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Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing

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Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHA	Aboriginal Housing Authority, South Australia
AHID	Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate, Western Australia
AHO	Aboriginal Housing Office, New South Wales
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANIHI	Australian National Indigenous Housing Information
ARHP	Aboriginal Rental Housing Program
ASD	Adelaide Statistical Division (SA)
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATSIS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
BBF	Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
CGCIFI	Commonwealth Grants Commission Indigenous Funding Inquiry
CGCRoIF	Commonwealth Grants Commission Report on Indigenous Funding
CHFA	Community Housing Federation of Australia
CHINS	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
CHIP	Community Housing Infrastructure Program
CHO	Community Housing Organisation
CMIHP	Community Managed Indigenous Housing Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
DHW	Department of Housing and Works (WA)
FaCS	Family and Community Services, Commonwealth Department of
FHFBH	Fixing Houses for Better Health
GISCA	The National Centre for Social Applications of GIS, The University of Adelaide
HMAC	Housing Ministers Advisory Committee
HMC	Housing Ministers' Conference
HPA	Home Purchase Assistance
ICHO	Indigenous Community Housing Organisation

IHANT	Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory
IHAS	Indigenous Housing Advisory Service (NT)
JPG	Joint Planning Group
LGA	Local Government Area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAHS	National Aboriginal Health Strategy
NGO	non-government organisation
NHDAMG	National Housing Data Agreement Management Group
NIHIIC	National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee
NIHMDS	National Indigenous Housing Minimum Data Set
NRF	National Reporting Framework for Indigenous housing
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
NT	Northern Territory
PCR	Property Condition Reports (Homeswest)
PJCG	Project Jurisdictional Contact Group
PRA	Private Rent Assistance
PRWG	Policy and Research Working Group
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SACHA	South Australian Community Housing Authority
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
SCIH	Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SHA	State housing authority (includes Territory housing authorities)
SOMIH	State/Territory Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
WA	Western Australia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project examines the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and long-term community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in these housing tenure forms among Indigenous people.

In this paper we:

- Outline the aims, issues and research questions addressed by the project.
- Provide an examination of the existing evidence on the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing.
- Discuss the policy context to the research.
- Detail the methods that will be employed to examine the project's research questions.

The results of our research will be published in a Final Report which will be published in 2005.

Aims of the Project

The aims of this project are to:

- Conduct an analysis of the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and long-term community housing programs;
- Determine the extent to which Indigenous people face impediments in accessing mainstream public and long-term community housing assistance programs and sustaining tenancies in public and community housing; and,
- Identify policy actions and measures that may help to overcome obstacles experienced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream public and long-term community housing programs and sustaining tenancies in these forms of accommodation.

Defining Key Terms: 'Mainstream', 'Access' and 'Sustainability'

Mainstream public and community housing programs are those public and community housing programs under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) that do not involve an Indigenous-specific focus. An example of an Indigenous-specific public housing program is the CSHA Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP).

Long-term CSHA community housing refers to programs that involve long-term tenancy arrangements in the community housing sector. Long-term community housing excludes emergency and short-term CSHA community housing programs and the CSHA Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP).

Indigenous people gain **access** to mainstream public and long-term community housing when they have been granted entry to a mainstream public and long-term community dwelling under a tenancy agreement. The extent to which Indigenous households have gained access to mainstream public and community housing is, therefore, measured in terms of the *representation* of Indigenous households in these forms of accommodation. However, quantitative estimates of the level of representation of Indigenous households in mainstream public and community housing tell us little about the underlying causal forces that may either impede or

facilitate entry to mainstream public and long-term community and so a study of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing takes us well beyond the presentation of estimates of representation.

Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing is bound up with a broad range of issues including the awareness of mainstream public and community housing options by Indigenous households; the operation of wait lists, particularly the procedures and rules governing priority listing; the guidelines adopted to assess applications for accommodation in mainstream public and community housing, and the day-to-day administration of these guidelines by housing workers.

An examination of the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream housing must also address the question of the suitability of the accommodation to the needs of the occupants. ***Incomplete access*** occurs when overcrowding exists in the mainstream public and community housing unit or the dwelling is unsuitable given the specific housing needs of the occupants.

In this report, the issue of the ***sustainability*** of mainstream public and community housing tenancies is addressed by examining the extent to which households, who would otherwise be in a position of significant housing need without accommodation in the public and community housing sector, are able to maintain their tenancy in these forms of accommodation.

Research Questions

The key research questions to be posed in the project are:

- What is the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and long-term community housing programs? Is it higher or lower than what we might otherwise expect?
- Do Indigenous people face impediments in accessing mainstream public and long-term community housing assistance programs and, if so, what is the nature and extent of these impediments?
- What is being done by Federal, State and Territory authorities and agencies to facilitate access to mainstream public and community housing assistance programs by Indigenous people and how effective are existing measures in improving access? What else could be done to improve access?
- What evidence exists on the sustainability of mainstream public and community housing tenancies among Indigenous people? What is being done to sustain tenancies of Indigenous households within public and community housing programs? What else could be done to improve sustainability in mainstream public and community housing?

The project will provide the Housing Ministers Advisory Committee (HMAC), the Policy Research Working Group (PRWG), the Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing (SCIH), Federal, State and Territory Departments and Authorities charged with administering government housing programs and relevant Indigenous and community agencies and tenant advocacy and policy groups with evidence from all Australian jurisdictions on the representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing, the type and extent of barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing and sustaining tenancies in mainstream public and long-term community housing programs and an evaluation of State and Territory policies

relevant to the issues of mainstream public and community access and sustainability.

Policy Context

The central policy document relevant to Indigenous housing policy is the Ten Year Statement of New Directions for Indigenous Housing *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010 (BBF)* adopted by Federal, State, and Territory Housing Ministers in 2001.

In *Building a Better Future*, Federal, State, and Territory Housing Ministers affirmed their 'commitment to a national effort to make a real difference in housing and environmental health outcomes for Indigenous Australians'. Of particular relevance to this study is that *Building a Better Future* has a stated goal of improving Indigenous 'access to mainstream public and community housing programs' (1.4) as part of its implementation strategy of identifying and addressing unmet housing needs of Indigenous people.

Issues

Indigenous households may face a range of impediments to gaining access to mainstream public and community housing and to sustaining such tenancies over time. These impediments could include one or more of the following:

- A lack of awareness among Indigenous households of the availability of mainstream public and community housing options and their ability to access such forms of accommodation.
- Discrimination by mainstream public and community housing agencies or individual client officers towards Indigenous applicants and tenants or, alternatively, a perception on the part of Indigenous people that mainstream public and community housing agencies are discriminatory.
- A high incidence of risk outcomes which lead to higher rates of applicant rejection and higher rates of eviction among the pool of Indigenous public and community housing applicants and tenants.
- Coordination difficulties experienced between agencies concerned with dealing with households in housing need (such as SAAP providers and other homeless, emergency and crisis accommodation agencies) on the one hand and public housing authorities on the other with respect to the transition into public and long term housing accommodation for Indigenous households in need.

Methods

The project involves four components:

- A policy and best practice literature review.
- An extensive case study analysis involving Geraldton (WA), North-Western Adelaide (SA), Katherine (NT), and South-East Queensland (Qld).
- An open process of consultation with (a) Federal, State and Territory departmental and agency providers concerned with the administration of housing programs, (b) mainstream long-term community housing organisations, and (c) Shelter and tenant information, advice and advocacy organisations.

- An analysis of administrative mainstream public and long-term community housing data. CSHA Public Rental Housing and CSHA Community Housing administrative datasets held at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) will be examined to estimate the level of representation of Indigenous households in mainstream public and long-term community housing and provide quantitative evidence on a range of issues surrounding Indigenous access to mainstream public and long-term community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in these forms. The topics to be examined include: the experience of Indigenous people relative to the non-Indigenous people with respect to a range of indicators such as time spent on waiting lists; priority listing outcomes; eviction rates; the extent of overcrowding; the incidence of arrears; and the duration of tenancies.

The case studies selected for this study include both capital city and regional centre environments. The adoption of this multi-site case study approach provides an opportunity to examine the question of how Indigenous people gain access to mainstream public and long-term community housing tenures in a variety of urban and regional environments and in different jurisdictions. The multi-location case study approach also allows investigation of how local characteristics, demographic profiles and program delivery frameworks unique to a specific geographical setting may have influenced the experiences of Indigenous people with respect to mainstream public and long-term community housing.

Moreover, the case studies enable Indigenous people to make their voice heard directly in the research as the case study methodology adopted for this research involves semi-structured and conversational interviews in individual and focus group settings with Indigenous people in each case study area together with semi-structured interviews with local public housing and community housing providers and others agencies/providers involved in supporting Indigenous people achieve better housing outcomes (e.g., local governments or community councils). Within each case study area, an inter-agency workshop will be conducted with key local stakeholders.

The researchers undertaking the research in each of the four case study areas have developed a common case study protocol and common themes to guide the case study research process, facilitate ongoing collaboration and coordination, ensure that the data collected in the case study sites is comparable across space and time and that the results are rigorous. However, as each case study exists in a different geographical, policy and program setting, nuances in research design will be required in each case study location to gather the richest primary data.

Research teams in each of the case study areas will not only interview Indigenous people who have successfully accessed mainstream public and long-term community housing but will interview Indigenous people who might otherwise be eligible for mainstream public and community housing assistance but have chosen to leave mainstream tenures, are currently facing difficulty in accessing mainstream housing assistance or have been evicted from mainstream public and community housing accommodation.

The mix of methods adopted for this project provides a means of triangulating and verifying the validity and reliability of the research findings.

The research undertaken for this study adheres to Indigenous research protocols and ethical practices and presents an Indigenous view in both a culturally appropriate and confidential manner.

1 INTRODUCTION

The evidence from a range of reports and studies on Indigenous housing over the last decade points to two conclusions. First, using a range of measures of housing need, there exists a high level of housing need among Indigenous people in Australia. The proportion of Indigenous families and adults in housing need and enduring housing stress is four times greater than that for non-Indigenous Australians. Moreover, Indigenous families are over-represented in terms of key housing indicators such as overcrowding, housing poverty and homelessness. The rate of homelessness for Indigenous households is 20 times that of the non-Indigenous population. The second major conclusion is that judged against this need, Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing is arguably too low and that Indigenous people are more likely than non-Indigenous people to face impediments in accessing public and community housing and face greater difficulties in sustaining tenancies in public and community housing.

In light of this, Federal, State, and Territory Housing Ministers agreed in 2001 to a strategy to improve Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing (*Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* strategy 1.4). Indigenous-specific housing programs are being increasingly targeted on remote and very remote areas. This places greater emphasis on all levels of government to ensure that Indigenous people in urban and regional centres have greater access to mainstream housing assistance options. It is within this policy context that this research was commissioned.

This project examines the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and long-term community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in these forms of accommodation among Indigenous people.

In this Positioning Paper we:

- Outline the aims, issues and research questions addressed by the project.
- Provide an examination of the existing evidence on the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing.
- Discuss the policy context to the research.
- Detail the methods that will be employed to examine the project's research questions.

The results of from our research will be published in a 2005 Final Report which will be made available on the AHURI web site.

1.1 Aims

The aims of this project are to:

- Conduct an analysis of the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and long-term community housing programs;
- Determine the extent to which Indigenous people face impediments in accessing mainstream public and long-term community housing assistance programs and sustaining tenancies in public and community housing; and,

- Identify policy actions and measures that may help to overcome obstacles experienced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream public and long-term community housing programs and sustaining tenancies in these forms of accommodation.

To achieve the aims of this project, we have drawn together an inter-disciplinary team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers from different jurisdictions across Australia. These researchers have extensive quantitative, survey, field and policy-related experience together with a broad understanding of Indigenous housing issues. Importantly, this research team recognises that Indigenous people exhibit different forms of social and economic disadvantage and live in quite diverse geographical and community settings. A multiplicity of Indigenous experiences and voices must, therefore, be represented in a project such as this. As such, four different case study sites have been selected for this research project. The sites selected cover both capital city and regional centre environments.

1.2 Research Questions

The key **research questions** to be posed in the project are:

- What is the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing programs?
- Do Indigenous people face impediments in accessing mainstream public and community housing assistance programs and, if so, what is the nature and extent of these impediments?
- What is being done by Federal, State and Territory authorities and agencies to facilitate access to mainstream public and community housing assistance programs by Indigenous people and how effective are existing measures in improving access? What else could be done to improve access?
- What evidence exists on the sustainability of mainstream public and community housing tenancies among Indigenous people? What is being done to sustain tenancies of Indigenous households within public and community housing programs? What else could be done to improve sustainability in mainstream public and community housing?

1.3 Defining Key Terms: Mainstream, Access and Sustainability

Mainstream Public Housing refers to Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) Public Housing administered by States and Territories. An example of an Indigenous-specific public housing program is the CSHA Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP). Government owned and managed Indigenous-specific housing is often referred to as State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH).

Mainstream Community Housing refers to Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) Community Housing managed by non-profit community based organisations. It excludes the Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) administered by Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs).

Long-term CSHA Community Housing excludes emergency or crisis accommodation and medium-term or transitional accommodation. The CSHA Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) is specifically excluded from the definition of Long-term CSHA Community Housing.

Indigenous people gain **access** to mainstream public and long-term community housing when they have been granted entry to a mainstream public and long-term community dwelling under a tenancy agreement. The extent to which Indigenous households have gained access to mainstream public and community housing is, therefore, measured in terms of the *representation* of Indigenous households in these forms of accommodation. However, quantitative estimates of the level of representation of Indigenous households in mainstream public and community housing tell us little about the underlying causal forces that may either impede or facilitate entry to mainstream public and long-term community and so a study of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing takes us well beyond the presentation of estimates of representation.

Before a tenancy agreement can be struck an application for accommodation has to be made by, or on behalf of, the Indigenous household; that application must be accepted for review; the criteria for the issuing of a tenancy agreement must have been satisfied by the Indigenous household; and, the Indigenous household must be sufficiently advanced in a queue of applicants to be assessed as next 'in line'. Hence, the question of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing is bound up with a broad range of issues including the awareness of mainstream public and community housing options by Indigenous households; the operation of wait lists, particularly the procedures and rules governing priority listing; the guidelines adopted to assess applications for accommodation in mainstream public and community housing, and the day-to-day administration of guidelines by housing authority officers.

At an even more fundamental level, access issues are bound up with the question of the stock of available mainstream public and community housing dwellings; the lower the stock, the fewer the number of households, all other things being equal, who can gain access. Questions of the available supply of mainstream public and community housing are, however, beyond the scope of the present study.

