



Positioning Paper

Indigenous homelessness: place, house and home

authored by

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1 FOUNDATION CONCEPTS IN RESEARCH AND POLICY

1.1 The policy context

The policy research aim of this research is to understand the place, house and home needs of Indigenous peoples and how to address these needs through housing and other service responses that secure sustainable solutions and support stable life conditions. More specifically, policy makers see a need:

- to differentiate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous homelessness; and
- to know whether or not Indigenous homelessness should be further differentiated according to contrasting geographic settings.

This research will inform policy development by enabling government and Indigenous housing providers to address the following objectives from the National Policy Vision for Indigenous Housing, *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010*:

- identify and address unmet housing needs of Indigenous people through the identification of paths to and from homelessness; and
- improve the capacity of Indigenous community housing organisations in planning and service delivery of housing needs through the acquisition of an analytical understanding of Indigenous homelessness that takes into account the multiple factors of regional, cultural and environmental variation in the situation of Indigenous homeless people.

1.2 The research method

In this study, homelessness will be approached as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The data gathering method will be the ethnographic interview. In this, the researcher conducts an unstructured interview focused on eliciting information which constitutes a cultural interpretation by the participant for the interviewer of his or her own story of housing and homelessness. This method is uniquely suited to the task of collecting data appropriate for the development of typologies as a means of understanding socio-cultural phenomena.

Participants will be recruited to the Western Australian part of the study through links established in the first author's previous research on Indigenous housing careers (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). In the course of the housing careers project, participants were informed of the planned homelessness research. They were asked if they had any family currently experiencing homelessness and whether or not they would be willing to provide introductions to their homeless relatives. All participants in that study stated that they had one or more homeless relatives to whom they would introduce the researchers. From these introductions, the present research will seek to recruit further participants using the snowball approach.

As well, key community organisations will be approached to provide their experience of working with Indigenous homeless people. These will include, but not be limited to, registered Indigenous hostels, local Aboriginal Medical Services, Indigenous community organisations whose interests include housing issues, emergency accommodation services such as women's refuges and safe houses, the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme, and other organisations and services whose work provides them with insights into the nature and experience of Indigenous homelessness locally.

Homelessness is a presence in Indigenous lives in a way that it is not in the wider society. Most Indigenous people have relatives who are homeless, and homelessness

forms a part of the housing careers of many Indigenous people. Therefore, a valid way to make contact with Indigenous homeless people is to approach Indigenous people who have housing and seek their help in contacting their homeless relatives.

In New South Wales, participant recruitment will begin with approaching key local services and agencies including the Redfern Land Council, Redfern Medical Centre, the Redfern Legal Centre and the Aboriginal Housing Company which is the independent community housing provider for the small area of Redfern known as the Block. With the approval and guidance of these organisations, general community forums on the local experience of Indigenous homelessness will be held out of which participants will be recruited either to focus groups or to individual interviews, according to preference.

The Nura Gili Indigenous Programs Centre will be informed of the study and consulted about its conduct to achieve cultural appropriateness and to help the researchers to recruit local Indigenous people as field assistants who will be asked to provide liaison between the local community and the researchers. At Mt Druitt, the permission of the New South Wales Department of Housing will be sought to distribute invitations to participate in interviews, followed by door-knocking conducted by researchers.

This research method belongs to that larger group of methods collectively referred to as 'qualitative', a term that has been used so extensively that it now means only that the analysis relies on data that is in the form of words rather than statistics. In this project, data will take the form of interview transcripts. Analysis of the data will employ the thematic method, in which overall patterns will be identified and related according to themes. This involves a rigorous process of relating the components of individual experience to form a comprehensive picture of collective experience (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Spradley 1979). This process will result in an analysis which speaks to individual experience and contextualises it within the social framework in which individual experience originates.

This study will have its foundation firmly in established anthropological methods with regard to fieldwork and data collection and will call on sociological understandings of self in relation to society in the process of analysis. The reason for taking this approach is to arrive at a method of analysis which will situate personal, or individual, experience in the wider social context which structures individual experience. The results will speak to existing terms of policy in order to facilitate their utilisation by policy makers. The conduct of this study is governed by the ethics requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (2007a, 2007b) and the Code of Ethics of the Australian Anthropological Society (AAS 2003). The ethics instrument to be used is attached as Appendix 1.

There follows a limited discussion of the available census data on Indigenous homelessness. This is intended only to provide background to the study and should not be read as an analytical treatment of the data, which indeed is beyond the scope of this study. There are, however, some important questions raised by the particular viewpoint which can be developed out of the census. It is hoped that policy makers will take note of these questions which largely concern changing census homelessness approaches. It is brought up in this context for the specific purpose of calling it to the attention of policy makers who should consider the ways in which the changing approaches affect the Indigenous homeless count, and therefore the capacity of policy makers properly to address the needs of Indigenous homeless people.

1.3 The research sites

This project will consist of a comparison of Indigenous homelessness in selected sites in Western Australia and New South Wales. In Western Australia, the research sites are Perth, Carnarvon and Broome. In New South Wales, the sites are the Sydney suburbs of Redfern and Mt Druitt.

The available census figures for Indigenous homelessness (2001) show the national figure at 7,526. Of this total, 1,376 are from New South Wales and 1,054 are from Western Australia.¹ When these figures have been quoted in the course of workshop and seminar presentations of this project, the reaction has been interesting. Practitioners in the fields of child protection, social work, housing and homelessness have expressed doubt that these figures accurately reflect the true rate of Indigenous homelessness because they seem too low. This may be indicative of a rise in Indigenous homelessness since the 2001 census, but it may also be indicative of problems inherent in the conduct of any census in administering it to people whose mode of existence is dominated by itinerancy.

1.3.1 The 2001 Census

Some of the difficulties in the enumeration of the homeless population are inherent in the definition of that category for census data collection. Prior to the 1996 census, only people who were without shelter of any kind on census night could be picked up in the census as homeless. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003), it is likely that using this definition the census was able to account for only 14 per cent of homeless people. The balance were probably in short-term accommodation with friends or family, in boarding houses, hostels, night shelters, refuges, or may have been in transit from one shelter on the way to looking for somewhere else. The 1996 census used categories differentiated according to 'absolute homelessness', people living without a roof over their heads, and relative homelessness which was subdivided into three subcategories. These were adapted from the work of Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992).

Table 1: Categories of homelessness used in the 1996 Australian census

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Classification</i>
Housed but without conditions of 'home', e.g. security, safety or in conditions of adequate standard	Third degree relative homelessness/ inadequate housing/ incipient homelessness
People constrained to live permanently in single rooms in private boarding houses	Second degree relative homelessness
People moving between various forms of temporary or medium-term shelter such as refuges, hostels, boarding houses or friends	First degree relative homelessness
People without an acceptable roof over their heads, living on the streets, under bridges, in deserted buildings	Absolute homelessness

Source: Northwood (1997).

The ABS made considerable efforts to develop the means of accessing homeless people. These included liaising with mobile food services and with the Smith Family, Red Cross, Saint Vincent de Paul Society and Salvation Army (Northwood 1997: 36-

¹ At the time of writing, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) had not released any results from the 2006 census concerning people who answered the question regarding 'no usual address'. These figures are not due until around August 2008 (ABS, pers. comm.).

7). One of the difficulties involved in using these categories was the capacity of census collection staff to distinguish among them both accurately and consistently (p. 53). Another was the capacity of the various charitable organisations to facilitate the census process while their own activities were in train (p. 28). In the 2001 census, the 1996 contact and enumeration methods were redeveloped and the effort was made to operationalise these nationwide. The result depended on the response of the state offices of the ABS. For example, ABS New South Wales recruited a person who had several years experience in working with the homeless to a position wholly dedicated to the homeless count. In contrast, in Western Australia, one staff member was assigned to the homeless count, shipping, defence and Christmas Island. As Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003a: 19) comment, 'Overall, the coverage across the country appears to have been uneven'.

The 2001 census guidelines for collectors in remote communities made a significant change from the 1996 guidelines. In 1996, the category 'improvised dwelling' included dwellings without a working bathroom and toilet. In 2001, any dwelling that was intended to be both permanent and for the purpose of housing people was noted as a permanent dwelling for census purposes. Chamberlain and MacKenzie note that as a result of this change, the number of improvised dwellings in Indigenous communities in 1996 was 8,727 as opposed to 823 in 2001 (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2003a: 22). The significance of this changed definition is that because the improvised dwelling is not proper housing, this category is not included in the assessment of housing need that is drawn from the census figures. By reducing the number of improvised dwellings included in the improvised dwelling category, the Indigenous housing need may be reduced. This is reflected in the change in the count of Australians in improvised homes, tents and sleepers out, as is shown in table 2 (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2003a; see also Enga 2004). While the non-Indigenous count of these people who were inadequately housed or not housed went up by 1,649 the count of Indigenous people who were inadequately housed went down by 7,070.

There is also evidence that people experiencing housing shortages will refrain from participating in the census because they are currently solving the problem of shelter by increasing household occupancy rates in contravention of the conditions of rental leases. While it is not true that an individual's circumstances can be deduced from census data, there is a belief that one may endanger the security of existing shelter arrangements by honestly answering census questions in these regards.²

Together, these difficulties may account for the apparent discordance between the incidence of Indigenous homelessness perceived by practitioners and that reflected in the 2001 census.

Table 2: Indigenous status by enumeration in improvised homes, tents and sleepers out

	<i>1996</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>Change</i>
Indigenous	9,751	2,681	-7,070
Non-Indigenous	9,828	11,477	+1,649
Total	19,579	14,158	-5,421

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003a).

² In other AHURI funded research concerning housing market dynamics in resource boom towns (McKenzie, Birdsall-Jones and Rowley, research currently in train), we found that non-Indigenous fly-in fly-out mine workers in Karratha chose not to report their overcrowded housing conditions on the census forms for the same reason. These conditions are reflective of the severe shortage of housing in Karratha.

