

Improving housing responses to Indigenous patterns of mobility

authored by

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ACRONYMS

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AHL	Aboriginal Hostels Limited
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AHV	Aboriginal Housing Victoria
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights Act
ALT	Aboriginal Lands Trust
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
ARIA	Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation Programme
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Policy and Economic Research
CBD	Central Business District
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CHINS	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
CHIP	Community Housing and Infrastructure Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
DDHCS	ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Service
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HOIL	Home Ownership on Indigenous Land program
ICHO	Indigenous Community Housing Organisations
ICO	Indigenous Community Organisations
IYMP	Indigenous Youth Mobility Program
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NPRIH	National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NGO	Non-government organisation
NTER	Northern Territory Emergency Intervention
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHA	State Housing Authorities
SOMIH	State owned and managed Indigenous housing

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Circular mobility

Mobility within an identifiable region involving regular journeys from rural and remote communities to regional centres, over periods ranging from a few days to several weeks.

Migration

Long-term population movement with some degree of permanent settlement away from the place of origin. This can occur across a range of settings, but is most often applied in the context of urbanisation.

National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)

The NAHA was introduced in 2009 to replace the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Agreement. It aims to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation. It is supported by National Agreements on social housing, homelessness and Indigenous peoples living in remote areas.

Population churn

Population inflows and outflows within a specified area.

Return to country programs

Transport or financial assistance programs that assist Indigenous individuals and families visiting population centres to return to their home communities.

Service population

Residents and non-residents who are, on average, likely to be present in a dwelling at any given time in the course of a year (Taylor 2006:28).

Sorry business

Ceremonial acts of mourning and grieving for the loss of a relative and/or community member.

Temporary mobility

The short-term geographical movement of Indigenous individuals and groups, in ways that impact on service demand. It involves spatial and temporal dimensions associated with how and where people move, for what purpose, and for how long.

Wiltja

Traditional structures, often circular in shape, providing temporary shelter and often abandoned after use.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines housing service responses to Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility and how these can be improved. These questions are examined in the context of policy developments in remote and regional Australia that have potential to increase Indigenous urbanisation.

This Positioning Paper provides an overview of research on the relationship between housing services and Indigenous patterns of mobility, identifies the policy context within which this takes place, and examines current housing service responses to this. It addresses issues central to the planning and delivery of housing to Indigenous populations. Although the focus of the study is on remote and regional Australia, its findings also have implications for social housing in urban areas.

Many Indigenous individuals and families are highly reliant on the social housing sector because of barriers to private housing markets. Yet Indigenous populations also face difficulties in accessing and sustaining tenancies in housing programs provided by mainstream Commonwealth and State and Territory Housing Authorities. One reason for this is that mainstream social housing occurs within a paradigm based on the needs of a sedentary population, involving permanent residence in a single, fixed location. This fails to accommodate the forms of mobility that many Indigenous individuals and families engage in, which reflect attachment to customary practices. This failure contributes to the poor housing outcomes experienced by Indigenous peoples in Australia.

The question of how social housing providers should respond to the mobility of Indigenous populations is a vexed one, involving issues of whether alternative and better models of service delivery can, or should, be found. How governments address this question carries implications for the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia because of its impact on Indigenous aspirations for cultural integrity and cultural survival. Policies that constrain customary 'between places' living (Memmott et al 2006) are implicated in the sustainment of Indigenous self-identity. Morgan describes how 'many Aboriginals who have lived in cities for most or all of their lives make sense of their existence through reference to traditional social arrangements and to the nurturing and guiding properties of traditional lands and kinship links' (2006:145). There is some urgency about these issues as developments in Indigenous policy are transforming Indigenous housing service provision, especially in remote and regional Australia.

Understanding Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility

For the purposes of this study, temporary mobility refers to the geographical movement of Indigenous individuals and groups, involving journeys of a few days to several months, in ways that impact on service demand. It involves spatial and temporal dimensions associated with how and where people move, for what purpose, and for how long. A broad distinction can be made between temporary mobility and migration. Migration involves long-term population movement with some degree of permanent settlement away from the place of origin. This can occur across a range of settings, but is most often applied in the context of urbanisation. Within Indigenous populations, temporary mobility usually involves frequent journeys between different sites that are linked by well-established family and community connections.

The distinction between temporary mobility and migration is not clear-cut. Defining Indigenous migrants as permanent city dwellers ignores their enduring ties to ancestral lands and their periodic returns to them (Memmott et al 2006). It also assumes an intentionality and consistency on the part of individuals that may be

lacking, especially in the context of shifting policy environments. In his analysis of population movement in Darwin, following the introduction of the NTER, Taylor found a high level of population churn and confusion. There was some initial in-migration to Darwin, but his analysis suggested that many people returned to their homeland communities (2008).

