

Indigenous homelessness and mobility

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- Indigenous Homelessness: Perth, Carnarvon, Broome, Sydney.
 - Ethnographic interviews.
- Policy Initiatives in Indigenous Mobility Patterns: WA, SA, NT.
 - Structured interviews.
- This paper is based on fieldwork carried out in Perth, Carnarvon, Broome.

Cultural concepts and homelessness

- Mobility and obligation.
- Cultural mobility Vs. social mobility.
- Mobility and overcrowding.

Mobility and obligation

- One of the most strongly held features of Indigenous culture and identity is the obligation of kinfolk to look after one another.

Beckett 1988; Birdsall 1988, Birdsall-Jones 2001, 2004; Henry and Smith 02; Gale 1972; Gale and Binnion 1975; Memmott et al. 2006).

Culturally motivated mobility

- Funerals.
- Maintaining kin relationships.
- Law time.

Birdsall 1990; Memmott et al. 2006; Smith; Beckett 1988: 133-34

Social mobility

- Arises out of causes external to the Indigenous socio-cultural world, but handled according to Indigenous social structures and institutions.

e.g.

- Power and gas.
- Loss of home.
- Violence and substance abuse.

Negatively sanctioned mobility

- Arises out of gender and aged based lifestyle choices that may have been acceptable in youth, but are unacceptable as people grow older.

Homeless or just visiting?





Mobility, homelessness and place

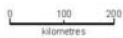
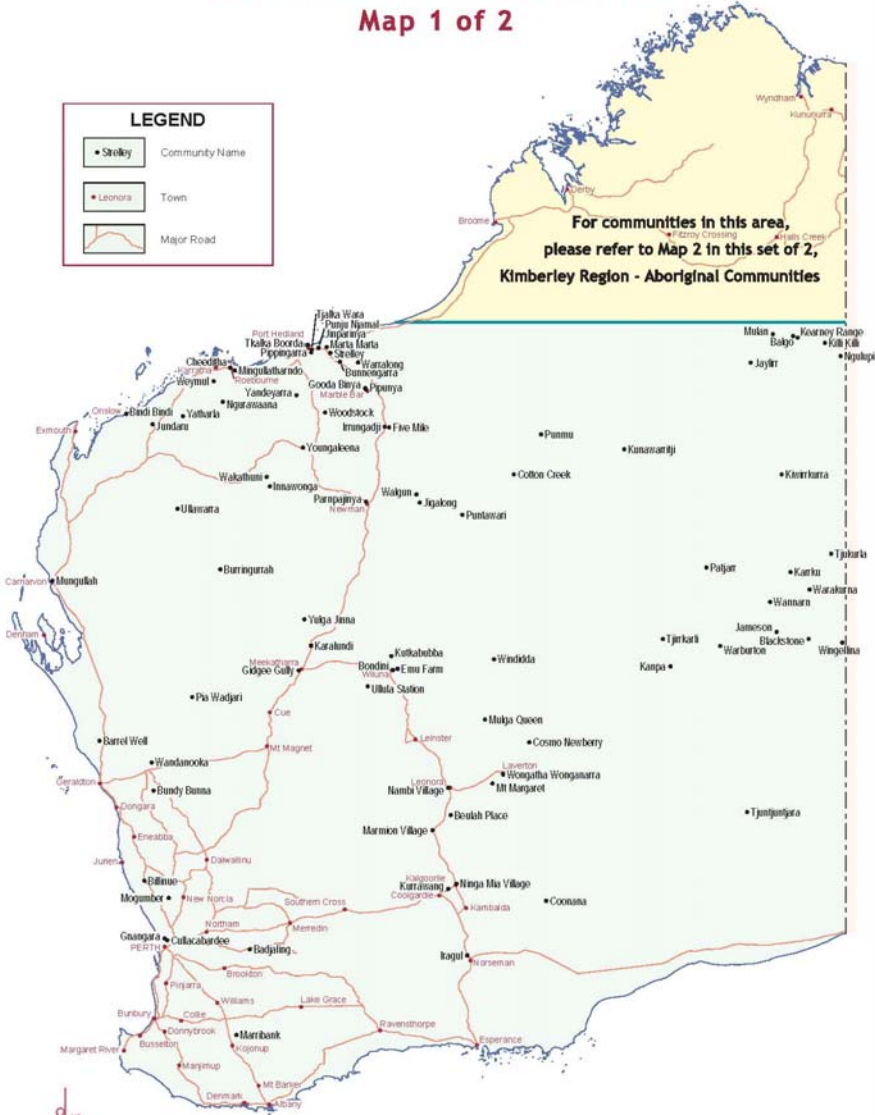
- The local character of Indigenous homelessness is to some extent determined by the nature of the urban hinterland.
- Broome has a primary homeless population that is highly socially visible.
- Carnarvon has almost no primary homelessness, comparatively.
- Perth has a lot of primary homeless Indigenous, but they're largely invisible.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Map 1 of 2

LEGEND

- Strelley Community Name
- Leonora Town
- Major Road



Department of Indigenous Affairs

WESTERN AUSTRALIA DIA REGIONS



History of place and kinship

Carnarvon, gateway to the south...

- Stolen generations were moved through Carnarvon.

Closure of the Swan Valley Noongar Community.

- Still homeless 6 years later.

Rights and obligations

- Overcrowding may result from both the housing shortage and responses to the rights and obligations accruing to kin relationships.

- An Aboriginal mother is not going to kick her son out on the street. She can't do that.
- You can't say no to your family.
- You have to have respect for your family.
- I like to help the family but I want to have my own place.
- For a lot of men from the communities, the last thing on their mind is to go to HomesWest because that's a women's issue.

An Aboriginal mother is not going to kick her son out on the street. She can't do that.

- The focus of the injunction to look after each other derives from relationships founded in the process of child rearing.
- An individual who aspires to long term residence in a household must have been reared up by or with the leaseholder, or the individual must be one of the people who helped to rear him/her.

You can't say **no** to your family

- You have to have respect for your family.
- Even when it is not in one's own interests to do so, one ought, rightly, to accede to family requests for shelter.
- But sometimes, people can say no. How?

I like to help the family but I want to have my own place

- People may be obligated to take in their homeless relations.
- But, they have the right to say what goes on in their own place.

For a lot of men from the communities, the last thing on their mind is to go to HomeWest because that's a women's issue

- Division of responsibilities according to gender.
- However, circumstances alter cases.

Home ownership and permanent employment

- Sometimes it is hard to own a place: it goes against trying to help your family and people; I can starve to pay the loan but how do you explain that to other people (i.e. Family)?
Szava and Moran 2008: 33
- People in work and/or who own their own homes tend to restrict their relations' access to their homes.
Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008

“For an Aboriginal to be homeless, they would have to be separated from their own cultural identity in some way ... the circumstances we’re in tells us that we’re not the same as everybody else [non-Indigenous people].”

Research Interview, Sydney December, 2008