



# Safe and sound? How funding mix affects homelessness support for Indigenous Australians

Inquiry into funding and delivery of programs to reduce homelessness

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## Acronyms and abbreviations used in this report

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACAT	Aged Care Assessment Team
ADC	Aboriginal Development Commission
AHL	Aboriginal Hostels Limited
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
APY Lands	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
ATAR	Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAAPS	Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services
CCP	Community Connections Program
CLP	Country Liberal Party
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
DSS	Department of Social Services (Australian Government)
EFT	equivalent full-time
FaHCSIA	(Department of) Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Australian Government)
HEAL	Healthy Engagement and Assistance in the Long Grass
HPAP	Homeless Persons Assistance Program
HSA	Housing Support for the Aged
IAHP	Indigenous Australians' Health Programme
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICO	Indigenous Community Organisation
ICHO	Indigenous Community Housing Organisation
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NPAH	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
NPARIH	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing
PD	Position Description
PMC	(Department of the) Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australian Government)
QSS	Quantum Support Services
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHASP	Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Service
SOMIH	State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

## Glossary

A list of definitions for terms commonly used by AHURI is available on the AHURI website [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/glossary](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/glossary).

## Executive summary

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- *The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians* forms one part of the research program in the AHURI Inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in Australia, which aims to understand the mix of government and non-government funding and how the funding of services that support people who are experiencing homelessness influences service provision and outcomes for those people.
  - Indigenous Australians are 14 times more likely to become homeless than other Australians, and their homelessness situations are likely to be more severe. This research examines the extent to which the needs of homeless and at-risk Indigenous Australians are being met.
  - The research used relevant findings from the AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey (Flatau, Zaretsky et al. 2016) plus five case-studies and three focus groups. Twenty-seven organisations with Indigenous Australians as a main client group participated in the survey.
  - Findings in this research show that financial support to organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness is primarily provided by governments through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) which funds Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), with 94 per cent of funds from governments and the next largest source of funds (only 2%) from rent revenue.
  - No federal or state program specifically targets supporting homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of experiencing homelessness. Services for homeless Indigenous people are overwhelmingly ‘mainstreamed’, with SHS funds going to Indigenous organisations but no targeted support or coordination with programs which are targeted at Indigenous Australians.
  - Funding uncertainty is a major issue, and the problems (including operational inefficiency, inability of organisations to innovate, and impacts on staff recruitment and retention) caused by this precarity are notably similar, regardless of the location or type of service, with larger organisations best placed to cope.
  - Homeless Indigenous Australians may not be receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, and current support may not be culturally appropriate.
  - More than half of the survey respondents anticipate that negative consequences such as excessive reporting would result from attempting to further diversify their funding sources, including seeking funds from non-NAHA/NPAH sources.
-

## Key findings

A review of the history and policy context of organisations that support Indigenous Australians who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness revealed, that until now comprehensive information regarding their funding sources has not been readily available. No federal or state program specifically targets supporting homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of experiencing homelessness. The research is centred around the implications of funding mix for these organisations. It did not seek to ascertain the effectiveness of the organisations in alleviating homelessness.

The 2011 Census reported that 26,743 (1 in 20) Indigenous people were experiencing homelessness, which is a rate 14 times higher than that among non-Indigenous people (1 in 284) (ABS 2012). Despite over-representation of Indigenous people within Australia's homeless population, services for homeless Indigenous people are overwhelmingly provided by mainstream organisations and funding arrangements are characterised by an absence of non-Indigenous specific funding and a lack of Indigenous policy coordination.

This project used data obtained by the AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey (Flatau, Zaretzky et al. 2016), one of the other three research projects within the Inquiry. Analysis of the relevant survey data provided by Flatau, Zaretzky et al. (2016) was combined with a case-study and focus group approach intended to deepen understanding of how the mix of funding sources affects service delivery to homeless Indigenous Australians. Twenty-seven organisations with Indigenous Australians as a main client group participated in the *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey*. In addition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the organisations listed young single women, people exiting prison, and families as their client groups. The key types of assistance provided to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness were financial information, assistance to access mainstream social housing, material aid/brokerage, assistance and advice related to family and domestic violence, and referrals to other services. Only two agencies were able to meet more than 90 per cent of client demand, with most able to meet less than 75 per cent of client demand. Organisations exhibited some resistance to the idea of spending further staff and financial resources to pursue funding from non-government sources.

The research team identified five case studies which were investigated more thoroughly. Most were organisations that had taken part in the survey. The five case studies are of a cross-section of services provided by organisations from different areas:

- Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Territory
- Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services, Northern Territory
- Ruth's Women's Shelter, Queensland
- Weave Youth and Community Services, New South Wales
- Quantum Support Services, Victoria.

Approximately 35 research participants from five states participated in our case-study research interviews and in three focus groups held in WA, NT and Queensland with representatives of service providers and government departments. These revealed that funding uncertainty is a major issue for services; funding from governments is at the mercy of the priorities those governments give to homelessness, and affected by the changing economies of jurisdictions. Just as importantly, we found that Indigenous Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness may not be receiving the kinds of support best suited to them, and that support may not be culturally appropriate.

The combination of the fieldwork data with the *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* (Flatau, Zaretzky et al. 2016) results allowed areas of common concern and

importance to emerge. Drawing together the findings from the survey and our fieldwork revealed a notable similarity in the problems caused by the precarity and uncertainty of funding, regardless of location or type of service. These were operational inefficiency, service gaps, inability of organisations to innovate, and impacts on staff recruitment and retention. All the surveyed organisations and the case-study organisations received most of their funding from Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Financial support to organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness is primarily provided by governments through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) which funds Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), with 94 per cent of funds from governments and the next largest source of funds (only 2%) from rent revenue.

This dependence on government funding sources makes organisations and services vulnerable to policy changes and funding cuts.

For services that receive funding through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and/or the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), short-term funding arrangements creates operational inefficiencies and an inability to innovate. Of the 24 organisations who answered the relevant survey question, more than half anticipated that attempts to further diversify their funding sources and seek funds from non-National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)/NPAH sources would have negative consequences. Eleven organisations cited excessive reporting to meet funding requirements as the most significant consequence.

The majority of organisations serving homeless clients assist both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Although some mainstream organisations provide Indigenous-specific services, Indigenous people often have to seek support from people and organisations whose cultural competency can vary.

Our key findings are, in summary:

- Comprehensive information has not been readily available up to now regarding the funding sources of organisations that support Indigenous Australians who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- No federal or state/territory program specifically targets homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- Within the major funding programs for homelessness—the NAHA and the NPAH—services for Indigenous people are overwhelmingly mainstreamed. Within housing programs however a range of Indigenous specific funds are available to increase the supply of housing in remote communities (NPARIH); to improve tenancy sustainment (NPARIH); for provision of short-term accommodation for travel related to access to education, employment, training and health (AHL); for health services, including primary care outreach to homeless Indigenous people (IAHP); and for a range of programs relating to homelessness, including mental health, criminal and juvenile justice, transport, substance use and family violence services (IAS). None of these programs have Indigenous homelessness as their primary focus, suggesting that Indigenous homelessness funding arrangements are characterised by fragmentation and an absence of policy coordination.
- Indigenous homelessness services receiving NPAH funding are subject to similar conditions as other homelessness services. These vary between states and territories but include the length of term (currently two years, in line with the current NPAH), regular financial reporting, a service agreement and performance reporting arrangements. Whether this is the best way for governments to fund Indigenous services is highly contested.
- The survey results confirm there is heavy dependence on Commonwealth and state government funding for organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians who

are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. All 27 organisations whose main client group was homeless Indigenous people received the major portion of their funding from Commonwealth or state governments. Of these, only four organisations received funding from other sources—either philanthropic grants, community donations or fundraising activities—and the overall amounts from these sources were relatively small. In addition, three of these organisations received donations of goods and four of the organisations generated funds internally by charging their clients rent. It is clear that these organisations rely primarily upon Commonwealth and state government funds in order to provide their services. The total funding from all sources for these organisations was \$8.8 million, of which \$8.3 million was through Commonwealth and state funding sources. 94 per cent of funds came from governments (Flatau, Zaretsky et al. 2016).

- Homeless Indigenous Australians may not be receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, and current support may not be culturally appropriate.
- Services with a majority of homeless Indigenous clients are overwhelmingly run by mainstream organisations. Of the ICOs that do provide services for homeless Indigenous Australians, few receive funding through NPAH or NPARIH. It seems likely that the onerous application and reporting conditions act as a deterrent for smaller ICOs that might otherwise enter the space.

## Policy development options

Implications of these findings include the following:

- Uncertainty of funding is having a major impact on service provision and client outcomes. Research respondents' key requirement is funding certainty. Funding arrangements need to last for at least three years to improve services' viability. Three-year funding arrangements as a minimum would greatly assist organisations to plan ahead and improve service provision and client outcomes.
- Organisations' dependency on government funding in order to provide their services is highly unlikely to change. The analysis of funding sources makes it clear that there is no Indigenous-specific funding for homelessness services; unlike housing services, homelessness support services are not able to access funding specifically intended for Indigenous Australians. Funding arrangements are fragmented and lack policy coordination, and the ICHO sector is currently in a vulnerable position due to funding restrictions. With adequate funding for homelessness services to support Indigenous Australians, their use of non-homelessness services in sectors such as health, welfare and justice is likely to reduce (Zaretsky and Flatau 2013; Zaretsky, Flatau et al. 2013).
- There is a need for governments to build the capacity of Indigenous organisations, as these organisations are particularly well placed to provide culturally appropriate support. Milligan and Martin et al. (2016) point out that despite national policy support for a vigorous Indigenous housing services sector, there have been few sustained efforts to support Indigenous organisations' achievements in this area. Instead, service mainstreaming has caused disruptions and uncertainties within the sector and dissatisfaction among Indigenous leaders (Milligan, Martin et al. 2016).
- Lack of information available to organisations during times of government policy change must be minimised in order for services to continue effectively during interim periods. Advance notice of policy change would assist organisations to plan effectively.
- Job security and training for staff are important to minimise staff turnover and in turn to maintain quality of service provision. Organisations' dependency on government funding in

order to provide services is highly unlikely to change. Policy decisions need to take account of this.

- Most of the organisations providing support to Indigenous Australians who are homeless are not Indigenous-specific. Further work is required in order to determine whether homeless Indigenous Australians are receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, and whether the support they receive is culturally appropriate. We need to understand the views of Indigenous clients of homelessness services and of Indigenous people who do not or cannot access services.

## The study

*The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians* forms one part of a broader AHURI Inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in Australia. The Inquiry seeks to build policy- and practice-relevant evidence to help fill the gap in our knowledge about the financing of services supporting homeless people, to consider the current policy environment surrounding homelessness funding and service delivery, and to make recommendations for the future of homelessness funding in Australia.

This research project looks exclusively at the impact of funding sources on the outcomes of services for homeless Indigenous Australians. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports that Indigenous Australians make up around 2.5 per cent of the overall Australian population, but around 9 per cent of Australia's homeless population (AIHW 2011). This over-representation is reflected in the use of homelessness support services. Seventeen per cent (21,400) of all homeless people who were clients of government-funded SHSs in 2008–09 were Indigenous Australians (AIHW 2011).

This research has addressed the question 'What is the level of government and non-government direct and indirect funding of services which support Indigenous homeless people and how does the funding mix influence service provision and outcomes?'

It also addressed the following complementary questions:

- What proportion of funding comes from Indigenous-specific funding and non-Indigenous sources of funding?
- Are there other innovative sources of funding being tapped into for Indigenous homelessness in Australia or internationally?
- What impact do changes in funding sources have on service and delivery and outcomes for Indigenous people?

The case-study services were chosen to represent a range of organisation types and service provision in very different locations. Some of the organisations are mainstream, some are Indigenous-specific, some are homelessness-specific; some deal with particular types of clients, such as young people, or people experiencing domestic and family violence; some are very small and some are part of Australia-wide organisations. All provide services for homeless people and have mainly Indigenous Australian clients. These wide-ranging examples are intended to provide a breadth of information on the impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians.

Focus groups of key stakeholders held in Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Victoria drew together key informants from government departments, homelessness organisations and ICOs to discuss the impact of funding mix on both service providers and homeless Indigenous Australians. Information from these focus groups supplements our case study findings.

Our research was designed to facilitate engagement between the research and policy communities on how the mix of government and non-government direct and indirect funding of homelessness services for Indigenous Australians affects service provision. The particular contribution of this research to the broader Inquiry is to provide a lens for viewing the extent to which the needs of homeless and at-risk Indigenous Australians are being met. Our methodological approach integrates evidence-building with opportunities for increasing policy development knowledge for policy-makers.

# 1 Introduction

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- This research report looks specifically at the funding sources for organisations that support Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness.
  - Homelessness is an issue of major social concern in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that it affects over 100,000 people on any given night (ABS 2013).
  - In 2011, most Indigenous Australians (79%) resided in either regional or metropolitan areas.
  - Indigenous households are twice as likely as other Australian households to use one of the major housing assistance programs.
  - Indigenous Australians are more likely to become homeless than other Australians, and their homelessness situations are likely to be more severe.
  - This chapter provides contextual information regarding the funding of organisations that support Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness.
- 

## 1.1 Inquiry on homelessness funding in Australia

This research project, *The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians*, forms one part of the AHURI Inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in Australia. The Inquiry's aim is twofold. First, to gather and synthesise evidence on the mix of government and non-government funding of the homelessness service system, as well as of mainstream services and enterprises that support people experiencing homelessness. Second, to examine how the funding of services that support people who are experiencing homelessness influences service provision and outcomes for those people.

The Inquiry seeks to build policy- and practice-relevant evidence to help fill the gap in our knowledge about the financing of services supporting homeless people, to consider the current policy environment surrounding homelessness funding and delivery and to make recommendations on the future of homelessness funding in Australia.

This research project looks exclusively at the impact of funding sources on the outcomes of services for Indigenous homeless Australians. The AIHW reports that Indigenous Australians make up around 2.5 per cent of the overall Australian population, but around 9 per cent of Australia's homeless population (AIHW 2011). This over-representation is reflected in use of homelessness support services. Seventeen per cent (21,400) of all homeless people who were clients of government-funded SHSs in 2008–09 were Indigenous Australians (AIHW 2011).

This project was designed to facilitate engagement between the research and policy communities on how the mix of government and non-government direct and indirect funding of homelessness services for Indigenous Australians impacts on service provision. In common with the other projects in the Inquiry, it has a methodological approach that integrates evidence-building on the impact of the mix of funding sources with opportunities for increasing policy development knowledge for policy-makers.

The rest of this chapter provides relevant context for the research findings discussed in Chapters 3 to 5 of this report.

## 1.2 Homelessness in Australia

Homelessness is an issue of major social concern in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that it affects over 100,000 people on any given night (ABS 2013). People experiencing homelessness are without a base from which to work, go to school and engage with others. It can cause deep distress, lead to the onset of mental and physical health problems and exacerbate pre-existing conditions. Homelessness results from, and contributes to, problems of financial insecurity and hardship and past lives of violence and trauma. The high cost of housing in Australia is a contributing cause of homelessness and a barrier to exiting from it (Flatau, Wood et al. 2015). However, much of the homelessness in Australia can be attributed to experiencing domestic and family violence (AIHW 2011):

*Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless Australians are alike in that the single largest reported cause of their homelessness is domestic and family violence, with women and children most likely to seek access to homelessness services.*

A home that is inadequate for whatever reason can impact on the extent to which we can be included in society, as 'there is a difference between living in a dwelling and having a home' (Hulse, Jacobs et al. 2010: 25). It is not only the physical structure, but rather the meaning with which such a space is inscribed that makes it home (Easthope 2004).

### 1.2.1 Definitions of homelessness in Australia

For 20 years Chamberlain and MacKenzie's (1992) definition of three levels of homelessness was the most consistently used in Australia. This cultural construction maintained that homelessness only makes sense in a particular community at a given time; before deciding if somebody is homeless it is necessary to identify shared community standards about the minimum standard of housing that people have the right to expect in order to live according to the conventions and expectations of the particular culture. This cultural definition of homelessness led to the identification of three segments of the homeless population:

- The primary homeless are people who are living on the streets, in deserted buildings, cars or improvised dwellings.
- Secondary homeless people move between various forms of temporary shelter, including staying with friends and relatives and in emergency accommodation and boarding houses.
- The tertiary homeless live in single rooms in private boarding houses on a long-term basis (usually three months or more) and are without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure. They are homeless because their accommodation does not have the characteristics identified in the minimum community standard.

More recently ABS has developed a statistical definition of homelessness, which has replaced the Chamberlain and MacKenzie definition for the analysis of census data. Under this definition, people are homeless when they do not have suitable accommodation or if their current housing arrangement is inadequate, they have no tenure, the lease is not extendable or the conditions of their dwelling limit their control of and access to space for social relations.

This definition is not informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'rooflessness', but rather as the state of being without a 'home'. It emphasises the key aspects of a home identified by Mallett (2004), which are a sense of security, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space. A homeless person is someone whose dwelling lacks one or more of the elements that represent 'home' (ABS 2012d). Under this definition, people living in overcrowded conditions are considered to be homeless.

### **1.2.2 Housing conditions of Indigenous Australians**

In 2011, most Indigenous Australians (79%) resided in either regional or metropolitan areas. Only 14 per cent of Indigenous Australians were reported to live in very remote areas. Overall, the Indigenous population of Australia is younger than the non-Indigenous population, although the median age is increasing (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2016).

Indigenous households are half as likely to own their own home as other Australians. The 2011 Census data suggests that 36 per cent of Indigenous households were house owners (11% owned the home outright and 25% were owners with a mortgage). This rate is half that of non-Indigenous households (68%). The home ownership rate among Indigenous households was even lower in remote and very remote areas (18% combined in 2011). Seventy per cent of Indigenous households in remote areas lived in public housing (AIHW 2014c). Although there was an increase in the overall rate of house ownership among Indigenous households between 2001 and 2011, the rate of increase was only 4 per cent (from 32% to 36%) (AIHW 2014a; Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) 2013, 2014).

Indigenous households are twice as likely as other Australian households to use one of the major housing assistance programs—either Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), a non-taxable income supplement funded by the Australian Government to assist renters with the cost of housing, or social housing provided by state or territory governments and community housing organisations (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP) 2014a; AIHW 2013a, 2013b). Indigenous Australians are six times more likely to live in social housing than non-Indigenous Australian households (31% Indigenous compared to 5% non-Indigenous). As at June 2013, 14 per cent of all Indigenous households (excluding those in the Northern Territory) lived in public housing and 8 per cent lived in community housing (SCRGSP 2014a). In 2012–13, 18 per cent of new social housing allocations were to Indigenous households (SCRGSP 2014a).

Ten per cent of all households that received help in private rentals between 2012 and 2013 were Indigenous. In the same period, 664 new home loans were approved through the Indigenous Home Ownership Program and 1 in 25 households living in homes provided through the National Rental Affordability Scheme was Indigenous (AIHW 2014b).

### **1.2.3 Indigenous Australians who are homeless**

Indigenous Australians are over-represented as clients of homelessness services, making up 2.5 per cent of the total Australian population, but around 9 per cent of the total homeless population. The kind of homelessness experienced by Indigenous Australians also tends to be more severe. They are nearly twice as likely as non-Indigenous homeless people to experience primary homelessness.