Table 3 shows homelessness rates for the broadest range of statistical divisions which include the Western Australian field sites. It is of some significance that these divisions, dominated by the regional centres, account for 76 per cent of all Indigenous homelessness in Western Australia enumerated in the 2001 census.

Table 3: Indigenous homeless people by statistical division for Western Australian field sites

<i>Statistical division</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Perth	443	42
Central	180	17
Kimberley	178	17
Total	801	76

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003b).

New South Wales data is somewhat more detailed than that provided for Western Australia in that figures on Indigenous residents of caravan parks are included in Chamberlain and MacKenzie's (2004) New South Wales report. However, the scale of the data is the same as for Western Australia, and it is given only in statistical divisions.

Table 4: Indigenous homeless people and Indigenous marginal residents of caravan parks, Sydney statistical division, 2001

<i>Statistical division</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>Caravan</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Sydney	577	52	629	33

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2004).

It is interesting to note that while Sydney accounted for about a third of New South Wales' total Indigenous homeless count, Perth accounted for more than 40 per cent of the Western Australian Indigenous homeless count.

Providing a population count of the Indigenous homeless in the field sites is not one of the objectives of this project, but it is hoped that, somewhere along the line, our inquiries will reveal a source of information that provides a more fine grained count than the statistical divisions.

1.4 The current understanding of Indigenous homelessness

There are several recent AHURI funded studies into various aspects of homelessness. These include Flatau et al. (2006), Cooper and Morris (2005) and Memmott et al. (2003). The Positioning Papers from these studies contain extensive reviews of the literature on homelessness. The reader is encouraged to review them for a more general treatment of the literature than will be attempted here. The focus of this Positioning Paper is on defining the terms of analysis to be derived from the literature, the key concepts particular to the study of Indigenous homelessness, and to survey the available, though scarce, literature specifically pertaining to homelessness in the field sites.

The need to incorporate the element of culture in our understanding of Indigenous homeless has been recognised for some time. The *National Inquiry into Homeless Children* (Australia. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1989: 129)) states that:

When assessing the causes and nature of Indigenous homelessness, we recognize the need to do so within a distinct cultural context.

This recognition was further developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992) who are responsible for the tripartite differentiation of the broad phenomenon of homelessness in Australian society which was endorsed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) and which appears below. Their differentiation has been one of the two most influential models of Indigenous homelessness. The second is contained in the Keys Young (1998) report.

Table 5: Chamberlain and MacKenzie’s tripartite model of homelessness

<i>Minimum community standard – equivalent to a small rented flat with a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom.</i>	
Culturally recognised exceptions: where it is inappropriate to apply the minimum standard – e.g. seminaries, gaols, student halls of residence	<p>Marginally housed: people in housing situations close to the minimum standard</p> <p>Tertiary homelessness: people living in single rooms in private boarding houses – without their own bathroom, kitchen, or security of tenure</p> <p>Secondary homelessness: people moving between various forms of temporary shelter including: friends, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses</p> <p>Primary homelessness: people without conventional accommodation (living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks etc.)</p>

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003a: 12).

In their review of the literature on defining homelessness specifically in the Indigenous context, Keys Young (1998) comment on the tripartite model. They point out that Chamberlain and MacKenzie’s model is addressed to a particular aspect of homelessness; that of the adequacy of housing in relation to a minimum community standard. In relation to Indigenous society, Keys Young proposes a five part typology of homelessness which appears to take in the central aspects of Chamberlain and MacKenzie’s tripartite model while seeking to speak to:

- the commonality of the Indigenous experience of both homelessness and housing stress; and
- the key elements of Indigenous identity which can be threatened in the situation of solving the problem of shelter, which are family and place.

Their central contention is that despite apparent similarities between aspects of Indigenous and non-Indigenous homelessness, the causes and the contexts of the Indigenous experience of homelessness are different.

Table 6: The Keys Young Indigenous homelessness typology

Spiritual homelessness	Arises from separation from traditional land or from family
Overcrowding	A hidden form of homelessness
Relocation and transient homelessness	Temporary, intermittent and often cyclical patterns of homelessness arising out of lifestyle choices, but also the need to travel to obtain services
Escaping from an unsafe or unstable home	Arises from threats to safety or survival. Especially affects women and young people
Nowhere to go	Lack of access to any stable shelter, accommodation or housing

Source: Keys Young (1998: 45).

Interestingly, the Keys Young typology includes no corollary of Chamberlain and MacKenzie's 'minimum community standard'. It seems apparent that they view this as an unnecessary limitation on the definition of homelessness, preferring the SAAP approach which emphasises the notion of 'safe and secure' housing because it 'goes beyond any concept of homelessness related to some fixed standard of housing' (Keys Young 1998: 10).

However, they take issue with SAAP's focus on crisis management as opposed to dealing with the structural features of homelessness. Presumably, this criticism was noted in that since the publication of the Keys Young report, other measures have been developed to address at least some structural features of homelessness. These include the Reconnect program (1999), aimed at early intervention with young people at risk of homelessness; The Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice Program (2004); the Job Placement Education and Training Program (1999) (JPET) and various demonstration projects in a variety of locations (Australia. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2007).

In 2001 Berry et al. developed further the view that cultural context matters in understanding Indigenous homelessness. They set out a number of strongly held components of Indigenous cultural identity that they variously termed practices, norms and values which, in concert with the state and status of Indigenous people in Australian society, shape the structure and experience of Indigenous homelessness. These revolve around the key elements of Indigenous identity of family and place which were earlier noted by Keys Young. Berry et al. (2001: 10) asked whether there should be one policy definition inclusive of all citizens and, if so, could difference be expressed through describing the needs of different groups. They do not provide an answer to this question, but they do provide a response to the tripartite model of homelessness on the basis of focus group discussions with Victorian Indigenous people. Interestingly, participants were not concerned with an explicit definition of homelessness; rather, they approached the issue from the aspect of service. They were most concerned with the range of issues and needs which a homelessness policy program should cover. Fundamentally, they considered that policy must be responsive to Indigenous people's concern with their history of dispossession, and that programs based on policy must take into account some of the most basic aspects of Indigenous culture. These included the importance of Indigenous kinship organisation and the way that family, individual and home must interact with this.

Memcott et al. (2003: 23) also note the importance of the historical context of dispossession in the understanding of Indigenous homelessness. This matter of the historical context is an enduring aspect of the Indigenous narrative of contemporary experience over a wide variety of topics. This was apparent in the course of fieldwork conducted by Birdsall-Jones and Corunna (2008) in connection with AHURI funded research on Indigenous housing careers. While the structural features of poverty, inadequate housing and an ongoing crisis of affordability were nominated as the defining features of the Indigenous housing situation, participants also held that the historical social exclusion of Indigenous people flowed directly from their colonisation, and that colonisation therefore could not be excluded or discounted in the understanding of their current state and status.

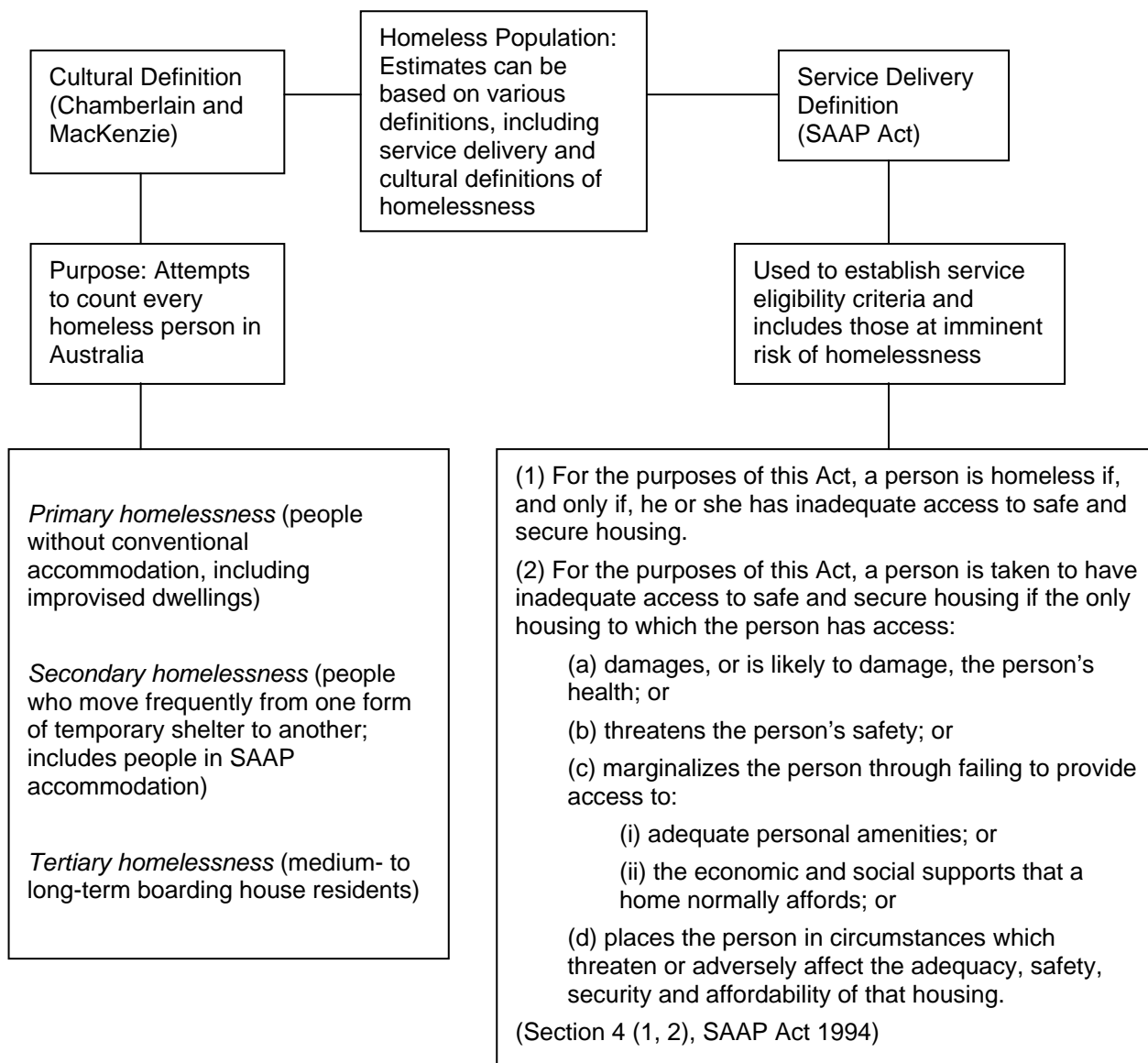
Memcott et al. (2003) have developed a scheme of categories of Indigenous homeless people based on their own prior research and evidence from the literature.