An examination of the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream housing must also address the question of the suitability of the accommodation to the needs of the occupants. **Incomplete access** occurs when the basic shelter needs of the occupants are not met on gaining entry to the dwelling as occurs when overcrowding exists.

In this report, the issue of the **sustainability** of mainstream public and community housing tenancies is addressed by examining the extent to which households, who would otherwise be in a position of significant housing need without accommodation in the public and community housing sector, are able to maintain that tenancy. Voluntary exits from the public and community housing stock as a result of an improved household income position are not evidence of a sustainability problem (irrespective of the duration of that tenancy). Evictions and voluntary separations from mainstream public and community housing tenancies of households in need to less secure accommodation, or, indeed, to homelessness do, however, represent evidence of a sustainability problem; one whose causes requires examination. The shorter the duration of a tenancy prior to a transition to a more vulnerable housing position the worse the sustainability problem.

1.4 Methods

Given the national context of this research and the broad nature of the issues being examined, a multi-jurisdictional and transdisciplinary approach to the issue of the access of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing is used to investigate the project's research questions.

The research involves four components:

- A policy and best practice literature review.
- The analysis of large scale administrative mainstream public and community housing data and survey-based unit record data.
- An extensive case study analysis built around sites that bring out a broad range of issues surrounding access to mainstream public and community housing.
- An open process of consultation with Federal, State and Territory departmental and agency providers and with mainstream community housing agencies and organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

The mix of methods adopted in this project provides a means of triangulating and verifying the validity and reliability in addition to deepening analysis of the project's findings.

The quantitative analysis involves an analysis of mainstream public and community housing administrative data held at the AIHW. The CSHA Public Rental Housing and CSHA Community Housing administrative datasets held at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) will be investigated to determine the level of representation of Indigenous households in mainstream public and long-term community housing against levels of housing need and provide quantitative evidence on a range of important issues surrounding Indigenous access to mainstream public and long-term community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in these forms. The topics to be examined include: the experience of Indigenous people relative to the non-Indigenous people with respect to waiting lists (e.g., time spent on the waiting list); priority listing outcomes; eviction rates; the extent of overcrowding; the incidence of arrears; the extent of transitions between tenancies within a period of time; and the duration of tenancies. The analysis will seek to determine the extent to which Indigenous people experience poorer outcomes (e.g., higher rates of eviction) than the non-Indigenous population on selected indicators for which there exists available data.

The quantitative analysis will be complemented by a series of intensive case studies. The selected case study localities are: Geraldton (WA), North-West Adelaide (SA), Katherine (NT) and South-East Queensland. The case studies allow for the generation of data on the experiences of both Indigenous people and local housing providers that simply does not exist in existing quantitative datasets. This data will provide important insights into the underlying causes of low Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing and the impediments that Indigenous people themselves suggest they face in accessing mainstream public and community housing options. The case studies will also, of course, provide invaluable location-specific information and assist in finding answers to questions such as: what are the existing needs for housing among the local Indigenous community and what do local Indigenous people and service providers think can improve Indigenous access. Combined with the quantitative analysis, the case

studies will shed light on what are the main factors shaping the level of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing assistance.

Finally, the study also involves extensive stakeholder and housing provider *consultations* with housing authorities in all jurisdictions in Australia together with community housing peak bodies and tenant advocacy organisations in all jurisdictions.

Consultation will be by way of formal survey process with respondents providing written, open, public responses to a set list of questions relevant to the research.

1.5 Potential Findings and Capacity to Inform Policy

This research will aid policy development by adding significantly to the evidence base on the ability of Indigenous Australians to gain access to mainstream public and community housing and sustain tenancies in such housing. The outcomes of the research will inform the policy making process in a number of ways.

The project will provide the Housing Ministers Advisory Committee (HMAC), the Policy Research Working Group (PRWG), the Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing (SCIH), Federal, State and Territory housing departments and policy authorities and relevant Indigenous and community agencies with evidence from all Australian jurisdictions on the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing, the type and extent of barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing and sustaining tenancies in mainstream public and community housing programs and an evaluation of State and Territory policies relevant to the issues of mainstream public and community access and sustainability.

Our study will attempt to provide evidence on the role of various causal forces/factors in shaping mainstream public and long-term community housing access and sustainability outcomes for Indigenous households. These impediments could include one or more of the following:

- A lack of awareness among Indigenous households of the availability of mainstream public and community housing options and their ability to access such forms of accommodation.
- Discrimination by mainstream public and community housing agencies or individual client officers towards Indigenous applicants and tenants or, alternatively, a perception on the part of Indigenous people that mainstream public and community housing agencies are discriminatory.
- A high incidence of risk outcomes which lead to higher rates of applicant rejection and higher rates of eviction among the pool of Indigenous public and community housing applicants and tenants.
- Coordination difficulties experienced between agencies concerned with dealing with households in housing need (such as SAAP providers and other homeless, emergency and crisis accommodation agencies) on the one hand and public housing authorities on the other with respect to the transition into public and long term housing accommodation for Indigenous households in need.

The study will also consider the issue of *incomplete access* to mainstream public and long-term community housing. This occurs when there exists a mismatch between the specific accommodation needs of an Indigenous household and the

actual mainstream public and community accommodation provided to that household.

Our examination of the sustainability of tenancies in mainstream public and community housing will attempt to take account of the role of both forced separation from such housing through eviction and voluntary separation together with the influence of location and housing mobility by Indigenous people.

The research will also document alternative models of assisting Indigenous people in accessing and sustaining tenancies in mainstream housing assistance tenures. Finally, the research will provide clear policy alternatives for improving Indigenous access to, and sustainability in, mainstream social housing.

1.6 Structure of the Document

The structure of the report is as follows. Chapter two provides a literature review and outlines the policy environment against which this research has been framed and is to be conducted. Chapter three outlines the overarching methodology of the study. Chapter four presents an in-depth discussion of the four case study sites selected for this research. In Chapter five we present the next steps in this research. A short conclusion drawing together the discussion in this Positioning Paper is provided in Chapter six.

2 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH, POLICY SETTINGS AND ISSUES

2.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, the issue of Indigenous disadvantage with respect to Government service delivery has received considerable policy attention. National and State and Territory governments have implemented a range of programs and policy initiatives designed to address the disparity in housing outcomes between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. A particular focus of government policy has been on reducing the gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in the area of housing need. However, a significant majority of Australia's Indigenous population continues to remain in a disadvantaged position with respect to housing outcomes.

The relative disadvantage experienced by the Indigenous population is thought to be greatest in remote areas. This has resulted in an increased policy emphasis on the targeting of Indigenous-specific housing services and assistance to rural and remote Indigenous populations who also have less access to private market and mainstream social housing options. In regional centres and in capital cities, the emphasis has been on reliance on mainstream housing funds and existing mainstream social housing options to provide accommodation to the Indigenous population in housing need rather than on increasing the stock of Indigenous-specific public and community housing.

This chapter provides a broad outline of the policy context to the research and reviews the existing literature. A number of important policy documents address the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing (see section 2.4) but there is an absence of primary research focussed specifically on the barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream and public and community housing. The review of the literature, therefore, includes material drawn from the general literature on Indigenous housing which may provide insights into the current research project on mainstream housing access.

Section 2.2 provides the reader with an overview of the various mainstream and Indigenous-specific housing programs delivered in Australia. In Section 2.3 we review the existing evidence on the housing tenure profile of Indigenous people and their representation in mainstream and Indigenous-specific public and community housing programs. Section 2.4 discusses the recent policy focus on the delivery of mainstream public and community housing services for Indigenous people, while Section 2.5 reviews the evidence from the existing research literature of the potential barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream public and community housing assistance and sustaining tenancies in these housing tenures.

2.2 Mainstream and Indigenous-Specific Housing Assistance Programs

Housing assistance programs are financed and delivered by both the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments. The Commonwealth Government takes the major role in the financing of housing assistance programs while the States and Territories are primarily involved in the provision of such programs. However, there are a number of exceptions. One important exception is the Commonwealth's Rent Assistance program which is a wholly Commonwealth financed and administered program.

Box 2.1 Key CSHA Housing Assistance Programs in Australia

Mainstream public and community housing programs include the following:

- *CSHA Public Housing*. This is administered by State and Territory governments through the relevant State Housing Authority (SHA) who make available publicly owned dwellings to provide appropriate, affordable and accessible shelter for low to moderate income earners who are unable to access or sustain a tenancy in the private market.
- *CSHA Community Housing*. This is managed by non-profit community based organisations who are generally subsidised by government, i.e., through funds for community housing provided via the CSHA. CSHA Community Housing takes several forms including: medium-term or transitional accommodation; and long-term community housing that provides the tenant with long-term tenure. Community housing models vary across jurisdictions.
- *Private Rental Assistance (PRA)*. PRA is a suite of housing assistance programs provided by State and Territory governments through the CSHA and aimed at assisting low-income households experiencing difficulty in securing or maintaining private rental accommodation. This assistance may include payments and/or reimbursements for relocation costs, guarantees or loans to cover the cost of bonds and housing assistance advice and information services. PRA may be provided by community-based organisations funded by government to provide such assistance.
- *Home Purchase Assistance (HPA)*. HPA or home ownership assistance is provided by State and Territory governments to people who wish to buy their own house but need help with finance. Assistance can be in the form of deposit assistance, mortgage relief and access to surplus public housing stock.
- *CSHA Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)*. CSHA CAP funds are used for the purchase, lease, and maintenance of dwellings that provide accommodation and assistance to people who are homeless or in crisis. Services are generally provided by non-government organisations and many are linked to support services funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

Dedicated Indigenous-specific housing funds are directed into two main areas:

- *CSHA Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP)* stock managed by State and Territory governments and allocated specifically to Indigenous Australians. The ARHP may be supplemented by untied CSHA funds and State matching funds. In some cases, ARHP funds Indigenous specific public housing (referred to as State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing SOMIH) and in others ARHP funds Indigenous community housing organisations.
- The *Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP)* previously funded through ATISIC and ATISIS and now administered by the Department of Family and Community Services. CHIP only funds Indigenous community housing organisations.

The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), negotiated between Federal and State and Territory partners, provides the framework for the financing and provision of mainstream public and community housing programs in Australia. Housing assistance under the CSHA is largely provided and administered by State and Territory Governments but a significant minority role is played by community housing organisations (CHOs). State and Territory governments also contribute to the delivery of housing assistance through mechanisms such as home lending programs and joint ventures with the private sector.

The main role of local government in housing is in terms of implementation of planning regulations. In addition, some local governments are also involved in providing community housing, assuming the role of joint venture partner with local CHOs and/or the State agency responsible for community housing (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision 2003). In short, all three tiers of government in Australia are involved in and/or influence the provision mainstream public and community housing assistance programs.

Box 2.1 presents the key mainstream and Indigenous-specific housing assistance programs delivered and/of funded under the CSHA. The scope of this project is restricted to Indigenous access to CSHA mainstream public housing and CSHA mainstream community housing. In terms of CSHA community housing, our project further restricts the scope of analysis to the question of access to long-term community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in this housing tenure rather than emergency and short-term CSHA community housing programs and the CSHA Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP). However, these latter programs do have a bearing on the current research in that we need to understand the mechanisms whereby Indigenous people may face impediments in moving from short-term crisis accommodation to mainstream public and long-term community housing options.

2.3 Indigenous Housing: A Snapshot

2.3.1. Housing Tenure Profiles

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 (below) show the housing tenure profile of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians from the 2001 Census for all private dwellings.

The Census results indicate that Indigenous households are under-represented (relative to their population size) in home ownership. Indigenous households are over-represented (relative to population size) in State/Territory Housing Authority and community housing.

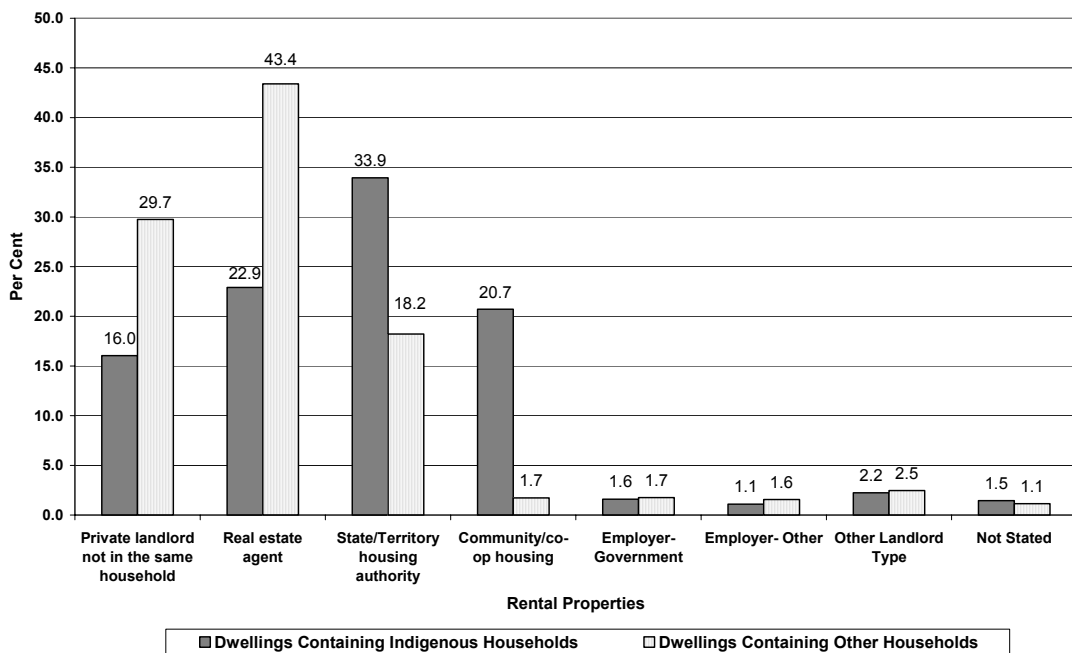
Within the Indigenous population, 20.8 per cent reside in public housing dwellings and 12.7 per cent in community housing. In sharp contrast, only 4.5 per cent of non-Indigenous households reside in public housing and less than one per cent in community housing. The over-representation of Indigenous households in public and community housing is unsurprising given the high levels of disadvantage in the Indigenous population (see, for example, Altman and Hunter, 2003) and the high levels of housing need (discussed further in the following section). What remains to be determined is whether the representation of Indigenous households in public and community housing is high or low after account is taken of levels of disadvantage and need in the Indigenous community.