The 2011 Census reported that 26,743 (1 in 20) Indigenous people were experiencing homelessness, which is a rate 14 times higher than that among non-Indigenous people (1 in 284) (ABS 2012a). Of those Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, 75 per cent were living in crowded housing, with an average of 12 people in each residence. Twelve per cent were living in supported accommodation for homeless people and 6 per cent were staying in tents, sleeping out or staying with other households temporarily. The overall rate of homelessness among Indigenous people dropped by 14 per cent from 2006 to 2011. Over the same period, homelessness among non-Indigenous people rose by 12 per cent (AIHW 2014a).

Indigenous Australians who are homeless are more likely than other homeless Australians to be female and under the age of 18. In 2011, half of Indigenous homeless people were female and about four in 10 were aged 18 or under. More than half were living in very remote areas and almost 97 per cent were living in severely crowded housing (AIHW 2014a).

The demographic profile of homelessness among Indigenous Australians is somewhat different from that of the non-Indigenous Australian population. The 2011 Census shows the level of homelessness among Indigenous women is somewhat higher, at 51 per cent of the total Indigenous homeless population, compared with 42 per cent of the total non-Indigenous population (see Table 1 below). Table 1 also shows that the age profile difference is distinct. Across all age groups, Indigenous people experience higher rates of homelessness compared with non-Indigenous people. Rates of Indigenous homelessness are highest among young people; for non-Indigenous people, rates of homelessness increase with age. In 2011 about 42 per cent of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were aged 18 or under, compared with 23 per cent for non-Indigenous people aged 18 or under (AIHW 2014a).

**Table 1: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homelessness by age and gender, 2011**

	Per cent		Rate <sup>(a)</sup>		Rate ratio <sup>(b)</sup>
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
<b>Sex</b>					
Males	49.2	58.4	487.2	41.7	11.7
Females	50.8	41.6	488.6	28.9	16.9
<b>Age group (years)</b>					
Under 12	28.2	13.2	477.3	30.9	15.4
12–18	14.1	9.3	432.4	36.7	11.8
19–24	13.1	15.4	617.1	67.9	9.1
25–34	15.6	19.3	582.2	49.5	11.8
35–44	13.0	13.8	515.0	34.0	15.1
45–54	8.9	12.7	450.1	32.1	14.0
55 and over	6.9	16.2	348.5	21.9	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>488.0</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>13.9</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Per 100,000 population

<sup>(b)</sup> The rate ratio is the rate for Indigenous people divided by the rate for non-Indigenous people.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014a).

At the other end of the scale, seven per cent of homeless Indigenous people were aged 55 years or over, compared with 16 per cent of non-Indigenous homeless people. Although this may be partly explained by differences in life expectancy, it is important to note that the rate of homelessness among Indigenous people aged 55 years or over was almost 16 times the rate for non-Indigenous people in the same age group.

Between 2012 and 2013, 22 per cent of the clients who sought help from SHSs were Indigenous people. From 2011 to 2013 there was an increase of 8.8 per cent in the Indigenous population using SHSs (9.2% estimated) (AIHW 2014b). Although other factors contributed, domestic and family violence was recognised as the major factor contributing to homelessness among Indigenous Australians (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). Indigenous Australian women are up to 35 times more likely to experience domestic and family violence than non-Indigenous Australian women (Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2010). There are various explanations for the higher prevalence of domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities. The impact of colonisation, ongoing trauma from the displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional lands and kinship groups, the removal of children from their families, the low expectations that mainstream society has for Indigenous Australians and the

high rates of unemployment, poverty and substance abuse have been cited as causes. The next section further considers issues relevant to Indigenous homelessness.

### 1.2.4 Understanding Indigenous homelessness

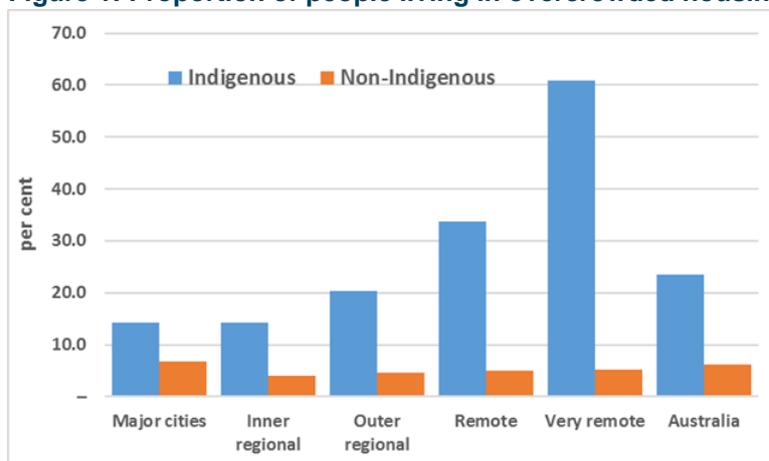
Indigenous homelessness is distinct from that of the non-Indigenous homeless population for a complex mix of reasons. At the heart of these is the legacy of colonisation, which separated Indigenous people from their lands and subjected them to state control of every aspect of their lives. This has given rise to the concept of spiritual homelessness, which is defined as a state of disconnection from one’s homeland, separation from family or kinship networks or not being familiar with one’s heritage (AIHW 2011: 2; see also Memmott, Long et al. 2003a).

The legacy of colonisation is deeply implicated in the contemporary disadvantage of many Indigenous people that forms the context of homelessness (Keys Young 1998). Low income, the absence of affordable housing, discrimination, and cultural differences in the meanings of ‘shelter’ and ‘home’ have resulted in high levels of housing exclusion (Birdsall-Jones and Shaw 2008; Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness 2006; Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2011; Keys Young 1998; Memmott, Long et al. 2003a ). This is compounded by policies of past and present governments which have resulted in distrust when it comes to Indigenous people engaging with ‘white’ services, including homelessness services (Habibis 2013; Prout 2008).

Housing shortages, and differences in the ways that Indigenous people use household space, result in high levels of crowding, with Indigenous crowding rates almost five times those of Euro-Australian households. In remote locations, 50 per cent of houses are overcrowded, rising to 70 per cent in very remote areas (see Figure 1 below).

Definitions of crowding differ. ABS definitions use measures of household density to assess levels of crowding (ABS 2012c, 2012d), but Indigenous housing and homelessness researchers argue that density measures of crowding are inadequate. Instead, they propose that crowding be understood as a state of stress induced by large numbers of residents (Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2012b: 147). From this perspective, crowding of Indigenous households should be understood as occurring when the level of household density is both involuntary and stressful to household members. This definition highlights the importance of distinguishing between crowding that is culturally sanctioned and crowding that arises from a lack of housing choice. The latter is associated with homelessness, poor health, low school attendance, family and community violence and other behaviours that are detrimental to individual and community wellbeing (SCRGSP 2014c).

**Figure 1: Proportion of people living in overcrowded housing by remoteness area, 2006**



Source: SCRGSP (2014c) Table 10A.1.8.

The shortage of affordable housing, and inadequate, inappropriate or poorly maintained housing are the most important causes of crowding, especially in remote locations. Large family sizes and the value that Indigenous people place on connection to kin are also contributing factors. Family relationships are embedded within a moral economy of cooperation and mutuality, giving rise to a culture of reciprocity in which caring and supporting kin is a critical social obligation. Reciprocity is central to the kinship system and structures private relationships as well as economic, social and political relations.

Indigenous relationships to place are also associated with high levels of residential mobility, which can lead to crowded households and the destabilisation of tenancies. Visits to kin are essential for social identity, the maintenance of important relationships and social interaction. Short-term mobility is also associated with caring for country and historical attachments to particular locations, as well as with the cultural expectations associated with particular demographic groups (Habibis 2013; Prout, 2008).

Seasonally related mobility is also a regular feature of many regions as a result of the wet season, cyclones and extremely hot weather affecting parts of the Northern Territory; the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia; parts of central and southern Western Australia, including the Goldfields-Esperance region; inland areas of the Kimberley region; and far western regions of Queensland. Journeys often involve travel from inland areas to coastal ones, and coincide with school holidays.

Population mobility is associated with homelessness because low incomes, discrimination and an absence of culturally appropriate and affordable short-term accommodation mean that accommodation options for many Indigenous people when travelling are likely to be limited and risky. People can stay with relatives, or in public spaces with health, safety and criminalisation risks, or at one of the hostels operated under the Federal program, Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL). The latter are not always available, and may exclude some categories of people, such as individuals who are on bail. Public space dwelling is therefore an important feature of Indigenous homelessness, arising out of a complex mix of voluntary and involuntary factors (Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2011).

Population mobility can also cause tenancy failure and homelessness. The presence of visitors may threaten the stability of households through breaches in tenancy agreements because of crowding, behaviour that leads to neighbour complaints, and demand-sharing that undermines household budgets and tenants' capacity to maintain their rental payments (Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2011).

The kinds of homelessness experienced by Indigenous Australians are also more severe. They are nearly twice as likely as non-Indigenous homeless people to experience primary homelessness, such as sleeping rough or living in improvised dwellings and shelters (27% Indigenous compared to 15% non-Indigenous at the 2006 Census). Although most people who become homeless do so while living in a major city, a much higher proportion of Indigenous Australians seek homelessness support in regional, remote and very remote areas than their non-Indigenous counterparts (63% Indigenous compared to 30% non-Indigenous) (AIHW 2011). Whichever part of Australia they are based in, Indigenous Australians are four times more likely to become homeless than non-Indigenous Australians (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008).

The Australian Government has recognised that homelessness among the Indigenous population is a critical policy issue. In 2009, the Australian Government released a White Paper, *The road home: a national approach to reducing homelessness* (Commonwealth of Australia 2008), which identified the vulnerability of Indigenous Australians to homelessness and set homelessness reduction targets. The White Paper was followed by the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH), which aims to reduce the incidence of homelessness in remote Australia by 50 per cent by 2018 (COAG 2009: 8).

### **1.2.5 Organisations supporting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who are homeless**

Homelessness services support those experiencing homelessness across a range of needs, and work with those at risk to help them avoid homelessness. People who are homeless are also supported by other mainstream services such as drug and alcohol services, mental health services and employment services.

Homelessness services in Australia are operated almost exclusively by not-for-profit agencies. Additional support is provided by housing, health, drug and alcohol, education and employment services which are based in both not-for-profit agencies and government agencies.

Homelessness services are often part of larger organisations (e.g. the Salvation Army, Mission Australia and Anglicare) that deliver a range of community support services, but they may also be part of organisations whose sole focus is supporting homeless people. The services that receive funding through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and/or the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) are referred to as Specialist Homeless Services (SHSs) in this study. Existing evidence suggests that homelessness services (almost all of which are non-government organisations) rely heavily on government sources of funding but also use their own-sources of revenue (e.g. rent payments, in the case of accommodation services) and philanthropic donations to fund their operations.

Most organisations serving homeless clients assist both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This brings to the fore questions of cultural competency. Cultural differences are implicated in reduced Indigenous access to homelessness services and to less successful interventions (Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2012a, 2012b; Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010). As Hunt notes, without genuine engagement with Indigenous people it is difficult to meet the COAG targets for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage (2013: 1):

*Community engagement requires a relationship built on trust and integrity: it is a sustained relationship between groups of people working towards shared goals.*

We return to the important discussion regarding whether homeless Indigenous Australians are receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, or support that is culturally appropriate, later in this report.

### **1.2.6 Indigenous-specific organisations**

Indigenous-specific organisations are more likely than mainstream services to deal with homelessness as one aspect of their work. This is, perhaps, partly because of the level of need within the Indigenous population and partly because they are uniquely placed to deliver culturally appropriate services compared with mainstream government and non-government services.

Funding arrangements for Indigenous organisations are often different from mainstream community and government sector funding, with fewer funding sources and a heavier dependence on government funding. This can create an uncertain financial environment that impacts on the organisations' ability to maintain consistent service delivery. It also reduces their capacity to take advantage of opportunities to grow (Eringa, Spring et al. 2008). The vulnerability of the Indigenous Community Housing Organisation (ICHO) sector is at odds with the evidence base on the importance of culturally sensitive service delivery for effective intervention (Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2012a, 2012b). The objective of culturally appropriate service delivery is also supported by government homelessness policies (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). It is therefore critical to develop a deeper understanding of how the Indigenous community sector is funded, and how this shapes the nature, structure and types of homelessness services these organisations provide to Indigenous people.

### **Indigenous Community Housing Organisations**

ICHOs include community organisations such as resource agencies and land councils (SCRGSP 2016: 17.3). Dwellings are owned or leased and managed by ICHOs and community councils in major cities, regional and remote areas. ICHO models vary across jurisdictions and their services can also include dwellings funded or registered by government. Together, the state-owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) and ICHO sectors comprise over 27,000 social housing tenancies managed by state governments and an estimated 200 other landlord entities.

While mainstream providers struggle to remain viable in the face of tightening government funding provision, the destabilising impact on the Indigenous community sector is especially severe. The National Partnership Agreement reforms (NAHA, NPAH and NPARIH) and the introduction of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) have, along with other policy changes, accelerated the decline of the ICHO sector, due to the loss of federal funding (see Table 2 below). ICHOs are generally small organisations (Eringa, Spring et al. 2008) with limited financial and organisational capacity and complex legal and financial arrangements. When programs are cut they have a limited ability to find alternative sources, so they have been hard hit by the policy shift towards mainstreaming. With the exception of New South Wales, where adapted policy, funding and regulation are in place (Milligan, Phillips et al. 2011), the shift towards mainstreaming has been associated with a drastic decline in Indigenous organisations in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia and in remote Indigenous communities generally (Habibis, Phillips et al. 2015).

**Table 2: Indigenous Community Housing Organisations by state or territory (2001, 2006 and 2012)**

State or territory	All ICHOs	All ICHOs	All ICHOs	Funded ICHOs
	2001	2006	2012	2012
NSW and ACT	205	169	207	122
VIC	25	22	19	18
QLD	116	91	33	33
SA	31	37	34	33
WA	125	92	7	7
TAS	3	3	2	2
NT	111	82	28	28
Total Australia	616	496	330	243

Source: Habibis, Phillips et al. (2015: 16).

It is possible for some ICHOs to maintain a role in the delivery of housing and homelessness services if they can meet the policy and regulatory conditions that accompany federal funding, but there are many barriers. ICHOs are without economies of scale, have limited ability to resource overcoming regulatory hurdles and complex legal frameworks, and have limited access to qualified personnel or training opportunities (Eringa, Spring et al. 2008).

The decline of the ICHO sector in housing and homelessness provision runs counter to the evidence that services for Indigenous people should be provided in ways that are culturally appropriate. This is especially true in remote Australia, where the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia is widest and includes language barriers and the impact of traditional practices and beliefs (Habibis 2013). In urban settings, too, research has shown that services that are not adapted to Indigenous cultural realities are problematic. This point is made well by Milligan, Phillips et al. (2011: 49):

*Appreciation of, and respect for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] identity and cultural values and understanding the implications of cultural norms and life styles for housing aspirations and the variety of needs and living patterns ... is the fundamental starting point for designing and delivering housing service responses.*

Successive studies have shown that when it comes to access to and engagement with homelessness services, Indigenous people fall into the 'hard to reach' category (Birdsall-Jones, Corunna et al. 2010; Memmott, Long et al. 2003b). Understanding how Indigenous organisations are responding to the increasingly tight funding environment is, therefore, an important aspect of this research.

### **1.2.7 Research on Indigenous homelessness**

In a groundbreaking report on homelessness among Indigenous people, Keys Young expanded on Chamberlain and MacKenzie's definition (discussed earlier) by proposing to recognise five distinct types of homelessness (Keys Young 1998: 45):

- Spiritual forms of homelessness, which relate to separation from traditional land or from family.
- Overcrowding, a hidden form of homelessness, which causes considerable stress and distress to Indigenous families and communities.
- Relocation and transient homelessness, which results in temporary, intermittent and often cyclical patterns of homelessness due to transient and mobile lifestyles, but also to Indigenous people having to travel to obtain services.
- Escaping an unsafe or unstable home for their own safety or survival is another form of homelessness affecting large numbers of Indigenous people, especially women and young people.
- Lack of access to any stable shelter, accommodation or housing—literally having 'nowhere to go'—is regarded as the worst form of homelessness by many of those consulted.

### **1.2.8 AHURI research on Indigenous homelessness**

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited (AHURI) has undertaken three major research projects on Indigenous homelessness:

- Memmott, Long et al. (2003a, 2003b) examined the definition of Indigenous homelessness compared with current non-Indigenous definitions, the categories of Indigenous homelessness and the categories of responses to Indigenous homelessness. These papers highlight the importance of incorporating a cultural element into the definition of homelessness.
- Birdsall-Jones and Shaw (2008) and Birdsall-Jones, Corunna et al. (2010) revisited the evolving understanding of homelessness (Birdsall-Jones and Shaw 2008: 1.4), in particular its cultural elements, as a preliminary to undertaking a comparative analysis of Indigenous homelessness in major cities and regional towns in order to understand the place, house and home needs of Indigenous peoples and how to address those needs.

- Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. (2011 and 2012b) examined the issue of Indigenous house crowding with a view to building a model, testing it and refining it empirically for urban and metropolitan areas. This study examined existing models of household crowding—the Canadian National Occupancy Standard used by the ABS and the Proxy Occupancy Standard used by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)—and rejected these density models based on numbers in favour of a culturally determined stress model. These papers provided ‘policy-makers with an increased knowledge base from which to understand, predict, measure, assess and manage Aboriginal household crowding’ (Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2012b: 3).

## 1.3 Research methods

### 1.3.1 Overall Inquiry

The Inquiry comprises three separate research projects covering a national survey of services supporting people who are homeless, case studies on how the funding mix affects homelessness service delivery, and an in-depth examination of the funding of Indigenous homelessness services. The latter is the focus of this report. The Inquiry is supported by an Inquiry Panel process to draw together evidence, the outcomes of the research, and policy and practice expertise to address the policy issue and to make particular recommendations for policy development and/or practice innovation. The panel comprises key Commonwealth and state and territory government representatives, as well as representatives of services and peak bodies in the homelessness sector.

### 1.3.2 Inquiry questions

The Inquiry addresses the following research and policy questions:

- 1 What is the overall level and the mix of funding for homelessness services in Australia?
- 2 What is the impact of the funding mix on the nature, structure and types of services provided and the extent to which these support different groups of homeless people?
- 3 What is the relationship between the funding mix and service structures on the one hand and the outcomes of people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing, homelessness?
- 4 How, and from where, is funding sourced by agencies and enterprises which serve or provide employment or other complementary opportunities for the homeless?
- 5 What is the level of government and non-government direct and indirect funding of services which support Indigenous homeless people and how does the funding mix influence service provision and outcomes?

Complementary questions relevant to this report, *Safe and sound? How funding mix affects homelessness support for Indigenous Australians*, include:

- What proportion of funding comes from Indigenous-specific funding and non-Indigenous sources of funding?
- Are there other innovative sources of funding being tapped into for Indigenous homelessness in Australia or internationally?
- What impact do changes in funding sources have on service and delivery and outcomes for Indigenous people?

### 1.3.3 Approach for this research

This project used data obtained by Flatau, Zaretsky et al. (2016), one of the other three research projects within the Inquiry. Analysis of the relevant survey data provided by Flatau,

Zaretsky et al. (2016) was combined with a case-study and focus group approach intended to deepen understanding of how the mix of funding sources affects service delivery to homeless Indigenous Australians.

