CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Community Citizens Training Program:

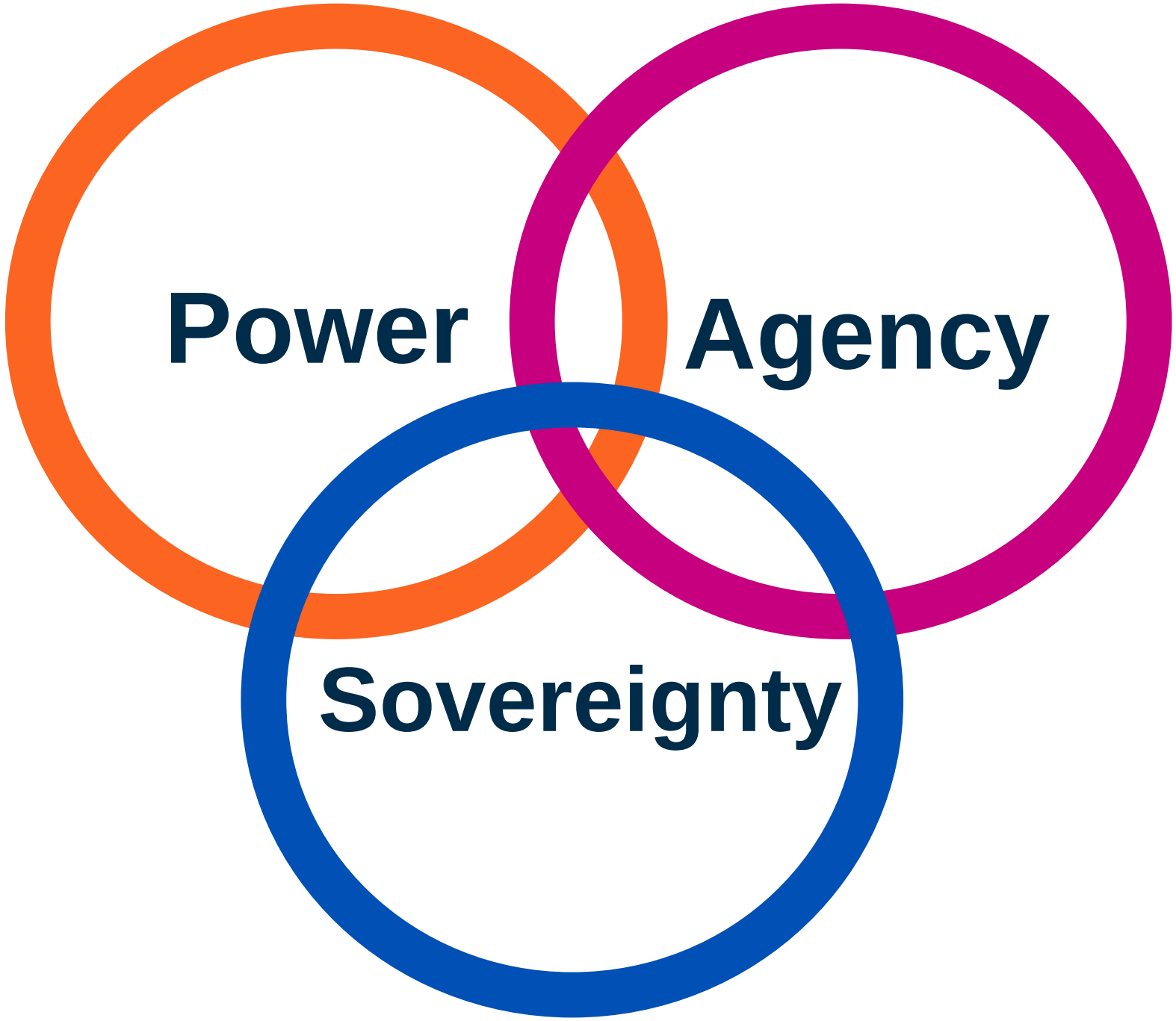
Designed to strengthen capacity to engage with power structures & achieve positive change.