Table 7: Categories of Indigenous homeless persons

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>
1.0 Public place dwellers	Living in a mix of public or semi-public places (as well as some private places, which are entered illegally at night to gain overnight shelter) e.g. parks, churches, verandahs, car parks, car sales yards (under cars), beaches, drains, riverbanks, vacant lots, dilapidated buildings.
1.1 Public place dwellers – voluntary, short-term intermittent	These people are often staying in conventional accommodation (e.g. a relative's house) and may have their own residence in a rural or remote settlement. When they socialise in public urban places, they may or may not decide to camp out overnight, usually with others, despite the availability of their accommodation.
1.2 Public place dwellers – voluntary, long-term (chronic homeless)	Residing continually in public places (including overnight); acknowledge they have another place of residence in a home community but uncertain if and when they will return.
1.3 Public place dwellers – reluctant and by necessity	Residing continually in public places, and who (a) Wish to return home but need to remain in urban area due to a service need or to support a hospitalised relative or similar; or (b) Wish to return home but have no funds for travel and/or capacity to organise travel.
2.0 Those at risk of homelessness	At risk of losing one's house or of losing the amenity of one's house.
2.1 Insecurely housed people (Olive 1992, ABS 1999A)	Residing in adequate housing but under threat of loss of such; lack of security of occupancy; possibly due to circumstances of poverty.
2.2 People in sub-standard housing (Olive 1992)	Persons whose housing is of a sub-standard architectural quality, possibly unsafe or unhealthy housing (but the standards need to be defined – the issue of cultural standards.)
2.3 People experiencing crowded housing (Olive 1992: 2, 3, Keys Young 1998: iv, Memmott 1991: 258-61)	Persons whose housing is crowded, but crowding should be defined as involving considerable stress (and not assumed by density measures alone).
2.4 Dysfunctionally mobile persons (Olive 1992, Keys Young 1998, ABS 1999A, Berry et al. 2001)	In a state of continual or intermittent residential mobility including temporary residence (e.g. crisis accommodation) that is a result of personal and/or social problems (e.g. violence, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of safety or security in a social sense, personality or 'identity crisis', lack of emotional support and security).
3.0 Spiritually homeless people (Berry et al. 2001: 34-43, Keys Young 1998)	A state arising from either (a) separation from traditional land, (b) separation from family and kinship networks, or (c) a crisis of personal identity wherein one's understanding or knowledge of how one relates to country, family and Indigenous identity systems is confused.

Source: Memmott et al. (2003). Note: references in the table are to sources used by Memmott et al., not all of which are available to the authors of this Positioning Paper.

Figure 1: Relationships between definitions of homelessness contained in the SAAP Act 1994 and that developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003a)



Source: Adapted from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2004).

1.4.1 Which definition?

Figure 1 distinguishes between the frameworks of utility for two definitions of homelessness and represents the understanding of the Australian Health and Welfare Institute (2004). It should be noted that the full version of Chamberlain and MacKenzie's model was not used in the collection of 2006 census data. The ABS definition of homelessness for the census is adapted from the tripartite definition, which the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) has reduced to two categories:

1. *Absolute homeless (primary homeless)*: People without conventional accommodation (living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, in parks etc.).
2. *Relative homeless (secondary and tertiary homeless)*: people staying in boarding houses, people using Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and other similar emergency accommodation services, or

people with no secure accommodation staying temporarily with friends or relatives in private dwellings.

Both the ABS definition and the tripartite model speak to one purpose, which is the enumeration of the homeless. The SAAP definition is intended to facilitate service delivery. Both definitions necessarily strive to capture some experiential element of homelessness and in this sense they are expressive of conceptions of its sociological nature. For example, the SAAP definition recognises the phenomenon of marginalisation among the very poorest in the community, and the tripartite definition (and its ABS derivative) recognises that high mobility rates are a fundamental part of the homeless person's strategy for achieving shelter. However, these definitions do not aim to shed light on pathways to homelessness, nor do they speak specifically to the nature of homelessness in Indigenous society. This is tacitly acknowledged by the Australian Statistician (ABS) and the director of the AIHW:

the concept of homelessness is subjective and depends on prevailing community standards ... The definition of homelessness however, can be related to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander history, values and beliefs ... Keys Young developed a number of definitions of Indigenous homelessness which emphasized the multi-layered and multi-dimensional nature of Indigenous homelessness and incorporated the concept of spiritual homelessness. Underlying these definitions was the understanding that 'home' can have different meaning for Indigenous Australians ... Memmott, Long and Chambers (2003) ...proposed five categories of public place dwellers ... However, these definitions are not captured by any of the existing data sources (Trewin and Madden 2005: 45).

The reason for this lies in the purpose for which these various definitions have been designed and the research questions out of which they developed. To put the matter simplistically, the ABS and AIHW need to count the homeless, and the research questions they ask in pursuit of this objective are those that can be asked in the context of statistical research. Keys Young and Memmott et al. seek to provide explanations of Indigenous homelessness that account for the complexity of lived experience in the context of the Indigenous socio-cultural world. Trewin and Madden (2005) note that the definitions resulting from qualitative research are not reflected in any of their 'existing data sources', by which they mean statistical data sources. It is likely that they would find difficulties in using those definitions in the collection of statistical data. Conversely, the questions the ABS and AIHW must ask cannot provide the data which would permit obtaining the results required to develop socio-cultural explanations of lived experience. This does not indicate the greater reliability of statistical results over qualitative results, merely, it indicates that research methods should be chosen according to the nature of the data required to answer research questions. Therefore, in order to provide an explanation of homelessness which will address the requirements of this research, we must necessarily turn to Keys Young and to Memmott et al.

Memmott et al. (2003) differentiate their categories primarily on the basis of those with access to housing as opposed to those without, and seek to take account of the nuances of experience between these points of contrast. This set of categories is utilised as a means of assessing the practice quality of responses to homelessness. Its utility in other contexts needs to be tested, which is one of the objects of this research. One way in which this scheme of categories might be developed is to investigate the ways in which the categories interrelate. For example, spiritual homelessness plays a strong role in mental health and can therefore be a factor in individuals becoming public place dwellers and dysfunctionally mobile persons.

Overcrowded housing has been shown in other research to be a direct precursor to homelessness (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). Public place dwellers as a category could perhaps be expanded to include those who are so by necessity of having no other options. Dysfunctionally mobile persons may take up residence with relations in homes that by cultural standards are not overcrowded, but because of their lifestyles and/or behaviour they make living in the home unbearable to other occupants. Their presence may lead to the disintegration of the household as members disperse to other households or to take up public place dwelling in preference to living with their dysfunctional relations.

Keys Young presents a typology, a set of ideal types, whereas Memmott et al. present a set of categories reflective of circumstances. The typology describes homelessness largely as a reflection of the pathways to homelessness. The set of categories seeks to account for both the present circumstances of homeless persons and the pathways to homelessness. Ideally, this is what one would wish to achieve in the product of analysis. The difficulty of the task is to relate the pathways to the present circumstances. Memmott et al.'s set of categories is a work in progress and therefore open to further development (Memmott, pers. comm. 2006). This research will seek to develop an analysis which relates the present circumstances of Indigenous homeless persons to the processes through which they arrived at those circumstances.

1.4.2 Homelessness pathways or homeless careers?

One of the objectives of this research is to relate homelessness to housing careers. It is proposed that, in the context of Indigenous experience, homelessness should be understood as one end of a continuum in the quest to solve the problem of shelter. The reason for this is that Indigenous people are the most socially and economically disadvantaged definable group in Australian society, and this has always been the case (see, for example, the reports of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2003, 2005, 2007). This means that Indigenous people's capacity to protect themselves economically from variations in their circumstances, together with the crisis of affordable housing, renders them much more liable to lose their housing than the mainstream of society. The question is whether we should conceptualise this continuum in terms of a career or a pathway.

The concepts of career and pathway both seek to capture the element of longitudinal mobility in the study of dwelling patterns. The housing career concept, as it has been developed in the literature, is focused on the investigation of the lifetime dwelling patterns of households both in terms of changes of dwelling and changes in the membership of the household (Kendig 1984). Beer et al. (2006: 10) note the utility of the concept in the understanding of the owner occupied sector of the housing market. Further, they note the strong association of the careers concept with what might be described as the middle-class housing experience:

First, the conventional definition of a housing career assumed that households move to achieve greater levels of housing satisfaction in their housing or to accrue capital gain. Individuals and households are seen to advance their material position, choosing only to consume less housing during the later part of their life when a substantial dwelling may no longer be appropriate. Second, the concept of a housing career explicitly emphasizes choice within the housing market and the individual household's ability to achieve its desires. It presents an interpretation of personal experiences within the housing market that suggest that housing outcomes are a product of free will.

Ultimately, having noted the deficiencies in the concept, Beer et al. (2006) employ a careers approach with the caveat that they take note of the deficiencies and seek to redress these in their own use of the approach.

The Indigenous experience of housing is predominantly that of renting, mostly from a public housing provider. The housing situation in Australia currently is characterised by low affordability, and public housing is therefore in greater demand. However, public housing stock has declined over the last ten years (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). Together with the fact of their poverty, this means that housing outcomes for Indigenous people are not an outcome of free will because their power of choice is severely reduced in comparison with the wider society. Because of the lack of fit between the nature of experience understood to underlie the notion of housing careers and the Indigenous housing experience, housing careers would seem to be an inappropriate concept in the Indigenous context.