### **Survey analysis**

Data specific to homeless Indigenous Australians was extracted from the results of the *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* (Flatau, Zaretsky et al. 2016) and analysed. It was initially envisaged that the results from the pilot survey would be used, but it became clear that the pilot results would not produce enough data specific to homeless Indigenous Australians. It was therefore decided to include questions regarding the funding of organisations that provide homelessness services to Indigenous Australians from the full *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* rather than from the pilot. Although this decision slowed progress, it ensured that more data relevant to this project was available for analysis.

Incorporating questions into the full survey regarding the funding of organisations that provide homelessness services to Indigenous Australians allowed asking all surveyed services whether their main clients could be best described as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and what proportion of all clients over the 2013–15 period were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The survey was administered to:

- 1 a representative sample of SHSs
- 2 a targeted sample of mainstream services in areas such as drug and alcohol and mental health services, and other systems delivering support to homeless people
- 3 social enterprises employing homeless people.

The majority of services in the SHS sample received funding from the Commonwealth, state or territory governments through the NAHA and NPAH. A smaller number are homelessness services that do not receive NAHA or NPAH funding.

In the targeted mainstream sample, two primary types of non-specialist services and funding arrangements were identified: services not funded through any homelessness-specific funding program, delivered by mainstream providers directly assisting homeless people; and non-SHSs within the mainstream healthcare, welfare and justice system sectors, receiving government and other funding, where homeless people are over-represented in service use.

The survey provided primary evidence of:

- The profile of each service; including organisation size, client group(s), services provided and geographic location.
- Funding level and mix in 2013–15, both recurrent and capital, including NAHA and NPAH funding, other funding from government sources such as health or corrections, and non-government funding sources.
- How the current funding mix meets service delivery objectives.
- How a change in available sources of funding may influence service delivery.

### **Literature review and fieldwork**

The extracted survey findings specific to homeless Indigenous Australians were complemented by a grey literature web-based search of information on homelessness service funding, including government budgets, government policy documents such as Productivity Commission/SCRGSP reports, non-government organisation annual reports (particularly Indigenous Community Organisations (ICOs)), reviews of Indigenous services, and so on. This provided an initial overview of funding for services supporting homeless Indigenous Australians.

The research team identified five case studies which were investigated more thoroughly. Most were organisations that had taken part in the survey. The five case studies are of a cross-section of services provided by organisations from different areas:

- Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Territory
- Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services, Northern Territory
- Ruth's Women's Shelter, Queensland
- Weave Youth and Community Services, New South Wales
- Quantum Support Services, Victoria.

Telephone and face-to-face interviews with the case study key informants provided for an in-depth analysis of the history of these services, their relationships with homeless Indigenous Australians and their sources of funding. Invaluable information was gathered on how the mix of government and non-government funding has affected the service providers' capacity and the outcomes for homeless Indigenous Australians, providing insights into each of the project's research questions. The findings are detailed later in this report.

Focus groups of key stakeholders were also held in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. These focus groups drew together key informants from government departments (both policy officers and those delivering services) and representatives of organisations providing services to Indigenous Australians to discuss the impacts of funding mix on both service providers and homeless Indigenous Australians. In particular, these focus groups addressed the third and fourth project research questions.

Telephone and face-to-face interviews with our selected case-study services took place between January and April 2016. The focus groups took place in February 2016. The information sheets for the project and the informed consent forms are included as appendices to this report.

Approximately 35 research participants from five states took part in the three focus groups and five case-studies. This number allowed us to gain a wide range of views from senior representatives of government and relevant not-for-profit organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness. The combination of this data with the *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* results allowed areas of common concern and importance to emerge.

Clients of services were not involved in this very specific research on funding mix. It is recommended that further research on funding implications investigates the views of Indigenous Australian clients of homelessness services.

The organisations that took part in this research have wide-ranging aims and purposes, but all seek to alleviate homelessness and/or the risk of experiencing homelessness. This research centred around the implications of funding mix for these organisations. It did not seek to ascertain the effectiveness of the organisations in alleviating homelessness.

## **1.4 Summary**

This chapter has provided the relevant context of homelessness for Indigenous people in Australia. Indigenous Australians are more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to become homeless, to experience domestic and family violence and to live in situations of crowding.

The following chapter discusses the history and policy context of organisations that support Indigenous Australians who are homeless.

## 2 Funding history and policy context

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- Until now, comprehensive information has not been readily available regarding the funding sources of organisations that support Indigenous Australians who are homeless.
  - No federal or state program specifically targets homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of experiencing homelessness.
  - Very few ICOs receive funding through NPAH or NPARIH.
  - Services for homeless Indigenous people are overwhelmingly mainstreamed, despite over-representation of Indigenous people within Australia's homeless population.
  - In comparison, housing does have Indigenous-specific service funding streams.
  - Funding arrangements are characterised by a lack of policy coordination.
- 

This chapter charts the historical and policy context of relevant organisations in order to provide context to the research findings (which are detailed in Chapters 3 to 5).

Before this research was undertaken, comprehensive information regarding combinations of funding sources and their impact was not readily available. We explain the frameworks we used to collect and analyse the findings concerning funding in order to determine how these funding sources and combinations affect services, and their client outcomes are also explained.

### 2.1 Funding for homelessness services before 1985

Before the 1970s, services supporting homeless people were invariably provided and funded by faith-based organisations. Government funding of homelessness services in Australia commenced in a systematic way during the 1970s (Bullen 2010; Chamberlain, Johnson et al. 2014; Chesterman 1988). In 1974, the Commonwealth Government introduced the Homeless Person's Assistance Program (HPAP) in response to the findings of the Commonwealth of Australia Working Party on Homeless Men and Women (1973). Bullen (2010) and Chamberlain, Johnson et al. (2014) argue that the report of the Working Party represented a watershed, both in terms of an understanding of the wider social and economic structural factors affecting homelessness and an expansion of the role of government in funding services. HPAP provided funding to faith-based and non-profit groups that were providing case support and accommodation for homeless people, mainly men who were often chronically homeless. Many HPAP services, the forerunners of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), which began in 1985, were traditional night shelters.

In 1983 a review of crisis accommodation found it was very fragmented, uncoordinated, overly restricted to specific target groups and inadequately funded. This led to the formation of SAAP in 1985. In the first three years, funding increased from \$43 million to \$68.7 million. Alongside SAAP and as part of the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement, a new Crisis Accommodation Program (\$13 million in 1984–85) was created to fund capital investment in crisis accommodation facilities (Flatau, Wood et al. 2015).

Homelessness services for population subgroups identified as being at higher risk (e.g. women fleeing domestic violence, and young people) also began to emerge during the 1970s and

1980s. From 1974, Australian Government funding began to be directed to women's refuges for women and children escaping domestic violence. This funding was initially provided through the Department of Health, and subsequently through the SAAP funding program.

## 2.2 Historical funding for homelessness services with prioritised client groups

The Australian 1967 Referendum enabled the Commonwealth to legislate for Indigenous Australians, and since that time responsibility for Indigenous housing policy has been shared between the Commonwealth and the states. In 1968, the Commonwealth attempted to address the housing conditions and homelessness of Indigenous Australians by providing funds to the states for Aboriginal housing. In most states these funds were mainstreamed by allocating them to the state housing authority (except in Queensland, where funds were allocated to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs).

Many current services that seek to address the issues of Indigenous housing and homelessness have their origins with the Whitlam Labor Government as it sought to fulfil its election platform of 'All Aboriginal families to be properly housed within a period of 10 years'. Initiatives at this time included:

- A dramatic increase in funding to the states for Aboriginal housing through state housing authorities.
- The establishment of an Aboriginal housing board in each state to provide advice to government on Aboriginal housing (Long 2000; Ross 2000).
- The introduction of Indigenous-managed housing associations (see Long 2000; Ross 2000; Tripcony 2000)—by 2014, over 300 ICHOs managed around 17,000 dwellings throughout Australia (SCRGSP 2016: Table 17A.8).
- The establishment of AHL as a separate company (Long 2000: 112):  
*to provide 'essential and urgent accommodation' primarily for people moving to cities and towns for education or employment, and for medical care. The aim was to meet needs with minimum red tape and maximum flexibility. By 1975, AHL had 56 hostels and some 1,000 beds ...*
- the introduction of the Aboriginal Loans Commission, which provided low-interest loans to low-income families to purchase houses—this Commission later became the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) and, from 1990, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) (Long 2000).

Sanders (2000: 239–240), reflecting on this history of attempts to address the issues of Indigenous housing and homelessness, notes:

*This brings us to another theme: that Indigenous people's responses to non-Indigenous intervention in their housing and living environments have been complex, diverse, unanticipated and also at times quite resistant. Seldom, if ever, has intervention worked out as non-Indigenous people planned or intended. Consequences of intervention have been unforeseen, and almost always, it seems, Indigenous people had a somewhat different perspective. Some Indigenous people have resisted the intervention altogether, while others have tried to turn it, in some way, to their own rather different purposes and lifestyles.*

The funding of homelessness services for Indigenous clients has not always been a priority for Australia's Commonwealth and state governments. When the formal funding of homelessness services through the HPAP commenced in the 1970s, the focus was initially on providing

support and accommodation to chronically homeless men through night shelters. However, during the mid to late 1970s, two further homeless groups emerged: women fleeing domestic violence, and vulnerable young people. In response, the Department of Health funded women's refuges and the Commonwealth also funded youth refuges.

In 1985, with the introduction of SAAP, through which different funding sources for homelessness support were drawn together and the Crisis Accommodation Program, which provided capital funds for accommodation, funding was divided into three sub-programs (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985*: cl. 7):

- a General Supported Accommodation sub-program
- a Women's Emergency Services sub-program
- a Youth Supported Accommodation sub-program.

SAAP was established as a national program in 1994 to assist those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 2005–06, SAAP support was provided to 16,200 Indigenous Australians aged 15 or over. This group included people whose housing conditions were a threat to health, safety or security, who had no safety or security, or who lived in temporary or other emergency accommodation. In all states of Australia, Indigenous Australians who used SAAP services were described as over-represented given the populations of Indigenous people in those areas. Among those who sought help from SAAP services, Indigenous females were counted as the highest proportion of clients (73%, compared to 57% of non-Indigenous clients). Eighty per cent of Indigenous clients aged 25 to 29 were female (ABS & AIHW 2008).

This high representation of women reflects the correlation between homelessness and experiencing domestic and family violence (ABS and AIHW 2008). Family violence was given as the most common reason for which clients sought help from SAAP, and it was cited at a higher rate by Indigenous people (31%) than non-Indigenous people (21%). Other major reasons for Indigenous clients to seek assistance from SAAP were relationship breakdowns, accommodation difficulties, alcohol and other drug issues, financial difficulty and overcrowding (ABS & AIHW 2008).

The SAAP program did not specifically recognise Indigenous Australians as a priority group for funding until the mid-1990s. The first review of SAAP in 1988, and subsequently the second SAAP agreement between the Commonwealth and the states (known as SAAP II), recognised 'the emerging needs of other target groups' (Chesterman 1988: 48) such as families and single women. SAAP II identified five main target groups: young people; women and women with children who were homeless and/or in crisis as a result of domestic violence; families, including single-parent families; single men; and single women (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*: cl. 6(5); Bullen 2010).

The SAAP Act 1989's only reference to Indigenous Australians appears in clause 6(1)(d):

*6 (1) The program shall ...*

*(d) include services designed to meet the needs of, and provide equitable access for, Aboriginal people and people from non English-speaking backgrounds ...*

The *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994* (SAAP III) listed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as one of eight groups to which specific services could be provided (cl. 13). This Act set up the SAAP Data and Research Advisory Committee, and homelessness among Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders was the focus of one of the first research projects it commissioned. Through the Keys Young report (1998), SAAP for the first time recognised that Indigenous Australians were a priority group among people experiencing homelessness. Indigenous-specific homelessness services first received funding through SAAP in the early 2000s.

Further recognition was achieved in SAAP IV (2003) when, despite the official definition of homelessness, an accompanying memorandum of understanding (MOU) noted that the definition of homelessness is widely contested and the experience of homelessness for Indigenous Australians is different from that for non-Indigenous Australians (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004: 9–10).

In 2001, Indigenous Australians were recognised as a significant group in the first ABS count of homelessness (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2003). This identification continued in the 2006 and 2011 counts.

## **2.3 Current government funding of homelessness services**

In 2009, SAAP was superseded by the NAHA, which included funding for homelessness services, rebadged with additional funding coming in from the NPAH and other channels. By 2011–12, the combined Commonwealth and state/territory funding for homelessness services was \$507 million. Most government funding for the homelessness sector is provided through the NAHA and the NPAH. The latter requires joint funding from the states/territories. It is estimated that about 1,500 SHSs around Australia are funded under these two agreements (AIHW 2014a).

### **2.3.1 National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness**

The major source of funding for Indigenous homelessness services is through the Commonwealth–state NPAH, which funds not only Indigenous homelessness services but a broad range of homelessness services. The latest NPAH jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments commenced in July 2015. This is a two-year program (2015–17) and, as did the two previous NPAHs in 2013 and 2014, it aims ‘to reduce homelessness through sustained effort and partnerships with business, the not-for-profit sector and the community’ (COAG 2015). While the non-profit sector has been instrumental in delivering homelessness services, the role of business remains undetermined.

Almost \$250 million per year is being directed to around 800 homelessness agencies across Australia. The NPAH priority is given to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, as well as to homeless youth. Indigenous people are referred to only once in the Preliminaries section of the Agreement as a ‘targeting priority group’ and are not referred to among the ‘priority outputs’ or the ‘additional outputs’ (COAG 2015: 3–4).

Indigenous homelessness services receiving NPAH funding are subject to similar conditions as other homelessness services. These vary between states and territories but include the length of term (currently two years, in line with the current NPAH), regular financial reporting, a service agreement and performance reporting arrangements. Whether this is the best way for governments to fund Indigenous services is highly contested. In a review of what works (and what does not work) to overcome Indigenous disadvantage, the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (2012: 5) noted the importance of a flexible approach to funding, one which allowed for ‘local variation in need, context and service delivery style’. In remote and very remote areas, the delivery of services may require a new form of governance, as the current governance arrangements are too focused on the politics of the eastern states (Walker, Porter et al. 2012). In their report on funding Indigenous organisations, Moran, Porter et al. (2014: 3) note that governments tend to ‘over-emphasise risk and uncertainty’. They examined a number of ways that government funds Indigenous organisations, from completely untied general-purpose grants to tightly prescribed specific-purpose grants. Among the approaches examined, they found that organising funds around an organisation rather than a program was successful, that having stable ongoing funding led to improved governance capabilities, and that governance capabilities were enhanced when decision-making was devolved to local organisations, allowing

them to identify priorities and to be accountable to the people they served. (Moran, Porter et al. 2014: 47) conclude that:

*Indigenous organisations and authorities in remote Australia serve scattered, low-density communities in highly variable physical, socioeconomic and cultural environments with typically few commercially viable activities. In general, these organisations are overwhelmed by the demands placed on them by their constituents and their funders. The constraints of distance, coupled with vast differences in cultural outlook, mean these Indigenous organisations are disadvantaged in how they are understood, facilitated and supported in meeting their respective service delivery and governance obligations.*

*In such situations, whether in Australia or abroad, experience suggests that positive impacts can be achieved on key dimensions of accountability and outcomes by (1) progressively devolving authority, by (2) amalgamating rather than fragmenting grant systems, and by (3) introducing mutually agreed measures that are directly applicable to the activities and services being funded (and within the control of the funded organisation) to incentivise performance, backed by (4) credible and enforceable rewards and sanctions.*

*Devolution is no panacea; indeed, given the diversity of context, and the difficulties of backing innovative grant systems with the level of support that has proven necessary elsewhere, it is reasonable to expect some failure. But experience elsewhere also shows that seeing such contexts only through the lens of risk, deficit and chronic governance failure will most certainly undermine the prospect of local capability or accountability developing—ultimately undermining the possibility of improved outcomes for Indigenous people.*

In a review of the tendering process for the Commonwealth IAS in 2014–15, the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee recommended (in its list of nine recommendations) that rather than a competitive tendering process, the next round of IAS funds should be ‘underpinned by robust service planning and needs mapping’ and that it should enhance ‘the capacity of organisations to meet community needs’ (Australian Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee 2016).

## **2.4 Indigenous-specific funding**

Funding for Indigenous homelessness services is overwhelmingly derived from federal and state governments and delivered via the mainstream and Indigenous community sectors. Community organisations source SHS funding through the NAHA and the NPAH, as well as from state government housing, health, mental health and justice agencies. Both the mainstream and Indigenous community sectors access funding from state government agencies because of the strong relationship between homelessness and high physical and mental health needs, drug and alcohol use, unemployment and financial hardship and high levels of contact with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. This funding is usually provided through six-month to three-year funding agreements that are tied to performance measures.

In addition to mainstream government funding sources, four federal funding streams directly target Indigenous peoples: the IAS and AHL, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) and the Indigenous Australians’ Health Programme (IAHP).

### **2.4.1 The National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing**

NPARIH plays a critical role with respect to Indigenous homelessness by directly providing housing and attempting to ameliorate overcrowding problems. This partnership brought funding

for remote Indigenous housing to more than \$5 billion over 10 years up until 2018 for new homes (up to 4,200) for Indigenous people and a similar number of upgrades to existing homes (COAG 2009). While this housing initiative is not positioned as a homelessness initiative, it aims to reduce homelessness and overcrowding (a form of homelessness adopted in recent ABS definitions of homelessness) as well as to improve poor housing conditions for Indigenous people (Flatau, Wood et al. 2015).

Recent research on the effectiveness of NPARIH has found it has reduced crowding in some locations, but housing supply remains far short of what is required in remote Indigenous Australia. Although the transfer of housing management to state departments has resulted in some improvements, this comes with risks that some tenancies will be at risk of failure as a result of higher rental payments and less flexible tenancy management policies (Habibis, Phillips et al. 2016).

### **2.4.2 The Indigenous Advancement Strategy**

The IAS is located within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) with a budget allocation of \$4.9 billion over four years to 2018–19. Until July 2014, there were more than 150 federally funded Indigenous programs—some, such as health outreach, with relevance to Indigenous homelessness. These programs were spread across three federal agencies: the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations, and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health within the Department of Health and Ageing. When the Abbott Coalition government came to power, funding was transferred to the IAS under five programs: jobs, land and economy; children and schooling; safety and wellbeing; culture and capability; and remote Australia strategies. Aboriginal health programs delivered by the Federal Department of Health were excluded from this reshuffle.

The aim of the IAS was to reduce fragmentation and duplication, to increase flexibility and to review existing programs to ensure they were appropriate and effective in their goals of improving Indigenous health and wellbeing (Commonwealth of Australia 2016). Rather than applying for individual program funding, organisations were asked to apply for block funding for all of their programs, on the grounds that funding agreements would be easier to apply and red tape would be reduced.

As with the 2013 NPAH and NAHA round, this involved a massive task for the community sector, as well as for PMC, as thousands of organisations applied for funding. The process generated many concerns about the demands of the application process (Morgan 2015). Out of almost 5,000 organisations that applied, only 964 were funded, and of these only 45 per cent were Indigenous-specific. The change was criticised for being confusing and unfair, cutting \$534 million out of Indigenous funding and not refunding many Indigenous organisations that had formerly been funded through federal Indigenous grants (Henderson 2015; Morgan 2015). Many submissions to a Senate Inquiry into the tendering process labelled it inefficient, detrimental and disempowering for First Nations peoples (see, for example, Chaney 2015). As well as a full internal review by PMC, recommendations from the Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia 2016) included:

- avoiding ‘blanket competitive’ processes
- awarding longer contracts to Indigenous organisations to ensure stability
- prioritising investment in small Indigenous organisations.