Regional centres play an important role in temporary mobility acting as service hubs for the surrounding population. CHINS 1999 data suggests a total of 96 service centres across remote Australia servicing 1,100 smaller communities with a collective population of 80,000 (Taylor 2002 cited in Taylor 2006:25) with variation between service centres in the proportion of the Indigenous short-term residents. Key population centres include Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin, Cairns and a number of smaller catchment areas in Western Australia (Taylor 2006:25).

Town camps are often the destination of temporary visitors. Consequently, town camp populations include a large, transient population. One study estimated that the size of population moving in and out of the town camps as a whole ranged from one third to two fifths (Foster, Mitchell, Ulrik, and Williams 2005). There is little understanding of fluctuations in these numbers or the service needs they generate. There is also little knowledge of where other visitors stay, and how they find short-term accommodation. It is known that many long-grassers are temporary visitors, but few studies have investigated the housing and other service needs of this group (Memmott et al 2001; Maypilama et al 2004).

Housing services and Indigenous temporary mobility

The implications of temporary mobility for housing services include housing design and service planning, the location of services, and the mix of facilities including temporary, transitional and permanent housing as well as areas of specialised service need, such as women and children. It requires policies and operational procedures that respond to cultural practices, such as attendance at Sorry Day ceremonies and co- or multi-locational residence, in ways that support tenancy sustainability. The range of different types of temporary mobility and the complexity of the underlying causes need to be understood if services are to develop appropriate responses. Careful planning is required to identify the diverse needs within mobile populations as well as negotiation with a wide range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

The importance of local factors such as history, geography, regional mobility patterns, and regional facilities require locally developed solutions. What is important or possible in one area may not be relevant to another. Service planning requires reliable, regional information about the forms, direction, duration and population composition of the geographical movements of service populations and how this is changing over time. For Indigenous populations, this needs to encompass both regular patterns of short- to medium-term mobility as well as long-term trends.

Policy responses

Temporary mobility is not inherently problematic for housing services. The non-Indigenous population is highly mobile, but this is not associated with homelessness. The market economy responds effectively to the diversity of demands for temporary accommodation and related services within the non-Indigenous population. Nor does the combination of temporary mobility and cultural difference necessarily present a challenge to housing service delivery. What is critical to Indigenous temporary mobility is the context of structural disadvantage in which it takes place, as well as its implications for cultural survival. It is the clustering of cultural difference, Indigenous reliance on social housing, low economic resources, the visibility of some forms of

Indigenous homelessness and itinerancy and the combination of Indigenous resistance to, and rejection by, mainstream housing services that makes developing effective responses so challenging.

Within the social housing sector the existence of temporary mobility and its role as an expression of Indigenous culture, as well as its effects on poor housing access and housing instability, is understood. Less understood is how temporary mobility articulates with homelessness, leading to difficulties in disentangling the two. Social housing providers see the relationship between temporary mobility, overcrowding and tenancy failure, but lack the infrastructure and strategies to prevent this. The effects of seasonal migration on the number of Indigenous individuals and families living in public spaces such as riverbeds and parks is highly visible, but programs that provide for the diverse needs of these groups are lacking. Unanticipated influxes of Indigenous populations into regional towns and urban centres are experienced as service pressures, but the motives for these movements and their housing implications are not well understood. These difficulties are compounded in regions where Indigenous population movement takes place across the borders of two or three States.

The policy context

The commitment of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to closing the gap in health and socioeconomic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia has led to a \$5.5 billion investment in Indigenous housing in remote Indigenous communities. A major strategy for improving Indigenous housing outcomes is mainstreaming of Indigenous housing provision including in regional and remote Indigenous communities. The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing transfers responsibility for housing in remote Australia from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories (COAG, 2009). This makes State Housing Authorities (SHAs) the major deliverer of housing for Indigenous peoples across all jurisdictions and locations in Australia. How SHAs implement their expanded responsibility is being negotiated in each State with the extent of direct housing provision and management dependent on factors including the response of Indigenous communities, the strength of local Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHO) and the degree of remoteness. In some locations, for example, in Groote Eyland in the Northern Territory, housing provision and management has been transferred from Indigenous-controlled community housing to the SHA. In others, for example, Victoria, SHAs are working with ICHOs to establish them as registered housing agencies or to accredit them for provision of housing services.

The inclusion of remote Indigenous communities in the responsibilities of SHAs generates an urgent need for them to develop new strategies for tenancy management which takes better account of temporary mobility. It also creates an urgent need for community consultation so that SHAs develop an understanding of what services the community thinks need to be provided, and when, where, and how. This is especially the case in remote Australia where temporary mobility is most prevalent.

The implementation of a hub and spoke model of service delivery in remote and regional Australia will further transform service provision in remote and regional Australia. The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery has nominated 26 priority remote Indigenous communities in which housing and other essential infrastructure services are to be concentrated. These will act as service hubs for smaller, outlying remote Indigenous communities. These changes raise questions about the future of many smaller remote communities that have not been awarded

priority status. They have potential to increase population movement and churn between remote outstations and communities, small towns and regional centres as well as long-term migration (Altman 2008; DIA 2009).