Table 2.1 Private Dwellings by Tenure and Indigenous Status, 2001 Census

	Dwellings Containing Indigenous Households		Other Dwellings	
	No.	%	No.	%
Owned				
Fully owned	14,712	12.8	2,732,152	42.9
Being purchased(b)	22,419	19.4	1,799,445	28.3
Rental Properties				
Private landlord not in the same household	11,332	9.8	464,764	7.3
Real estate agent	16,184	14.0	678,316	10.7
State/Territory housing authority	23,974	20.8	284,502	4.5
Community/Co-op housing group	14,628	12.7	27,103	0.4
Employer- Government	1,136	1.0	27,333	0.4
Employer- Other	776	0.7	24,517	0.4
Other Landlord Type	1,587	1.4	38,536	0.6
Not Stated	1,027	0.9	17,849	0.3
Other Tenure Types	3,399	2.9	140,158	2.2
Not Stated	4,181	3.6	132,210	2.1
Total	115,355	100.0	6,366,885	100.0

Source 2001 Census

Figure 2.1 Rental Households by Indigenous Status and Landlord Type, 2001 Census



Source: Census 2001.

Table 2.2 Indigenous Households Representation in the Social Housing Sector

	No. Indigenous households Census 30 June 2001	Indigenous Households					Indigenous Community Housing Organisation (ICHO) dwellings 2001 ^c
		CSHA mainstream public rental housing sector 30 June 2003 ^a	CSHA State/Territory Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) sector 30 June 2003 ^b	CSHA mainstream community housing sector assisted by targeted providers 30 June 2003 ^b	CSHA mainstream community housing sector assisted by non-targeted providers 30 June 2003 ^b	Total CSHA mainstream community housing sector 30 June 2003 ^b	
New South Wales	36,743	8,700	3,423	540	131	671	4,150
Victoria ^d	8,107	1,006	1,041	0	n.a.	n.a.	416
Queensland	30,358	2,491	2,239	327	185	512	5,673
Western Australia	13,896	2,363	1,933	99	63	162	3,273
South Australia	6,524	1,118	1,337	28	32	60	1,004
Tasmania	5,811	447	281	6	0	6	118
ACT ^e	1,171	185	..	0	11	11	9
Northern Territory ^f	8,885	1,451	..	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6,715
Total	111,551	17,761	10,254	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21,287

Sources: AIHW, various publications, and the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS) ABS (2001).

Notes

- a) Excludes State/Territory Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing.
- b) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement National Data Reports 2002-03.
- c) Estimates from the *Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey* (CHINS) ABS (2001). This represents CSHA and CHIP funds going to ICHOs.
- d) No estimates are available for Indigenous households in CSHA community housing in Victoria.
- e) The ACT does not have a separate Indigenous-specific public rental housing program.
- f) All Indigenous-specific housing programs in the Northern Territory are community based programs.

Census data does not provide a breakdown of the representation of Indigenous households in mainstream as distinct from Indigenous-specific public and community housing. To examine this issue we need to utilise AIHW held data from public, community and Indigenous-specific housing administrative sources. Estimates of the representation of Indigenous households in both mainstream and Indigenous-specific public and community housing using such data are contained in Table 2.2. (Census and administrative data are not directly comparable (e.g., Census data are on a self-assessed basis while administrative data are not) and so the direct comparison of estimates from these two sources must be treated with some caution.)

With the exception of New South Wales, Indigenous households are roughly evenly split between mainstream and Indigenous-specific public housing programs. In New South Wales, the majority of Indigenous households in public housing are located in mainstream public housing dwellings rather than State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) dwellings. In contrast to the case of public housing, Indigenous representation in the mainstream CSHA community housing sector is particularly low. Furthermore, Indigenous household representation is skewed towards targeted provider community housing organisations in most states. The final column of Table 2.2 presents estimates of dwellings within the Indigenous-specific community housing sector. These estimates underline the importance of Indigenous-specific community housing to Indigenous housing. The Census-based estimates of a high representation of Indigenous households in the community sector, presented earlier in Table 2.1, simply arises from the large Indigenous-specific community housing sector and not from high levels of representation in the mainstream community housing sector.

2.3.2. Indigenous Housing Need

It is important to assess Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing against the backdrop of levels of housing need. While the representation of Indigenous households in the mainstream public housing sector is relatively high so too are levels of housing need in the Indigenous population. A significant representation of Indigenous households in the mainstream public housing sector, therefore, does not constitute evidence of an absence of access and sustainability problems.

The first detailed examination of housing need among Indigenous people in Australia was undertaken by Jones (1994). His analysis covered the issues of overcrowding, poor standards of housing, and housing-related poverty among Indigenous persons. The analysis showed that although Indigenous families represented around 1.4 per cent of all families in Australia at the time, they accounted for 22 per cent of the measured homeless population and 38 per cent of families living in improvised dwellings in 1991. Jones (1994) estimated that the proportion of Indigenous people in housing need was four times that of the non-Indigenous population. Recent estimates of Indigenous housing need (e.g., the AIHW (2003d) *Australia's Welfare* report) confirm that high levels of housing need continue to be experienced in the Indigenous population (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Indigenous Housing Need, Australian States and Territories, 2001

Housing Need Indicator	Source	Units	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Aust.
Proportion of Indigenous people who are homeless, 2001	Census	%	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.2	0.3	0.6	2.4	1.0
Proportion of Indigenous households who are overcrowded across all household tenures, 2001	Census	%	5.6	4.1	10.5	14.2	9.0	2.8	4.4	34.7	10.2
Proportion of Indigenous households paying more than 25 per cent of income in rent, 2001	Census	%	47.1	53.3	47.7	36.6	40.1	39.1	58.3	19.4	43.2

Sources: Census and AIHW

Jones (1994) provided a foundation for the statistical description of housing need by using homelessness, overcrowding and financial stress as indicators. A modified version of these indicators represents the current nationally accepted approach to determining Indigenous housing need.

At present, national, State and Territory housing agencies measure Indigenous housing need by taking account of five dimension of need: homelessness; overcrowding; affordability; stock condition; and connection to essential services (i.e., water, electricity and sewerage). Further work is ongoing at the national level to improve and use administrative data on these five dimensions and to assess the feasibility of measuring appropriateness; emerging need; and security of tenure as part of a multi-measure modelling of Indigenous housing need.

Indigenous households in housing need represent the focal point of the present study. Where such households have not been able to gain access to public and community housing accommodation or have been unable to sustain tenancies in these housing forms they remain in a highly vulnerable housing position.

2.4 The Recent Policy Focus

There has been a recent shift in Indigenous housing policy and program assistance to an increased emphasis on targeting Indigenous-specific housing assistance funding and programs to remote Indigenous locations; and the better tailoring of mainstream housing assistance to service and accommodate Indigenous people in regional centres, towns and cities.

The two key documents that have shaped this recent policy focus are the Commonwealth Grants Commission's *Indigenous Funding Inquiry* conducted in 2001 and the Australian Housing Ministers' Ten Year Statement of New Directions for Indigenous Housing of the same year (2001) known as *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* (BBF). Also critical to an understanding of the current policy environment is the current Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) which outlines the funding priorities of the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments for the five year period from 2003-08. Furthermore, the current CSHA includes a mandate to implement *BBF*.

An increased focus on improving access to mainstream services has also been supported by a number of Indigenous peak organisations in the past. For example, the ATSIC Program Policy 2002-2005 states that 'where there are private housing markets available (for rental and/or purchase) and where mainstream government housing assistance (public housing) is more readily accessible, these housing tenures should be the main focus of targeted assistance for Indigenous people' (ATSIC 2002). In addition, the National Strategy for Overcoming Disadvantage states as a major objective '[a]n increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who successfully gain and maintain public housing and private rental accommodation' (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 2000).

2.4.1. Commonwealth Grants Commission Indigenous Funding Inquiry

The *Commonwealth Grants Commission Indigenous Funding Inquiry* (CGCIFI) was established to develop methods of calculating the relative needs of Indigenous Australians for health, housing, infrastructure, education, training and employment services in different regions. The Inquiry's report (CGCRoIF 2001) was delivered in 2001. The Inquiry found that Indigenous people in all regions have high needs relative to the non-Indigenous population, i.e., '[i]n all regions, and across all functional areas examined...Indigenous people experience entrenched levels of

disadvantage compared to non-Indigenous people (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xiv). The highest needs per Indigenous person (or per Indigenous household) were found to be in the remote ATSI regions.

A number of the other main findings of the CGCIFI are significant in the context of the present research. First, in all regions, Indigenous Australians accessed mainstream services at much lower rates than non-Indigenous people which the Inquiry argued was of considerable concern given the acknowledged levels of disadvantage in Indigenous communities (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xvi). Second, Indigenous people were found to face barriers in accessing mainstream services. Specifically, these barriers related to program design, the ways in which programs are funded and presented and their cost to users. In remote areas, the CGCIFI found that additional problems were prevalent including both a lack of available mainstream services and long distances between those services that did exist (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xvi). Further, the CGCIFI found that mainstream housing assistance services did not meet the needs of Indigenous people to the same extent as they met the needs of non-Indigenous people (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xv). Third, Commonwealth Indigenous-specific programs were viewed as having to deliver more than their original mandate. The Inquiry suggested that this had resulted in the Commonwealth supported Indigenous-specific programs being less able to focus on the most disadvantaged Indigenous people (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xvi). Fourth, overcrowding and poor quality housing was the major problem in rural and remote locations while affordability was more prominent in urban regions.

The CGCIFI report highlights a range of measures that have been adopted to ameliorate the inherent problems with Indigenous housing and so help towards securing a better Indigenous housing future. Such measures included ‘...effort[s] to co-ordinate, plan and target Indigenous-specific funding through formal agreements with the States, the creation of Indigenous housing authorities, the development of new management models for community housing, and targeting of specific funding to rural and remote regions [p. xx]’.

The CGCIFI set as the highest priority ‘[a]chieving equitable access for Indigenous People to mainstream services (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xviii)’. To fulfil this objective the Inquiry recommended actions to:

- i) ‘Ensure all spheres of government recognise their responsibilities through mainstream programs, and the appropriate relationship between mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs
- ii) Review all aspects of mainstream service delivery to ensure they are sensitive to the special needs and requirements of Indigenous people; and
- iii) Involve Indigenous people in the design and delivery of mainstream services (main finding no. 22) (CGCRoIF 2001, p. xviii)’.

The findings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission Indigenous Funding Inquiry have been important as they have provided a basis for the recent policy emphasis on improving Indigenous access to mainstream services in urban and regional centres whilst simultaneously focusing Indigenous-specific funding in remote areas where Indigenous people are less able to access mainstream services.

2.4.2. *Building a Better Future*

The objective of improving access to mainstream public and community housing is clearly evident within the Australian Housing Ministers' Ten Year Statement of New Directions for Indigenous Housing *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* (BBF) document, which represented the major outcome of the May 2001 Housing Ministers Conference. *BBF* outlines new directions for improving Indigenous housing circumstances and options over the years to 2010. It represents a significant commitment by Commonwealth, State and Territory Housing Ministers and the Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (Commonwealth), to a national effort for making a real difference to Indigenous housing and environmental health outcomes.

BBF represents not only an important formal commitment by Australian governments to ameliorating and improving Indigenous housing circumstances and options, it also provides a framework of priorities, objectives, desired outcomes and implementation strategies for working towards and achieving sustained improvements in Indigenous housing. The *BBF* 'Vision for Better Indigenous Housing' [2001, p.1], states that:

- 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia will have:
 - access to affordable and appropriate housing which contributes to their health and well-being;
 - access to housing which is safe, well-designed and appropriately maintained.
- There will be a vigorous and sustainable Indigenous community housing sector, operating in partnership with the Commonwealth and State, Territory and Local Governments.
- Indigenous housing policies and programs will be developed and administered in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous communities and with respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures'

Four objectives have been endorsed as part of the *BBF* framework to achieve the above vision (HMC 2001, p. 3). These include identifying and addressing the unmet needs of Indigenous people; improving the capacity of Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) and involving Indigenous people in planning and service delivery; achieving safe, healthy and sustainable housing; and the better coordination of program administration.

The first objective is the most relevant to this research project. The implementation strategies to achieve this objective are (*BBF* 2001, p.3):

- 1.1 to 'develop and use a multi-measure approach to quantifying Indigenous housing need, and to assist in informing resource allocation at national, State, Territory and regional levels'.
- 1.4 to '...continue to improve Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing' —listed as an implementation strategy to address unmet need.

- 1.5 to 'implement the *Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information*, including data collection to support national performance indicators, a national minimum data set and reporting systems that will facilitate performance appraisal at the national, State, Territory, regional and local levels'.

2.4.3. CSHA 2003-08 and COAG

Commonwealth financial assistance provided through the CSHA is conditional on supplementary funds and grants being provided by State/Territory governments. Commonwealth financial assistance provided through the Agreement is provided in the form of either tied or untied grants. Under the conditions of the CSHA, State and Territory governments are responsible for the allocation of funds for housing assistance programs within their jurisdiction across the life of the Agreement. CSAs generally extend over a four year period and outline the Commonwealth funds to be made available for housing assistance over the life of the Agreement as well as the housing assistance priorities to be met under the Agreement as negotiated between State/Territory and Commonwealth governments and expressed in the Bilateral Agreements negotiated and agreed to by the relevant State/Territory and Commonwealth parties.

The current CSHA (2003-08) sets out a number of priorities of relevance to this project. First and foremost, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have formalised their commitment to *BBF* by agreeing to its implementation. As set out in Recital J of the current CSHA: 'Under this Agreement, and in accordance with the Council of Australian Governments' resolution to reduce Indigenous disadvantage by improving program performance, the Commonwealth and the States commit to improving housing outcomes for Indigenous people by implementing *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010*' (CSHA 2003). Second, CSHA (2003-08) Recitals state clearly the policy position that Indigenous-specific public housing is to be targeted to rural and remote areas and that Commonwealth and State Governments would work to increase access to mainstream public housing in urban and regional centres. The CSHA states:

- 'K. The Commonwealth and the States acknowledge that the Commonwealth's policy is to target Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP) funds to rural and remote areas where there is high need and where mainstream public housing and private housing are unavailable. For this Agreement, the priority for the ARHP is to ensure that houses are well maintained and managed to achieve health related outcomes for Indigenous people.
- L. Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the States will work together to improve access to mainstream housing options (public housing, community housing, private rental and home ownership) for Indigenous people living in urban and regional centres (CSHA 2003)'.