### **2.4.3 Aboriginal Hostels Limited**

AHL is a Commonwealth funded agency that aims to provide safe, comfortable, culturally appropriate and affordable accommodation for Indigenous Australians who must live away from

home to access services and economic opportunity. It is operated and staffed by Indigenous people, with 70 per cent of its staff being Indigenous in 2014–15 (AHL 2015). AHL was established in 1973, and the Australian Government provides funding for the construction, operating costs, repairs and maintenance of accommodation facilities. AHL also enters into contracts with the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments to operate their accommodation facilities on a fee-for-service basis. Total income in 2014–15 was \$57 million, comprising \$40 million from the Commonwealth Government, \$2 million combined from the states and just under \$14 million from hostel accommodation revenue. Service users are charged a proportion of income that is considered reasonable, fair and affordable for them to pay. The program operates more than hostels, and in 2014–15 offered 593,886 bed nights of accommodation, with bed occupancy levels at 65 per cent and room occupancy at 74 per cent for the year (AHL 2015).

AHL's hostels are targeted across three program areas:

- Multipurpose facilities that provide short-term accommodation to assist residents to access social and economic opportunities and services.
- Health accommodation facilities that provide safe accommodation for residents travelling from community to access specialist medical and allied health services in urban and regional centres.
- Secondary education and tertiary education and training facilities that provide safe accommodation for young people to access education and training services leading to job prospects.

The program provides much-needed short-term accommodation to Indigenous people, but its contribution to the homelessness sector is limited (see Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010; Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2011):

- Its target population is not homeless Indigenous people, but Indigenous people travelling to access specific services such as renal dialysis, employment opportunities or training.
- The program offers no form of support for accommodation or other needs. The multiple needs of clients are not addressed by the program and there is no follow-up of clients after exit.
- The network has limited coverage, the cost of accommodation is relatively expensive and the eligibility requirements may exclude sections of the homeless population. There are also no amenities for disabled individuals.

#### **2.4.4 The Indigenous Australians' Health Programme**

The IAHP is located within the Federal Department of Health, and in 2015 had a budget of \$920 million. It operates with other federal departments, including PMC, to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It includes funding for Aboriginal-controlled community health organisations. There are four programs under this initiative:

- Tackling Indigenous Smoking
- Primary Health Care Activity
- Remote Area Health Corps
- Care Coordination and Supplementary Services Programme
- Improving Indigenous Access to Mainstream Primary Care Programme.

Within these programs, two are relevant to Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. The Care Coordination and Supplementary Services Programme includes some outreach work to homeless Indigenous people. It aims to contribute to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions through providing better access to coordinated and multidisciplinary care. Activities can include providing appropriate clinical care, arranging the services required, assisting patients to attend appointments, ensuring medical records are complete and current and ensuring that regular reviews are undertaken by patients' primary care providers. The Supplementary Services Programme can be used to fund transport to access essential health services when these are urgently needed. The Improving Indigenous Access to Mainstream Primary Care Programme aims to increase access to culturally competent mainstream primary care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including ensuring they can access the mainstream primary care program (Department of Health 2015).

#### **2.4.5 Philanthropic funding**

While governments wrestle with the problems of funding Indigenous services, particularly in remote and very remote areas, many philanthropic funds also seek to work in this space.

In their Discussion Paper for this Inquiry, Flatau, Wood et al. (2015) reviewed the work of Tually, Skinner et al. (2012) and Tually, Baulderstone et al. (2013) on philanthropy and homelessness in Australia. Work more specifically focused on philanthropy and Indigenous homelessness was not explored, and there seems to be no research in this area.

Some early work exploring the relationship between Indigenous organisations and philanthropic funds was undertaken by Schwab and Sutherland (2002). More recently, Smyllie, Scaife and McDonald have undertaken a number of studies exploring this relationship (Scaife 2006; Scaife, Williamson et al. 2012; Smyllie and Scaife 2010; Smyllie, Scaife et al. 2011). They note the lack of research in this area and that Indigenous causes are under-represented as recipients of philanthropic funds—of the 5,000 philanthropic funds in Australia, only 61 have focused specifically on Indigenous projects (Smyllie, Scaife et al. 2011). Moreover, the funds' impact is patchy, not subject to rigorous assessment and, in particular, there is 'no assessment from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective' (Smyllie and Scaife 2010: 4). Indeed, Smyllie and Scaife (2010: 25) note that philanthropic Boards or personnel had no knowledge of cultural competency. While many philanthropic funds see themselves as innovative risk-takers compared with the highly structured and performance-oriented outputs typical of government funding programs, they focus on organisational capacity rather than on community capacity and tend to work through established connections rather than directly with Indigenous organisations. The funding of Indigenous causes is a new venture for many philanthropic funds and they are "learning by doing" a new way of working' (Smyllie and Scaife 2010: 25). The philanthropic sector is also concerned that government is abnegating the role of providing 'a decent world for its citizens' (Smyllie, Scaife et al. 2011: 1144). The philanthropic funds see their own role as more limited, with a particular focus on new projects that will eventually receive mainstream government funding.

Following the introduction of government funding for homelessness services, and particularly since the introduction of SAAP, NAHA and the NPAH, homelessness services have relied heavily on government funding. Charitable donations were always a supplementary source of income but generally came through large charities. Accommodation services also used rent payments as a source of own-revenue funding. While evidence is scant, it is generally thought that philanthropic funding has been mobilised for pilot projects, but has made little contribution to covering recurrent expenditure on any scale. The Federal Government White Paper *The road home* (Commonwealth of Australia 2008) stressed that mainstream agencies should play a much larger role in preventing homelessness. The strategic policy setting of prevention and early intervention was referred to as 'turning off the tap'. However, despite the call for mainstream agencies to play a more important role and be a source of significant funding outside of the specific homelessness budget, little progress appears to have been made in this area.

## **2.5 Summary of funding**

According to the Commonwealth, spending on Indigenous peoples amounts to \$30 billion annually (SCRGSP 2014b). However, there are no federal or state programs that specifically target homeless Indigenous peoples or those at risk of experiencing homelessness. This is the case despite the over-representation of Indigenous people among Australia's homeless population, Indigenous Australians' high vulnerability to homelessness, and the policy tenet that if Indigenous populations are to access and benefit from homelessness services, the support needs to be delivered in ways that are culturally appropriate.

Within the major funding programs for homelessness—the NAHA and the NPAH—services for Indigenous people are overwhelmingly mainstreamed, with only very few ICHOs receiving funding from this source. Within housing programs, funds are available to increase the supply of housing in remote communities (NPARIH); to improve tenancy sustainment (NPARIH); for provision of short-term accommodation for travel related to access to education, employment, training and health (AHL); for health services, including primary care outreach to homeless Indigenous people (IAHP); and for a range of programs relating to homelessness, including mental health, criminal and juvenile justice, transport, substance use and family violence services (IAS). None of these programs have Indigenous homelessness as their primary focus, suggesting that funding arrangements are characterised by fragmentation and an absence of policy coordination.

## **2.6 Framework for analysing funding sources and their combined impact**

There are three main funding sources of funding for organisations that support homeless clients in Australia: governments, companies and philanthropic sources (with a small but growing social business element). These are explored in detail in the forthcoming AHURI Inquiry Final Report, so for reasons of brevity are not repeated here. The survey findings relevant to Indigenous Australians who are homeless are analysed in Chapter 3. Later in this report, the impact of these funding sources on our case study organisations are analysed according to their influence on each organisation, its services and client outcomes.

## **2.7 Implications for service delivery**

The analysis of funding sources makes it clear that there is no Indigenous-specific funding for homelessness services; unlike housing services, homelessness support services are not able to access funding specifically intended for Indigenous Australians. Funding arrangements are fragmented and lack policy coordination, and the ICHO sector is currently in a vulnerable position due to funding restrictions. Both of these matters are at odds with the evidence base on the importance of culturally sensitive service delivery for effective intervention (Memmott, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2012b).

### **3 Findings from the *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey***

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- Twenty-seven organisations with Indigenous Australians as a main client group participated in the survey.
  - Of these, 23 were Indigenous-specific organisations.
  - Only four were homelessness-specific organisations.
  - The organisations that participated were not evenly spread across Australia.
  - Most core funding came from governments.
  - Fifteen of the 27 organisations had funding from only one source.
  - There was some resistance to the idea of spending further staff and financial resources to pursue funding from other sources.
- 

#### **3.1 Existing research on organisations supporting homeless clients**

Previous research by Zaretsky and Flatau (2013) and Zaretsky, Flatau et al. (2013) examined a range of SHSs across Australia. This research considered three types of non-Indigenous specific services: homelessness accommodation services, tenancy support services and street-to-home services under the NAHA and NPAH programs. Ten agencies participated, providing a combined total of 16 SHSs. All agencies offering tenancy support services or street-to-home services were completely government funded, with no other sources of funding. Agencies that offered supported accommodation were also largely government funded (77.8%) but received supplementary funding from agency grants and donations (7.6%) and income realised from rent (12.0%). Government carried 58 per cent of capital costs for supported accommodation services and 75 per cent for street-to-home services.

Systems of data collection and monitoring are far more developed for government-funded services, including services delivered by non-government organisations under contract, than for philanthropic, corporate and social enterprise services.

#### **3.2 Survey findings regarding Indigenous clients experiencing homelessness**

The *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* conducted by Flatau, Zaretsky et al. (2016) surveyed SHSs (services that receive funding through NPAH) as well as a sample of mainstream organisations that provide support services to people experiencing homelessness. In total, 450 responses were received: 398 (88%) from SHSs and 21 (12%) from non-SHSs. The survey asked questions about:

- the characteristics of the organisations managing the services
- their clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- the types of assistance provided

- their funding sources
- the impact of their current funding mix on their service delivery
- the possible impact of future funding on their service.

Among the organisations surveyed, 23 identified themselves as Indigenous-specific and a further five listed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as their main client group. One organisation had ceased operating. One organisation did not deliver services directly to clients and has been excluded from this analysis.

The following is an analysis of the 27 organisations providing services to Indigenous people. It supplements the analysis in Flatau, Cooper et al. (2006) by providing further details on organisations that provide homelessness support services to Indigenous Australians. Given the relatively small number of responses, numbers rather than percentages are used in this analysis. Twenty-three of the 27 organisations that participated in the survey are Indigenous-specific organisations. Importantly, each response is given equal weight in the analysis regardless of the size of the organisation. Many organisations providing services to homeless people, particularly those that provide services solely or mostly to Indigenous Australians, are small in size.

### **3.3 Organisations providing homelessness services to Indigenous clients**

The characteristics of the 27 respondent organisations providing Indigenous services are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Characteristics of organisations providing Indigenous services**

<b>Type of service</b>	4 homelessness-specific 18 generalist, providing one or more other services along with homelessness service 5 others
<b>Size (revenue for 2013–15)</b>	8 with revenue less than \$1 million 8 with revenue between \$1 million and \$5 million 11 with revenue over \$5 million
<b>Size (equivalent full-time (EFT) staff in 2013–15)</b>	6 with fewer than 10 EFT staff 2 with 10 to 19 EFT staff 10 with 20 to 49 EFT staff 9 with 50 or more EFT staff
<b>State/territory where the service is located</b>	10 in New South Wales 5 in Victoria 4 in Queensland 4 in Western Australia 3 in South Australia 1 in the Northern Territory
<b>Number of states/territories where the service provides assistance</b>	23 in one state/territory only 1 in two states/territories 1 in three states/territories 1 in four states/territories 1 nationally
<b>Types of region where the service operates</b>	20 in regional areas 9 in capital cities 8 in remote/very remote areas  18 operated in one type of region 8 operated in two types of region 1 operated in all three types of region  4 operated in a capital city only 11 operated in regional areas only 3 operated in remote/very remote areas only 4 services operated in capital city/regional areas 4 services operated in regional/remote/very remote areas

### 3.4 Key client groups

In addition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the organisations listed other key client groups. As shown in Table 4, among the most predominant key client groups were young people (21 organisations), single women (18 organisations), people exiting correctional institutions/prisons (17 organisations) and families (17 organisations).

Of the 27 organisations, one listed only one key client group, eight listed two to five key groups, eight listed six to ten key groups and 10 listed 10 or more key groups.

**Table 4: Key client groups or specialisations by number of organisations**

<b>Key client group</b>	<b>No.</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	27
Young people (under 25 years)	21
Single women	18
People exiting correctional institutions/prison	17
Families	17
Single men	16
People experiencing mental health problems	16
Women and children experiencing domestic and family violence	15
General/mixed	15
Survivors of trauma	14
People exiting mental health facilities	14
Older people	14
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	13
Outreach for rough sleepers	11
People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ)	10

As shown in Table 5 below, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the main client group for 22 organisations (including one organisation whose main client group were Aboriginal women and children experiencing domestic and family violence). Three organisations listed young people as their main client group, one listed families and one single men.

**Table 5: Main client groups by number of organisations**

<b>Main client group</b>	<b>No.</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	21
Aboriginal women and children experiencing domestic violence	1
Young people (under 25 years)	3
Families	1
Single men	1

The survey also sought information on the proportion of time that organisations spent on different client groups (Table 6 below). Thirteen organisations indicated that they spent 100 per cent of their time and another seven more than 50 per cent of their time on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The other groups of focus were people born overseas (on which 12 organisations spent more than 50% of their time), women with children (on which 10 organisations spent more than 50% of their time) and families (on which eight organisations spent more than 50% of their time). Surprisingly, 18 of the organisations spent none of their time on older people and 15 spent none of their time on young people.

**Table 6: Percentage of time spent on client groups by number of organisations**

Client group	100%	80–99%	50–79%	20–49%	1–19%	0%	Total no.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	13	–	7	2	4	0	26
Young people (under 25 years)	3	3	1	2	2	15	26
Women with children	1	6	3	7	7	2	26
Single men	1	5	1	3	5	11	26
Single women	1	4	–	4	5	12	26
People born overseas	–	12	–	–	–	14	26
Families	–	7	1	5	7	6	26
Older people (55+ years)	–	6	–	–	2	18	26

### 3.5 Types of assistance provided

The survey explored the different types of assistance that organisations provided to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These results were divided into two categories: the type of accommodation provided and the key type of assistance provided.

As Table 7 below shows, 10 organisations did not provide accommodation. Most, however, provided either crisis and emergency accommodation or transitional accommodation, with six of the 27 organisations providing both, 12 providing crisis and emergency accommodation and 11 providing transitional accommodation. Only one organisation provided long-term housing.

**Table 7: Accommodation provided by number of organisations**

Type of accommodation	No.
Crisis and emergency accommodation	12
Transitional accommodation	11
Long-term housing	1
Service does not provide accommodation	10

The key types of assistance provided to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness (Table 8 below) were financial information (26 of 27 organisations), assistance to access mainstream

social housing (25 organisations), material aid/brokerage (23 organisations), assistance/advice for family/domestic violence (22 organisations) and referral to other services (22 organisations).

**Table 8: Assistance provided to homelessness support clients by number of organisations**

<b>Key type of assistance</b>	<b>No.</b>
Financial information	26
Assistance to access mainstream social housing	25
Material aid/brokerage	23
Assistance/advice for family/domestic violence	22
Referral to other services	22
Assistance to sustain a tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction	20
Meals, laundry, showers	17
Crisis and emergency accommodation	16
Transitional accommodation	15
Specialist psychological services, psychiatric services and mental health services	10
Long-term housing	5

### **3.6 Funding sources**

The surveyed organisations indicated the broad categories of their funding for homelessness services (Table 9). All 27 received funding from external sources. Fifteen organisations received funds from one source only. Six received funds from two sources, five received funds from three sources, and one organisation received funds from six sources.

**Table 9: Broad categories of funds by number of organisations**

<b>Category of funds</b>	<b>No.</b>
External sources of recurrent funding	27
Internally generated revenue	8
Funding allocated by your parent agency	2
Centralised functional support paid for by your parent agency	4
In-kind support	5
Joint funding	2
Capital funding	–

Sixteen of the organisations provided further financial details under each of these broad categories. For the two years from 2013 to 2015, these 16 organisations received a total of \$18.3 million from all sources. The amounts that individual organisations received for the two-year period ranged from \$140,000 to \$5,508,268, with median funding of \$772,506.

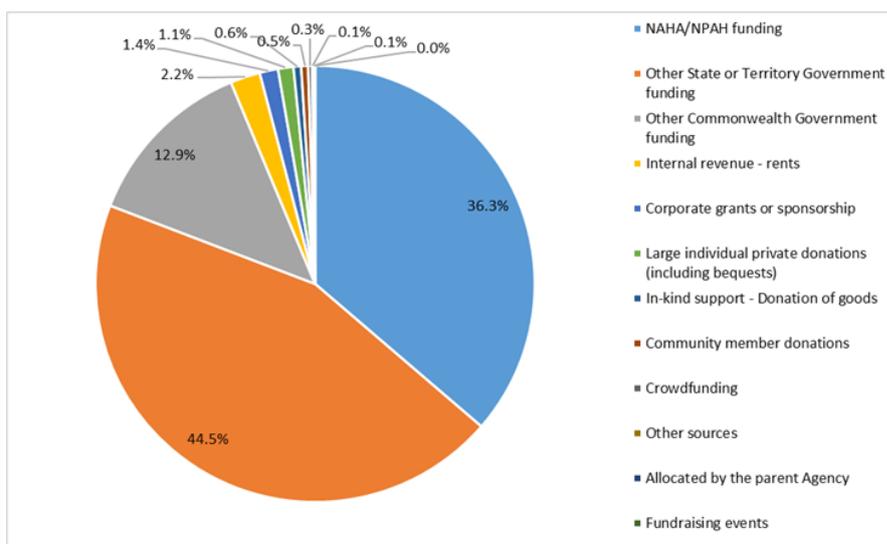
Table 10 summarises the funds available to these 16 organisations for their homelessness services for the 2014–15 year (funding in 2013–14 was similar), including funding sources, total amount of funding and number of organisations receiving funding from each source. NAHA and NPAH were the major source of funding with 11 recipient organisations. The median NAHA/NPAH funding for 2014–15 was \$150,000. Amounts ranged from \$16,000 to \$1,138,000.

**Table 10: Funding sources and total funds by number of organisations, 2014–15**

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	<b>No.</b>
NAHA/NPAH funding	\$3,212,743	11
Other Commonwealth Government funding	\$1,140,000	3
Other state or territory government funding	\$3,935,663	6
Corporate grants or sponsorship	\$120,000	1
Large individual private donations (including bequests)	\$100,000	1
Crowdfunding	\$26,000	1
Community member donations	\$45,000	2
Fundraising events	\$400	1
Other sources	\$11,630	1
Internal revenue—rents	\$193,859	4
Allocated by the parent agency	\$7,000	1
In-kind support—donation of goods	\$49,600	3

The total funding from all sources for these organisations was \$8.8 million, of which \$8.3 million was through Commonwealth and state funding sources. The dominance of these bodies' influence is illustrated in Figure 2 below: 94 per cent of funds came from governments. The next largest source of funds (only 2%) was rent revenue.