Clapham (2002a) objects to the concept of housing careers on much the same grounds. He notes that it tends to assume that housing is perceived in 'uniform ways by the participants in it and is uncontentious' (Clapham 2002a: 59). In this approach, housing is very much a consumable commodity in terms of price, quality of the dwelling, and quality of the location. Clapham contends that the careers approach fails to account for the relationship between individual household behaviour and the larger framework of constraints and opportunities within which households must operate (p. 59). He prefers an approach founded in Giddens' social constructionism which he terms 'housing pathways'. This approach, he says, builds on the concepts of a housing career but seeks to 'capture the social meanings and relationships associated with this consumption' (Clapham 2002a: 64):

Flatau et al. (2006: 21), though they do not cite Clapham, take a 'pathways' approach for similar reasons. They seek to take account of the relationship between 'structural and individual factors, and the interaction between structural factors and major life events over the life course'.

One of the advantages that the authors see in the pathways approach is that it can be used to generate a costing structure. They say that pathways studies can elucidate three related features of costing and economic evaluation:

- They identify costs by tracing the activities and experiences of homeless or at risk individuals and families;
- They quantify costs by linking these instances to unit costs;
- They trace the accumulation of these cost instances over time (Pinkney and Ewing 2006: 101, quoted in Flatau et al. 2006: 22)

This is certainly an important issue in the administration of services to the homeless, and Flatau et al. develop the notion of pathways by broadening its frame of relevance beyond social science analysis. It is clearly beyond Clapham's original intentions in offering the pathways approach:

The concept of a housing pathway is merely an organizing device based on a metaphor and so can be used with any number of wider frameworks. However, it only has meaning in relation to those frameworks which define the phenomena to be included and the relationships between them (Clapham 2002a: 80).

It is important to bear in mind that Clapham's original intent was to provide a new metaphor in order to broaden the original concept of the housing career to include housing experience beyond that of the middle class. However, the use of the term

'career' in social science has had a considerable history prior to its adoption by housing researchers.

MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2003a) note that the term 'career' has an established use in social science, citing Erving Goffman's work. Goffman's (1961: 127) conceptualisation is as follows:

Traditionally the term career has been reserved for those who expect to enjoy the rises laid out within a respectable profession. The term is coming to be used, however, in a broadened sense to refer to any social strand of any person's course through life ... One value of the concept of career is its two-sidedness. One side is linked to internal matters held dearly and closely, such as image of self and felt identity; the other side concerns official position, jural relations, and style of life, and is part of a publicly accessible institutional complex. The concept of career, then, allows one to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society.

One of Clapham's primary criticisms of the careers approach to housing was that it failed to take account of economic, social and political structures within which the individual experience of housing is played out. This is much the same as Flatau et al.'s desire to take account of the structural and the individual factors which go to shape life experience. Clearly, however, in its original sociological conception, the term 'career' did take account of both facets of the strands of the life course, making it possible, as Goffman says, 'to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society'.

1.4.3 Policy language

It is interesting that the major policy advice document commissioned by the federal government on Indigenous homelessness (Australia 2006) makes no mention of either pathways or careers. However, this may be a matter the level of applicability of these concepts because the term 'pathways' is a part of the language of the HOME Advice Program, JPET and the Job Pathways Program (JPP) (Evans and Shaver 2001). The current guidelines of the Reconnect Program, YouthLinx and the Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS) all employ the careers model, as well as using the term 'pathways' descriptively (Australian Government FaCSIA 2006a, 2006b, 2006c).

In assessing the utility of the career concept in the field of homeless research and policy formation, Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003b) point to the way in which it is possible to differentiate among homelessness careers according to life stage, precipitating events, and the careers of families as opposed to individuals. In the context of youth homelessness, they employ a careers based theoretical model in order to propose a national model for early intervention and prevention policy framework (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2004).

While the pathways approach has received important development in Clapham's work, he notes that it is not a theory or a model, but rather an organising principle derived from a metaphor, which he believes enables it to be used with a wide variety of frameworks. Flatau et al. (2006) have shown how a pathways model can be utilised in service costing frameworks. Despite this evident utility, the career concept is drawn from a wider theoretical perspective and the term is also widely used in the housing research literature. As well, it is the term used in the previous research, the findings of which this research was conceived of as addressing in the context of homelessness. For these reasons, this research will employ the concept of homelessness careers.

2 CULTURAL CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF HOMELESSNESS

There are certain key features of Indigenous society which must be taken into account in the understanding of Indigenous homelessness. These include the relationship between mobility and obligation, and the contrast between mobility and itinerancy.

2.1 Mobility and obligation

One of the most strongly held features of Indigenous culture and identity is the obligation of kinfolk to look after one another (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). In the words of one of Berry et al.'s participants, 'If you have a home, you will always have debt in the family' (Berry et al. 2001: 11). Those who might otherwise be homeless will often find accommodation with kinfolk. In this way, homelessness within the Indigenous community is 'hidden' (p. 10). The obligation of kinfolk to look after one another is also expressed in patterns of mobility within Indigenous family communities. Indeed, the pattern of visiting among kinfolk distributed through several towns within a region is a major factor in maintaining kin links (Beckett 1988; Birdsall 1988, Birdsall-Jones 2001, 2004; Gale 1972; Gale and Binnion 1975; Memmott et al. 2006).

People visit for a variety of reasons. For example, living in towns dominated by a woman's in-laws can lead to conflict between husband and wife, and a woman's mother will visit her specifically to provide support in that situation. A woman may also visit her grandchildren, particularly if she hears they are in danger of neglect or being abused. People rarely travel by themselves and so if a woman organises a visit to another town, she will take any of her dependent children or grandchildren and any other of her kinfolk who wish to travel with her and for whom there is room in the car. These kinfolk will travel for reasons which often are reflective of their time of life. Adolescents will travel for the pleasure of visiting their cousins in another town; grown women may travel to see their sisters; men and women who have been in town visiting will take the opportunity of a lift back to their own households. Thus, socially, travel will often reflect kin obligations and spatially, travel tends to reflect regional residence patterns (Birdsall 1990; Memmott et al. 2006). Beckett (1988: 133-34) describes this socio-spatial pattern:

personal responsibility is accepted only for those who are 'known'. One is known wherever one has lived and wherever one has kin; where one has kin one can also visit and meet the other local people face-to-face. There are no other means whereby one can become known, even by repute. If we are to speak of an Indigenous belonging to a community wider than the local residential group, it is his or her beat – the localities where there are kin who will provide a pied-a-terre. In this sense, each individual [has] a personal community, but inasmuch as people are closely interrelated and tend to marry into the same local groups, communities tend to coincide.

This kind of mobility is expressive of Indigenous culture and social organisation, and it is important to understand it as an indicator of the membership and the regional association of an Indigenous family community. However, not all Indigenous travel can be understood this way.

2.2 Mobility versus itinerancy

Mobility which arises from Indigenous culture and social organisation should be distinguished from that which arises out of causes which are either external to

Indigenous culture and society or which are negatively sanctioned in that context. Memmott et al. (2003) term this 'dysfunctional mobility' (p. 13). Birdsall-Jones and Corunna (2008) have employed the term 'itinerancy' in much the same context. In interviews conducted in both Carnarvon and Broome, participants described neighbourhood violence and household overcrowding as being due to 'itinerants'. For our Carnarvon participants, itinerants were always Indigenous. These itinerants travel from town to town and around town in search of shelter and support. They are characterised as having no homes of their own and thus conform closely to Memmott et al.'s (2003) conception of dysfunctional mobility. For participants in Broome, the category of itinerants includes this understanding, but also tourists who take up temporary residence over their holidays in rental dwellings and engage in substance abuse, and unidentified people who sell drugs from a dwelling which attracts more strangers 'coming and going', who may be either Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

The distinction between mobility which arises out of a cultural base as opposed to dysfunctional itinerancy is important for two reasons. First, mobility acts to strengthen the family community and maintain economic, political and social stability among its membership. In contrast, dysfunctional itinerancy disrupts the continuity of household management, threatening the stability of household membership and constituting a source of economic stress in a situation already characterised by economic and housing stress. Second, those who practice dysfunctional itinerancy represent the most visible component of the Indigenous homeless population. They are, perforce, of central concern in the context of this research.

2.3 Mobility and overcrowding

The importance of overcrowding in relation to Indigenous housing and homelessness is noted in the literature, both in Australia and overseas (Bolger 1996; Australia 2006; Dehavenon 1996; Memmott et al. 2003; Memmott et al. 2006). However, as Long et al. (2007: 55) note:

Whilst it is easy to source statistical analysis of 'overcrowding' in the 2000-2006 period, and despite the AIHW's acknowledgement that perceptions of overcrowding are subject to 'cultural norms', there were no significant studies of Indigenous perceptions of overcrowding. Such perceptions should be considered a research sub-theme. Until such empirical perceptual studies are carried out, the measurement of 'crowding' from occupation density remains methodologically flawed.

Indigenous perceptions of overcrowding are reported in recently completed AHURI funded research on Indigenous housing careers (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). This research confirmed the findings of earlier research in the same locations (Birdsall 1990). In Birdsall-Jones and Corunna's (2008) research, two kinds of overcrowding were distinguished, to which should be added a third. These are:

- overcrowding that arises out of culturally legitimated activities, or mobility;
- overcrowding that arises out of the system of kinship obligation (socially legitimated overcrowding); and
- overcrowding that arises out of activities that are neither culturally nor socially legitimated (dysfunctional itinerancy).

2.3.1 Mobility

Overcrowding in certain defined circumstances is culturally legitimated, but in others it is not. Culturally legitimated overcrowding generally is associated with funerals, ceremonies and other culturally based activities which require the gathering of the

family community. In these circumstances, overcrowding is expected, planned for, and accepted, not least because it is temporary and short-term, lasting a maximum of a few weeks. This is what we refer to as mobility.