CSHA 2003-08 Guiding Principle Number 4 is also important in the context of the present research. This principle, one of 11 principles that guide the current CSHA, stipulates that the Commonwealth and States/Territories agree 'to commit to improving housing outcomes for Indigenous people in urban, rural and remote areas, through specific initiatives that strengthen the Indigenous housing sector and the responsiveness and appropriateness of the full range of mainstream housing options' (CSHA 2003).

Important policy commitments made by the Council of Australian Governments include:

- *The National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders* (1992) which seeks: “improved access of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to mainstream programs”, “services which are adequate and culturally appropriate”, “appropriate information about ... rights to and availability of services”, “effective resourcing of services” and “the opportunity for [for Indigenous communities] to negotiate, manage and provide their own services”; and more recently
- *The National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians* (2004) which highlights a commitment to “harnessing the mainstream”, ensuring Indigenous specific and mainstream programs and services are complementary, increasing “flexibility of funding”, developing “appropriate, coordinated and flexible” programs and services, taking account of “local circumstances and informed by appropriate consultations and negotiations” with Indigenous communities; “strengthen[ing] accountability” for program “effectiveness” and “developing a learning framework” for best practice service provision to Indigenous people.

As the above excerpts from COAG deliberations and the 2003-08 CSHA show and policy discussions in the previous section of this chapter reinforce, the main thrust of Commonwealth Government policy regarding the provision of housing assistance for Indigenous people is clearly to target Indigenous-specific housing program funds almost exclusively on servicing and accommodating rural and remote Indigenous populations and better tailoring existing mainstream housing assistance programs to meet the needs of the Indigenous population in major urban and regional centres.

2.5 Barriers to Indigenous Access to and Sustainability of Mainstream Public and Community Housing Tenancies

The aim of the present study is to investigate the impediments faced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream public and community housing assistance programs and sustaining tenancies in mainstream public and long-term community housing. In this section, we review the extant Indigenous housing literature insofar as it may shed light on the question of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing (for recent reviews of the Indigenous housing literature see, Neutze, 2000; Read, 2000; Burke, 2004; Memmott, Long, Chambers and Spring, 2003; and Memmott, 2004).

The Indigenous housing research literature covers a broad spectrum of topics and issues including the housing experiences and histories of individual Aboriginal people particularly as they connect to a history of dispossession, the ‘Stolen Generation’ experience and resettlement; the housing needs of Indigenous people and their housing outcomes relative to the non-Indigenous population; questions of appropriate architectural design and styles of housing; and, evaluations of mainstream and Indigenous-specific housing assistance funding and provision regimes.

Within the broad Indigenous housing literature, there exists little by way of a detailed primary analysis of the specific issue of the barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream and public and community housing. This research

project will, therefore, provide an original contribution to the literature on barriers experienced by Indigenous people and on the options available to housing providers to improve Indigenous access to mainstream housing services and the sustainability of tenancies in these tenures.

Despite the absence of direct primary research evidence on the specific question of the present study, it remains possible to draw out from the broader Indigenous housing literature a number of themes as to potential causes of a low Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing and a poor tenancy sustainability in these housing tenure forms among Indigenous people. A useful reference point in this context is the 2001 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report *We Can Do It! The Needs of Urban Dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. While not a primary research document, the report lists a number of barriers that may impede access by Indigenous people to mainstream services and so provides a useful organising tool for our discussion. Barriers to access to mainstream services cited in the report include discrimination; a lack of knowledge about available mainstream housing services among Indigenous people; a reluctance to use mainstream public and community housing services for a variety of disparate reasons including distrust and shame, shyness and a perception of prejudice; the suitability of the housing stock; the absence of Indigenous staff that can help guide Indigenous applicants; a lack of suitable language services; difficulties associated with a transient lifestyle and problems associated with adapting to urban life; the incidence of general risk factors that inhibit entry and exacerbate problems of sustainability such as alcohol and drug dependence; and structural problems associated with a fragmentation of services.

2.5.1. Discrimination

An important potential cause of low Indigenous representation in mainstream housing and poor tenancy sustainability is that of discrimination. Discrimination towards Indigenous people in housing has been very much a constant in the history of Indigenous housing (see, for example, the Read, 2000 anthology and Neutze, 2000). Discrimination remains widely reported in the Indigenous housing literature (see Berry et al., 2001, Gordon et al., 2002, Burke, 2004). Much of the direct evidence for discrimination in the housing market comes, however, from the private rental market (see, for example, Huggins's 1998, p.136 review of the Queensland private rental market).

The issue of discrimination among public housing authorities is complex as public and community housing authorities do not adopt direct discriminatory policies and practices. Indeed, precisely the opposite is the case. State and Territory housing authorities actively support Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing services. In addition, public housing authorities and many mainstream community housing organisations make efforts to establish mechanisms for Indigenous representation in formal decision-making processes. Furthermore, they employ Indigenous staff to assist in working with Indigenous people in the local community and adopt strong, direct, overt anti-discrimination policies. Hence, the question that needs to be addressed is the relative roles of possible non-overt or indirect discrimination among public and mainstream community housing providers and or housing client officers and perceptions of discrimination by Indigenous clients.

To the extent that discriminations occurs, it may result in longer waiting times, higher rates of eviction and/or higher rates of application rejection for Indigenous people. Where Indigenous people in need are unable to gain access to secure public and community housing options, they will often seek accommodation with other Aboriginal families. This, in turn, exacerbates in many cases, existing overcrowding, housing quality and emerging rent arrears problems. Such problems are primary risk factors in future evictions. A cycle of eviction may thus be perpetuated. In addition to the problems of discrimination generating and perpetuating a cycle of eviction, perceptions of discrimination in the Indigenous population are also likely to lead to an underutilization of services.

Suspicion, distrust and a feeling of powerlessness are felt by many Indigenous people when accessing public services. Data on the extent of discrimination is very limited as Indigenous people may not complain due to the difficulties they experience with the written, legalistic and time requirements that the process demands. Power and cultural issues, in addition to the difficulties in substantiating cases of racial discrimination, exacerbate this difficulty (Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, 2004).

2.5.2. Indigenous Cultural and Historical Forces

Traditionally, Indigenous people had mobile, nomadic lifestyles in which they moved in a circular migration between seasons for food, for cultural reasons and between groups to visit and to share a responsibility for raising children. Movement may also occur within a camp because of changing social relationships including the existence of conflict.

Indigenous people today still move for these reasons and also for many more reasons including the need to gain employment, education, health and other services. A challenge in public housing is to cater for a more nomadic lifestyle. It is a difficult task to provide housing of European standard at an appropriate cost within the public and community housing system if the housing is to be only occupied for short periods of time and perhaps by different individuals at different times (Neutze, 2000).

Extended family forms are an integral component of the Indigenous way of life. A common Indigenous view is that 'It is our culture that we accommodate families' (Berry et al., 2001). Hostel accommodation is often not affordable for low income Indigenous people leading Indigenous visitors to seek shelter instead with an extended family member. Overcrowding is often the consequence and is common in Indigenous communities and Indigenous households (Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness 2001, and Durkey et al. 2003). Overcrowding places extra demands on housing structures and equipment which are often not sufficiently robust and durable. As Hansen and Roche (2003 p. 5) suggest 'Paintwork becomes damaged, flyscreens are torn, keys are lost and windows are broken to gain entry. Water use escalates as do costs heating, cooking and lighting. The house becomes noisy. The neighbours complain'. Large maintenance bills and possibly eviction result. Hence, accommodating extended families may lead to overcrowding, a higher incidence of neighbourhood complaints, and damage to property. Evictions are often the final inevitable outcome of these tensions.

Memmott et al. (2003 p.14) discuss the spiritual and psychological homelessness that is encountered by individuals and families who have been removed from their traditional land through history by government. They state 'the more temporally distant is the connection to country in terms of generations, the more inaccessible

seem to be the answers about self-identity and 'home' (country), which in turn may have a stressful impact on an individual's sense of spiritual health'. As a result, post-traumatic stress is experienced by many Indigenous individuals (Hansen & Roche, 2003) and compounds problems associated with socio-economic poverty including drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence that result in an inability to sustain a tenancy in mainstream accommodation. Additionally, the cycle of grief, anger, frustration and depression that is inherited by each generation is likely to exacerbate distrust of mainstream government services.

Indigenous people may not have the home management and urban living skills, which are often required to maintain mainstream public and community housing stock in addition to living alongside often non-Indigenous neighbours (Cooper and Morris, 2003). Indigenous people may not have experience in modern appliances, using cleaning agents, budgeting, or home maintenance. They may not have access to some of the equipment that western society accepts as a part of daily life (Berry et al., 2001). It is conceivable that, without these skills, when provided with a home they are unintentionally likely to damage the property resulting in eviction, debts for damages and a resulting inability to access mainstream housing in the future. Urban living skills are being taught to Indigenous people in some remote areas in the Northern Territory with a demonstration project ongoing in Katherine; a case study site for the present project.

In research conducted in Queensland by Cooper and Morris (researchers on the present project) public housing providers noted that some Indigenous people refused to come to the public housing offices because they were ashamed of previous debts or bad behaviour. Housing managers noted that they would often meet with Indigenous people in the street outside offices. Feelings of shame, shyness and fear of prejudice are likely to lead to underutilisation of services (House of Representatives, 2001). In addition, people may not feel comfortable or even be able to explain, for cultural reasons, spiritual and other personal issues with mainstream housing personnel (Hansen & Roche, 2003). Hansen and Roche (2003 p. 4) state 'there is recognition that white people's housing is a complex system with rules, codes and values of operation. Not everyone understands these rules. Not everyone can speak the language. Not everyone can read the language or respond in similar patterns of writing. Interpreters are needed.'

The building of long-term relationships, of increasing gender and cultural awareness and the availability of Indigenous staff and language and interpreter services are a number of strategies recommended by the 2001 Inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to overcome problems of this type. An example of a best-practice program suggested by Hansen and Roche (2003) is SHAP (Special Housing Assistance Program) in its capacity to cross the cultural divide and assist Indigenous people, particularly those most at risk of eviction. They list a number of characteristics which define SHAPs strengths including long-term intervention; partnerships; home visits; the availability of translators, mediators, counsellors and advocates; the use of minimal documentation; and an attitude of 'doing whatever it takes'.

European style housing is, in many instances, inappropriate to the cultural, social and traditional requirements of Indigenous people. There are many reasons for this including the inflexibility and immobility that this style of housing requires, the inability of the inhabitants to influence their surrounds and the fact that European housing tends to be isolating relative to the communal structures of Indigenous camp environments. These problems are exacerbated when an Indigenous family is

further isolated within non-Indigenous neighbourhoods as may occur within mainstream public and community housing accommodation (Neutze, 2000).

Inappropriate allocations can often occur (Martin et al., 2002). An example is when feuding families are placed within the vicinity of each other which results in vandalism and other maintenance issues. Indigenous people may also be located in areas where they are marginalised from their support networks and also from other relevant services including employment (Berry et al., 2001). Issues of racism and differing cultural expectations also exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous neighbours. Insufficient accommodation combined with lengthy waiting lists within a given locality place huge demands on the mainstream public and community housing systems and may often result in these social issues being overlooked.

2.5.3. Disadvantage and Risk Factors

Cooper and Morris (2003), in their study of sustainable tenancies for Indigenous women in Queensland and the Northern Territory noted many risk factors that potentially contribute to high rates of eviction and future access difficulties. These include the inter-related problems of poverty, domestic and family violence, incarceration, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of skills in accessing formal services, poor home management and urban living skills, anti-social behaviour and mental illness.

One of the biggest risk factors contributing to public housing and mainstream community housing access and sustainability problems is that of severe poverty. Census figures point to low rates of employment and educational qualifications compared with the non-Indigenous population. Unemployment and a lack of education both contribute to poverty. Indigenous people who are not employed rely on the financial pensions and benefits of the income support system. Of course, high rates of poverty mean that Indigenous people will be more likely to be assessed as in need of public housing. This means that high rates of poverty should also translate into higher than average public housing tenancy rates (as we in fact see in the data). However, while this is so, the nature of the interaction of poverty and housing access is generally more complex in the case of Indigenous households than non-Indigenous households and it is the severity of the poverty experienced by many Indigenous households which can lead to a higher probability of eviction, of debt, of property damage and poor tenancy records than would otherwise be anticipated. These outcomes reduce the duration of tenancies and result in future access problems.

Indigenous households are complex social and economic units and are likely to consist of more people across several generations and family groups. Severe poverty may result because of visitor-induced economic stress. In any case, family obligations and sharing of income amongst family members who are in need of financial assistance is common (Berry et al., 2001). Such stress coupled with the larger size of Indigenous households may lead to ill health and environmental health problems with deterioration in standards of living. Indigenous people may also suffer from higher rates of breaching of income support payments which results in payments being withdrawn or reduced resulting in loss of income for rental, food and other basic essentials (Saunders, 1999). The long term impact of unstable and reduced incomes in terms of meeting rental payments and past debts are obvious.

Even subsidised accommodation within mainstream housing services may still be more than the typical Indigenous family group can afford. Neutze (2000) notes that even with rent rebates that are set against the level of income, a significant number

of Indigenous households are unable to maintain regular rental payments. Additionally, the requirement that may exist in mainstream community housing for bond payments will often be beyond the reach of Indigenous people in a situation of severe poverty (Berry et al. 2001).

Family violence and domestic violence are factors associated with homelessness and problems in accessing public and community housing. Durkey et al. (2003) in a study of 60 homeless families in Perth found that 14 per cent had left their homes because of domestic violence. In comparing Indigenous with non-Indigenous Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) clients, Lai and McDonald (2001) found that 44 per cent of Indigenous women gave domestic violence as a reason for seeking assistance compared to 37 per cent of non-Indigenous women. In crime statistics, the assault rate for Aboriginal people in Western Australia is 55.2 per 1000, compared to 10.7 per 1000 for white people (Loh and Ferrante 2000). Seventy-two per cent of Aboriginal victims were women compared with 42 per cent of non-Aboriginal women.