Tanya Owen - Community Capacity Building Team
National Conference, 6-8 November, 2019

For Everyone & Anyone

CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Core Concept


Power
Agency
Sovereignty

Active Citizenship – Traditional Framing

- Low levels of political knowledge, interest in the traditional political system, & both low and falling levels of conventional civic participation.
- Narrow definition of active citizenship – voting, membership of political parties/unions, public consultations, speaking to elected Representatives
- Traditional education responses seeking to increase knowledge of Australia's democratic system and structures – traditional politics, facts and figures
- Maintaining "Healthy democracy"
- Assumes increased knowledge of facts of system of democracy will lead to increased (conventional) political participation.

What is missing?

When disengagement from traditional political participation has persisted…

- Facts alone do not automatically lead to a change in behaviour
- Failure of system? – Address systemic barriers & “Why bother” perspective
- “Healthy democracy” vs “Healthy Society” – People live in more than a democracy
- Cherry-picking meaning of active citizenship
- Civic is more than just traditional political space – civic activity encompasses the social, economic and cultural spheres of life.
- View: People are producers as well as products of their environment – can do this unconsciously or consciously
- **Psycho/social element to participation is ignored – Agency is fundamental to wellbeing & participation, is affected by environment, and requires more than facts to develop**.

People **take action**, and **persevere** in the face of difficulty, when they **believe** they **can** have impact – **“make a difference”.**