2.3.2 Socially legitimated overcrowding

Overcrowding can also arise on account of the ebb and flow of economic circumstances which occur because the majority of Indigenous people live in poverty in a housing market characterised by very poor affordability (Khadem 2007). Any expenditure required outside of the necessities of subsistence can render a household economically unviable and vulnerable to loss of housing. If this occurs, the household has no choice except to fall back upon the system of social obligation that operates within the family community. This means finding shelter with their relations, which may put another household in violation of the terms of their lease and thus liable to lose their own housing. This is not a matter of culture, but of social organisation. Going to live with one's relations is thus not culturally legitimated in the same way as the overcrowding that results from a funeral or ceremony, nor is it legitimated on the same basis as the kind of visiting described above. Going to live with relations is legitimated through the operation of the kinship based system of obligation that operates among the family community. It is accepted because of this, but it is accepted with resignation because, unlike culturally legitimated overcrowding, there is no foreseeable endpoint to the situation. The movement of people from place to place that arises out this need for housing is socially legitimated itinerancy.

Loss of housing can lead to itinerancy. There may come a point at which neither the host family nor their guest kinfolk can abide the conditions brought about through overcrowding, and someone must leave. Or, the landlord may discover the occupancy of the home is in excess of that set out in the conditions of the lease, cancel the lease and evict all the occupants. In the same situation, the public housing authority will not automatically cancel the lease and serve a notice of eviction. In Western Australia, for example, provided that the rent is paid according to the occupancy level, there is no anti-social behaviour as defined in the Homeswest policy manual, and no complaint from neighbours, the situation will be allowed to continue (Western Australia 2007). While no data is available to confirm this, logic would suggest that the practice must act to reduce the level of itinerancy arising from the circumstances of social overcrowding.

2.3.3 Unlegitimated overcrowding

Overcrowding in response to straitened means brought on by substance abuse, however, goes beyond the limits of either culture or social organisation. Quality of life deteriorates, health and safety is threatened, children in particular, and at some point the household will simply disintegrate as individuals abandon the home to seek safer shelter elsewhere. The ways in which this situation can arise are various. For reasons which are difficult to discover, parents may descend into a lifestyle dominated by alcohol, encourage other drinkers to take up residence, and by this means reduce the safe areas of the home to such an extent that they are effectively eliminated and the children must either leave home or live in danger. In other situations, people whose lives are dominated by substance abuse may force themselves on the hospitality of their elderly kinfolk. These and similar situations are regarded with deep disapproval by the family community, but they are at a loss to remedy the situation, except by urging their elderly kinfolk to abandon the home themselves.

2.3.4 Mobility versus itinerancy

The relationship between the movement of people from place to place and the occurrence of overcrowding needs to be understood in the context of the differences

that exist between modes of overcrowding and in terms of the distinction between mobility and dysfunctional itinerancy. The relationship between dysfunctional itinerancy and unlegitimated overcrowding is that unlegitimated overcrowding is an outcome of dysfunctional itinerancy, practised by those within the family community whose lives are dominated by substance abuse. Culturally and socially legitimated overcrowding are facilitated by movement, but this ongoing movement of people is not the cause. Cultural imperatives and kinship obligation drive mobility and social itinerancy, as demonstrated by Memmott et al. (2006) and by Birdsall-Jones and Corunna (2008). Overcrowding arising out of social itinerancy is driven by institutionalised kinship obligation. The relationship between dysfunctional itinerancy and social itinerancy is that both are regulated by the kinship system and both arise out of causes external to Indigenous culture.

The nature of itinerancy in the phenomenon of Indigenous homelessness is thus dual. Hard times are always a near danger in a situation of poverty because there is simply no reserve to fund the occasional economic vicissitude. Individuals and families may become homeless in such a situation and they will fall back upon the family community for housing, that is, they will go and live with their relations. This is not negatively sanctioned behaviour, though it may have the effect of forcing an itinerant lifestyle upon people by the process described above. Itinerancy in these circumstances is viewed differently from itinerancy that arises from dysfunctional behaviour. In this research, the term 'mobility' will be reserved to refer only to culturally legitimated travel. Social itinerancy will refer to socially legitimated travel, and dysfunctional itinerancy will refer to itinerancy that is associated with dysfunctional behaviour.

2.4 Contrasting processes

The processes involved in arriving at the homeless state need to be understood in relation to ways in which circumstances alter cases. A particular example is the contrast in the processes through which a family becomes homeless, as opposed to the processes involved in child homelessness.

2.4.1 Family homelessness

Family homelessness is also referred to as 'clients with accompanying children' (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2004: 7). In 2002-03 Indigenous families accounted for 22 per cent of this SAAP category. Currently, families constitute the fastest growing component of the national homeless population (Noble-Carr 2006). Indigenous families may become homeless through a variety of circumstances which include family or neighbourhood violence, poverty, loss of access to a dwelling, reasons associated with substance abuse and/or mental illness and, in the case of women and their children, domestic violence. Indigenous women and their children constitute the most frequent users of SAAP services (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2004: 27).

Birdsall-Jones and Corunna (2008) found that, among participants escaping from violence it took many moves to succeed in finally escaping the perpetrators, sometimes over the period of a year or more. This was so both for single women with children escaping violent partners and for families escaping feuding.³ The

³ In this context, the distinction between feuding and neighbourhood violence should be remembered. The focus of violence in feuding is within the family community or between related family communities. Feuding can extend in time over generations and can involve perpetrators travelling some distance to continue the feud. Neighbourhood violence is a localised form of regular violent behaviour which may be experienced by anyone who lives within the vicinity of those who are carrying out that behaviour. Victims are not pursued out of the neighbourhood to other towns.

characteristics of this process of escape with regard to the number of moves and the period of time involved will be further investigated in this research.

2.4.2 Youth homelessness

The most frequently recorded cause of youth homelessness is escaping from an 'unsafe or unstable home' (Australia 2006: 9; Allwood and Rogers 2001: 14). Other reported causes expand upon this need to escape. These include parental alcohol problems, being evicted from home (by their parents) or other problems with their parents (Allwood and Rogers 2001: 15).

The danger for adolescent Indigenous children who leave home is that they may find themselves far from the region of their family community and unable to find a way to return. In these circumstances, they are homeless and in serious need of assistance. Children from Perth, for example, may follow chance-met 'friends' to Darwin and find themselves with no shelter and no kinfolk to turn to for help. This is a source of great concern to their families, who are well aware of the dangers inherent in the homeless travelling lifestyle. Not only are Indigenous adolescents in danger of threats to their health and safety; they are in danger of being caught up in a lifestyle dominated by substance abuse, and this can result in the child reaching adulthood without having established a stable home. These younger adults tend to travel in groups around the region of their family communities, becoming a source of housing and economic stress to their kinfolk, as well as being a constant source of worry for their families with regard to their health and safety.

In their study of Indigenous homeless youth in Adelaide, Allwood and Rogers (2001: 65) identified two sub-groups within their total study population.

1. Those who had relatively stable accommodation until their early teen years. These had less changes of caregivers, had experienced less abuse, and were more likely to have a positive relationship with at least one of their parents;
2. Those whose instability began at an early age (i.e. before the age of seven), and had early disruption of the parent-child relationship. These had longer histories of housing instability, were more likely to have experienced child abuse and neglect, and had negative (or no) relationship with their parents. These young people may have entered the formal Care system, or may have remained predominantly within the informal networks of family.

Significantly, Allwood and Rogers also discovered that the comparative stability in the lives of the first sub-group was somewhat illusory in that there had occurred significant disruption in the children's home environments as well as violence and abuse. Indeed, they remark that 'these young people had experienced a significant level of harm'.

3 INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS IN THE RESEARCH SITES: BACKGROUND

Most of the information available to establish the background of Indigenous homelessness in the Western Australian field sites concerns the Perth metropolitan area. This is contained in two unpublished reports, both from 1977, and in Biskup's (1973) unique history of the special Indigenous legislation in Western Australia between 1898 and 1954. There is some information available for Carnarvon but, surprisingly, there is no source which deals specifically with housing in Broome. For both Carnarvon and Broome, the author provides ethnographic information based on her own fieldwork.

3.1 Perth

In July 1908, following the closure of the Welshpool native settlement, some Indigenous families came to live at a long-standing Indigenous camping ground in West Guildford. By the end of that month, a complaint had been made to the police that the 'natives' were 'far from the best and they are within hearing of the road and there are a lot of children going to and fro' (Lippmann 1977: 1). The police moved them to Success Hill, on the Swan River, but two years later, as a result of more complaints from Guildford residents, they were moved to a new reserve in South Guildford (Biskup 1973: 121). In 1941, complaints made by 'various road boards adjacent to the Guildford townships' resulted in all Indigenous people in the Guildford area being removed to a campsite in Bassendean. On account of further complaints from local residents there, they were shifted to camps in the Bassendean-Bayswater area. In 1954, they were removed from these camps, evidently with no particular arrangements having been made for them. Some went to one of the old sanitary depot camps (Lippmann 1977: 2). Successive efforts were made by the Department of Native Welfare to establish a permanent camp, however:

A mere rumour that the Department is negotiating for the purchase of a suitable block inevitably results in a spate of publicity and organized protests, in the course of which natives and the Department are subjected to disgraceful, unwarranted criticism ... The inescapable conclusion, therefore, is that natives were not wanted anywhere in the metropolitan area fifty years ago, and they are not wanted today (Department of Native Welfare, Annual Report 1959, quoted in Lippmann 1977: 2).

Lippmann (1977: 7) goes on to describe the care of Indigenous homeless people:

Indigenous Hostels are fairly inactive in Western Australia and the home for inebriate Aborigines which is run under church auspices is overcrowded and unable to offer rehabilitation programmes. A large tin shed nearby, known as Miller's Cave, containing a few old beds and no other facilities whatsoever, serves as night shelter for whatever Indigenous alcoholics might seek protection there. Others camp in the open.