**Figure 2: Total funding by source for organisations, 2014–15**



Seventeen organisations indicated the sources of their funding for accommodation (Table 11). The major source was the National Affordable Housing Agreement/Crisis Accommodation Program, from which 12 of these 17 organisations received funds.

**Table 11: Funding of client accommodation by number of organisations**

Funding source	No.
NAHA/CAP	12
Internally generated funds	3
Rent	2

*N* = 17

### 3.7 Impact of the current funding mix on service delivery

The survey sought to examine the relationship between the current funding mix for each organisation and its impact on service delivery. Table 12 below indicates the proportion of client demand that each agency could meet with its 2013–15 funding. Few organisations (only two) were able to meet more than 90 per cent of client demand. Most (15 organisations) were only able to meet less than 75 per cent of client demand.

**Table 12: Proportion of client demand that could be met with 2013–15 funding by number of organisations**

Proportion of demand	No.
Greater than 90%	2
76–90%	8
50–75%	7
Less than 50%	8

The survey asked organisations to assess the degree of flexibility and discretion they had with each source of funding. Table 13 gives the funding sources, the number of organisations that answered the question and the number of agencies that gave each rating on the scale. A rating of one indicates that the funding source is very inflexible and allows very low discretion; a rating of five indicates that the funding source is very flexible and allows very high discretion. For the most part, agencies rated each source of funding towards the higher end of the scale. Other state/territory departments, however, tended to receive lower ratings.

**Table 13: Degree of flexibility and discretion in funding sources by number of organisations**

Funding source	No.	Very inflexible, very low discretion				Very flexible, very high discretion
		1	2	3	4	5
NAHA/NPAH	9	1	1	4	3	–
Other Commonwealth Government	4	1	–	2	1	–
Other state/territory government	6	2	3	1	–	–
Grants from independent government agencies (lotteries)	1	–	–	1	–	–
Corporate grants or sponsorship	1	–	–	–	–	1
Philanthropic foundations/trusts	1	–	–	1	–	–
Large individual private donations (including bequests)	1	–	–	–	–	1
Crowdfunding	1	–	–	–	–	1

Organisations were also asked to rate on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) whether funding enabled them to achieve specific service delivery requirements. As shown in Table 14, over half of the 27 organisations either strongly agreed or agreed that funding enabled them to achieve:

- flexible/tailored client services (17 organisations)
- client access to other services or programs (external to the service) (15 organisations)
- staff development (e.g. skills training, professional networking) (15 organisations)
- advocacy for homeless people (14 organisations).

Over half of the 27 agencies either strongly disagreed or disagreed that funding enabled:

- expansion of existing services or programs (19 organisations)
- development of client facilities (17 organisations)
- introduction or trial of new programs or forms of support (15 organisations)
- information technology (IT) development (15 organisations).

**Table 14: Impact of funding on service delivery and capacity: degree to which funding enabled specific achievements by number of organisations**

Achievement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Flexible/tailored client services	3	1	4	13	4
Client access to other services or programs (external to the service)	3	3	4	14	1
Staff development (e.g. skills training, professional networking)	2	5	3	12	3
Advocacy for homeless people	3	2	6	10	4
Integrated service delivery	3	2	7	9	4
Innovation or improvements to services for clients	7	3	2	11	2
Workforce stability	4	5	5	10	1
Evaluation and measurement of service/client outcomes	3	3	9	9	1
Access to longer-term permanent housing	4	8	6	4	3
Financial sustainability	4	4	10	6	1
Introduction or trial of new programs or forms of support	7	8	4	4	2
Expansion of existing services or programs	9	10	1	4	1
Employment options for clients	3	9	9	3	1
Development of client facilities	4	13	5	1	2
IT development	5	10	7	2	1

Some organisations experienced significant changes in funding between 2011–13 and 2013–15. The survey asked whether organisations had experienced (i) a significant increase in funding or (ii) a significant decrease in funding. As indicated in Table 15 below, one-fifth of the organisations had undergone a significant change in funding (either an increase or a decrease, of 20% or more) between 2011–13 and 2013–15.

**Table 15: Significant change in funding between 2011–13 and 2013–15**

	Significant increase	Significant decrease
Yes	5	6
No	19	17
Not applicable	1	2

Organisations were asked whether they had taken active steps to obtain funding from a range of sources and if so, what outcome they saw (Table 16 below). Nearly half of all agencies in the survey took active steps to obtain funding from other Commonwealth Government funds. Of these 13 organisations, four were successful and seven were unsuccessful. Organisations also actively approached local government (eight organisations), other state/territory governments (seven agencies) and independent government agencies (six agencies).

**Table 16: Results of active steps to obtain additional funding**

Type of funding	Attempts	Preliminary exploration	Not successful	Funded
NPAH/NAHA	1	–	1	0
Other Commonwealth Government	13	1	7	4
Other state or territory government	7	1	3	3
Independent government agencies	6	1	6	–
Local government	8	2	5	1
Corporate grants/sponsorship	5	2	–	1
Philanthropic foundations/trusts	5	2	2	2
Large individual private donations	2	1	–	1
Community member donations	3	1	1	1
Crowdfunding	1	–	–	1
Fundraising events	1	–	–	1
Social enterprise funds	–	–	–	–
Social impact investor funds	1	2	–	–
Social benefit/impact bond	1	2	–	–
Debt financing	–	–	–	–
Workplace giving scheme	3	–	1	2
Retail donation schemes	1	–	–	–

### 3.8 Expected impact of possible future funding on service delivery

If organisations were to obtain more funding in future, their top four priority areas that would maximise client outcomes (chosen from a provided list of priority areas) (Table 17 below) were to:

- expand existing services or programs (nine organisations)
- introduce innovation or improvements to services for clients (seven organisations)
- improve financial sustainability (seven organisations)
- improve workforce stability (seven organisations).

**Table 17: Priority areas to maximise client outcomes by number of organisations**

Priority area	No.
Expand existing services or programs	9
Introduce innovation or improvements to services for clients	7
Improve financial sustainability	7
Improve workforce stability	7
Improve access to longer-term permanent housing	6
Improve client access to other services or programs (external to this service)	5
Improve integrated service delivery	4
Expand advocacy for homeless people	3
Improve and develop client facilities	3
Introduce or trial new programs or forms of support	2
Provide more flexible/tailored client services	2
Staff development (e.g. skills training, professional networking)	2
Crisis/transitional accommodation	1
Improve employment options for client	1
Support for Aboriginal-managed service providers	1

The three areas nominated as their first priority by most organisations were to:

- improve access to longer term permanent housing (nominated as first priority by five organisations)
- expand existing services or programs (nominated as first priority by four organisations)
- improve financial sustainability (nominated as first priority by four agencies).

When asked to rate, on a scale from one (not at all) to four (a lot), the potential for unintended negative consequences from diversifying funding sources, more than half of the respondents

expected that getting funds from non-NAHA/NPAH sources would have a range of unintended negative consequences (Table 18).

**Table 18: Potential for unintended negative consequences from additional non-NAHA/NPAH funding by number of organisations**

Potential unintended negative consequence	Not at all	A little	Moderate amount	A lot	Unable to say
Drain on resources applying for additional funds	–	5	8	8	3
Change of focus from welfare orientation to entrepreneurial orientation	1	5	4	10	3
Excessive output/outcome measurement to meet requirements of different funding providers	2	2	7	11	1
Increased reporting	2	3	9	8	1
Conflict of objectives between the service and fund providers	3	4	7	6	3
Conflict of objectives between various fund providers	4	3	7	7	2

*N = 24 (first statement); N = 23 all other statements*

### 3.9 Summary

The *AHURI Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* conducted by Flatau, Zaretzky et al. (2016) presents data on the funding mix for 27 organisations providing services to Indigenous Australians. Given the limited number of organisations in this sample, the analysis in this chapter gives equal weight to all organisations despite variations in their funding sources, sizes, types of location (remote, regional or urban) and types of assistance provided. As a result, it does not allow for generalisations, nor for any in-depth analysis according to the various characteristics of organisations. However, it does allow for some insights.

Of the 450 respondents to the survey overall, only 27 organisations (6%) indicated that Indigenous people experiencing or at risk of homelessness were a main client group. Indigenous Australians represent around 9 per cent of the Australian homeless population, so this response rate is smaller than could be expected, indicating either that services are disproportionately skewed towards supporting non-Indigenous Australians or that the response rate from agencies with homeless Indigenous people as their main client group was relatively low.

The Indigenous-specific organisations that took part in the survey mostly provided a range of services, not specifically homelessness support. The homelessness-specific organisations that took part in the survey were mostly mainstream organisations that had mostly Indigenous Australian clients or provided services specifically for Indigenous Australians.

The survey results confirm there is heavy dependence on Commonwealth and state government funding for organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. All 27 organisations whose main client group was

homeless Indigenous people received the major portion of their funding from Commonwealth or state governments. Of these, only four received funding from other sources—either philanthropic grants, community donations or fundraising activities—and the overall amounts from these sources were relatively small. In addition, one of these organisations, plus another two, received donations of goods and one of the organisations, plus another three, generated funds internally by charging their clients rent. It is clear that these organisations rely primarily upon Commonwealth and state government funds in order to provide their services.

Most of the 27 organisations anticipated that attempting to diversify their funding sources by seeking funds from non-NAHA/NPAH sources would have unintended negative consequences. They indicated that such attempts would be a drain on their resources, would change their focus from a welfare orientation to an entrepreneurial orientation, would require excessive measurement of outputs/outcomes and would require increased reporting.

## 4 Case studies and focus groups: services with mainly Indigenous Australian clients

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- This chapter provides information and analysis on selected organisations that have mainly Indigenous Australian clients and provide services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
  - The case study and focus group participants were chosen from a wide range of locations and types of service.
  - They indicate the breadth of organisations that provide support and services to Indigenous Australians who are homeless.
  - Focus groups of stakeholders drew together key informants from government departments, homelessness organisations and ICOs.
  - Organisations have varying views about accessing non-government funding sources.
  - Funding uncertainty is a major issue for the organisations and their services.
  - Funding is at the mercy of changing governmental priorities and jurisdictional economies.
  - Larger mainstream organisations with several services can generally cope with funding changes more easily than can smaller organisations with fewer funding sources.
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Case studies of organisations, stakeholders and focus groups formed the basis of our fieldwork for this research. The case-study services were chosen because they cover a range of different types of organisation and service provision in very different locations. Some of the organisations have an Indigenous-specific focus, some a homeless-specific focus. Some deal with particular types of clients, such as young people or those who have experienced domestic and family violence. Some are very small, and some are part of Australia-wide organisations. These wide-ranging examples are intended to provide a breadth of information on the impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians.

In this chapter we combine interesting relevant information about the services with some analysis of the impact that funding sources have on them. In the following chapter we provide further analysis and draw conclusions in answer to our research questions.

Focus groups of key stakeholders in Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Victoria drew together key informants from government departments, homelessness organisations and ICOs to discuss the impact of funding mix both on service providers and on Indigenous Australians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This information supplements our case study findings.

### 4.1 Northern Territory

Our fieldwork in Darwin involved interviews and focus groups with seven services. These organisations provided programs that directly targeted Indigenous people who were homeless

or at risk of homelessness, or else provided services to clients who were mostly Indigenous people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The fieldwork focused especially on two Aboriginal community organisations, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services (CAAPS), but also involved interviews and focus groups with five others: three Aboriginal organisations and two mainstream community organisations (Table 19 below). All but one were based in Darwin. The exception was Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs, which is one of two of the largest ICOs in the Northern Territory and has a long history of providing housing to Aboriginal people. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, with four conducted by phone.

**Table 19: Organisations included in Northern Territory fieldwork**

Organisation	Type	Homelessness services	Respondents
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation	ICO	Homelessness outreach, tenancy support, Return to Country, Night Patrol	5
Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services	ICO	Alcohol and drug residential treatment program, homelessness outreach	2
Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter	ICO	Women's shelter	1
Yilli Rreung	ICO	Community housing, tenancy support	1
Tangentyere Council	ICO	Community housing, tenancy support	1
Salvation Army	Christian charity organisation	Hostel	2
St Vincent de Paul's	Community organisation	Hostel, community housing, mobile kitchen	1
NT Shelter	Community organisation	Advocacy	1
<i>Total respondents</i>			<i>14</i>

Of the 14 respondents, seven were senior managers or CEOs, two were program managers and five were frontline workers.

Programs and funding sources critical for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness are identified in Table 20 below.

**Table 20: Funding sources for Northern Territory homelessness programs 2013–16**

<b>Funding sources 2013–16</b>	<b>Funding 2016</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Outputs 2014</b>
<i>Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services</i>			
SHS (Northern Territory Department of Health)	Not reported	Healthy Families program (residential alcohol and other drugs program)	Not reported
SHS (Northern Territory Department of Health)	Defunded in 2015	Outreach program	Support for up to 250 clients per year
SHS (Northern Territory Department of Health)	\$441,236	Volatile Substance Misuse program (residential drug program for young people)	184 placements per year
<i>Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation</i>			
2013 Northern Territory Government, 2014 PMC	\$380,000 combined	Tenancy support	127 clients at Bagot town camp and surrounds
		Healthy Engagement and Assistance in the Long Grass (HEAL) program	7,729 assists
Northern Territory Primary Health Network	Not reported	Care Coordination program	Not reported
Larrakia Nation	Not reported	Return to Country program	3,432 clients returned home 285 clients in accommodation 14,164 IDs issued
2013 Northern Territory Government, 2014 PMC	\$1,016,000 combined	Night Patrol service	5,841 assists
		Halfway house program	2,640 assists
Northern Territory Department of Social Services	Not reported	Aged care	58 clients
Federal Department of Health and Ageing	Not reported	Meals on wheels	8,065 delivered
		Emergency relief	27 clients
Federal Department of Social Services	Not reported	Assistance with care and housing for the aged	43 clients

Source: Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (2015: 4).

### 4.1.1 Case study: Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1997 to represent the interests and aspirations of eight Larrakia families who are the traditional owners of Darwin and surrounding regions. The goals of Larrakia Nation include protecting Larrakia lands, people, language and culture, alleviating social and economic disadvantage for Larrakia people and contributing to reconciliation. Originally established to address Native Title claims, the organisation expanded to become a multi-provider of community services in areas including homelessness support, aged care, ranger and arts and cultural services. By 2014 Larrakia's membership had grown to over 700 individuals. The organisation employs almost 100 staff, approximately three-quarters of whom are Aboriginal, and has an annual budget of just over \$5 million (Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation 2015).

Larrakia is especially concerned with providing support to individuals and families who live in public spaces in and around Darwin. These people, often described as long grass dwellers, include local Larrakia men and women, as well as people from remote communities. The reasons for living in the long grass are complex and include spiritual homelessness, mental illness and other physical and mental disabilities, substance use, escaping family violence, difficulties in sustaining housing and conflict within the home community (Habibis, Birdsall-Jones et al. 2011; Holmes, Ahmat et al. 2007). These individuals have high needs for social, health and cultural services and are subject to criminalisation, especially following the introduction of 'three strikes' and 'paperless arrests' legislation.

Almost all of the funding for Larrakia's homelessness programs comes from the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. In 2014, 85 per cent of Larrakia Nation's income was derived from federal, state and local government grants, with the remainder from sales, services and donations (Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation 2015). Significantly, all its services for homeless people are funded by mainstream programs rather than SHSs. Entrepreneurial activity is limited to artwork production and a research service. Federal funding is the most important source for its homelessness services. The election of the Country Liberal Party (CLP) government in 2012 resulted in substantial cuts to the Territory's homelessness programs. Larrakia Nation was directly affected, and had to take the decision to self-fund its Return to Country program.

Financial difficulties have been present throughout much of Larrakia Nation's history. The organisation went through a period in the mid-2000s when it self-generated a significant proportion of its income, but the programs generating this capacity depended on government funding. For example, the Return to Country program levied a 10 per cent cost on travel and negotiated a commission with one of the major regional airlines. Income was made, but only because the wages and operational budget were covered by a government grant. Since 2014, Larrakia Nation has been struggling financially with the loss of its Territory Government contracts, the costs of the Return to Country program, and subsequent difficulties in managing the construction of a community centre.

#### ***Night Patrol service***

This program assists about 500 individuals each week. The police work closely with the Night Patrol service, referring people when they need transport to a safe place and would otherwise be at risk of accident or injury or being taken into police custody. The service operates seven days a week for the eight-hour period until 11.30 pm. About 70 per cent of service users are people experiencing homelessness, often living in town camps or temporary shelters. Others are public housing tenants who would otherwise be at risk of breaching tenancy regulations, such as liquor restrictions. This places them at high risk of homelessness because of the Territory Department of Housing 'three strikes' policy. When the Night Patrol service can intervene early, taking tenants or visitors to a safe place, it prevents them from receiving a breach notification (a 'strike'), reducing the chances that they will be evicted.

The service is well known, which helps to ensure the safety of its Indigenous clients. For example, homeless Indigenous people tend to sit near the local supermarket, which puts them at risk of being picked up by police and charged with causing a disturbance. However, supermarket managers often call the Night Patrol service, minimising this risk.

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Under the Northern Territory's paperless arrest laws, an individual who is apprehended by the police for being intoxicated in a public place, or for being disorderly, may be detained in the lockup for up to four hours. Of those who have been detained under these laws, 80 per cent are Aboriginal (Carlisle 2015). Homeless Aboriginal people are especially vulnerable because of their visibility and presence in public spaces. When detained by the police they also risk longer periods of incarceration if, for example, the police name check reveals outstanding warrants for unpaid fines. A detained person who has no fixed address will be denied bail, instead facing a \$2,000 fine and a 10-day jail period.

When they exit jail they often return to public space dwelling or go to stay with family or friends, further crowding already overcrowded homes. This cycle of homelessness and incarceration is an important contributor to the extreme over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system—the rate is about 12 times higher than for the overall Australian population (Australian Institute of Criminology 2015).

Services such as Larrakia Nation's Night Patrol help by getting individuals at risk of police attention off the streets and into safe places. In 2015, Larrakia Nation's Night Patrol won the Northern Territory Human Rights Justice Award for its achievements in early intervention.

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### ***Return to Country program***

This program provides transport fare and accommodation funds for visitors who come to Darwin from remote Aboriginal communities and do not have the money to return home. The service books and pays for fares up front, and clients agree to repay a portion through Centrepay deductions. The program's future is in jeopardy because the funds clients pay back are insufficient, causing unsustainable debt for Larrakia Nation. It is unlikely ever to become a self-sustaining program.

### ***Healthy Engagement and Assistance in the Long Grass and Care Coordination programs***

Many people living in the long grass have health conditions, ranging from minor injuries to chronic conditions such as diabetes, kidney failure, liver failure and melioidosis (a potentially fatal disease, contracted from bacteria in the muddy water and soil during the wet season, which causes pneumonia, multiple abscesses and septicaemia). Some long grass dwellers are wheelchair bound.

Larrakia Nation's Healthy Engagement and Assistance in the Long Grass (HEAL) and Care Coordination programs provide medical treatment, health referral and support services to Indigenous individuals living in the long grass. HEAL staff visit long grass people and talk to them about their health needs and treatment. The Care Coordination program operates based on referrals from HEAL, the police and other agencies and services. Care Coordination provides assessment, direct care and coordination, while HEAL provides a referral service and transport to medical appointments.