Women who have been assaulted as a result of domestic violence or family violence are difficult to re-house. In particular, such women are more likely to be housed in crisis accommodation than in public housing or long-term community housing options. In some remote communities it may be difficult to re-house women at a safe distance from the perpetrator/s. In urban communities this issue is not as evident but whatever the situation, it often means that the women and their family leave homes to be re-housed in other locations. Re-housing does not necessarily mean immediate access to mainstream housing but use of emergency shelters, crisis accommodation, short term housing until mainstream housing becomes available. In Queensland and the Northern Territory, researchers noted that the costs of up front payments in Aboriginal Hostels and prior debts to housing authorities are significant barriers to a return to mainstream public housing (Coleman, 2000 and Memmott and Fantin, 2001).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the prison population. Offences are related to family violence, assaults, alcohol abuse and non-payment of fines. Indigenous people make up a much larger percentage of prisoners than their proportion and generally serve shorter sentences (Queensland Government 1999). Access to public housing options on discharge can be difficult. Once a prison sentence has been served, homelessness is often a likely outcome.

Domestic and family violence is compounded by drug and alcohol abuse. Memmott and Fantin (2002) in a study of the long grass people in Darwin noted the widespread problems of alcohol abuse, binge drinking and homelessness and associated anti-social behaviours. Coleman (2000) conducted a similar study in Brisbane city with similar findings. It is not surprising that extrapolating from this behaviour and using the practice knowledge of researchers of working with these people that such action impacts on housing stability, increases the rate of evictions and ensures a cycle of eviction, debt as a result of property damage and emergency accommodation or living with family in overcrowded situations. These families may not get immediate access to mainstream housing until debts are repaid or housing becomes available.

2.5.4. Fragmentation and Service Delivery

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have very complex needs. The Australian health and welfare service provision system can be affected by a silo system of service provision. This means that social problems are responded to as a

single unit of service with little consideration of individuals who have complex and interacting social problems. By way of example, drug and alcohol issues will be considered in isolation of domestic or family violence. Mental health will be treated in isolation of community living arrangements (Cooper et al., 2004). The difficulties faced by Indigenous people in accessing the service system is that they may need to go to one agency to discuss financial issues, another agency to find help with family violence and another agency to find assistance for housing and so on. Those people who have the greatest need for services are less likely to access specific services and are less skilled at accessing the system (DATSIP, 2000).

In many cases, the funding is defined for certain purposes whilst the need may lie elsewhere. Imposed definitions of need do not often allow for locally determined needs (Berry, 2001). Inter-sectoral collaboration is difficult to achieve particularly with a desired outcome of flexible long-term funding that is responsive to local need.

It has been suggested by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inquiry (2001) that when agencies are coordinating their funding that one government agency act as the lead agency in which to take overall responsibility for the partnership and to act either as the first or just the single point of contact for other government agencies. The Inquiry also suggests the use of locally based case managers who would be in a position to coordinate and improve access to available services at both the Commonwealth and State levels in a holistic long term client focussed approach.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the existing evidence on the representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing programs and recent policy changes and relevant documents that have influenced the current direction of policy on Indigenous housing assistance, i.e., the focus on improving Indigenous access to mainstream housing services in non-remote locations (regional centres, towns and cities) and the simultaneous focusing of Indigenous-specific funding to remote areas where Indigenous disadvantage is comparatively high and mainstream services are generally non-existent.

The chapter also presented a broad review of the extant Indigenous housing literature. Our review indicates that there is a dearth of primary research evidence on the specific issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing but nevertheless that literature is suggestive of a number of forces that may act to affect Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing. These forces include discrimination; Indigenous cultural and historical factors; cultural mis-match; a lack of appropriate, affordable and available accommodation; poverty; and fragmentation in service delivery.

The next chapter outlines the methodology adopted to answer the research questions that guide this research.

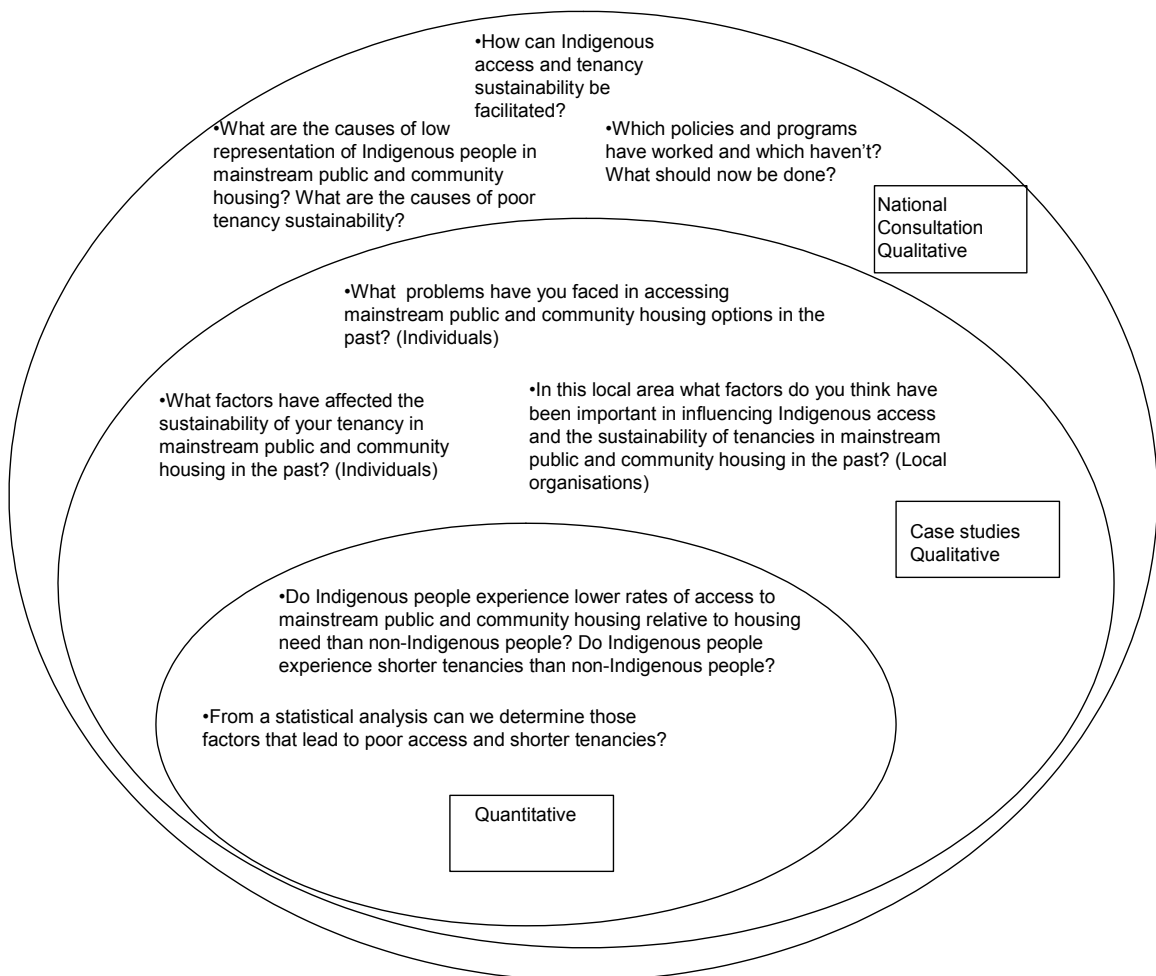
3 METHODS

3.1 Overview

The overarching approach taken in this study is that in dealing with research topics which defy traditional disciplinary boundaries, a range of methods should be used to draw out and refine the relevant issues and investigate the research questions. A necessary condition for this to occur is to draw together people from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds who can simultaneously investigate the layers of the research topic. That is the case in the present project where researchers have been drawn from a variety of backgrounds such as social work, economics, housing and urban studies. Such a transdisciplinary approach can also help to avoid the inaccuracies and biases of individual disciplines and individual researchers by focussing research attention to the broad picture rather than its individual facets.

The methodology adopted in this study includes three separate groups of methods: *quantitative analysis*, *case studies* and *consultation processes*. Figure 3.1 summarises the type of research questions that will be addressed through the application of these three groups of methods.

Figure 3.1 Methodology of the Study – Methods and Questions



The three groups of methods are presented in Figure 3.1 in an embedded way which means that the statistical analysis informs the case studies as well as the national consultation process, the latter also being informed by the case studies.

In some contexts it is possible to use one particular approach to answer the research questions but in this case all three methods must be used if we are to avoid a disconnected partial understanding of Indigenous access and sustainability problems. Quantitative analyses should provide us with a good understanding of the levels of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing but can shed only limited light on the forces acting to impede Indigenous access or to reduce the sustainability of tenancies in these forms of housing. Such an understanding is more likely to come from a series of case studies in different jurisdictions and environments. Finally, consultations with stakeholders and housing providers will allow for a much richer awareness of the policy environment and policy options than would otherwise be the case.

The employment of a transdisciplinary approach utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods requires a research approach that is rigorous and meets standards of research quality: internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. The proposed processes of data collection, analysis and triangulation for this project are able to achieve a high standard of research and thus produce reliable and trustworthy conclusions. The research topic does not fit within traditional disciplinary boundaries. In terms of disciplines, the project draws together academics from the fields of Indigenous studies, sustainability, economics, geography, social work, participatory development, psychology, planning and architecture.

In drawing together people from diverse backgrounds, the research deliberately avoids a silo approach and attempts to transcend disciplines and professional expertise by integrating and synthesising content, examining theory from different disciplines and professional to shed light on the research questions. This disciplinary transcendence for research problems is referred to as transdisciplinarity. Transdisciplinarity involves what is between the disciplines, across the disciplines and beyond the disciplines, and is interested in the dynamics of simultaneous action of several layers of reality (Nicolescu 1997).¹

3.2 Indigenous Research Protocols and Ethics

3.2.1. Overview

The ethical principles which will be used to guide the collation of data from Indigenous people within their social, economic and cultural context are drawn from a range of sources and conform to the AHURI *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Indigenous Research*.

The Aboriginal Terms of Reference (Osbourne and Dick, 1994) guidelines have informed the research process and have been applied to establish principles to guide the process for collecting and analysing data.

The Aboriginal Terms of Reference include:

¹ Transdisciplinarity has evolved from the earlier research fields of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. Multidisciplinary is defined as research that studies a topic not only in one discipline but in several at the same time. Interdisciplinarity concerns the links and the transfer of knowledge, methods, concepts and models from one discipline to another. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary remain within the framework of disciplinarity which is concerned with one level of reality, or fragments of that one level. Transdisciplinary studies investigate issues and look for explanations between, across and beyond disciplinary boundaries.

- The right of Aboriginal people to have those things they value to be fully considered in any interaction;
- To ensure that the authority for the construction of Aboriginal meanings and knowledge is determined by Aboriginal people;
- The Aboriginal world view is taken into account in all negotiations of the issues that impact on Aboriginal peoples.

Participants in the research will be informed about the following points before each field interview is conducted:

- The right of each participant to have their confidentiality respected and upheld;
- The process of the interview and the reason for the questions asked;
- The recording of the interviews, storage of materials and ownership of intellectual property and publication rights;
- The need for informants to validate the interpretation abstracted from raw data and results that are concluded;
- The right of each participant to withdraw from the project at any stage without any personal consequences.

3.2.2. Protocols

The successful conduct of this project requires that a number of research ethics protocols and principles are followed. They are described below.

University Ethics Approval

Ethics approval for the case study research has been sought by researchers/research teams through their individual Universities. This process has included consultation with individual University specialist Indigenous units where they exist.

Indigenous Community Protocol

Indigenous communities are diverse communities and therefore there is a need to understand the protocol for interacting with Indigenous people. The diversity that exists between communities will be recognised at all stages of the research in addition to respect for the diversity of Indigenous people within communities (AIATSIS 2000).

Respect for Indigenous Knowledge

Respect for Indigenous Knowledge will not only occur as a matter of courtesy but in recognition of the fact that Indigenous Knowledge will make a significant and necessary contribution to the research (AIATSIS 2000).

Informed Consent

All participants will be required to sign a consent form prior to interviews. Participants will be fully informed of how the data collected for this research will be used within the research. Any use of the data collected for this research for a purpose(s) other than for this project will require permission from the participants prior to commencement of any such project.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue of highest priority in this research. As such, names of people interviewed or other types of identifiers and any information provided by participants themselves will not be discussed with anyone other than the researcher(s) and their assistant.

Ownership of Publication and Data

Copies of all transcripts will be issued to participants once results are finalised and verification of interpretations by individuals interviewed are completed (transcripts will then be destroyed). Any other studies seeking to refer to the transcripts of interviews undertaken in this research will need to seek permission directly from the individuals who have ownership of the transcripts. Interview participants retain intellectual property rights over the specific information within the transcripts that they have provided.

Proposed Storage and Access to Files and Disposal/Storage upon Conclusion of Project

Raw data will be kept only during transcribing and analysis of interviews. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer.

Dissemination of Results

Results will be disseminated to the case study communities in an appropriate format. Alternative reporting formats suggested within the AHURI guidelines include poster presentations, focus groups, individual or small group meetings or community forums (Walker 2004).

3.3 Quantitative Research Methods

The quantitative analysis component of this research will be based on an analysis of the *CSHA Public Rental Housing* and *CSHA Community Housing* administrative data sets held at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) National Housing Data Repository. Existing survey data such as the *2001 Census Household Sample File* and the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey do not distinguish between mainstream and Indigenous-specific public and community housing programs and, therefore, cannot be utilised for our present purposes.

The quantitative analysis begins with a comparison of the Indigenous population's utilisation of mainstream public and community housing programs relative to the non-Indigenous population. From this we seek to determine the extent to which the Indigenous population is under-represented (or over-represented) in the mainstream public and community housing sectors and the nature and spatial/jurisdictional variation of any under-representation (or over-representation) compared to housing need using the three key dimensions of affordability, overcrowding and homelessness.

The second part of the quantitative analysis provides a profile of the Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people in CSHA public rental housing and CSHA community housing *waiting lists* and, as far as the data permit, the experience of Indigenous people relative to the non-Indigenous people while on those waiting lists (e.g., time spent on the waiting list). Waiting lists capture a significant part of the group of households with housing needs but without current access. The quantitative analysis will then compare the housing outcomes of Indigenous renters relative to non-Indigenous renters in CSHA public rental housing, and CSHA

community housing against indicators for which data are available, i.e. the extent of overcrowding, incidence of arrears, the rate of evictions, the operation of priority lists, the extent of transitions between tenancies within a period of time, and affordability. CSHA public rental housing and CSHA community housing data will also be investigated to determine the extent of non-sustainability of public and community housing tenancies by Indigenous status.

Quantitative analyses will be conducted in consultation with PRWG, SCIH, AIHW, the NHDAMG and NIHIIC.