She received estimates of around 900 Indigenous families on the Housing Commission waiting list and roughly 100 Indigenous homeless men living in East Perth (p. 8).

According to Robinson et al. (1977: 15), 'conventional housing' for Indigenous people in Perth 'did not become an issue until the 1960s'. In 1966 between 90 and 100 Indigenous families were living in private rental accommodation in Perth, some of which was 'unfit for human occupation, and located in areas which have been approved as future industrial sites' (Department of Native Welfare, Annual Report

1966: 35, quoted in Robinson et al. 1977: 15). Indigenous housing was the responsibility of the Department of Native Welfare in 1966, and they had provided one conventional house in that year. The following year, the Department appointed a dedicated housing officer and by 1972 there were 205 Indigenous homes (Robinson et al. 1977: 15). In 1972, the State Housing Commission took over responsibility for Indigenous housing. However, the provision of housing lagged well behind the population growth. By 1976, when Lippmann was conducting her research for the Office for Community Relations, the shortage of homes for Indigenous people in Perth ran to 500 dwellings (Robinson et al. 1977: 16). Lippmann's information regarding a shortage of 900 dwellings may have been an overestimate, therefore.

In 1984, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs published a statistical report, *Aboriginal Social Indicators*. Strictly speaking there was no information provided on homelessness. As well, the selective regional breakdown does not include Broome or Carnarvon and concerns only housing funded out of the national Housing Grants in Aid Program, administered by Indigenous communities. However, it does include a table showing the condition of houses and flats, the number of cabins and shelters, and the number of families on the Indigenous associations' housing waiting lists (Table 8).

Table 8: Conditions of dwellings administered by Indigenous associations, together with waiting list numbers

<i>State</i>	<i>Dwellings administered by Indigenous associations</i>						
	<i>Number of houses and flats</i>					<i>Number of cabins and shelters</i>	<i>Number of families on housing waiting lists</i>
	<i>Good(a)</i>	<i>Fair(a)</i>	<i>Poor(b)</i>	<i>Bad(c)</i>	<i>Total</i>		
NSW	491	421	292	189	1,393	102	1,185
Metropolitan	32	60	4	4	100	—	217
WA	423	85	28	25	561	234	692
Perth	26	—	—	4	30	—	40

- (a) Routine repairs and maintenance required
- (b) Major repairs required
- (c) Replacement required
- (d) Excludes reserves

Source: Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1984): 124, 125, 127.

Interpreting this table in terms of present day reckoning, we need to be aware of the somewhat fluid nature of definitions of homelessness. In the 1996 census, people resident in houses and flats in need of major repairs or replacement would have been counted as third degree homeless, as would those in cabins and shelters. In the 2001 census, people in poor or bad condition dwellings would probably not have been included in the homeless count, and whether or not those in cabins and shelters were included would have depended on interpretation by the census collector of whether or not the dwelling was intended to be both permanent and meant to house people. In either case, the families on waiting lists must include a range of needs, from some form of homelessness to those in private rental accommodation who aspired to public housing. A comparison with the situation presented in 1977 accounts leads one to suppose that very little housing was provided to Indigenous people in Perth from the Housing Grants in Aid program, and that very few were aware of the housing available

under this program. It is difficult to say how much help the program was at that time to Perth's Indigenous homeless people.

3.2 Carnarvon

Until 1981, Indigenous people in Carnarvon were divided into three groups, two of which had appellations by which they were known within the Indigenous community: the Boor Street Mob and the Reserve Mob. The third group was referred to only as living 'in town'. Most of those who lived in town were in State Housing Commission homes which by and large were in good repair. The Reserve Mob, as the name would suggest, lived on the gazetted Carnarvon Indigenous Reserve (Birdsall 1990). The housing on the reserve was provided by the Department of Native Welfare prior to the State Housing Commission taking over responsibility for Indigenous housing in 1972. This was what was called 'transitional' housing and came in two types. There was primary transitional, made of unlined galvanised iron and uncovered concrete floors. They had no connection to water or electricity, no bathroom and no toilet, though there was a tap in front of each house. Then there was standard transitional, built either from unlined galvanised iron or asbestos sheeting. These houses did have water, electricity, toilet and laundry facilities. Cooking was done on a wood stove in the lounge room which doubled as the kitchen (Dagmar 1978: 148). There was a third kind of transitional housing which was built by the State Housing Commission. This was conventional in design and in the facilities provided, but the interior walls were painted galvanised iron. The exterior walls were either asbestos sheeting or wood. This was built specifically for Indigenous housing (Dagmar 1978).

Homelessness in Carnarvon at this time was plainly visible and was represented by the Boor Street Mob who lived outside the town on undeveloped land that was dominated by patchy, low scrub growing on sand flats. Essentially, everyone there was squatting with the tacit approval of the Shire of Carnarvon. There were no services provided nor was there any actual housing of any kind. People who lived there built their own dwellings, and paid the Shire to truck water in or brought it in themselves in containers. There was considerable variety in these dwellings. Some people had caravans, some lived in cars or an old bus, but mostly people constructed housing out of tents, tarpaulins, tin, corrugated iron and wood. Cooking was done on a camp fire (Birdsall 1990). Dagmar (1978: 150) estimated the unmet need for housing at Boor Street on the basis of an average number of persons per house of 5.8, finding that at least 138 more houses were needed. This constituted a homeless population of 800, of whom a very few were single white men or white men who had Indigenous wives.

The Reserve, which was situated on the banks of the Gascoyne River, had always been prone to infrequent but severe flooding in the rainy season, and on these occasions the residents were forced to abandon it for higher ground. In the late 1970s, the Reserve was again flooded and the decision was made to abandon it finally. The residents were removed to higher ground and housed in tents pending the development of a housing solution. At this point, they received an additional appellation: the Tent City Mob. In 1981, the State Housing Commission established a subdivision of dedicated Indigenous housing at Boor Street which was named Mungullah. Some of the Boor Street Mob found housing there, but most of it was allocated to the Reserve Mob, and today most residents of Mungullah Village are former Reserve residents and their descendants. Gradually, the Boor Street mob was re-housed, and the old Native Welfare transitional housing was eliminated and replaced with conventional Housing Commission stock. The Commission's transitional, corrugated iron wall houses still remain.

Currently, homelessness in Carnarvon is largely hidden through overcrowding and itinerancy arising out of family homelessness, youth homelessness and the dysfunctional behaviour which arises out of substance abuse. Substance abuse related itinerancy is most visible in that part of Carnarvon which Indigenous people refer to as the Bronx, an area of two streets in town noted for a high level of street sited violence (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). Current Indigenous homelessness rates for the Shire of Carnarvon are not available, but in the Gascoyne subdivision, Chamberlain and MacKenzie report a total of 10 Indigenous homeless people (2003b: Appendix 2). On the basis of the author's recent field experience, this seems a very low figure.

3.3 Broome

Indigenous housing in Broome in the 1970s and early 1980s was dominated by two reserves. One was the Community Welfare reserve at Anne Street and the other was at Kennedy Hill. People referred to the reserve at Anne Street as 'Anne Street', but the reserve on Kennedy Hill was called 'Indian Territory'. The reason for this was that the reserve was the site of significant alcohol abuse and associated violence. Calling it 'Indian Territory' was intended to signal that this was an area to be avoided because it was dangerous, in much the same way as people today use 'the Bronx'. On the basis of the author's personal recollection, however, Indian Territory then was more overtly dangerous than the Bronx is today.

Housing at Anne Street was a type of transitional housing. Construction was wood frame, unlined corrugated iron walls, two bedrooms off a central living room with a wood stove, concrete floors and a wooden front verandah that extended the length of the house. A kitchen area was located under the overhang of the roof at the rear of the house. Toilet, laundry and bathroom were situated along a path in the back garden. Verandahs were generally furnished with a row of iron frame single beds which were used either by visitors or by children for whom there was no room in the bedrooms. Anne Street was generally fairly quiet, and the population stable. It was well treed, and built around an internal circular drive frequented only by reserve residents and police patrols. Most houses had lawns in front. Block size was very large, at around 800 to 1,000 square metres. There was also conventional State Housing Commission housing in the town itself.

Housing at Kennedy Hill was that kind of transitional housing provided by the Department of Native Welfare, referred to as primary transitional housing, which was highly reminiscent of a suburban gardening shed. It was difficult to discern any particular pattern indicative of distinct housing blocks, but the houses were relatively close together. There was no vegetation. The ground was fine red sand with a fair amount of broken glass. The population was fairly fluid. Visitors to town with nowhere to go could camp on Kennedy Hill, and residents who could make other arrangements left for better housing elsewhere.

There were several camps in the bush surrounding the town. There were no facilities of any kind at these camps. Some people who camped in the bush had kinfolk in town, either in State Housing Commission homes or at Anne Street, and they would come in periodically to use the laundry and bathing facilities at their relations' places.

In the mid- to late 1980s, the Anne Street reserve was taken over by the State Housing Commission. The transitional housing was replaced by conventional housing, and an ordinary pattern of suburban streets was established. Kennedy Hill is on top of the dunes overlooking the water near that part of Broome called China Town. In the early 1980s, rumour held that on account of the investment potential represented by its location, Kennedy Hill was the subject of a push by real estate interests in the town

to acquire it for private development. In the end, however, this pressure was successfully resisted. Kennedy Hill is now called Mallingbarr and is administered by the Mambulanjin Indigenous Corporation which administers several properties in town and remote area Indigenous communities. Birdsall-Jones and Corunna interviewed the housing officer responsible for Mallingbarr. At the time Mambulanjin acquired responsibility for Mallingbarr, housing was still at a fairly low standard, in that there were houses with no kitchens. Mambulanjin sought and received funding from Homeswest for improvements, and the housing now conforms to conventional design. However, Mallingbarr is still known as a site of excessive drinking and substance abuse.