The services address the high need for medical care among a group of people who strongly distrust medical services, as illustrated in this Care Coordination worker's account:

*I've got a 67-year-old man, he has no eyesight in his left eye and is vision impaired in the right eye. His wife passed away a long time ago. In 25 months he's deteriorated, he's lost his dignity and his confidence. He left his community because he didn't have any support other than a son he didn't want to depend on. So he's ended up here in Darwin, for more than six years, he's been on the streets. I've been working with the ACAT [Aged Care Assessment Team] and the Aboriginal Health service, but after half a day of visiting the service he's back in the long grass. I can't drop him off to a homelessness hostel.*

*I've done an ACAT, spoken to the community centre nurse, who'll visit, and will also see what his aspirations are for housing. She'll do a mental health status examination. I've put that I want a package [of care] to get him out of the long grass and somewhere for his twilight years. I've never seen someone deteriorate so fast in 24 months. His father was a stockman and he has no pension.*

#### **4.1.2 Case study: The Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services**

CAAPS is an Aboriginal corporation and the largest not-for-profit family-focused residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation centre in Northern Australia. It provides residential rehabilitation programs for alcohol and drug use, with outreach and referrals to prevent homelessness. Services include a 12-week residential alcohol and drug treatment program, a 16-week volatile substance use program that targets young people, a children's program and a homelessness outreach program. Income for the 2015 financial year was \$2,867,980 (CAAPS 2015). The client profile is mostly young families, including single-parent families with young children. Most clients are in their early 20s. The program employs 33 staff, of whom 15 are equivalent full time (EFT) and almost 50 per cent are Indigenous. The outreach program is offered because many of the organisation's clients are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of high levels of crowding. Once they have completed the program they are supported into stable accommodation. However, in 2015 the outreach program was forced to close because of funding cuts, as the CEO explained:

*We had to reapply for all our funding, so we applied for funding that covered everything from pre-treatment to post-treatment. We were told we were successful for a two-year contract, but not for full funding. The response was that we had to retract to core business, which was A&D [alcohol and other drugs] treatment. Then we had to put up a fight for our children and families program.*

*Where do we find the time to do all this? We are very small. We are running on the smell of an oily rag. They [government funding sources] know we don't have the administrative support, or management resources. We have no funding for human resources, an accountant who's here two days per week and these are the cuts we had to make because the money had to be quite focused, and everything else had to be cut ...*

As a result of the funding uncertainty, CAAPS lost three Aboriginal after-hours workers, some administrative staff and two Aboriginal outreach workers. The CEO observed:

*It's very hard to retain good, qualified Aboriginal staff. Government positions are better paid. The people we have here are people who believe in CAAPS and want to work in the NGO [non-government organisation] sector, but we see a lot of movement and turnover. With the uncertainties with PMC and our outreach service, some Aboriginal staff decided not to wait till the decision was made and took out a redundancy.*

The CAAPS funding uncertainty increases the risk of criminalisation for some Indigenous people in the Northern Territory who, without access to CAAPS services, are likely to fall foul of the Territory's alcohol mandatory treatment legislation. Many people referred for mandatory treatment fall within CAAPS's client group because of the high visibility of homeless Aboriginal people. This is a concern not only because mandatory alcohol treatment breaches human rights from CAAPS's perspective, but also because research suggests it is ineffective (see Lander, Gray et al. 2015).

## 4.2 New South Wales

Four of our six case studies were selected from a range of mainstream organisations providing services to homeless and at-risk Indigenous Australians in urban or regional areas. Weave Youth and Community Services, in New South Wales, is described in the following section.

### 4.2.1 Case study: Weave Youth and Community Services

Weave is an urban organisation operating in Waterloo and Redfern in inner Sydney. It runs a range of programs focused on young people, women and children. Around 85 per cent of participants in its programs are Indigenous Australians. Weave received funding as an SHS for the first time in 2015 after a Department of Family and Community Services review and retendering process. In partnership with Launchpad Youth Community, the lead agency, and the Ted Noffs Foundation, Weave's primary role is supporting homeless young people, particularly Indigenous young people, through outreach and case-management. To do this, Weave employs a family and adolescent counsellor and an outreach case manager. Launchpad also provides outreach services and manages tenancies. The Ted Noffs Foundation focuses on school-based preventative and crisis services.

Since 2015, Weave has housed 70 young people and worked with around 300. Over a long period the organisation has built up strong local connections in Redfern–Waterloo and works closely with the Indigenous communities in these areas. If Weave did not have a specific Indigenous focus, fewer Indigenous young people would be housed. Weave considers its role an important part in the mosaic of services in inner Sydney. It uses its local connections to partner with non-Indigenous organisations and provide cultural training for their staff.

Weave's homelessness service is part of a broader range of services that include:

- a 'one-stop shop' Aboriginal information and referral service that provides pathways into a range of other providers' services
- a tutoring and arts program
- a drop-in casework and group work program for women with children
- an outreach and intensive support program for Indigenous young people
- a dual diagnoses mental health service.

Commonwealth and state government grants have been and continue to be Weave's main source of funds. The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services' SHS, using funds provided under the Commonwealth–state NPAH, funds Weave's homelessness services. The services are also supplemented with funds from a range of other Commonwealth and state government programs.

As shown in Table 21, government grants represented more than three-quarters (77.3%) of Weave's income in the 2014–15 financial year. Other sources included donations (11.3%), other non-government grants (9.1%), interest (1.6%) and other income (1.0%). Weave receives a relatively high proportion of its funds from donations and other grants (mainly philanthropic

funds). It also receives in-kind contributions, including food and other tangible items for clients as well as services to the organisation such as auditing, consulting, IT support and marketing.

**Table 21: Income for Weave Youth and Community Services, 2014–15**

Source	Amount	Percentage of income
Government grants	\$2,111,892	77.3%
Donations	\$307,732	11.3%
Other grants	\$247,585	9.1%
Interest	\$42,670	1.6%
Other income	\$20,453	0.7%
Total income	\$2,730,333	100.0%

Source: Weave Youth and Community Services (2015).

Many of Australia’s large corporations have their headquarters in Sydney, where Weave is located. Weave is actively seeking to increase its income from non-government sources and is making a concerted attempt to develop relationships with the wider community and raise funds from the corporate sector, philanthropic organisations and individuals. Weave’s CEO is proactive and has the requisite knowledge and skills to develop and maintain contacts with corporate sponsors and to sell the organisation and its work as a positive contribution to society.

Since about 2012 Weave has made a deliberate decision to target more corporate funding. To facilitate this, it has appointed a fundraising manager (three days per week) and a new board whose members were taken from corporate organisations in Sydney. One of the key roles of this ‘corporate’ board is to raise funds for Weave through the members’ links with corporations in Sydney. Board members also contribute financially to the work of the Weave.

Weave strongly promotes how well it works with Indigenous communities. It highlights particular local causes and issues and seeks assistance and support to address them. One-quarter of Weave’s funds now come from corporate sponsorship. Over the next decade, it anticipates that this will increase to around one-half of total revenue.

Recently, Ernst and Young nominated Weave as its charity of the year and will help to raise funds for Weave’s services. The Finance Industry Council has supported Weave’s work with the Aboriginal community by providing \$60,000 per year since 2013. Telstra staff have also provided around \$60,000 per year through a workplace giving program.

Most funding from corporate sources is time-limited, and building relationships with corporate staff is time-consuming. The priorities of corporate funders are broader in scope than are government departments’. Compared with more detail-focused and prescriptive government agencies, corporate funders tend to have less defined notions of what they want. The extent of reporting requirements for corporate funders also varies. Reporting is generally not as arduous or detailed as government reporting; corporate funders usually require a financial report (Weave’s audited annual financial report is sufficient) and a short report on outcomes.

Weave plays a role in providing homelessness services to young people, particularly Indigenous young people. In part, the organisation has acted as a link between Indigenous young people and mainstream homelessness organisations, and provided cultural training for these organisations. By receiving funds as an SHS from the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services, Weave has been able to consolidate its services, expand its outreach

service and provide services focused on and targeted at homeless Indigenous young people. By raising funds from the corporate sector and seeking in-kind donations, Weave has been able to supplement its homelessness services, provide additional support services and establish young people in long-term housing arrangements, providing them with basic goods and furnishings.

The appointment of a 'corporate' board may, however, have an impact on Weave's future services. On the one hand, the strategy provides additional non-government funds to the organisation. In contrast with government's focus on outputs and regular, detailed reporting, the corporate sector tends to be less demanding and more focused on outcomes. This allows Weave more flexibility in the ways that funds are used, and more discretion regarding target groups and types of services. By drawing in requisite expertise, the corporate board can provide stronger governance, particularly in relation to financial oversight and strategic relationships with corporate Sydney.

However, such a board is not drawn from the local community and does not necessarily have a direct relationship with that community. This means that Weave's staff play an important role in relating to the local community and understanding community members' needs, interests and concerns. Whether Weave can continue to respond to the changing and emerging needs of this local community will depend upon how successful the CEO and staff are in communicating these needs to the board, and upon the board's ability to listen to, understand and strategically respond to these needs.

## **4.3 Victoria**

In Victoria, we selected a case study from mainstream organisations that provide services to homeless Indigenous Australians in urban or regional areas. The work of Quantum Support Services (Quantum or QSS) is discussed in the following section.

### **4.3.1 Case study: Quantum Support Services**

QSS is a regional service that operates in a number of locations throughout central Gippsland. For more than a decade, QSS has managed an Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk (ATAR) program, an SHS that specifically targets Indigenous Australians at risk of homelessness. This program aims 'to establish or sustain Aboriginal tenancies by supporting tenants to address issues placing their housing at risk'. In developing and managing this program, QSS has developed a strong partnership with local Indigenous-specific organisations, taking the lead because of the organisation's particular housing and homelessness services expertise.

The ATAR is part of a suite of services, targeted at specific groups, which seek to prevent or respond to homelessness. The suite includes the Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP), the Tenancy and Consumer Advocacy Service, the Community Connections Program (CCP), the Housing Support for the Aged program (HSA), the Transitional Support program, the Mental Health Housing Pathways program, the Court Integrated Support program, the Supporting Families at Risk of Homelessness program and the A Place to Call Home program. QSS also provides a specialist family violence support service for women and their children. Many Indigenous Australians access these services. QSS has strong connections with many other organisations in the region and provides cultural training that plays an important role in mediating between mainstream services and Indigenous Australians.

Commonwealth and state government grants have been and continue to be the predominant source of income for QSS. The Victorian Department of Human Services SHS funds the QSS homelessness service, using funds provided under the Commonwealth–state NPAH. This is further supplemented by funds from a range of other Commonwealth and state government programs.

As shown in Table 22, QSS had a total income of \$8.4 million in the 2014–15 financial year, with government grants representing around 95 per cent. Other sources of funds included rental income (2.3%), interest (0.3%), donations (0.1%) and other income (2.1%).

**Table 22: Income for Quantum Support Services, 2014–15**

Source	Amount	Percentage of income
Government grants	\$7,993,601	95.2%
Rental income	\$193,268	2.3%
Interest	\$27,311	0.3%
Donations	\$11,285	0.1%
Other income	\$175,614	2.1%
Total income	\$8,401,079	100.0%

Source: Quantum Support Services (2015).

QSS has managed its homelessness services for over a decade. Our fieldwork revealed that QSS will continue to rely on government sources of funds for its homelessness support services. Even if it wanted to develop its non-government sources of funds, the organisation faces a number of barriers:

- Seeking such funds would have high initial costs. On occasion, QSS has sought funds from philanthropic trusts for particular projects. This has demanded significant staff resources to complete applications for relatively small funding amounts (in the order of \$5,000 to \$10,000). If QSS were to make a concerted effort to raise funds through philanthropic trusts, corporate sponsors or public donations, it would initially have to divert scarce funds from current services to employ someone with the requisite skills. This would entail considerable risk, as the organisation would need to develop relationships with philanthropic trusts and corporate sponsors in a very competitive environment, and continue to maintain these relationships over an extended period.
- QSS is not geographically well located. It is in a regional area where most businesses are relatively small and struggling economically. So, QSS does not have easy access to businesses and donors whose brands would be enhanced by their contributions.
- QSS would also have to spend considerable time raising its profile in the area.

## 4.4 Queensland

Research participants in Queensland included representatives of the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, Murri Sisters, Ozcare and Mission Australia, who attended a focus group held in Brisbane, and the CEO of the case-study organisation, Ruth Women's Shelter.

As in the other states and the Northern Territory, organisations providing services to homeless Indigenous clients in Queensland rely largely on government funding. Changes in funding have affected small organisations, especially in remote areas where it is difficult to retain staff.

Organisational representatives spoke of donations being used to supplement government funding, providing items for clients that would not otherwise be available. Fundraising was

generally not considered worthwhile because of the expenditure needed to seek new funds. In discussion about the likely success of fundraising attempts, racism towards Indigenous Australians was raised as an issue:

*Governments have an obligation whereas corporates do not. Corporates don't want to risk their brand. They want to protect their brand and don't know how to enter that space and to make a difference. Only some are willing to do so.*

*We need resources to actually work on getting funds—groups skilled at maintaining relationships, providing feedback and reports.*

Representatives from organisations with a national presence felt more able to link into potential funding sources, but state-based organisations found it difficult. One participant highlighted specific problems for Indigenous organisations providing services:

*Some Indigenous organisations have gone under in the last decade because of reporting requirements/accountability/governance and/or [been] taken over by non-Indigenous organisations—caused by the requirements of government. Things were more negotiable in the past.*

Participants voiced concern about the amounts of resources needed to access funds from non-government sources:

*Who will drive the process? Will it be left to homelessness organisations to seek funds from corporates? Or, will corporates make a decision to work in the homelessness field and go and seek out homelessness services? We need a process that will bring the two together.*

Recipients of government grant funding have been restricted to running mainstream rather than Indigenous-specific services. Contracts have also restricted the rights of organisations to advocate on behalf of their clients. Participant comments on this important matter variously included:

*... It is about healing. Our mob won't go into a white fellas' place. It is for the whole family and whole community. It's about how the service is delivered ...*

*... A different model may be needed. It may cost more and this needs to be recognised. What is funded is based on a non-Indigenous model of delivery ...*

*... White fellas have the power and their decisions are at best well intentioned. Then head to ignorance, avoidance and racism. This is the context for decisions and policies being developed. The First Nations in Australia are being used as the footfalls. This is the Indigenous experience. A lot of people won't trust. A lot won't engage because it's not safe. Need a culturally safe place—that's why Indigenous Australians need Indigenous-specific services ...*

#### **4.4.1 Case study; Ruth's Women's Shelter**

Ruth's Women's Shelter, a small not-for-profit organisation, is one of two shelters in Cairns that provide secure crisis accommodation to women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Ruth's operates in the area from Cooktown to Cardwell. The organisation is not Indigenous-specific, but almost two-thirds of its clients are Aboriginal Australians or Torres Strait Islanders. The purpose-built shelter has been operating since 1977 and provides rooms to house six families, with shared bathrooms and communal kitchens, lounge rooms and children's play areas. Recently, Ruth's has acquired self-contained accommodation to house women preparing to return to the community. Emotional and practical support is available to residents 24 hours a day, Monday to Friday. Services include:

- crisis counselling
- information on domestic and family violence
- information and referrals for assistance to apply for domestic violence protection orders
- information on safety plans
- referrals to specialist counselling services
- referrals for legal advice
- information on parenting
- assistance in accessing housing services, exploring housing options and completing housing applications.

Clients' individual circumstances are taken into consideration, and shelter residents pay a nominal amount for board where they can afford it. Ruth's provides food staples so residents do not have to go shopping unless they wish to.

As is often the case for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence, many clients who stay at Ruth's Women's Shelter have longstanding homelessness issues:

*... so they ... come [because of] domestic violence, but actually, when you scratch the surface, they may have been couch surfing for years or just living with relatives. Really, the majority of them are suffering long-term homelessness due to domestic violence. They sort of get settled somewhere and then it all falls in a heap, and then off they go.*

The vast majority of Ruth's income is from government grants. This government funding totalled \$638,192 in 2014, with a slight increase to \$716,306 in 2015. The additional 2015 funds were granted to help Ruth's deal with increases in staff award rates.

Ruth's main source of funding was previously the Queensland Department of Communities, but funding since 2014 has come from the Department of Housing funds for SHSs. The shelter's CEO described this new arrangement, which has affected all shelters in Queensland, as like putting a square peg in a round hole:

*... they see us only as a room. They don't see all the extra work we do, which is support work, and we get women into housing.*

Ruth's is well supported by the local community. The shelter does not organise its own fundraising but gratefully receives donations raised by community groups, businesses and organisations. Federal emergency relief funding for Ruth's was cut by half in recent years (from \$22,000 per year down to \$11,000 per year), but the community has made up the shortfall with cash and in-kind donations:

*We are hugely supported by the community. All these clubs, they're always out there fundraising for us. It's quite amazing.*

Ruth's received \$21,205 in cash donations in 2015, and \$19,864 in 2014. In comparison the organisation's rental income was only \$2,772 in 2015.

On its website, Ruth's advertises its willingness to accept good quality donated items 'both new and preloved', including clothing and toys, cutlery, glassware and crockery, bed linen, whitegoods, large furniture and baby goods. Community donations and support are requested not for the shelter, but to 'enable us to assist our clients to leave a domestic violence situation and start a new life' by establishing themselves back in the community in private accommodation:

*We get so much in kind. We have two storage sheds because we get so much furniture and that given to us ... if someone walks in off the street, we can outfit them and then we can get them into school. We've got school books, school bags, we've got lunchboxes, we've got absolutely everything—all from donations of goods in kind.*

Ruth's surplus on overall operations for 2015 was \$49,665. The organisation is therefore in a healthy financial position, and it sees the current Queensland Labor Government as a source of funding stability:

*We got a big scare when [former premier] Campbell Newman was in, because he was going to totally change everything. He was going to make massive changes, and we were sort of looking at forming a consortium, because we thought we were going to lose our funding.*

Ruth's CEO identified certain advantages in not running an Indigenous-specific service, but noted that demand for support is much greater than what the two shelters in the area can currently supply:

*A lot of women ... choose to come to us [rather than the Indigenous-specific refuge in Cairns] because they're concerned that their relatives will either work there or they know people that work there. But they're always full, too ... there's only two shelters in Cairns. But we take the most, and we also take women from Cape York.*

## **4.5 Western Australia**

In Western Australia a focus group was held in Perth. The group was made up of a range of representatives from government departments and not-for-profit organisations that run services with mainly Indigenous Australian clients. All of the organisations were mainstream, with no Indigenous-specific organisation representatives able to attend.

In the Perth area, homelessness support for Indigenous Australians is overwhelmingly provided by non-Indigenous specific organisations. Most organisations represented ran services with mostly Indigenous clients, but also services with more mixed client bases. It was the location of the service provision that appeared to influence the mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients, rather than organisations' intentions to run services specifically for Indigenous Australians.

Perhaps because of this, participants did not make many references to particular difficulties in obtaining funding or running homelessness services for Indigenous people. The exceptions were references to the effects seen from government closure of remote Indigenous communities. Representatives of larger organisations running state-wide services noted that people being forced to leave their communities have drifted, resulting in increased numbers of homeless Indigenous Australians in Broome and other areas. No additional government funding is available for organisations to cope with the increased demand.

All participants agreed that the amount of NAHA funding they receive per client has reduced since the 2013 change in state government, and that state funding has become less generous in Western Australia because of the economic situation in which the state now finds itself, given the recent mining industry decline.