3.4 Qualitative Research Methods

The two qualitative research methods used in this project are case studies and national consultation processes (refer to Figure 3.1).

3.4.1. Case Studies

The case study methodology comprises:

- Semi-structured and conversational interviews in individual and focus group settings with Indigenous people in the case study area. The precise format and number of interviews will depend upon the agreed research design between AHURI, the AHURI User Group, the Project Jurisdictional Contact Group (PJCG), the relevant community and the researchers concerned. An Indigenous researcher or consultant will be engaged to work with the local community. Individuals will be contacted through the AHURI User Group, the PJCG, service providers, housing managers or other culturally appropriate means. This part of the research gives an important voice to Indigenous people.
- Semi-structured interviews with local public housing and community housing providers, service providers, and others agencies/providers involved in supporting Indigenous people and their housing, i.e., local governments or community councils. Within each case study area an inter-agency workshop will be conducted with key local stakeholders.

The four case studies are Geraldton (WA), North-West Adelaide (SA), Katherine (NT) and South-East Queensland. In each case study community, a user group of key local housing and service managers will be formed and this group will meet at regular intervals during fieldwork preparation and post field analysis.

The qualitative information to be generated during the interviews will relate to questions such as: what are the existing needs for housing among the local Indigenous community?; what are the impediments to Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing?; and what has/has not been done to improve Indigenous access and the sustainability of tenancies. The analysis of the qualitative data collected in each case study area will involve a process of triangulation within and between the above sets of interviews and qualitative coding using Nudist software to determine common themes emerging from the research. The results from this analysis will form the basis of improving dialogue on housing access and sustainability issues between the stakeholders and especially between Indigenous people and the agencies providing mainstream services to them. The presence of an Indigenous community voice alongside other relevant stakeholders in relation to the research questions is a critical component of the project's research agenda.

Background material and details of the specific methods adopted in each case study area are contained in Chapter 4 of this paper.

3.4.2. National Consultation Processes

An important component of the present study is the consultations to be undertaken with relevant stakeholders and housing providers across all jurisdictions. These consultations will be undertaken at both a formal and informal level.

The formal part of the consultation process involves the administration of surveys to State and Territory Housing Authorities, State and Territory peak community housing organisations, and State and Territory tenants' advisory services and Shelter organisations. The informal consultation mechanisms include meetings, teleconferences and phone conversations with contact points in both these and agencies that work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in housing need. Within the case study jurisdictions, meetings have been held with State Housing Authorities, a range of community housing agencies, and tenant advocacy groups.

The consultation process is designed to achieve four main objectives.

The first objective is to ensure that the study has available to it all relevant program/policy documents and that project researchers are aware of programs, strategies and actions that have already been taken by jurisdictions and housing providers to address impediments experienced by Indigenous people in accessing and sustaining tenancy in mainstream public and community housing programs.

The second objective is to elicit stakeholder and housing provider views as to the difficulties and barriers faced by Indigenous people in accessing and sustaining assistance in mainstream public and community housing programs and the reasons why Indigenous people do not access or sustain housing assistance in these tenures at levels commensurate with their housing need. The third objective is to obtain stakeholder and housing provider options regarding possible actions and programs that might be implemented in the future to improve access and sustainability outcomes in mainstream public and community housing programs for Indigenous people. The fourth objective involves stakeholders and housing providers in guiding the project's research process. These consultations will enable the research to be relevant to the issues faced by stakeholders and housing providers and provide an opportunity for their representation at both the informal and formal level.

There are five groups of stakeholders and housing providers that will be formally surveyed through a questionnaire instrument:

- Australian Government, State and Territory Housing Authorities;
- the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA);
- The Torres Strait Regional Authority;
- Community housing peak bodies in each jurisdiction;
- State/Territory and peak national Shelter and tenant advocacy, information and advice services.

It is proposed that the national survey will not be anonymous; rather submissions will be open organisational submissions and reported as such in the final report. These submissions will be presented in a tabular format to enable direct comparison between and by relevant stakeholders. Analysis of the table through structured coding (based directly upon the survey questions) will draw out the main themes of this process for discussion.

Box 3.1 Outline of Issues under Review for the Survey

(Sent to Respondents 26th March 2004)

**ISSUES FOR FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY
MAINSTREAM HOUSING PROVIDERS TO BE COVERED IN THE SURVEY**

1. Provide a listing and briefly summarise policies that apply in your jurisdiction that relate to Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and the sustainability of tenancies.
2. List and briefly describe best-practice programs in your jurisdiction that improve Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and improve the sustainability of tenancies.
3. How are Indigenous people represented in mainstream public and community housing decision making processes within your particular jurisdiction?
4. Provide estimates and comment on the levels of Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing programs and on the duration of tenancies of Indigenous mainstream public and community housing tenants within your jurisdiction.
5. What difficulties or barriers are faced by Indigenous people in accessing mainstream public and community housing programs and in sustaining tenancies in such housing forms?
5. How effective are current policies and programs in your jurisdiction in improving Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and sustaining tenancies? What specific actions has your jurisdiction taken to improve Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing in the last two years?
6. List recommendations for policy action that might improve the access of Indigenous people to mainstream public and community housing in the future and help sustain tenancies in mainstream public and community housing.

3.5 Research Rigour and Triangulation

This section outlines the proposed processes of data collection, analysis and triangulation for this project which are necessary to achieve a high standard of research and thus produce reliable and trustworthy conclusions. The use of the methods outlined in the previous sections, in addition to the triangulation of data that is collected within and between the methods will be tabulated against major findings for each of the four research questions. This tabulation process will aim to 'publicly disclose' the process of research linking the research questions to how the research findings have been achieved (Anfara Jnr V., Brown K. et al. 2002). The use of individual research methods and triangulation will be ongoing through the research project. The final tabular presentation will encapsulate this process.

Data collection:

Yin (1994 p.18) states that design is 'the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study' (Yin 1994). All three methods of data collection will be designed to address the four research questions that were outlined in Chapter One.

Case Studies: The main aim of the case studies is to collect multiple sources of evidence, written and verbal, that relate directly to the research questions and in which to systematically analyse and triangulate the lived experience as perceived by the Indigenous people within or outside the mainstream system and the personnel within the agencies that service this system.

Consultations: A survey will be administered to both government and non-government bodies. Informal consultations with stakeholders and providers will also be undertaken.

Quantitative Analysis: No new data collection will be undertaken and the quantitative component of the study will rely on the existing *CSHA Public Rental Housing* and *CSHA Community Housing* administrative data.

Data analysis

Data analysis of qualitative information involves a process of interpretation and sorting through large amounts of information to identify patterns and code themes to generate theory.

Case Studies: The constant comparative analysis detailed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) will be utilised within the data analysis of the case studies as recommended by Anfara et al. (2002). This is designed such that data collection occurs simultaneous to analysis (Anfara Jnr V., Brown K. et al. 2002). Nudist N6 software will be employed to manage the process of coding themes emerging from the transcripts that relate to the research questions and that will be useful for building theory relevant to research conclusions. The process of generating codes and categories and thus theory from raw data will be tabulated to establish an audit trail.

Consultations: Submissions will be presented in a format which will enable direct comparison within, between and by relevant stakeholders/respondents, specifically government authorities/agencies and NGOs.

Quantitative Analysis: Simple cross-tabulation techniques and survival analysis techniques will be employed to analyse the data sets used in the study.

Data triangulation

Case Studies: Triangulation will occur within the case studies where multiple voices and written documentation will be compared and contrasted both within and between case studies. This will provide for a more holistic understanding of relevant issues in each of the four case studies that constitute a large component of this research project. Triangulation between the case studies will also allow for the emergence of differences and similarities of Indigenous experiences and opinions within and between each case study area. Stake (1995) outlines four triangulation protocols which are taken from Denzin's 1984 publication *The Research Act*. These provide a useful framework in which to coordinate the multi-jurisdictional case study approach adopted in this project. These protocols include:

- Data source triangulation: to investigate the same phenomenon under different circumstances;
- Investigator protocol: multiple researchers investigate the same phenomenon;
- Theory triangulation: multiple researchers compare data, analysis and theory;
- Methodological triangulation: multiples sources of data are compared within the case (Stake 1995).

Consultations: Triangulation of the data provided through the two part survey of Federal, State and Territory housing authorities and agencies and NGOs will draw out differences and similarities between the jurisdictions and between government and non-government groups of stakeholders.

Quantitative Analysis: Results from the quantitative analysis will be evaluated against existing research on the same data sets and Australian and international quantitative studies on the issue of access and sustainability of tenancies using other data sets.

Three way triangulation: The three primary research tools, the quantitative analysis, the case studies and the survey will be employed in a complementary fashion over the duration of the research process. Triangulation of the data collection and analysis within each method and between methods will be utilised to answer all four of the project's key research questions. Triangulation within and between the methods will enhance the credibility of research findings. Conclusions will be drawn from the multiple sources of evidence within the methods adopted for this research project and will be critically analysed and compared.

3.6 Advisory and Participatory Structures

A number of advisory and participatory structures have been established for this project and these are outlined in Table 3.2. The participatory nature of this research ensures that research design and progress is kept relevant to the issues experienced by the stakeholders and that the methodological instruments are employed in the most appropriate manner to achieve the objectives of the research. This input is primarily provided by the AHURI User Group and by PJCG representatives in each jurisdiction. The methodological instruments have however, been designed to ensure maximum participation of all stakeholders within the research process.

Table 3.2 The Project’s Participatory Structures

Participant Groups	Advisory Role	Structure of Participation
AHURI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of survey • Case-study selection 	Teleconferences
AHURI User Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of survey • Case-study selection • Interview format for case studies 	Teleconferences
Jurisdictional Contact Group (State/Territory representatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of survey • Case-study selection • Guidance throughout research progress 	Regular direct contact and phone conversations
Case Study Working Group (Case study regional agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance in accessing case-study • Interview format for case studies 	Regular phone conversations
Case Study Participants (Regional and local agencies, tenants and other housing tenures – homeless, crisis accommodation, private rental, Indigenous-specific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pertaining to obstacles/best practice and mechanisms to overcome/facilitate these. 	Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured and conversational interviews • Focus groups
Survey Participants (Federal, State and Territory authorities and agencies together with the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA), the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), and tenant advocacy groups – Shelter and Tenants Advisory Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information pertaining to best practice and also obstacles/problems and mechanisms to overcome these 	Survey – open organisational submissions

3.7 Conclusion

The overarching transdisciplinary approach adopted for this project will enable the research process to be relevant to both the Indigenous population and policy makers who are involved with the mainstream public and community housing system. Issues of access and sustainability are best explored through a number of complementary methods: quantitative analysis, case studies and consultation. The complementary relationship of these methods is depicted in Figure 3.1. The quantitative analysis is most useful in developing an understanding of the dimensions of Indigenous representation in mainstream public and community housing. The case studies provide an in-depth insight into what the problems are as viewed by different stakeholders and why they are occurring as well as unearthing possible solutions. The consultation provides insights into policy actions that are feasible and could help alleviate existing impediments to Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing.

Adherence to Indigenous research protocols and ethics will ensure that this research presents an Indigenous view in a culturally appropriate and confidential manner. A framework of stakeholder participation is outlined in Table 3.2 which tabulates the advisory role and structure of participation for each of the stakeholder groups.

Research rigour will be achieved through triangulation within and between the methods and also by ensuring that the research process is clear and that an 'audit trail' is visible from the formulation of the research questions to the final conclusions. The research sequence and timetable is presented in Table 3.2 and has been structured to ensure the maximum participation of all relevant stakeholders.

4 CASE STUDIES

4.1 Introduction

A major component of this research project is an extensive investigation of the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and the interwoven issues of barriers to access, jurisdictional approaches to program delivery and sustainability of tenancies as they are translated and experienced at the local level in four distinct case study areas: Geraldton (WA); North-Western Adelaide (SA); Katherine (NT) and South-East Queensland (Qld) (see Figure 4.1).

The adoption of this multi-site case study approach also provides an opportunity to examine how Indigenous people gain access to mainstream public and community housing tenures in specific geographic settings, i.e., urban and regional city environments. The multi-case study approach also allows investigation of how local characteristics, demographics and program delivery frameworks unique to a specific geographic setting have influenced (if at all) the lived experiences of Indigenous people accessing mainstream public and community housing, as well as those who have chosen to leave mainstream tenures, been thus far unable to access mainstream housing assistance, fallen out of it or returned to mainstream public or community housing following a period(s) of residence in a non-mainstream (private market) option(s). Localised influences will be considered in the investigations of sustainability of tenancies in mainstream public and community housing among Indigenous people who have accessed these tenures and those who have not.