An ongoing source of homelessness in Broome is the migration of people from outlying communities in the Kimberley. This was encountered in the course of the author's field research in the housing careers project. The reasons for people coming into Broome include the need to access services available only in town, attending cultural events such as the Pearl Festival, visiting relations, and simply visiting the town out of interest. An unknown proportion 'get stuck', that is, they find it impossible to obtain the means to return to their home communities. In recent months, there are reports of people coming into Broome because their communities have been defunded by the state government and they have become homeless because of this. They come into Broome because they have nowhere else to go. There are also reports of people from outlying communities which have recently been declared dry communities who come to Broome in order to drink alcohol.

The Kimberley as a whole has the highest rate of homelessness in Western Australia, at sixteen times that of Perth. Broome welfare service workers put the Homeswest waiting list time as five years, and are quoted as saying that 'people were almost waiting for someone to die to get a government house' and that there are 'families who were living in humpies because they had nowhere else to go' (Gibson 2007). The situation appears not to be restricted to Indigenous people, because the Shire called a public meeting for local business owners to discuss the shortage of accommodation for workers (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2007).

It will probably be necessary for field research in Broome to take in business and local government as well as Indigenous people in order to provide a holistic view of this developing situation.

3.4 Sydney

Excepting La Perouse, it would appear that most of the Indigenous population of Sydney is the result of migration from the outlying country regions of New South Wales:

Redfern attracted many Indigenous migrants to Sydney from the 1930s when began to be dissolved the official management system that had herded Aborigines onto segregated reserves in the countryside. New assimilation policies designed to foster the integration of Aborigines into European society were implemented nationwide, and these, together with the rural recession in New South Wales, forced other Indigenous to Sydney during the 1950s. Inner Sydney suburbs within easy reach of Central Railway station became a magnet to Aborigines of diverse communal and country origins who sought cheap housing, access to public transport, and unskilled employment in the Eveleigh Railway Yards and other industrial outlets (Anderson 1993: 318-19).

By 1948 Indigenous 'urban drift' into Sydney had become a matter of sufficient public interest to be reported in the city's press (Rowley 1970: 367). By 1960, around 10,000

Indigenous people were estimated to live in Sydney, with the largest proportion in the inner suburbs of Redfern, Chippendale, Newtown, Erskineville and Waterloo (Anderson 1993: 319). The second largest concentration was in the city's western suburbs, including Mt Druitt, because this was largely where the Housing Commission estates were located (Morgan 2000).

3.4.1 Housing in New South Wales

Until 1969, Indigenous housing in New South Wales was administered by the Aborigines' Welfare Board. In that year, the Board was dissolved and its responsibilities were devolved to various state government departments. Housing became the responsibility of the New South Wales Housing Commission which instituted a special housing program for Indigenous people, the Housing for Aborigines scheme (Morgan 2000). The ideology of training Indigenous people to fit into wider society was very much a part of the execution of this scheme, as Morgan (2000: 90) points out:

They had to demonstrate that they were both keen to and capable of making the transition to a suburban lifestyle, one of solid nuclear family values – modesty, privacy, strictly delineated gender roles, hard work, cleanliness and moral rectitude.

There is some indication of Indigenous homelessness during these years. Rowley (1970: 368) alludes to problems of overcrowding arising from the process of migration from the country areas:

One found that people in distant parts of New South Wales ... would know certain addresses in Sydney where a person without a bed could always at least get a 'shake-down' on the floor. I remember well discussing the point with a typical motherly Indigenous woman in a street in Redfern, whose response to my question was simple and humane, 'You can't let them sleep on the footpath, can you?'

Other contemporary accounts confirm the presence of a visible population of itinerant Indigenous men whose solution to the problem of shelter varied between the street, abandoned buildings, old cars, and the homes of friends and relations (Morgan 2000: 85).

According to a New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services report from 1976, Indigenous people of Sydney at that time suffered from a serious shortage of public housing, and racial prejudice barred most from entering the private rental system. This was a continuing and growing problem on account of the steady flow of Indigenous people migrating to Sydney from New South Wales country regions. For these reasons, the homeless population of Sydney had a strong, though unspecified, representation of homeless families. There were 150 families on the waiting list of the Indigenous Housing Project in Louis Street, Redfern. A 'voluntarily-operated', that is, unregistered, hostel in the western suburbs was accommodating around 40 Indigenous people per month. There were also 20 to 30 Indigenous homeless men housed in the Roman Catholic presbytery in Redfern (New South Wales. Department of Youth and Community Services 1976: 22).

3.4.2 The current situation

In the 2006 census, the population of Redfern was 11,410 of whom 272 stated that they were Indigenous, which is around 2 per cent of the total population of the suburb. In Mt Druitt, the population is reported as 13,605, of whom 299 stated that they were Indigenous, which is again around 2 per cent of the total population of the suburb. We are dealing with populations of very similar size and who make up the same

proportion within the total population of their suburbs. While there is no available information on Indigenous homelessness in Mt Druitt, there is one study of Indigenous homeless groups in the inner city area.

Memmott and Chambers (2005) distinguished six Indigenous homeless groups in inner Sydney. The principal localities occupied by these groups were the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo, Newtown, Central Railway Station, the City/Town Hall area, Kings Cross and Darlinghurst, and the area around Broadway towards Glebe. Apart from locality, one of the features which distinguished the groups appears to have been their choice of shelter for the night. For example, the Redfern-Waterloo group slept primarily around the Block. Some slept rough, that is, out of doors. Others made improvised shelters which had to be regularly rebuilt because the Council removed them. Others went to kinfolk or squats in and around Newtown and Glebe. In contrast, the Newtown group lived primarily in squats. Most of the Central Railway Station group slept rough in Belmore Park. Some of this group also slept in parks around Surry Hills and north towards the city. Most of these people were alcoholics, although the Kings Cross/Darlinghurst group were mostly heroin users. They were also the only group which included non-Indigenous members.

Most of Memmott and Chambers' informants were men between 25 and 45 years, and most had come from regional and rural New South Wales. Their reasons for coming to Sydney varied from hoping for better chances of employment and education, to seeking adventure in the city. They found the existing homeless population of Sydney welcomed them to an extent, providing a certain amount of instruction on how to live homeless in the city.

Memmott and Chambers also interviewed people who were insecurely housed, that is, in overcrowded and/or substandard dwellings. In this context they make the useful observation that household overcrowding is not just a matter of household density but also involves the behaviour of household occupants. Dysfunctional behaviour within the household functions to cause housing stress and can precipitate homelessness.

One of the primary points of contrast between Mt Druitt and Redfern is that Mt Druitt has been the site of a major public housing development whereas Redfern has been undergoing a process of gentrification for at least 30 years. To some extent, this is the explanation behind the enduring presence of Redfern as an issue in public debate. It is also the explanation for the very evident oppositional culture that developed in Redfern and which has served to objectify it as the site of intense contestation. According to Shaw (2007), this is a matter of conflicting reckonings of what constitutes cultural heritage.

In the public consciousness, Indigenous people are acknowledged to have a cultural heritage, but this is closely tied to the non-urban, pre-colonial setting. Non-Indigenous heritage, in contrast, is multi-sited in both the urban and the non-urban setting. In the urban setting, heritage is the built environment, made up of a range of architectural expressions of class from High Victoriana to the more humble workers' cottages and terrace houses (Shaw 2007). The Indigenous heritage of the Block does not lie in the built environment, but in a set of events which represent the ongoing lived experience of Indigenous people seeking to make a home in the urban setting. This was the great housing dispute of 1972 to 1973, in the course of which the Block became a rallying point for Indigenous housing and human rights generally (Anderson 1993). As a result, the Block acquired national notoriety, and the various troubles that have beset this small community have been played out in the national news ever since. Much of this attention has a slightly vindictive edge because, as Shaw (2007) points out, the Block's troubles reinforce the stereotype of Indigenous people as being unable to

conform to urban life or to maintain social order in that setting, and also of their inability to succeed within the business framework of western capitalism.

4 MIGRATION AND HOMELESSNESS

One of the commonalities in the development of Indigenous homelessness across the field sites is the strong presence of migrants in the homeless populations. This is not to say that migration from place to place is the cause of homelessness, however, it is a phenomenon that needs to be considered in this research context. Not much attention has been paid to migration from remote communities to regional town centres, but there exists a solid literature in urban migration. According to the literature surveyed here, Indigenous urban migration has been ongoing from at least 1930. This certainly increased after World War II. The reasons for this lie partly in the effect of the war years on Indigenous employment, and partly on the postwar changes in national policy on Indigenous affairs.

In both Western Australia and New South Wales, the years 1940-47 represented a hiatus in Indigenous affairs. Both states were subject to the national shortage of labour owing to the number of men called into the armed forces. The gap was filled as much as was possible with Indigenous labour. Although the restrictions on Indigenous employment and movement were still in force, in the economic circumstances created by the war they became difficult to enforce (Birdsall 1990; Gray 2004). In New South Wales, the resulting labour shortage on the state government Indigenous reserves led to the failure of assimilation programs, and control over residence was progressively loosened (Gray 2004). The situation in Western Australia was exacerbated by the retirement of A. O. Neville, the Chief Protector, who had held that position from 1915 to 1940. Lacking his direction, the Western Australian Aborigines Department drifted into a period of 'masterly inactivity' (Biskup 1973: 227). After the war, the policy situation never returned to the pre-war focus on controlling all aspects of Indigenous life.

Despite the shift in policy, the common ideology was largely unchanged and it was still the case that, in New South Wales and Western Australian country towns, restrictions were imposed that barred Indigenous people from residing within town boundaries. Active racial prejudice made it very difficult for Indigenous children to attend local schools. Nyungar people from the south-west of Western Australia called this the 'colour bar'. The colour bar included other restrictions, such as those on alcohol, not being permitted to patronise milkbars and other sitdown eating facilities, and not being permitted to visit a doctor's surgery or attend the local hospital. Although these restrictions were not legislated and formed no part of Indigenous policy, the colour bar continued in the country towns long after they had ceased, or at least eased, in the cities. For this reason, Indigenous people increasingly migrated to the urban areas (Gray 2004). According to Taylor and Bell (2004: 34), this migration was a 'temporary wave' limited to the 1950s and the 1960s. After this time, it is thought likely that the apparent increase in the urban Indigenous population may well have been due to the changing policy landscape which made it less onerous to self-identify as being Indigenous, and this flowed through to the census, creating an apparent rise in the Indigenous population of the major cities (Taylor and Bell 2004).