CITY OF PARRAMATTA

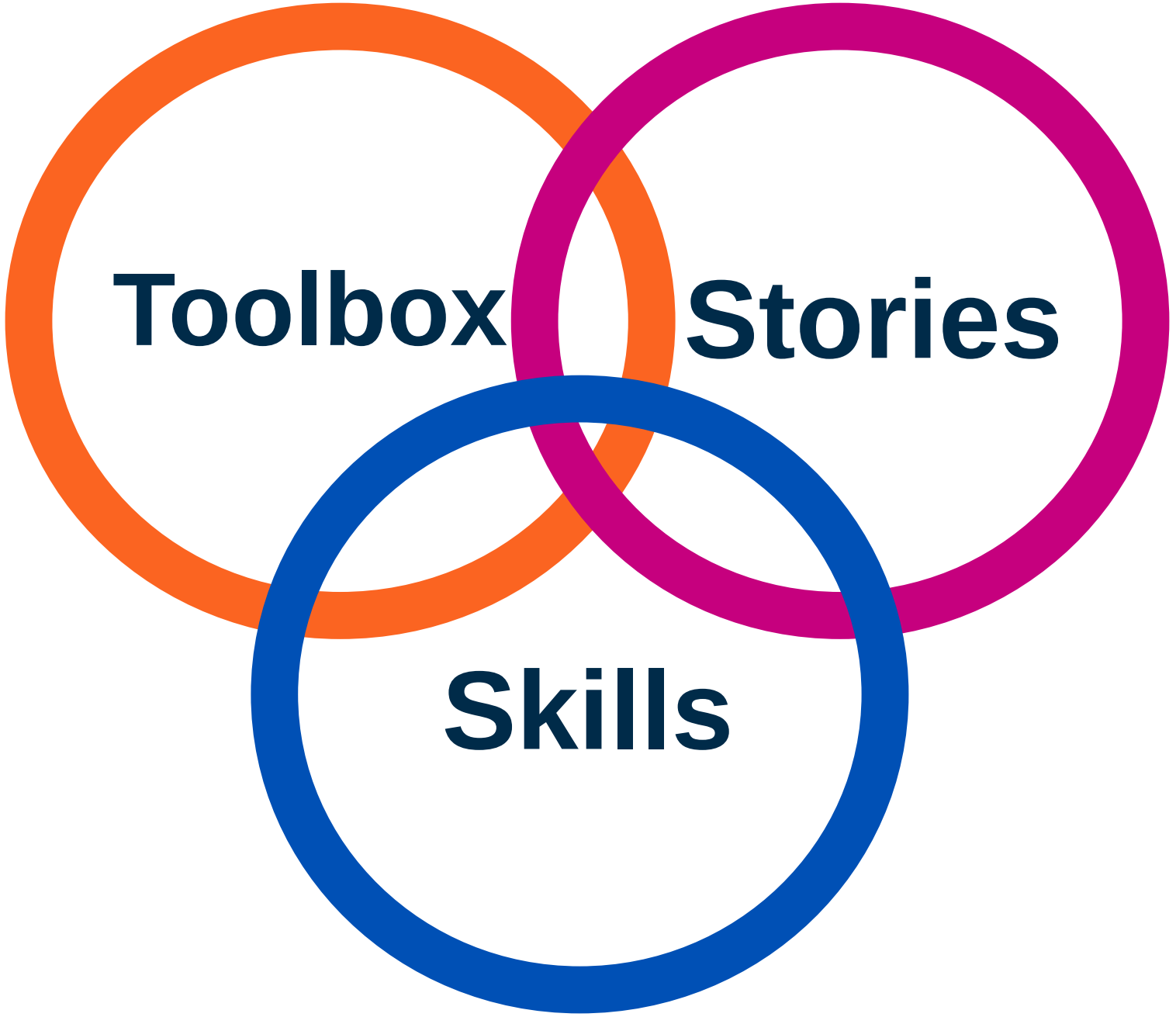
Agency & Empowerment

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura), Liberation Psychology (Zimmerman & Rappaport), Socio-Political Development Theory (Watts, Williams, Guessous)