Interestingly, both state government and not-for-profit representatives considered it a government responsibility to provide for homeless people and to fund homelessness services. The group were not of the opinion that it was appropriate for organisations to have to rely on other sources of funding. Although several organisations received Lotterywest funding, this was considered government money because the Western Australian Government is in charge of, and organises, the state lottery. Participants gave examples of receiving small amounts of in-

kind, philanthropic and corporate funding: Rio Tinto funded a Christmas party for one organisation's clients, and the Rotary Club of Perth conducted renovation and refit works to a building owned by another organisation. One participant organisation received approximately \$30,000 in donations each year. However, there was a very heavy reliance on NAHA funding for organisations' core activities.

There was also limited support among the organisations for the use of volunteers. Some organisations had policies not to use volunteers, either because volunteers could not provide the professional support that clients needed or because it was organisational policy that workers should be reimbursed for their efforts. One participant noted that volunteers make a valuable contribution, but asked, 'Do we ever capture how much time is spent by them and what that is worth to a business or to an outcome?'

Several group participants spoke of the way changes in government lead to ever-shifting funding application processes, funding conditions and availability:

*... every time there is a change of government, federal or state, not only does the name change, which must cost them a fortune, but the goal posts are shifted for not-for-profit groups ... and we've got to change, and we've got to do all this work to suit the people who've just walked in and said, 'We want it this way'. And when things changed to Department of Social Services we had to sit and put in a huge tender just to get that money. And we were given a short time frame to do that ...*

*and*

*... with every new government, why does it suddenly change? That's no good. They just go, 'We're changing this'. Immediately, without thinking what has been achieved, and then that sends the not-for-profits into an absolute spin because we don't know what's going on—nobody's telling us ...*

Participants spoke of their frustration at developing services that were effective, only to face funding cuts that threatened the ability to keep them running:

*I believe having a specialist homelessness worker dedicated to homelessness and that support for a full 12 months has been the best thing for keeping people in their houses [who] would normally have lost their houses ... So I think that that was one of the best programs ever introduced and I don't think it should fall off the table just because the budget might be a bit tight.*

Various participants highlighted how difficult it is to cope when they do not know what funding arrangements will be in place until the last minute:

*I've been with [the organisation] for two years, but it seems like this consistent state of the unknown. No one really knows what's going to happen and it's a challenging way to deliver services.*

Although some representatives of larger organisations mentioned that running several linked services had the advantage of allowing some client support to continue when funding is cut, they did not feel immune to the struggle against uncertainty:

*There have certainly been times of anxiety. Particularly ... June 30, 2015, I think they were talking 13 contracts, they all came to a dead end on that date.*

The following themes emerged from the Western Australian focus group:

- homelessness services' strong reliance on government funding
- difficulties coping with reductions in funding caused by economic decline

- difficulties in coping with government changes in the commitment to prioritise homelessness and in funding application and outcome requirements
- ongoing uncertainty of funding arrangements.

## 5 Implications and opportunities for policy and practice development

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- All of the Indigenous Australian-supporting organisations covered by our survey analysis and fieldwork investigations received the majority of their funding from Commonwealth or state and territory government sources.
  - Only six of the survey respondent organisations received funding or support from other sources, but almost all of the organisations represented in the focus groups and case studies received additional types of funding or support, such as donations of goods, philanthropic grants and cash donations from community members and fundraising activities. The amounts of this additional funding were relatively small in all cases but one.
  - Most organisations anticipated that attempting to further diversify their funding sources would have negative consequences on service provision and outcomes.
  - The problems organisations experienced because of funding precarity and uncertainty were notably similar, regardless of their location or the types of services they provided.
  - Although some mainstream organisations provide Indigenous-specific services, Indigenous people have to seek support from people and organisations whose cultural competency can vary.
  - Homeless Indigenous Australians may therefore not be receiving the kinds of support that are best suited to them, and current support may not be culturally appropriate.
- 

### 5.1 Precarity of funding

Funding for the NPAH is secure until 2017, but the outlook for government support for homelessness services over the medium to long term is uncertain. SAAP funding was supported by legislation that committed the Commonwealth and the states to joint funding of homelessness services under the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994* (Cth). But the legislative framework for funding of both the NPAH and NAHA under the *Federal Financial Relations Act 2009* (Cth), which effectively replaced the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994* (Cth), addresses specific-purpose funding and makes no provision for the commitment of the states and territories. Currently, therefore, there is no legislative requirement for the Commonwealth to provide housing assistance to homelessness people, or to reduce their numbers (Walsh 2015: 823).

A number of high-level government reports have also included suggestions that the Commonwealth consider withdrawing its role in addressing and preventing homelessness. These include the 2014 report of the National Commission of Audit (Commonwealth of Australia 2014), the *Reform of the federation* discussion paper (Department of PMC 2015) and the Henry Review (Commonwealth of Australia 2010). The Commonwealth has also withdrawn funding to homelessness peak bodies including Homelessness Australia (2016) and National Shelter.

This uncertainty is a source of considerable anxiety for all of the organisations included in the fieldwork component of this study. All of the organisations covered by our survey analysis and fieldwork activities are heavily reliant on funding from the government sector, including state and territory housing departments, departments such as health and child protection, and the Attorney-General's Department.

For most organisations, government funding was supplemented by a relatively small amount of self-funding, including sources such as rental income, Centrepay repayments from clients, fees for provision of literacy programs, and so on. Almost all organisations also received relatively small amounts of philanthropic or corporate funding. These amounts were generally used to fund items and activities that would not have otherwise been available for clients, such as food vouchers and children's parties. In particular, the CEO of Weave Youth and Community Services in Sydney is determined to increase the organisation's funding from corporate and other non-government sources. However, most organisations were struggling to find alternative ways of funding their services outside of government provision.

The overall high level of dependence on federal, state and territory government funding sources made the organisations vulnerable to changes in the policy and funding environments. This was especially the case for organisations in the Northern Territory; without exception, informants there described funding for their programs as short-term, unstable and precarious. A number of these organisations were operating programs, including a youth service, a food bank service and a drug and alcohol service, with no certainty that they would continue to exist beyond the next two to three months.

Organisations that received funding through the National Partnership Agreements reported struggling with short-term funding agreements, the termination of funding programs for capital works and the removal of Consumer Price Index (CPI) provisions from program grants, all of which amounted to a substantial cut in funding levels. As a result of the Commonwealth transferring responsibility for Indigenous programs from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to PMC, the situation was similar for organisations that received Indigenous-specific funding.

There was also some uncertainty about the sources of current funding. Some informants were uncertain about whether they received Commonwealth Government funding. The sharing of responsibility for homelessness between the Commonwealth and the states and territories has created concerns about a lack of clarity and transparency regarding responsibilities for funding. Some respondents observed that it could be difficult to obtain detailed information about whether the source of their funding was the Commonwealth or from the state or territory government.

In fact, the only constant across the funding environments seems to be instability. In Western Australia, organisations were more confident of their funding after a change in state government, but in every jurisdiction informants highlighted the problems and consequences of dealing with one-year NPAH funding for the last two years. Informants described a situation in which policy change and funding uncertainty arises anew with every change of federal, state and territory government, with every change of Prime Minister, and with every ministry reshuffle.

## **5.2 The situation for Indigenous community organisations**

Perhaps especially, these changes affect the ICO sector. Few respondents from this sector received SHS funding. The organisations' typically small sizes and their difficulties in attracting and retaining staff meant that any change in the funding of programs had a substantial impact on the viability of the organisation. Their access to Indigenous funding streams had not

protected them—the Commonwealth’s transfer of Indigenous programs from the DSS to PMC and the introduction of the IAS funding created enormous uncertainty and the requirement to submit funding applications for any program that had previously been funded by the DSS tied up resources. One informant described the impact on their organisation as follows:

*At the end of the last financial year, we got into July and were delivering services but we didn’t have signed funding agreements for a couple of programs for this current financial year. The [problem is the] lack of long-term commitment—three years is not long-term—and the timeliness of future contracts. You’d like to know 12 months out that you’re going to get the commitment but it’s more towards the end of the period that you know whether you are.*

*The financial impact is huge because the majority of these [services], the funding is in—we get to the end of a quarter and we have to do the quarterly report and then you get the funding for the next quarter. More often than not you’re well into the next quarter before we get the next funding. We are expected to have sufficient working capital to keep going before we get the money. It means we have to juggle finances and the organisation has other factors that impact on its financial capabilities. This is a factor that impacts at the end of each quarter and the beginning of each new quarter. Our cash is down and we have to keep all our programs running until the next round of funding comes through. We keep the programs going and don’t take staff off the job and try to shield them from any impacts as far as worrying about whether they’ve got a job.*

Almost all organisations’ programs had experienced changes in funding sources at least once over the 2013–2016 period. Some services had to be cut entirely, while most of the remainder were operating on a maintenance basis, with no scope for innovation or growth. These organisations had demonstrated their effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for clients, so from their perspective the precariousness of their existence was ‘stupid’ and ‘absurd’. One manager explained what it was like running an organisation when Indigenous programs were transferred from the Commonwealth DSS to PMC in 2015:

*That particular funding agreement was due to expire on 30 June 2015. Normally you would hear 90 days before the end of the contract if there was an intent to roll over [the funding] or an alternative with an application process. But we didn’t hear anything. We kept asking, but we were told ... they couldn’t tell us. We were aware the [Northern Territory government agency] were going through the same process. We were getting complaints from the public service that, ‘If your money has gone, so has mine’ ... Everything was happening backwards ... It was not business as usual. We didn’t find out until August.*

### **5.3 Responses to funding cuts**

A minority of organisations that informed our research have responded to the diminishing and uncertain nature of government funding by attempting to diversify their funding sources and becoming more entrepreneurial. However, there is a limit to how much organisations can achieve in this area. For some, diversification has meant seeking revenue streams from different government agencies, rather than finding alternatives in the corporate or philanthropic sectors or self-funding, because neither of the latter options seemed realistic or cost-effective. This informant’s observations about the difficulties of gaining funds from other sectors were typical:

*It’s forced us to look at a better business model, rather than a charity one, but because of funding being reduced year by year you can’t go out and be innovative.*

*You've just got to do what you're doing. So you operate a business model where you can change, but people can't pay, so you never get in front of the game so you can reinvest. It's just maintenance year by year. (Paul, manager, mainstream community organisation)*

While opportunities for funding diversification are currently limited for mainstream organisations, the situation could be different for Indigenous organisations that hold land rights or that can work with other Indigenous organisations that hold land rights. There is potential for the lands to be used as leverage to develop services for addressing Indigenous housing and homelessness. An example of this is Gandangara Aboriginal organisation, which owns 1,500 hectares of land in the metropolitan area of south-west Sydney. It has a well-developed plan to use some of the capital from the development of 850 hectares for a range of Aboriginal services, including housing (Heathcote Ridge 2016). This approach to the provision of Indigenous services is in the early stages of development, but offers potential for Indigenous people to provide their own services independent of governments. In pursuing this, the opportunities for realising the investment potential of Indigenous land rights needs to be balanced against the risk that the approach will extinguish or otherwise reduce hard-won land rights for future generations of Indigenous people.

## **5.4 Funding application processes and reporting**

Although the Federal Government's changes to homelessness funding came with claims about improved efficiencies and improved outcomes, this was not how respondents in Darwin experienced them. Informants described funding application processes that were difficult for even the more well-resourced and skilled staff to follow. While the Northern Territory Government was reported to have improved its application and reporting processes, the same could not be said of the Federal Government's requirements. One informant described abandoning a Regional Advancement Strategy application because:

*... it would have taken a team of professional tender writers to spend a month doing business planning because of the extent of documentation required to even be shortlisted. (Sarah, manager, ICO)*

Funding requirements are inflexible and get in the way of good service delivery. There are also concerns about time-consuming and sometimes frustrating reporting obligations that seem to be used for bureaucratic purposes rather than to improve services. A number of senior management respondents described the performance expectations attached to both Commonwealth and territory government funding as too demanding. One observed:

*The KPIs [key performance indicators] have been really onerous. We don't provide accommodation, but we're being asked to deliver the same evidence of standards, quality and governance as organisations given millions of dollars. We got to the point where we were saying we are accredited as a national health body—is that sufficient for you? (Mary, manager, ICO)*

Informants also expressed concern about the high level of staff turnover within federal, state and territory agencies, which makes it difficult for organisational representatives to build relationships.

## **5.5 Funding mix influences on service provision and outcomes**

The precarious funding environment has a number of problematic effects on the sector and the effectiveness of services. These include operational inefficiencies, an inability to innovate and problems in attracting and retaining staff.

### 5.5.1 Operational inefficiencies and inability to innovate

For services receiving SHS funding, the shift to short-term funding periods of no more than one year creates operational inefficiencies and an inability to innovate. Respondents described services as highly vulnerable, with some organisations unable to employ staff and uncertain what the emphasis of their programs should be. The manager of a mainstream community service explained:

*What's happened is, with the change of government, they've gone back to one year [funding]. It's actually even worse, they're late getting contracts out, we don't know whether we're going to get it. Year-by-year funding means you can't do big things. You can't plan, you can't invest for the long term, you can't take on new staff members ... We end up just doing the basics rather than what would really work. We can trial a program and have fantastic results, but it requires investment. You're not able to do that when we haven't got the funding scale. (Paul, manager, mainstream community organisation)*

Another informant spoke of their organisation's inability to innovate its work into new models of good practice:

*We would like to provide ongoing support for people who move into community housing. There is no funding available, which makes it very difficult to provide this support.*

These problems are exacerbated by periods of policy change when there is no advice available on future government funding until new arrangements are in place, creating enormous uncertainty in the sector. This is an almost untenable situation for organisations, although they have no choice but to manage it somehow:

*It's been about trying to find things that allow you to do the same job better rather than do more. If we get more funding for housing it is to do more, but it's not just about doing more, but doing better. If you're always having to do more then we're not going to be able to make it better. (Paul, manager, mainstream community organisation)*

This has resulted in many missed opportunities to improve services and address service gaps. The following examples were apparent in the Northern Territory:

- Few services that specifically target homeless Indigenous people.
- An absence of short-term accommodation for people living in the long grass during the wet season, when camps become waterlogged. At the time of our fieldwork, a group of community services in Darwin had established an MOU to work together in providing temporary secure, dry shelter at the local YMCA and YWCA, but the program has only a year of funding and may not exist beyond that period.
- A need for an early intervention day patrol service for individuals whose behaviour puts them, and/or head tenants, at risk of breaching Territory Housing's three strikes policy.
- Continuing funding uncertainties for Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation's Return to Country program that supports Aboriginal people from remote communities to leave public spaces in Darwin and return home.
- The termination of a program that supported access to primary health care for public space dwellers. This program used to be provided by Primary Health NT, but after funding changes its program's focus changed to individuals and families in social housing.
- A need for pre-entry and follow-up services for people entering alcohol and drug residential treatment programs. Darwin's Aboriginal drugs and alcohol residential program, run by CAAPS, experiences blockages as a result of this service gap.

### 5.5.2 The impact on staff recruitment and retention

For both mainstream and Indigenous-specific organisations, employment of Indigenous staff is critical for providing culturally appropriate services, but funding uncertainties create serious recruitment and retention problems. Some organisations that participated in our research did not have Indigenous staff working in their services despite having mainly Indigenous clients. Staff require not only the skills to work with clients with multiple needs, but also an understanding of Indigenous culture. Some services require workers with health or mental health qualifications, yet funding constraints make it difficult to pay them at competitive levels. Qualified Indigenous people are in high demand, and the lower wages and limited career structure that organisations could offer make it difficult to attract staff. This increases staff workloads and contributes to high staff turnover. All of the ICOs and several other organisations had staff vacancies for these reasons.

Staff turnover is also high because most services can only offer short-term contracts:

*At the end of the [funding] term it's really stressful, because it makes it difficult to employ people permanent full-time, so we end up employing on contract till the end of the funding agreement. So people are nervous about whether they're going to have a job because management is still negotiating for funding. (Mike, manager, ICO)*

*It was very challenging to retain staff. It was only because we had a good relationship with the worker [that we managed]. We had to second her to another position because we couldn't tell her what was happening [in the future to her position], so had to place her somewhere else. I can't imagine that would have been an easy thing, and it might not have worked with another worker. (Mary, manager, ICO)*

In Western Australia participants discussed staff retention problems caused by the uncertainty of funding:

*People who have been trained up and who do specialise ... who have made relationships with property managers, with other agencies and networks to assist these people, feel that their job is not secure so they're going to go and look for a more permanent job without the threat of the funding continuously hanging over their heads that it might be gone.*

These problems seem to impact especially powerfully on Indigenous workers because Indigenous cultural practices and family forms make it hard for them to manage periods of financial insecurity. Some employees may belong to multi-family or multi-generational households in which they are one of relatively few individuals earning a regular income, so family members are dependent on their earnings. Family members may also have health and other needs which require their economic support. Indigenous cultural norms of mutual reciprocity create an expectation that those who are able will support other family members. When this is destabilised, the impact ripples out across the worker's family and community network, creating pressure on them to find alternative means of income.

### 5.5.3 Poor service coordination and service gaps

Despite the efforts of funding programs, including the NPAH and the IAS, to avoid service duplication and improve service integration, respondents' view was that the absence of coordination was a problem in Darwin. One informant suggested there are over 30 programs with a homelessness theme in Darwin, but there is little or no communication or coordination between them. She observed:

*We're not talking about reducing homelessness, but just shuffling people around at a time when public housing stocks are shrinking. It explains the rise in homelessness. (Sarah, manager, ICO)*

Short-term funding leads to organisations being unable to run services consistently throughout the year, impacting on relationships with clients:

*... in the May before the end of the financial year, you know, that's when you see tenancies start to drop off, because the relationship is starting to drop off, because you don't know whether you're going to have a worker come June or July.*

*... Yeah, they're trying to wind up services consistently every year in preparation for the end date and that's why brokerage funds are not spent, because the allocations have slowed up ...*

### 5.5.4 Institutional memory

One effect of the precarious nature of homelessness funding was to reduce organisations' capacity to take a long view on how the mix of funding sources impacted on their services and clients. In many organisations very few people had been in their positions for longer than two or three years. This limited respondents' ability to describe in any detail the funding history of their organisation and how it had impacted on programs. Very few respondents had a good understanding of the forces driving change in the sector. Their perspective was relatively short-term, with changes understood as driven by the political cycle and changes in government, and levels of support largely determined by the ideological colouring of whoever was in power. This was closely allied to the strongly held view of most participants (both from not-for-profit organisations and government departments) that ensuring citizens have safe, appropriate housing is a governmental responsibility—at federal, state and territory levels.

## 5.6 Impacts of the service funding mix on Indigenous Australians

Organisations' heavy dependence on one or more government funding streams affects Indigenous people's access to services and limits their outcomes. In Darwin, where we spoke to representatives from Indigenous-specific organisations, the impact of service funding on the Aboriginal population who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is severe. A number of informants were concerned that the number of homeless Aboriginal people was growing, particularly at a time when services were experiencing cuts. Respondents described a situation of urban drift, with many Aboriginal people travelling to Darwin and other population centres, partly as a result of liquor restrictions and the presence of police in communities, and partly because of discrimination, a lack of affordable accommodation in the private rental market and the difficulty of accessing social housing accommodation. This urban drift creates high levels of crowding and public space dwelling, bringing with it risks of injury, physical and mental health problems and criminalisation. Homeless Indigenous people's high visibility in Darwin also generates significant, problematic media attention.