Figure 4.1 Case Study Locations

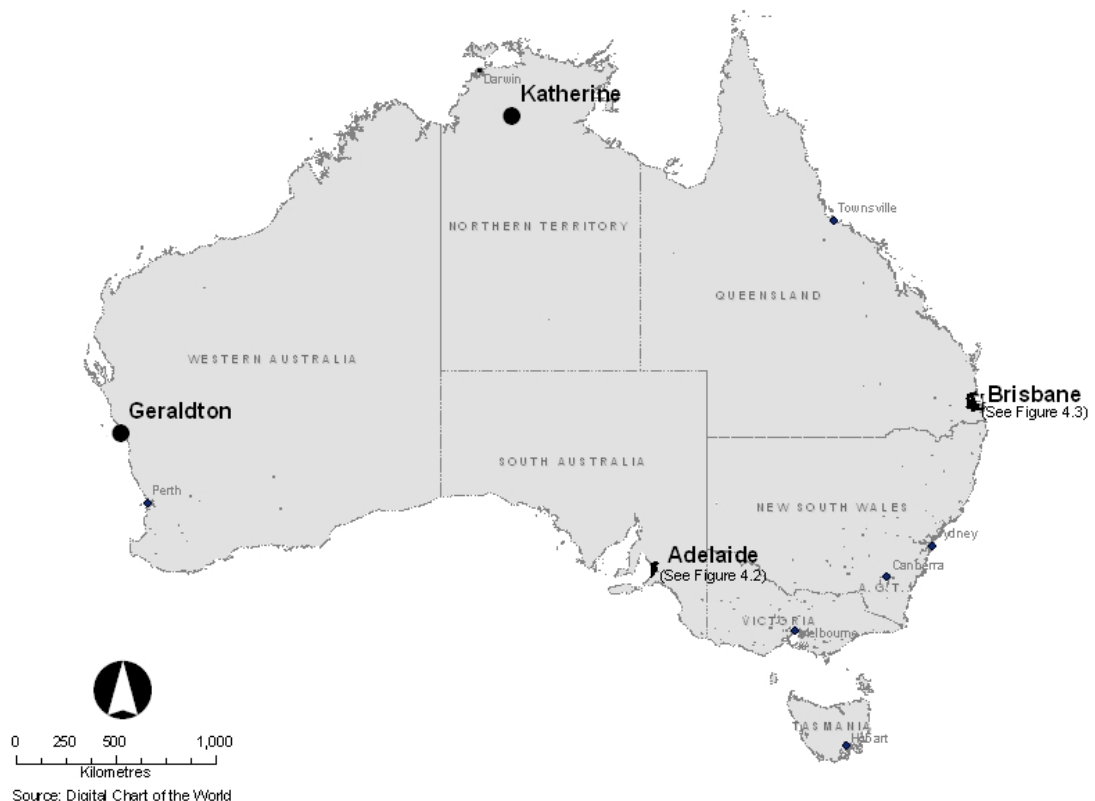


Table 4.1 Common Case Study Protocol

	A. Prior to the Field	
<i>Stage One</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics approval • Meet with case-study jurisdictional contacts (on-going). 	
<i>Stage Two</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with peak Indigenous housing bodies to gain their support for the project. 	
<i>Stage Three</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdictional contacts to provide a statistical overview of the case study locality (e.g., number and proportion of Indigenous people in each housing tenure). 	
<i>Stage Four</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop contact list of public, community and crisis housing providers, Indigenous organisations, education and health agencies in the case study area. • Commence local area networking through phone conversations. • Send letters to local (i.e., case study area) organisations requesting their participation and support (regional Housing Department, community housing organisations (CHOs) agencies, women’s refuges, Indigenous organisations, employment, education, health agencies). 	
<i>Stage Five</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send letters to SHAs requesting interviews with a sample of public housing tenants. • Send letters to relevant organisations requesting interviews with a sample of clients of community, homeless and crisis accommodation agencies. • Seek to obtain a sample of private rental tenants in housing stress. 	
<i>Stage Six</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with personnel from peak housing and Indigenous bodies including SHAs, Indigenous housing bodies, tenant advocacy groups, CHOs etc.. 	
<i>Stage Seven</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise field work timetable for case study. 	
	B. In the Field	C. Post Field
<i>Stage One</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual rapport building and interviews with representatives of agencies, relevant Indigenous organisations and community representatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative coding of themes from interviews with the use of Nudist software
<i>Stage Two</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise list of interviewees. Participants will be drawn from: (1) mainstream public and community housing tenants (CSHA public housing, and CSHA community housing - medium-term and long-term community housing); (2) Indigenous-specific housing program tenants (ARHP and CMIHP); and (3) tenants in housing need outside long-term secure public, Indigenous-specific and community housing: (private rental tenants experiencing high levels of housing stress, CSHA community housing short-term and crisis; CSHA CAP; and homeless people).² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of material back to the community
<i>Stage Three</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual interviews and family focus groups with Indigenous tenants. 	

² NB. The first group of tenants - mainstream public and community housing tenants - represents those tenants who have gained access to the target tenancy while the remaining tenants reside in tenancies outside of mainstream public and community housing.

4.2 Common Case Study Protocol

The researchers/research teams undertaking research in each of the four case study areas selected for this project have developed a common case study protocol. This protocol will guide the case study research process, as well as facilitating ongoing collaboration and coordination, ensuring that the data collected in the case study sites is comparable across space and time and the results are rigorous. This said, each case study is an independent component of a larger project and as such some parts of the common case study protocol and the methodologies outlined within the protocol will not be appropriate to all case studies due to differences in jurisdictional circumstances, program structures etc. As such, where necessary, case study researchers/research teams will adopt an approach they feel most suited and appropriate to local circumstances in their case study area.

In addition to the common case study protocol, a list of questions to be put to the Indigenous people to be interviewed in the focus groups has been developed such that the results from the case studies can be easily compared. The common set of questions for Indigenous people covers:

- Demographics
- Current household structure (including extended family stays and friendship stays)
- Current dwelling type and housing tenure
- Housing, household formation and location/mobility histories (particularly movements into and out of public and community housing, duration of tenancies, experiences on waiting lists, evictions, and interaction with short-term and emergency accommodation)
- Personal barriers/difficulties experienced in accessing and sustaining mainstream public and community housing (perceptions of discrimination, cultural barriers, evictions, debt and arrears etc.)
- Views on the appropriateness of mainstream public and community housing dwelling structures and housing policies and practices for Indigenous people
- Perceptions of mainstream public and community housing providers and agencies
- Views on the appropriateness of mainstream and Indigenous-specific public and community housing
- Suggestions/options for improving accessibility and sustainability of mainstream public and community housing for Indigenous people.

A common set of questions has also been developed for the interviews with local housing providers and local organisations and agencies that work with or represent Indigenous people in each of the case study locations. This schedule of questions covers issues such as:

- How the agency/organisation/provider works with Indigenous people in terms of services provided, social support programs, housing assistance/support programs/mechanisms, housing advice etc
- The agency's role/mandate/mission for working with Indigenous people
- The agency's funding mechanisms to assist Indigenous people

- The agency's understanding/knowledge of the experiences of Indigenous people accessing and sustaining mainstream public and community housing services
- The barriers the agency perceives as affecting Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing
- The agency view on programs that have been successful in assisting Indigenous people into appropriate and affordable housing including mainstream public and community housing. Their views on programs and models that work.
- The agency's views on the factors that contribute to successful and sustainable tenancies for Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing. The factors that seem common to failed tenancies for Indigenous people?
- The agency's views on how best to deal with the connections between Indigenous homelessness, short-term and crisis accommodation and mainstream public and community housing
- The agency's recommendations with respect to improving outcomes in the area of access to mainstream public and community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in mainstream public and community housing

4.3 Case Studies

The following section outlines the distinctive similar and differing characteristics of each of the four case study areas: Geraldton (WA); North-Western Adelaide (SA); Katherine (NT) and South-East Queensland (Qld). The diversity of population, demographic, socioeconomic and housing conditions and experiences in each of the four case studies selected for this research is outlined as these factors affect and are affected by the policy environment and policy options in each of the jurisdictions.

4.3.1. Geraldton

Geraldton is the administrative and service centre of the Mid West Region. It services the area of land that extends from Coorow in the South to Exmouth in the North and inland to Wiluna. As shown in Table 4.2, the Geraldton LGA had a total population of 19,179 at Census 2001, including 1,756 Indigenous persons. The Indigenous population of Geraldton represents approximately 9 per cent of the total Geraldton population (3.19 per cent for WA as a whole). The Indigenous population of Geraldton is a much younger population than the non-Indigenous population of Geraldton and has a lower family income level. Indigenous disadvantage in Geraldton is evident in that median family incomes are lower than for the non-Indigenous population.

Geraldton has a relatively large public housing stock making it a valuable case study for the present project. The Homeswest Regional Office is located in Geraldton and owns an estimated 11 per cent of the housing stock (Walker 2004). (The data provided in Table 4.2 is based on the Census and so does not distinguish between mainstream and Indigenous-specific public housing.) In contrast, it has a small community housing stock. Table 4.2 shows that only 40 community housing properties were rented by tenants in Geraldton at the time of the 2001 Census and only 12 of these were rented by Indigenous tenants. The majority of these properties are in fact not long-term mainstream community housing properties.

Table 4.2: Selected Socioeconomic and Demographic Statistics of Geraldton and Western Australia for Indigenous, Non-Indigenous and Total Populations

	Geraldton			Western Australia		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population
Population	1,765 (9.20%)	16,745 (87.31%)	19,179*	58,496 (3.19%)	1,702,809 (92.95%)	1,832,008
Proportion of the representative WA population	3.02%	0.98%	1.05%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median age (years)	18	36	34	20	35	34
Median weekly family income (\$)²	500-599	700-799	700-799	500-599	800-999	800-999
Median weekly rent (\$)³	50-99	100-149	100-149	50-99	100-149	100-149
Mean household size (persons)⁴	3.4	2.4	2.5	3.7	2.6	2.6
State/Territory housing Authority Households	193 (26.99%)	522 (73.01%)	715	4293 (15.08%)	24181 (84.92%)	28,474
Community Housing Organisation Authority Households	12 (30.00%)	28 (70.00%)	40	2070 (47.37%)	2300 (52.63%)	4,370

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001.

4.3.2. North-West Adelaide

Metropolitan Adelaide represents the largest single community of Indigenous persons in South Australia. The northern and north-western suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide contain the largest concentrations of resident Indigenous people in the Adelaide Statistical Division (ASD) (see Figure 4.1). At the time of the most recent Census (2001) 11,047 Indigenous persons were counted as resident in the Adelaide Statistical Division (ASD) representing 47.16 per cent of the 23,425 Indigenous residents enumerated in SA and an increase of 17.7 per cent (or 1 664 people) on the Indigenous population enumerated at Census 1996. Over the same period, the total population of the ASD grew only 2.6 per cent.

The site for the North-West Adelaide case study is the two contiguous local government areas (LGAs) of Port Adelaide-Enfield and Salisbury. These LGAs comprise a large part of the north-west region and were established in the years immediately post Second World War. The North-West area of Adelaide developed at this time as a result of the availability of cheap land for residential and industrial development; government-led industrial attraction activity in the Northern Adelaide region; and SA's SHA, the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT), developing large scale public housing estates to accommodate blue-collar workers (and their families) employed throughout the Northern metropolitan region.

In more recent years however, North-Western Adelaide has suffered due to structural changes in the economy, particularly the decline in the manufacturing sector and thus employment opportunities. Due to the recent property market boom the area is now dominated by residential development. While some areas of North-Western Adelaide have seen gentrification and public and private sector led residential estate redevelopment, many areas in the North-Western suburbs contain

large concentrations of South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) housing that is in need of significant upgrading, renovation and/or demolition. These suburbs are also considered sites of significant socio-economic disadvantage.

The Port Adelaide-Enfield and Salisbury LGAs have well established resident Indigenous populations. Indigenous people have resided in north-west Adelaide since the immediate post-war years. The LGAs of Port Adelaide-Enfield and Salisbury are two of the larger LGAs in the Adelaide metropolitan area with estimated resident populations at the 2001 Census of 98,569 and 110,924 respectively. Importantly, the two LGAs represent the largest single populations (absolute numbers) of Indigenous persons in the ASD: 2,162 and 1,752 respectively. The Indigenous populations of these two LGAs alone account for 35.43 per cent of Indigenous residents enumerated in Adelaide at Census 2001. Salisbury and Port Adelaide-Enfield experienced the largest and third largest growth respectively in absolute numbers of population in 2003 (ABS 2003 cat no. 1362.4).

Table 4.3 presents selected socio-economic and demographic statistics for Indigenous, non-Indigenous and total populations in the case study LGAs and for comparison in both Adelaide and SA. The Port Adelaide-Enfield and Salisbury LGAs exhibit a lower median age of the Indigenous populations of all four regions. Lower median weekly rent are paid by Indigenous households in the Port Adelaide-Enfield LGA (\$50-99); partly reflecting the lower rents paid by tenants of publicly provided housing in the LGA (6,499 properties compared to 3,575 in Salisbury LGA which also has a higher total population than Port Adelaide-Enfield). As with other areas, the mean size of Indigenous households is significantly above non-Indigenous and total population mean household sizes, reflecting the larger size of Indigenous households and diverse family living arrangements.

There is a significant overrepresentation of Indigenous households in mainstream SAHT public housing (relative simply to the non-Indigenous) and continued reliance on this tenure by Indigenous households in the case study LGAs. In contrast, there is an underrepresentation of Indigenous households in community housing tenures (10 households in Port Adelaide-Enfield and 6 in Salisbury). Statistics provided by the South Australian Community Housing Authority (SACHA), the statutory agency responsible for the delivery of mainstream community housing (association and cooperative housing) in SA, indicates that there are only around 60 Indigenous community housing households across SA (identification of Indigenous status dependent on self-reporting); and

Other features of the North-Western Adelaide case study area important in the context of this research include: poorer education outcomes/lower school leaver ages among Indigenous persons - a problem in outer Northern metropolitan Adelaide as a whole and magnified in the Indigenous population; higher unemployment rates among Indigenous persons compared to non-Indigenous and total populations in the region; and the presence of a suite of organisations and agencies, including church and community organisations, providing services and support for Indigenous persons in health, housing and welfare.

4.3.3. Katherine

Katherine is a regional centre of almost 10,000 residents located in the upper northern area of the NT. At Census 2001, 1,898 Indigenous persons were enumerated in the Katherine LGA (see Table 4.4). These individuals represented over 20 per cent of the population, the highest concentration of Indigenous persons of the four case study areas identified for this project.

The Indigenous population of Katherine is a rapidly growing population, increasing by 275 people or 16.9 per cent since Census 1996 and 420 people (28.4%) since Census 1991. Over 55 per cent of the Indigenous population of Katherine is aged 24 years and under compared with approximately 33 per cent of the non-Indigenous population and just over 38 per cent of the total LGA population. These Figures mirror those of the NT in general where the population is relatively young compared with the populations of other states in Australia.

Indigenous population in Katherine and more so in the NT as a whole earn considerably less in mean weekly individual, family and household income than do non-Indigenous people. In both Katherine and the NT Indigenous individuals, families and households earn less than half the mean weekly income earned by non-Indigenous individuals, families and households. The income trends presented in Table 4.4 are even more interesting when the mean household size is considered, i.e., Indigenous households are significantly larger (3.7 persons per household for Indigenous households in Katherine versus 2.8 for non-Indigenous households) and therefore such households must spread household/family income across more household members.

One hundred and ninety Territory housing authority properties are rented by Indigenous persons/households in Katherine; almost 48 per cent of the 396 Territory housing authority properties in the LGA. In addition, at Census 2001, 67 tenants rented their property from a CHO in Katherine, 91 per cent of these tenants identified as Indigenous. Katherine has a large concentration of Indigenous-specific housing managed and delivered by ICHOs. The Katherine case study therefore provides the opportunity to investigate the interaction between Indigenous-specific public and community housing programs and mainstream assistance programs.

A number of Indigenous organisations play a major role in delivering services to the Indigenous people of Katherine. For example, the Kalano Association provides housing and services to urban Indigenous people in Katherine as well as running the Kalano Community Patrol, an aged care facility and a child care facility.