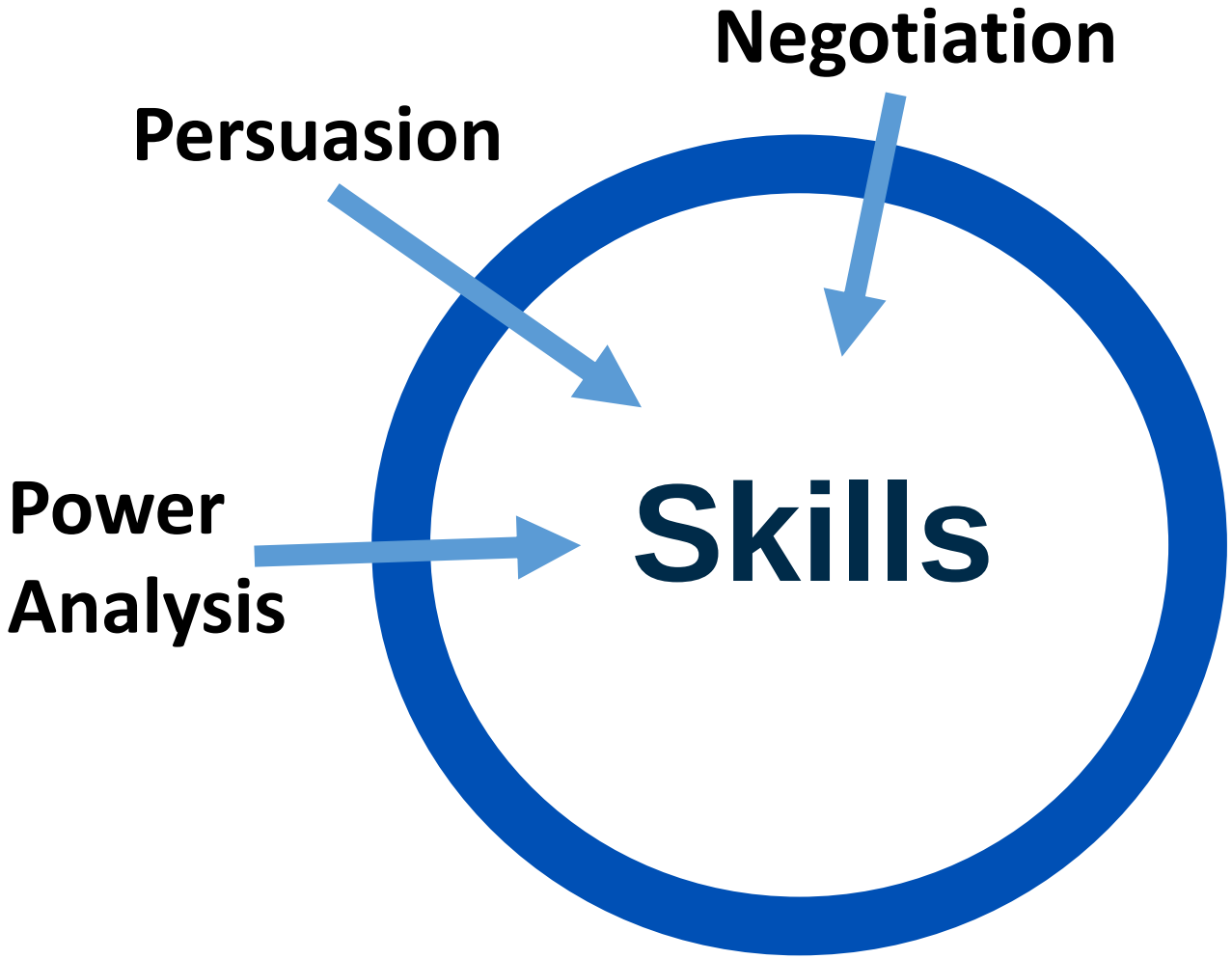
- Empowerment (to participate) – a process/outcome of individuals gaining control over their own lives, and democratic participation in the life of their community.
- Empowerment is a realisation of agency – and personal sovereignty – necessary for building capacity for action to create positive change.
- A sense of personal efficacy is integral – plus a willingness to take action and a critical understanding of the environment.
- Active Citizenship – intrinsically tied to personal and collective agency.

- ✓ **Capacity to analyse power & authority**
- ✓ **Know the status quo can be questioned - analysed for efficacy and subject to change**
- ✓ **Believe it CAN be done**
- ✓ **Practice civic action with purpose**

Program Content



Citizen Toolbox



- Relevant, real-life stories of everyday people
- Large scale & small scale action and change
- Demonstrate
  - Complexity
  - Collaboration
  - Different sources of power
  - Use of toolbox
  - Issue of time
- Opportunity to educate on how certain systems actually work (political, legal)
- Opportunity to analyse power, and learn from others.

