 2012). This study  
27 followed participants from a space of wellbeing to see what happens next. Its findings  
28 validate suggestions by Atkinson (2013) and others that experiences and benefits (the  
29 potential for wellbeing) can travel with someone (Doughty, 2013). Our findings are new in  
30 suggesting this occurs on an ongoing basis only due to therapeutic assemblage including  
31 factors amenable to wellbeing. We found largely positive effects and assemblages of  
32 wellbeing, but we note the constraints of a study where participants generally walked  
33 together, performed positively and visited public, busy (i.e. relatively secure) locations.  
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43 In terms of its limitations, the study was small and exploratory. While all of the social  
44 enterprise participants were male, there was diversity in age-range and inclusion of people  
45 with health challenges. GreenShed's operational model may be distinctive, limiting  
46 transferability of findings. Study participants were identified by staff, meaning there is  
47 potential for positive bias. Most participants undertook mental mapping and walking  
48 interviews alongside another GreenShed participant and, on occasion, with a carer present.  
49 This might have affected topics discussed, and mood/tone. Data collection about  
50 participants' community life was restricted to walking in participant-selected spaces.  
51 Unselected spaces and home life were not included and could be sites of negative  
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3 experiences that would reveal different findings. The number of non-participant boundary  
4 spanners who were included to extend insights about social enterprise participants and  
5 community life, was small and it is unlikely saturation of themes about social enterprise-  
6 community wellbeing relationships, was reached. Future studies are needed that include  
7 more interviews with community members, to provide a fuller picture.  
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12 Walking interviews appeared to engage social enterprise participants perhaps because they  
13 gave an opportunity to lead researchers, involved walking and talking with a companion and  
14 used novel technologies that interested participants. Walking in the locale involved  
15 interaction with objects and people that triggered participant discussion.  
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## 20 **Conclusions**

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

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