Background
Workplace relations is now a significant issue of research because although there are rules and guidelines as to how these relations are to be undertaken in Australia, there is little research into collegial relations at workplace. Within nursing, and especially in a high acuity setting of a hospital such as a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the nature and culture of the workplace and because staff and especially nurses come into today’s workplace from different backgrounds, nationalities and cultures as well as varieties of life and work experiences. This study therefore seeks to examine how nurses interact and relate with each other and how these interactions and relations contribute to constructing their relations into a NICU as a workplace.

An ethnographic approach is adopted to enable such examination as it provides a wide lens to view and interpret the social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, and organization. In this way it can capture how multiplicities within the nursing group construct a workplace and shape the social relations assisting in exploring the culture of complex organizations such as hospital wards/units such as the NICU, which is the context of this study.

Aim
In this paper I focus on processes of access and gaining ethical permissions from the research setting with a study that is considered as Low and Negligible Risk (LNR) research, negotiating access to the research setting and gaining ethical approval from the related authority was challenging. Therefore, this presentation will discuss those hitches and hindrances that came on the way of access process.

Study Design
The paper describes and discusses the process of obtaining ethics approval from the research site. Ethnographic data collection includes the processes of access and gaining ethics permissions, and recruitment as well as the time in the field to conduct fieldwork. A NICU of a tertiary level Australian hospital where sick newborn babies are cared for is the research setting and volunteers who work as nurses in the unit are the participants. The ethics proposal submitted for approval reported that data to be collected would consist of fieldwork notes (observations and field notes), interviews and documents such as policies, procedures and processes relevant to the study. Analysis of data involves organizing raw data, undertaking a critical analysis and developing emergent themes followed by interpretation through contextualization, correlation and development of new theories or concepts.

The Ethical Process consists of preparing the ethics proposal, submitting it to the relevant authority, and liaising with the research site. So, in accordance with the guidelines given in the online ethics forms designed by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Australian Research Council (ARC) the Low or Negligible Risk Research (LNR) form and its Site Specific Assessment (SSA) application were completed and submitted to the local Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) along with other required documents. The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) reviewed the study at the first stage and came up with some minor issues to be clarified. Once amendments were done, the proposal was approved without even requiring full HREC review. However, the Research Governance Office (RGO) deviated from the policy directive and the process ended with refusal of access. As a result, a new research site had to be arranged which caused dilemma to the researcher whether to abandon the project or leave the employment.

Discussion
This paper argues that the processes of ethnographic research such as ethics approval and initial access to the site are a challenge. No matter how significant the study would be for the organization it can be refused access at any moment. These issues are reflected through ethnographic accounts of the researcher’s experiences of gaining access to the setting, negotiating the “ethics process” and early encounters with the potential participants. Discussion of the nature of ethnographic research will underpin how such challenges may arise.