Eddie Mabo and Native Title

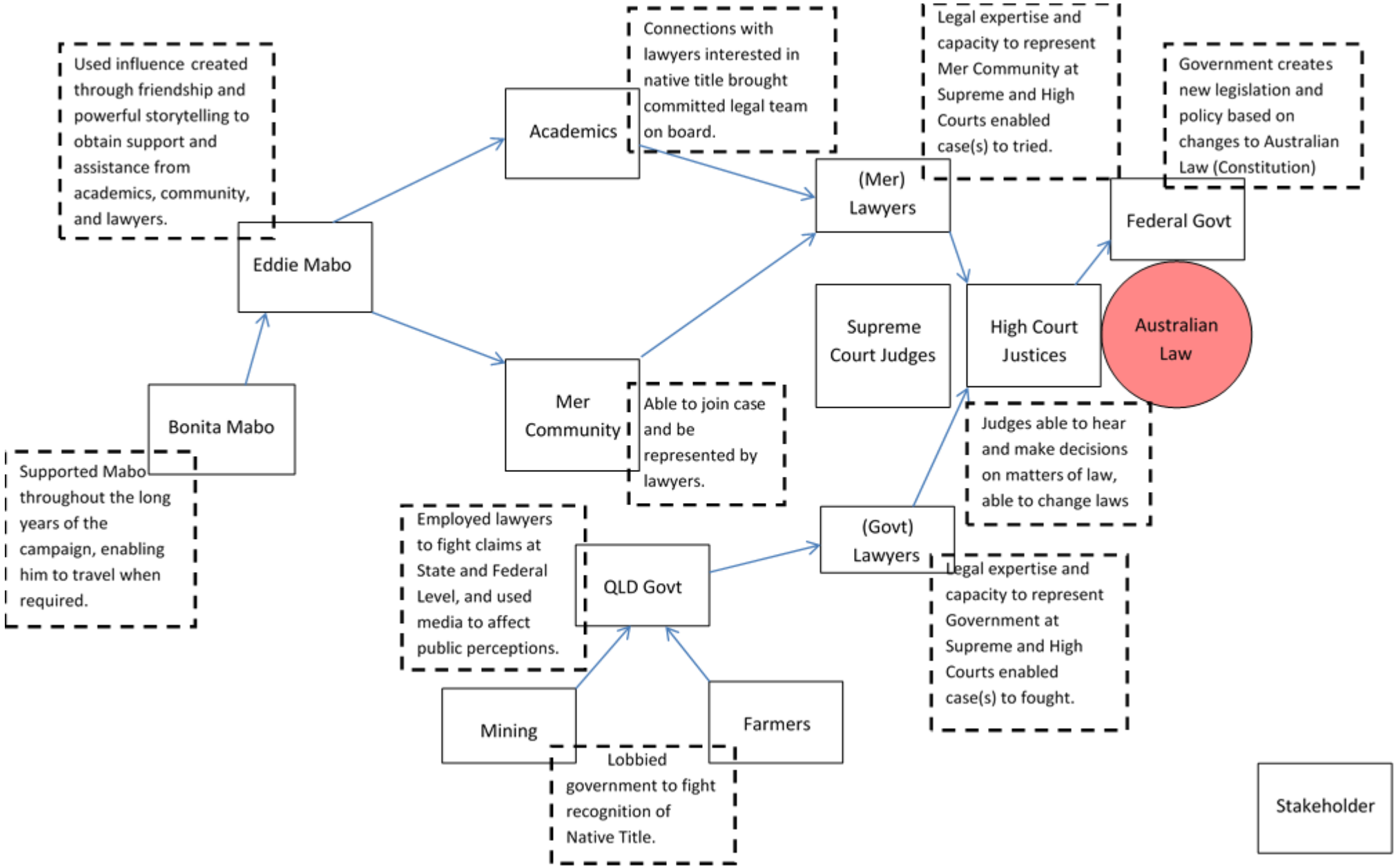
Q - What was the problem faced/experienced by Mabo and his people?
- What needed to change - that would provide a long-term solution?

Identify the key stakeholders

For each stakeholder:

- What types of power do they hold (according to power matrix on wall)?
- What did they want to happen – their goal?
- Who has the (direct) power to make that happen? (stakeholder)
- Who did they connect with to achieve their goal?
- What strategies did they use to use / increase their power and get the results they wanted – including who they influenced / joined in action with?
- On what power levels did they act (according to power matrix)?

Power Map Example – Eddie Mabo and Campaign for Native Title



Evaluation

Survey (perceived) change to:

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Confidence

Also ask:

- What has been the biggest change for them (personally)?
- What did they value the most?

Practice (Service/Project-based learning)

Councils are in a unique position to provide ongoing opportunities for further skills development, project support and mentoring.

Real-life learning opportunities to put what they have learned to the test, and to workshop challenges faced with someone who has expertise/experience or who can suggest someone who does.

Questions?

Tanya Owen

Community Capacity Building Officer

towen@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

CITY OF PARRAMATTA