An important aspect of the pattern of Indigenous urban migration is its circular pattern. This was demonstrated by Gray (1989) in his analysis of the 1981 and 1986 censuses. Between 1981 and 1986 there occurred a level of turnover of the Indigenous population through the cities that Gray terms 'spectacular' (Gray 1989: 130). His examination of age-specific data revealed that in-migration was largely composed of people aged 15 to 24. Out-migration to the country towns was largely composed of people in the age groups immediately above 25. The patterns were not the same nationwide, however:

This pattern in the eastern States suggests only one thing, and that is a characteristic pattern of migration of young adults to the city and return migration of slightly older adults with their young children to the country. The pattern is different in the other States. While in Adelaide and Perth the 15-24 age group shows the peak volume of net inflow, there is much less evidence for substantial return migration. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence for net in-migration across the age groups. It needs further investigation, but it is plausible that the reason is to be found in the very active programmes of State housing for Indigenous people in the metropolitan areas of those two States (Gray 1989: 133).

These contrasting migration patterns among the states were verified by Taylor and Bell (1996, 1999) using census data from 1986 to 1996. It will be interesting to discover whether or not the same patterns are confirmed in the succeeding censuses. The period from 1996 is important because, during this time, public housing stock in Western Australia declined significantly with a corresponding rise in the number of people on waiting lists (Tenants Advice Service, March 2007). As Gray (2004) points out, public housing plays a key role in shaping Indigenous migration patterns because Indigenous people are primarily renters, not owners. Further, they are dependent to a greater extent than other groups on low-cost housing.

Both public housing and migration patterns play a significant role in Indigenous homelessness. Not all homelessness is explained by a shortage of available low-cost housing (Memmott and Fantin 2001; Memmott and Chambers 2003; Memmott et al. 2003; Western Australia. Department of Indigenous Affairs 2006). However, the survey of the literature pertaining to the field sites (Chapter 3) indicates a strong presence of migrants among the homeless in all the field sites. In the general phenomenon of Indigenous homelessness there exists a relationship among four phenomena:

- patterns of migration;
- the element of mobility inherent in Indigenous culture and society;
- social itinerancy; and
- dysfunctional itinerancy.

The relationship among these phenomena has not been explicitly investigated. However, there have been recent contributions to our understanding of some components of the question. These are Memmott et al.'s (2006) study of Indigenous mobility patterns in north-west Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory, and Memmott et al.'s (2003) study of service responses to Indigenous homelessness across a variety of regional and urban settings. It is clear from the service responses surveyed in Memmott et al. (2003) that governments are aware of the generalities of the problem. In particular there is an awareness of the problem of people getting stuck who, if they could find a means, would return to their home communities.

Occasionally, migration may segue into cultural mobility and social itinerancy. The cities may not form a historically or traditionally established part of the region frequented by the family community. However, owing to serial migration, the initial establishment of a home by an individual who then helps kinfolk to establish their own homes in the city or town, the target of migration can become part of that region (Birdsall 1988, 1990) as people engage in culturally based visiting and call upon kinfolk for shelter in time of need. In this respect, migration, mobility and social itinerancy may be said to depend upon kinship as the driving or, indeed, the enabling force.

Governments would also appear to be aware of the problem of the occasional poor fit between the needs of Indigenous individuals and the administration of housing provision. This involves those who actively choose to be homeless, thereby escaping the requirements incumbent upon tenants who wish to retain their housing. It should be pointed out that this is not necessarily a cheerfully made choice, and it does not always involve the public housing provider. Community development and welfare departments can invoke stringent regimes aimed at behaviour modification which Indigenous clients must adhere to in order to retain their housing or to retain custody of their children, and in some cases simply to obtain visitation rights with their children. Occasionally, these regimes prove so demanding that people despair of being able to meet them, and abandon the behaviour modification regime, together with the house.

4.1 Summary perspective

This research will utilise a careers perspective in the investigation of Indigenous homelessness. Accordingly, the analysis of the individual's life experience of homelessness will be along two dimensions:

- the experiential dimension which takes into account life history, image of self and felt identity; and
- the institutional dimension which takes into account the relationship between the individual and the institutions of the wider society.

Within this perspective, it will be possible to examine transitions between types of homelessness, for example, the transitions from overcrowding to lack of shelter, from child homelessness to adult dysfunctional itinerancy, from family violence to family homelessness, and so on. It will also be possible to examine the role of social and government institutions in homeless careers. Within this context it may be useful to employ the metaphor of pathways, as a means of examining the response of individuals to intervention programs intended to enable them to move from homelessness to housing, from dysfunctional itinerancy to stable lifestyles, and the role of government services and related programs in counselling families in danger of homelessness.

The proposed research will connect with previous AHURI research by trialling the categories developed by Memmott et al. (2003), and by connecting the understanding of homelessness with recently completed research into Indigenous housing careers (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008).

As with the housing careers study, the proposed study takes a careers approach in order to discover:

- why Indigenous people are currently homeless;
- how this relates to their housing careers over the last decade;
- how being homeless relates to their shelter aspirations; and
- how life stage, employment, family and community responsibilities, lifestyle choice and the availability of housing assistance and other supports have affected their current status as homeless.

Using a careers approach makes it possible to provide models of paths to and from homelessness, further developing the understanding of Indigenous homelessness presented in established AHURI funded research. The study will identify:

- the future shelter intentions of Indigenous homeless people;

- the nature of the assistance they are likely to require to fulfil these intentions; and
- future directions for applied research in this field.

Analytical depth will be achieved by building on completed and current AHURI funded research and through a broad geographical focus in New South Wales and Western Australia.

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APPENDIX: ETHICS INSTRUMENT

Indigenous homelessness study

Information for participants

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a project to investigate homelessness among Aboriginal people.

The project is looking at:

1. Reasons, motivations and triggers for homelessness over the previous ten years.
2. How homeless Aboriginal people solve the problem of shelter
3. The role of factors such as kin connections, life stage, and lifestyle
4. Whether housing assistance, such as public housing and CRA has been of any help at all.
5. How you see yourself finding housing for yourself (and your family) in the future.

Conduct of the research

The research will be conducted using informal interviews and small focus group discussions. The timing of interviews and focus groups will be organised at mutually agreed times and places.

The research team

Chris Birdsall-Jones is an anthropologist at Curtin University of Technology. She is responsible for the conduct of the project. Vanessa Corunna is the Indigenous Research Officer on the project. If you have any concerns about the research, you should call Chris as the anthropologist on the project. Her contact details are:

Dr. Chris Birdsall-Jones

Research Fellow

John Curtin Institute of Public Policy

Curtin University of Technology

Office: 9266 7395

Mob. 0403328978

How the information will be used

The information we gather in this research will be analysed for our report. We will not use any personal information, such as your name and address, in the report. Our reports go first of all to the organisation that funds the research, which is the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. It will also go to commonwealth and state housing ministers who will use it to make policy on Aboriginal housing and homelessness programmes. Finally, we will submit reports based on our research to the professional journals for the use of other anthropologists and researchers in the field of Aboriginal housing.

Participation is voluntary

During interviews and focus groups you can decline to answer any question and request that the tape recorder be turned off. During field visits, if there is something culturally significant that it is inappropriate to show or to comment on, you may decline to do so. We will not repeat what you say in the context of research to other members

of your community. While the findings of the research will be up to the researchers, you may restrict the use of any of the material which you have provided. No names will appear on the transcribed interviews. Extracts of interviews and focus groups may be used in the research report, but you will not be identified in any way. Participation is voluntary and consent can terminate at any time.

As the research progresses, you will receive a taped copy and transcript of each interview and a summary of each focus group in which you have participated. At the end of the project, you will receive a copy of the report.

Confidentiality of information

We will base our report on the information you give us. However, this information is confidential. Only the research team will see the original material gathered in interviews, focus groups and field visits. All tapes, transcripts, and field notes will be held in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researchers. Any use made of this original material, other than that discussed in this information sheet, can occur only with your written permission.

Human Research Ethics Committee

This research has been approved by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethics of this research, please contact the Committee's Secretary, whose details are as follows:

The Secretary

Human Research Ethics Committee

Curtin University of Technology

GPO Box U1987

Perth 6845

Location: Office of Research and Development
Level 1, Building 100

Tel. (08) 9266 2784

Email t.lerch@curtin.edu.au

Thanks for your interest in the project.

Dr. Christina Birdsall-Jones and Vanessa Corunna

Participant's consent form (to be retained by the participant)

I, Christina Birdsall-Jones have undertaken to protect the confidentiality of this participant and recognise that the participant is the owner of the story, or any personal information that he or she provides. I also promise to return to the participant a transcript of any notes or recording I make of the interview. Upon the participant's request, I promise that I will correct any errors that are pointed out to me, remove material upon request, and if the participant later prefers not to have his or her interview included in the research, the interview transcript and all related content will be removed from the study.

Christina Birdsall-Jones

I, _____,
have discussed the *Information for participants* with the researcher. I understand the nature and intent of the study and have the opportunity to ask questions. I understand where to direct any future questions I might have. I have received a copy of the consent form. I agree to participate in the proposed research, and I hereby give permission to be interviewed, to be included in focus groups and for these interviews and focus groups to be tape recorded. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time without incurring any penalty.

Participant's
signature _____

Date _____

Address for return of interview transcript and report:

Name

Street/PO Box

Town/City

Post Code

AHURI Research Centres

Queensland Research Centre
RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre
Southern Research Centre
Swinburne-Monash Research Centre
Sydney Research Centre
UNSW-UWS Research Centre
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