The Jawoyn people are the traditional owners of the Katherine Gorge and the Jawoyn Association is a joint venture partner in the management of Nitimiluk National Park. They are also responsible for work and training programs for Indigenous people. There are three other major language groups among Katherine's Indigenous population: Wardaman, Dagoman and Mialli.

4.3.4. South-East Queensland

Inala is a large residential area in the western suburbs of Brisbane surrounded by the industrial areas of Wacol, Darra, Archerfield and Carole Park. Prior to the settlement of the area by non-Indigenous people, the Jaggera people inhabited the area.

The area now called Inala (previously Serviceton) was established after the Second World War as ex-servicemen were seeking affordable accommodation for their families during the post war housing shortage. In a history of Inala provided by the Brisbane City Council, the ex servicemen formed a housing cooperative (Serviceton Cooperative Society) and purchased land which was divided into household blocks for shareholders. The Queensland Housing Commission later took over this development and in 1949 called for tenders for construction of 1000 homes. This area is now a large public housing area.

Table 4.3 Selected Socioeconomic and Demographic Statistics of Port Adelaide-Enfield LGA, Salisbury LGA, Adelaide Statistical Division and SA for Indigenous, Non-Indigenous and Total Populations

	Port Adelaide-Enfield LGA			Salisbury LGA			Adelaide Statistical Division			South Australia		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population
Population	2,162 (2.19%)	91,910 (93.24%)	98,569	1,752 (1.58%)	106,285 (95.82%)	110,924	11,047 (1.03%)	1,023,872 (95.46%)	1,072,585	23,425 (1.60%)	1,391,045 (94.81%)	1,467,261
Proportion of the representative SA population	9.23%	6.61%	6.72%	7.48%	7.64%	7.56%	47.16%	73.60%	73.10%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median age (years)	19	38	38	17	33	33	19	37	37	20	37	37
Median weekly family income (\$)	500-599	700-799	600-699	600-699	700-799	700-799	600-699	800-899	800-899	500-599	800-899	800-899
Median weekly rent (\$)	50-99	100-149	100-149	100-149	100-149	100-149	100-149	100-149	100-149	50-99	100-149	100-149
Mean household size (persons)	3	2.3	2.3	3.3	2.7	2.7	3	2.4	2.4	3.3	2.5	2.5
State Housing Authority Households	321 (4.71%)	6,499 (95.29%)	6,820	189 (5.02%)	3,575 (94.98%)	3,764	1,234 (3.69%)	32,214 (96.31%)	33,448	2,158 (4.96%)	41,341 (95.04%)	43,499
Community Housing Organisation Households	10 (2.10%)	466 (97.90%)	476	6 (1.88%)	313 (98.12%)	319	64 (1.78%)	3,530 (98.22%)	3,594	735 (14.69%)	4,269 (85.31%)	5,004

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001

Table 4.4: Selected Socioeconomic and Demographic Statistics of Katherine and the Northern Territory for Indigenous, Non-Indigenous and Total Populations

	Katherine			Northern Territory		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population
Population	1,898 (20.01%)	7,141 (75.29%)	9,485	50,785 (25.05%)	139,839 (68.98%)	202,729*
Proportion of the representative NT population	3.74%	5.11%	4.68%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median age (years)	21	34	31	21	34	30
Median weekly family income (\$)²	600-699	1,200-1,499	1,000-1,199	400-499	1,200-1,499	1,000-1,199
Median weekly rent (\$)³	50-99	100-149	100-149	50-99	100-149	100-149
Mean household size (persons)⁵	3.7	2.8	2.9	4.6	2.7	3
Renting from State/Territory housing Authority	190 (47.98%)	206 (52.02%)	396	1,415 (28.42%)	3,564 (71.58%)	4,979
Renting from Community Housing Organisation	61 (91.04%)	6 (8.96%)	67	4,434 (94.24%)	271 (5.76%)	4,705

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001

Table 4.5: Selected Socioeconomic and Demographic Statistics of Inala and Queensland for Indigenous, Non-Indigenous and Total Populations

	Inala			Queensland		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total Population
Population	898 (7.25%)**	10,976 (88.64%)**	12,383*	112,772 (3.15%)**	3,338,671 (93.11%)**	3,585,639*
Proportion of the representative Qld population	0.80%	0.33%	0.35%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median age (years)	17	34	32	19	36	35
Median weekly family income (\$)²	500-599	500-599	500-599	600-699	800-999	800-999
Median weekly rent (\$)³	50-99	50-99	50-99	100-149	100-149	100-149
Mean household size (persons)⁵	3.2	2.7	2.8	3.5	2.6	2.6
State Housing Authority Households	163 (9.59%)	1,537 (90.41%)	1,700	5,064 (10.99%)	41,032 (89.01%)	46,096
Community Housing Organisation Households	0 (0.00%)	20 (100%)	20	4,270 (46.29%)	4,954 (53.71%)	9,224

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001

Inala now has a large number of Indigenous people and people from a non English speaking background. As shown in Table 4.5 the Inala statistical local area (SLA) had a total population at Census 2001 of 12,383, 898 (7.25%) of whom identified as Indigenous. Over 58 per cent of the Indigenous population of Inala is aged 24 years and under and just over 3 per cent (29 individuals) are aged in the 65 years and over age cohorts.

While Inala has a large concentration of public housing properties (1700 properties at Census 2001) the SLA contained only 20 community housing properties at last Census and none of these properties are tenanted by Indigenous people. As such, and like Geraldton, Inala represents an opportunity to specifically focus on barriers to access and sustainability of tenancy issues for mainstream public housing tenants and to investigate the role that an expanded and more accessible and sustainable mainstream community housing program for Indigenous people could play.

The Inala area was chosen as the South East Queensland case study as it not only contains a large number of Indigenous people and a significant concentration of public housing but also Inala has a high percentage of Indigenous people relative to other areas in South East Queensland. In addition, the Inala Housing Office is responsible for the provision of housing for people recently discharged from prisons including Wolston Corrections Centre, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre and David Longland Centre as well as mental health care facilities. The Inala case study site provides an opportunity to investigate the research questions as they relate to both the Indigenous population of Inala and formerly incarcerated Indigenous people directed to the mainstream and Indigenous-specific housing assistance offices in the Inala area.

4.4 Conclusion

A major component of this research project is an extensive investigation of the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and the interwoven issues of barriers to access, jurisdictional approaches to program delivery and sustainability of tenancies as they are translated and experienced at the local level in four distinct case study areas: Geraldton (WA); North-Western Adelaide (SA); Katherine (NT) and South-East Queensland (Qld).

A common case study protocol has been developed by the researchers to guide the case study research process and facilitate ongoing collaboration and coordination, ensure that data collection in the case study sites is comparable across space and time and the results of this component of the research are rigorous.

The case studies exist in different geographical, policy and program settings and thus require differing research approaches. The common case study protocol will act as a broad mechanism in which to coordinate these different approaches. In Geraldton, Katherine and Inala there exists little long term community housing and thus the research focus is upon the mainstream public housing. In Katherine the research will pay specific attention paid to women and the barriers to access and sustainability of tenancy issues experienced by Indigenous women accessing mainstream housing assistance. In Inala issues of access to mainstream housing assistance also includes access and sustainability issues as they relate to formerly incarcerated Indigenous people. North-West Adelaide represents the best opportunity to examine the research questions as they relate to mainstream community housing. While this case study area has less than 20 community housing

properties tenanted by Indigenous people, these properties are all mainstream community housing as no ICHOs manage property in metropolitan Adelaide.

Each of the case studies will not only examine the lived experiences of Indigenous people who have successfully accessed mainstream public and community housing but will also aim to interview Indigenous people who have chosen to leave mainstream tenures, been thus far unable to access mainstream housing assistance, fallen out of it or returned to mainstream public or community housing following a period(s) of residence in a non-mainstream (private market) option(s). This includes Indigenous people in (1) Mainstream public and community housing tenants (CSHA Public Housing, and CSHA Community Housing - medium-term and long-term community housing); (2) Indigenous-specific housing program tenants (ARHP and CMIHP); (3) Tenants in housing need outside long-term secure public, Indigenous-specific and community housing: (private rental tenants experiencing high levels of housing stress, CSHA Community Housing short-term and crisis; CSHA CAP; and Homeless people).

In all case studies contact and networking has commenced with relevant local organisations. Each of the case studies has also commenced a literature review particular to that case study.

5 NEXT STAGES IN THE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Next Stages in the Research

This project has been designed to maximise the participation of all relevant stakeholders within the research process. Given the national context of the project and the numerous stakeholders and housing providers involved and the multiple methods being employed, the research has been carefully structured to allow time for data collection, analysis and triangulation. This will better enable the project to progress smoothly and in a manner appropriate to stakeholder needs.

Preliminary work for each component of the project has now been completed. The User Group and a national network of jurisdictional contacts have been established and these groups are guiding the development of the research, particularly in terms of the case studies and with respect to the formal Survey process.

As discussed in detail in Section 4.7, the four case studies are focused upon a particular but complementary component of the overall research resulting from their different geographical, policy and program settings. As such, each of the four case studies has assumed a slightly different focus. In Geraldton, the research focus is on access to and the sustainability of tenancies in mainstream public housing. In Katherine, the research focus is on mainstream housing access and sustainability issues as they relate to Indigenous women and taking into account the unique housing structures in the Northern Territory. Inala has a more general focus, although this case study investigates access to mainstream public and community housing and tenancy sustainability as experienced by formerly incarcerated Indigenous people in the region. This is particularly important in the Inala case study as the Inala region has an above average number of formerly incarcerated Indigenous people compared to other areas and the total and non-Indigenous populations. North-West Adelaide represents the best opportunity to examine the research questions as they relate to mainstream community housing.

In all case study areas, contact with local stakeholders and housing providers has been established and the process of implementing a common case study protocol has commenced. Networking through phone conversations with relevant organisations in each case study area will continue throughout August and much of this effort will be aimed at establishing an interview list in a variety of housing options other than in public housing. This is an important part of the consultation process, as State/Territory housing authorities can provide lists of potential interviewees to whom consent letters for interviews and focus groups can be sent.

The current focus of the research and consultation process is on making further contact with agencies providing medium- and long-term CSHA community housing; tenants of Indigenous-specific housing programs; and tenants in housing need outside long-term secure public and community housing (e.g., private rental tenants experiencing high levels of housing stress, those accessing crisis accommodation and homeless people outside the formal structures).

Fieldwork will commence in each of the case study areas in late August and through September. A common list of questions for interviews and focus groups with individuals and agencies is currently being tested and refined through consultation with such agencies and jurisdictional contacts. Coordination within the case study

component of the research will continue through dialogue between the researchers concerning research progress, data collection and analysis in addition to unforeseen constraints and obstacles that may emerge in an individual case study. Final analysis of the case study material will occur in November.

It is evident from the data presented in Chapter Two and the discussions surrounding the data, that Indigenous people housed in mainstream housing are largely housed in mainstream CSHA public housing and not mainstream community housing. There are only a handful of community housing providers/agencies in each case study area which provide long-term accommodation options. As such, investigation of the issue of access to and sustainability of community housing tenancies among Indigenous people will rely heavily on the formal Survey consultation process with stakeholders in the community housing sector, including community housing peak bodies. In addition, further consultations with stakeholders in the community housing sector will be held in both Adelaide and Perth to add depth to this area of the research.

The national consultation process involves both a formal and informal component. Surveys will be administered during the year with the analysis of responses to be undertaken later in the year. The informal component of the national consultation includes meetings, workshops, teleconferences and phone conversations. These have commenced and are scheduled on a regular basis throughout the remainder of the project. Workshops will be held in all case-study locations and in the capital cities of the States and Territory where the case studies are located.

5.2 Conclusion

This project examines the issue of Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing and the sustainability of tenancies in these housing tenure forms by Indigenous people. The share of mainstream CSHA public rental housing is thought to be low relative to levels of disadvantage and housing need and is even lower in the mainstream CSHA community housing sector. There are significant concerns both in the policy making community, among housing providers and among community agencies and advocacy groups with respect to Indigenous arrears and eviction rates (and voluntary exits in the face of mounting difficulties being experienced from public housing and the ability of Indigenous people in need to re-renter public and community housing options. Scope, therefore, clearly exists to improve Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing programs. Of course, Indigenous-specific public rental housing and community housing programs provide significant support to Indigenous people but much of this support is in regional and remote areas.

There now exists a relatively large research literature in the area of Indigenous housing and a significant base of information on Indigenous representation in public and community housing forms. However, there also exist a number of important gaps in the literature which this project is designed to fill.

What we need further analysis on is the question of the level of representation of Indigenous people in mainstream public and community housing programs relative to need and comparative (Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous) information across all states and jurisdictions with respect to the duration of tenancies and eviction, waiting list, arrears, over-crowding outcomes in public and community housing. This analysis will be undertaken using an array of data sources.

More importantly, the research hopes to break new ground in determining the extent to which Indigenous people face impediments in accessing mainstream public and community housing assistance programs and sustaining tenancies in public and community housing through an extensive case study and formal and informal consultation process. This research focuses on important causal mechanisms that existing data sources are poorly equipped to address. We need to know more about the mechanisms through which either direct or indirect discrimination may operate in affecting access to mainstream public and community housing. We need to understand, from Indigenous people, what factors may inhibit their utilisation of mainstream housing services. The relative role of forces such as a potential lack of awareness, understanding and recognition of Indigenous cultures, housing practices and housing/dwelling type needs by mainstream public and community housing providers and a higher incidence of risk behaviours such as alcohol and substance abuse among the Indigenous public and community housing applicant and tenant population needs to be better understood. Consultation with housing providers, agencies and Indigenous people should also enable us to better understand the difficulties experienced in coordinating the transition into public and long term housing options of Indigenous people in severe need.

The mix of methods adopted in this project provides a means of triangulating and verifying the validity and reliability of the research findings. Adherence to Indigenous research protocols and ethics will ensure that the research undertaken in this study is consistent with appropriate Indigenous research protocols and presents an Indigenous view in a culturally appropriate and confidential manner.

Finally, this project has a specific policy goal, namely, to identify and evaluate policy actions and measures that address obstacles experienced by the Indigenous population to mainstream access and the sustainability of tenancies in public and community housing programs. The scale of national and community consultation with Indigenous people and housing providers and stakeholders in this research project is impressive and should deliver to Federal, State and Territory policy authorities and agencies and other housing providers and stakeholders important information on what works and what doesn't. Ultimately, the project is designed to ensure that housing outcomes for Indigenous people are improved.

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