The following comments were typical:

*There is definitely urban drift ... people drift to Darwin, so there's a big rise in antisocial behaviour issues and a lack of capacity of services to deal with this. (Paul, manager, mainstream community service)*

*People sometimes beg us to come and stay because their children are at risk in drinking households and they have nowhere else to go. We get lots of referrals through residential services, which are then referred to [the Northern Territory Department of] Children and Families because they are child protection cases. (Mary, manager, ICO)*

Most informants believed that funding for homelessness services was inadequate. They were concerned that most funding was directed at remote communities—although there was a need

for this, it should not be at the expense of providing adequate funding in Darwin, where there was also a high level of need. They argued there was very little provision to combat crowding and public space dwelling in Darwin.

Larrakia Nation is one of the few organisations that specifically target people living in the long grass. Its Care Coordination program operates on a tight budget with very little available to support discretionary needs:

*They need accommodation. There are lots of things they need—somewhere to keep their medications, their Webster pack [a sealed weekly calendar pack designed to help people take their medication in accordance with their doctor's specifications]—some people are on asthma puffers and they need a place for the nebuliser, but where are you going to plug the nebuliser into [when living in the long grass]? They need [funds for] counselling, financial counselling and for ACAT assessment costs. (Julie, frontline worker, ICO)*

Other informants made similar points about the inadequacy of provision:

*Community clients are the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach clients, so you need to build the relationship, but you can't do this with only one worker. (Mary, manager, ICO)*

In Western Australia respondents were especially concerned about the impact of the closure of 150 remote Indigenous communities on both service provision and their clients. The closures have resulted in more people becoming homeless, but additional funding has not been made available for services to cope with the extra demand:

*People have had to relocate from their land to places such as Broome, where some are homeless and sleeping on the streets. Services have not been given any additional funding to cope with this influx, which has caused real difficulties.*

### **5.6.1 Need for culturally appropriate services**

Indigenous organisation service providers and some of the mainstream organisations emphasised the inappropriateness of a 'one size fits all' approach to service provision, saying culturally adapted services were essential for Indigenous people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In Darwin, as well as the higher risk of homelessness for Indigenous people, many low-income Indigenous people experience difficulties beyond the issues of multiple needs evident in the overall homeless population. Indigenous people experience high rates of mental and physical disability, and many are also dealing with the legacy of colonisation:

*These people ... have come through trauma. They've got depression that's not diagnosed. They've got malnutrition, they have alcohol and drug dependency, they're low income earners. You can't just put them into accommodation and expect them to cope. (Jane, program manager, ICO)*

Cultural memories of colonisation and a distrust of government and 'white fella' services mean that many Indigenous people are reluctant to use mainstream services even when they have high levels of need. The relational orientation of Indigenous culture requires services based on direct knowledge and understanding of the client group, personal connection and face-to-face contact. Indigenous services relied on staff members' personal knowledge and networks to provide safe accommodation for individuals at risk of incarceration and/or homelessness:

*When we pick them up, we need to drop them off in a safe location and if they're homeless it's an all-night driving exercise. We know all our clients. We know option A, the first house, and the last option which is the police lockup ... The only time we've*

*ever taken someone to the watchhouse is when the police have intervened—that's three people in a two-year period. (Brett, program manager, ICO)*

Outreach work is especially important because of many Indigenous individuals' reluctance to seek the services they require:

*With Aboriginal people you need to go where they are. The people you're going to see come through are the people who need a lot of work. They've got so many complex needs, you need to reach the hard-to-reach, especially those people who are homeless, as they are the most vulnerable and in need. (Jane, program manager, ICO)*

Familiarity is especially important for homeless Aboriginal people whose interactions with many white services, such as the police or child protection services, have involved forms of control. The capacity of organisations to develop a trustworthy reputation and of workers to become familiar to clients is critical for effective service provision. A frontline worker of an Indigenous ICO explained:

*The majority of long grassers know the team. They call out for them whenever they need assistance. (Teresa, frontline worker, ICO)*

Indigenous organisations also understand how to configure their services in ways that will increase client participation. Larrakia's Care Coordination program was developed to adapt the ways Indigenous people were prepared to engage with the service, providing *in situ* support that becomes the starting point for a relationship that may enable clients to access the mainstream care they need.

Culturally appropriate services also require a capacity to respond to client expectations about age and gender. For more traditional individuals, services need to be provided by someone of the same gender. An older person may have difficulty accepting services from a younger person. These issues are especially important for Indigenous organisations, but limited funding means they are not always able to adapt services to their clients' individual needs:

*We need the flexibility to respond to individual client need. As an Aboriginal organisation we should be leading best practice for working with Aboriginal people, but funding restricts this. (Jane, manager, ICO)*

In Western Australia the appropriateness of services to assist homeless people following the closure of remote communities was questioned:

*They've had to move from their families and go to another area [where] they may not—because of all the different skin groups—they may not be able to access a particular service because of the cultural reasons for that skin group.*

## **5.7 Policy development implications**

Precarity of funding is having a major impact on service provision and client outcomes. The key funding requirement for our respondents is certainty. Three-year funding arrangements as a minimum would greatly assist organisations to plan ahead and improve service provision and client outcomes.

Lack of information available to organisations during times of government policy change must be minimised in order for services to continue effectively during interim periods. Advance notice of policy change would assist organisations to plan effectively.

Job security and training for staff are important to minimise staff turnover and in turn to maintain quality of service provision. Organisations' dependency on government funding in order to provide services is highly unlikely to change. Policy decisions need to take account of this.

Most of the organisations providing support to Indigenous Australians who are homeless are not Indigenous-specific. Further work is required in order to determine whether homeless Indigenous Australians are receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, and whether the support they receive is culturally appropriate.

## 6 Conclusions

This research has looked exclusively at the impact of funding sources on the outcomes of services for homeless Indigenous Australians.

Organisations that took part in the *Australian homelessness funding and delivery survey* between 2013 and 2015 were asked whether they ran a service where the main client group (and what proportion) was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The survey findings were considered along with a grey literature web-based search for information on the funding of services for homeless Indigenous Australians, case studies with a range of services assisting Indigenous Australians, and focus groups with representatives of relevant not-for-profit organisations and policy-makers and funders from government departments.

### 6.1 Funding of organisations supporting Indigenous Australians who are homeless

This research has addressed Inquiry question 5: 'What is the level of government and non-government direct and indirect funding of services which support Indigenous homeless people and how does the funding mix influence service provision and outcomes?'

It also addressed the following complementary questions:

- What proportion of funding comes from Indigenous-specific funding and non-Indigenous sources of funding?
- Are there other innovative sources of funding being tapped into for Indigenous homelessness in Australia or internationally?
- What impact do changes in funding sources have on service and delivery and outcomes for Indigenous people?

#### 6.1.1 Summary of findings

No federal or state program specifically targets homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of homelessness. This is despite over-representation of Indigenous people among Australia's homeless population. The consequence is that expectations regarding service outcomes are mainstreamed and the services available may not be appropriate for Indigenous clients.

Services with a majority of homeless Indigenous clients are overwhelmingly run by mainstream organisations. Of the ICOs that do provide services for homeless Indigenous Australians, very few receive funding through NPAH or NPARIH. It seems likely that the onerous application and reporting conditions act as a deterrent for smaller ICOs that might otherwise enter the space. No Indigenous-specific programs have Indigenous homelessness as their primary focus, although the housing space does have Indigenous-specific funding streams. Partly as a result of this, funding arrangements lack policy coordination. Funding also tends to have conditions attached that mean the available services are not appropriate or accessible for Indigenous Australians experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Most organisations that provide homelessness services for Indigenous Australians are heavily or totally reliant on government funding, and this situation is unlikely to change. In the main, homelessness service funding is from federal, state and territory sources such as NPAH. This funding and other government funding from smaller sources comes with different conditions that affect organisations, services and client outcomes.

The short-term, unpredictable nature of funding arrangements is of most concern to organisations that provide services to Indigenous Australians experiencing or at risk of

homelessness. In an environment where a three-year period is the maximum available funding security, and where one-year funding arrangements have become the norm, it is impossible for organisations to develop and maintain services that are most appropriate to their client groups. The diversification of funding sources developing in the mainstream homelessness sector does not appear to be happening for services that target Indigenous peoples.

Further research is needed to understand the views of Indigenous clients of homelessness services and of Indigenous people who do not or cannot access services.

## **6.2 Policy development opportunities**

Government funding commitments need to be for at least three-year periods to allow organisations to plan and deliver services that are cost-efficient and appropriate for Indigenous Australians.

Funding arrangements need to support a more integrated, cooperative services sector for Indigenous Australians who are homeless. A broad range of government services provide funding for homelessness Indigenous Australians, especially the criminal justice system and health and drug and alcohol services. Systems need to be developed to capture their contributions and support these activities.

Organisations' dependency on government funding in order to provide services is highly unlikely to change, so adequate government income must be ensured. With adequate funding for homelessness services to support Indigenous Australians, their use of non-homelessness services in sectors such as health, welfare and justice is likely to reduce (Zaretsky and Flatau 2013; Zaretsky, Flatau et al. 2013).

Most of the organisations providing support to Indigenous Australians who are homeless are not Indigenous-specific. Further work is required in order to determine whether homeless Indigenous Australians are receiving the kinds of support which are best suited to them, and whether the support they receive is culturally appropriate.

There is a need for governments to build the capacity of Indigenous organisations, as they are particularly well-placed to provide culturally appropriate support. Milligan and Martin et al. (2016) point out that despite national policy support for a vigorous Indigenous housing services sector, there have been few sustained efforts to support Indigenous organisations to achieve this. Instead the mainstreaming of services has caused disruptions and uncertainties within the sector, and dissatisfaction among Indigenous leaders (Milligan, Martin et al. 2016).

## **6.3 Final conclusion**

This report presents the findings from one of the three research projects in the Inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in Australia. The research looked specifically at the funding sources for organisations that support Indigenous Australians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Indigenous Australians are more likely to become homeless than other Australians, and their homelessness situations are likely to be more severe.

Findings in this research demonstrate that most support is provided by governments through NPAH. No federal, state or territory government program specifically targets supporting homeless Indigenous people or those at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Very few ICOs receive funding through NPAH or NPARIH. Services for homeless Indigenous people are overwhelmingly mainstreamed and funding arrangements are characterised by a lack of policy coordination.

The research has facilitated engagement between the research and policy communities on how the funding mix of homelessness services to Indigenous Australians impacts their services. A range of policy development opportunities have been identified to improve how funding arrangements can support a more integrated homelessness services sector.

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# Appendix 1: Participant information statement (CEO and interviewees)

## The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians

### Principal investigators

Dr Angela Spinney, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Assoc Prof Daphne Habibis, Housing and Community Research Unit, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia

Dr Sean McNelis, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

### Invitation to participate

The research project aims to address how the mix of government and non-government direct and indirect funding in the homelessness services system influences service provision and outcomes with specific reference to services providing homelessness support to Indigenous Australians.

You are invited to participate in this project as someone who has expertise and knowledge of the homelessness sector. We would like to discuss issues surrounding funding sources for homelessness support for Indigenous Australians.

### The project

This project will examine:

- From what sources are services providing homelessness support to Indigenous Australians currently accessing funding.
- How has this changed in the last decade, and what indications (if any) are there that the funding mix may change in the future.
- What impact have funding sources and funding mixes had on service provision to date and are there any indications that there may be impact in the future on service provision and outcomes.
- How have policy and service development been influenced by differing funding sources.

The project is funded by AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute).

### What is involved?

If you participate in the project, an experienced researcher will interview you by the telephone or face-to-face in your workplace or in another mutually agreed location. We anticipate that the interview will take up to one hour. We will ask you to answer as a representative of the organisation that you work for. The researcher will take notes of the interview and, with your consent, make an electronic recording as back up for checking the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the notes. The electronic recordings will not be transcribed.

## Your rights and interests

Participation in the project is entirely voluntary: you can choose not to be interviewed, not to answer a question, or to withdraw from the interview at any time you wish. You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview.

In signing the attached consent form, you are indicating that you have permission from your organisation to discuss these issues.

## Privacy and confidentiality

The electronic recordings (where applicable), interview notes and signed consent forms will be kept securely at the premises of the researchers. The project report, or any other academic publications, will not attribute opinions that you have expressed to you personally, either by name or position, and you will not be able to be identified in this respect unless you give us permission to do so. We would, however, like to acknowledge your contribution as one of a list of contributors but you may choose not to be acknowledged in this way if you wish. Prior to submitting a draft of the final report to AHURI, we will send you a copy. You will have 10 days in which to comment on areas relevant to your organisation.

## Research publications

The research will result in a report which will be published electronically and in paper format.

There may also be other publications arising from the research in the form of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals and presentations at conferences.

As a condition of our funding for the project we are also required to submit de-identified data to the Australian Data Archive (ADA) ([www.ada.edu.au](http://www.ada.edu.au)), a national service for the collection and preservation of digital research data and to make this data available for secondary analysis by academic researchers and other users. Your identity is not provided to the ADA.

## Further information about the project

For further information about the project, please contact the researcher who is coordinating the fieldwork.

Dr Angela Spinney, The Swinburne Institute of Social Research

Swinburne University of Technology, Mail Box H53, PO Box 218, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122, Australia

Telephone +61 3 92145637 or, email [aspinney@swin.edu.au](mailto:aspinney@swin.edu.au)

## Concerns or complaints

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68)

Swinburne University of Technology, PO Box 218, Hawthorn Vic 3122, Australia.

Tel (03) 9214 5218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or [resethics@swin.edu.au](mailto:resethics@swin.edu.au)

## **Appendix 2: Participant information statement (focus group)**

### **The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians**

#### **Principal investigators**

Dr Angela Spinney, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Assoc Prof Daphne Habibis, Housing and Community Research Unit, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia

Dr Sean McNelis, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

#### **Invitation to participate**

The research project aims to address how the mix of government and non-government direct and indirect funding in the homelessness services system influences service provision and outcomes with specific reference to services providing homelessness support to Indigenous Australians.

You are invited to participate in this project as someone who has expertise and knowledge of the homelessness sector. We would like to discuss with you issues surrounding funding sources for homelessness support for Indigenous Australians at a facilitated focus group.

#### **The project**

This project will examine:

- From what sources are services providing homelessness support to Indigenous Australians currently accessing funding.
- How has this changed in the last decade, and what indications (if any) are there that the funding mix may change in the future.
- What impact have funding sources and funding mixes had on service provision to date and are there any indications that there may be impact in the future on service provision and outcomes.
- How have policy and service development been influenced by differing funding sources.

The project is funded by AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute).

#### **What is involved?**

If you participate in the project, an experienced researcher will conduct a facilitated workshop to which you will be invited to contribute. We anticipate that the workshop will take approximately two hours. We are asking you to participate as a representative of the organisation for which you work. Notes will be taken at the workshop. It will also be recorded as back up for later checking of accuracy and comprehensiveness of the notes. The electronic recordings will not be transcribed.

## Your rights and interests

Participation in the project is entirely voluntary: you can choose not to participate in the workshop, not to be involved in any particular discussion, or to withdraw from the workshop at any time you wish. You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the workshop.

In signing the attached consent form, you are indicating that you have permission from your organisation to discuss these issues.

## Privacy and confidentiality

The electronic recordings (where applicable), workshop notes and signed consent forms will be kept securely at the premises of the researchers. The project report, or any other academic publications, will not attribute opinions that you have expressed to you personally, either by name or position, and you will not be able to be identified in this respect unless you give us permission to do so. We would, however, like to acknowledge your contribution as one of a list of contributors but you may choose not to be acknowledged in this way if you wish. Prior to submitting a draft of the final report to AHURI, we will send you a copy. You will have 10 days in which to comment on areas relevant to your organisation.

## Research publications

The research will result in a Report which will be published electronically and in paper format.

There may also be other publications arising from the research in the form of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals and presentations at conferences.

As a condition of our funding for the project we are also required to submit de-identified data to the Australian Data Archive (ADA) ([www.ada.edu.au](http://www.ada.edu.au)), a national service for the collection and preservation of digital research data and to make this data available for secondary analysis by academic researchers and other users. Your identity is not provided to the ADA.

## Further information about the project

For further information about the project, please contact the researcher who is coordinating the fieldwork.

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## Appendix 3: Sample questions for semi-structured interviews

### The impact of mixed funding sources on homelessness support for Indigenous Australians

#### Preliminary

- 1 Could you tell me about the background to your organisation?
  - What type of agency is it?
  - What are its vision and mission and objectives?
  - Are Indigenous Australians its primary target group? What other primary target group(s) does it have?
  - What services does it provide?
  - In what areas does it operate?
  - How is it incorporated? How are its board members appointed? How is the organisation structured?
  - What is its history? When did it begin?

#### Funding and sources

- 2 Could you tell me about your organisation's income and funding sources (say over the past three or four years)?
  - What is your average annual income?
  - What are the sources of your income (and amounts)?
    - NPARIH funding
    - NAHA/NPAH funding
    - other Commonwealth/state funds
    - philanthropic funds
    - Corporate sponsorships
    - sale of goods
    - fee for services
    - in-kind contributions, such as pro-bono, volunteers, free training
    - bequests/gifts
    - internal revenue.
  - Which sources of funds are the most important to your organisation? Why?
  - Which sources of funds are linked to particular programs/services you deliver?
  - Which sources of funds are ongoing? Which are one-off or a time-limited period? Which are dependant on number of clients or services delivered?
  - Which sources of funds are for a specific purpose? What is that purpose? How did these funds come to your organisation? Did you apply for them or did another organisation seek you out?

- For each source/block of funds, explore Questions (3), (4) and (5) below.

### **Impact of funding mix on the agency**

- 3** Can you identify sources of funds that have impacted on your agency? Work through each source of funds in terms of their impact including:
- Have you had to make changes to your board of directors or your internal processes or your management structure or, introduce more stringent auditing processes as a result of accepting particular sources of funds?
  - Have you had to change your incorporation status as a condition of accepting particular sources of funds?
  - Are you required to account for how you use a particular source of funds (over and above the usual audit process)?
  - What reporting processes, if any, have you had to put in place for particular sources of funds?
  - Have you had to introduce new KPIs for a source of funds?
  - Have new units been established and new managers/staff employed to deliver new services or to expand current units/services?
  - What training has staff required to deliver new services as a result of a new source of funds?
  - Where funding ceased, has alternative funding been found, have staff been laid-off?

### **Impact on services**

- 4** How has this particular source of funding impacted on the nature, structure and type of services provided by your agency?
- What, if any, new services has the organisation delivered to people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness?
  - Have current services been adjusted to make way for a newly funded service?
  - Has the funding allowed you to extend your services to remote and very remote areas?

### **Impact on outcomes for people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness**

- 5** What has been the impact of this particular source of funding on outcomes for people who are risk of or experiencing homelessness?
- What has been the impact on those experiencing homelessness?
  - To what extent has the service prevented homelessness among those at risk?
  - To what extent has it had an impact on cultural life and cultural practices?

### **Future**

- 6** What potential is there for the funding mix in your organisation to change?
- What opportunities are there for extending the funding mix within your organisation?
  - What barriers are there to extending the funding mix within your organisation?
  - What are the current gaps in your range of services? In what ways are you looking to fill these gaps?
- 7** What form, do you think, should the funding for Indigenous homelessness services take:
- individualised funding or organisational funding?

- performance-based funding or output or capability funding?
- 8 What do you think about the integration of Indigenous-specific homelessness and mainstream funding and service delivery?
- Do you think that this integration would improve client outcomes?

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