These developments have been linked to changes in land tenure arrangements, with the Federal Labor Government seeking to acquire 40-year leases over Indigenous community-owned land as the basis for its investment in service and infrastructure provision. Given the hard-won status of Aboriginal land rights in Australia, it is not surprising that this requirement has been met with mixed responses from Indigenous communities, with agreement achieved in some communities, but not in others.

Many of the policies being implemented by the Commonwealth and State governments assume a degree of mainstreaming that will require considerable adjustment on the part of those Indigenous individuals and communities that accept this. Others may choose to reject these pressures and the consequences for them are unclear. Either way, the current policy climate suggests an urgent need to consider how these changes will influence housing demand and tenancy management by SHAs in these areas.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing requires the States to provide 'standardised tenancy management and support consistent with public housing tenancy management' (COAG 2009). How this is interpreted in light of the different forms of spatial practices that prevail in remote regions of Australia will be a critical factor in achieving the 'closing the gap' policy goal. The effects are potentially far-reaching given the size of the Indigenous population living in these areas.

There are policies within Commonwealth and State and Territory housing programs that go some way towards accommodating the temporary mobility of Indigenous populations. These include support programs for new migrants to urban environments, including life skills programs, translation services, the employment of Indigenous workers and specialised support services. There are also some Return to Country programs that assist visitors to return to their homelands. As well, there are, in varying stages of development, initiatives to support the housing and transport needs of temporary visitors to regional towns located within recognised mobility areas. However, provision is limited, patchy and inconsistent and in remote settings public housing providers may be poorly prepared to deal with people who live 'between places' (Memmott et al 2006).

In planning for temporary mobility and the potential for increased Indigenous urbanisation, social housing providers need to address the probability that population movement will be bidirectional, with at least a proportion of the Indigenous population maintaining their connection with homeland communities. Both new arrivals to regional centres who lack experience of urban environments, and temporary visitors to remote Indigenous communities, require housing and related services.

The historical background of Indigenous disengagement from mainstream housing services exacerbates these issues (Morgan 2006). Memories of negative experiences, and resistance to requirements for behavioural change, necessitate policies that recognise cultural realities and provide for the engagement of Indigenous communities. Policy developments also need to be managed against the expectations and demands of the non-Indigenous community which is not always sympathetic to the needs of Indigenous individuals and communities.

Practical measures to address these complex issues include improving data collection procedures as a preliminary to reliable analysis of current and future service demand. This is especially important for the 26 remote locations designated as regional centres by the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery. Identifying

changes in the volume of population movement to these locations, the duration of visits and the composition of the population, will enable SHAs to understand how Indigenous communities are responding to the new facilities and the impact of the other policies being implemented in homeland communities. It is equally important to identify and monitor population movement to other population centres historically subject to this kind of population change.

A key recommendation is to employ the concept of the service population rather than the residence population when calculating service demand in areas with a high number of visitors (Taylor 2006). Related to this is the development of a mobility index that can be built into funding models so that budgets provide for the fluctuations in service demand associated with temporary mobility (Prout 2008a).

Community consultation with Indigenous service users is also essential if SHAs are to succeed in developing an understanding of what services need to be provided and when, where, and how. This needs to be linked with clearly identified outcomes in order to establish and develop trust between Indigenous communities and housing authorities.

It would also assist social housing providers to develop clear guidelines on how to distinguish between homelessness, temporary mobility and migration as a preliminary for developing programs to address these. This requires further empirical and conceptual work to understand and analyse the relationship between them and the implications of this for meeting housing needs.

1 INTRODUCTION

The history of Indigenous Australia since colonisation is one of accommodation to a largely externally imposed pattern of mobility and the efforts of Indigenous peoples to maintain their own forms of spatiality (Brady 1999; Gray 2004). This dynamic contributes to the socioeconomic and health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. Housing is deeply implicated in this, both as a cause of mobility and as a sphere in which cultural difference translates to severe inequality and social exclusion. The provision of housing and associated services is at the heart of these questions with the State a critical player because of the high reliance of Indigenous people on social housing.

The mobility of Australia's Indigenous peoples is largely invisible to the rest of the population (Peterson 2004). This is not the case for housing services whose experience of the effects of mobility on service delivery and its consequences for Indigenous homelessness and itinerancy has long been understood (Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness 2006; Gale & Wundersitz 1982; Heppell 1979). Over ten years ago, the Keys Young report into Indigenous homelessness recommended that housing services should review their policies and practices in ways that provide for Indigenous mobility, particularly in relation to transfers, temporary visitors, and the temporary vacation of housing (1998).

The lack of policy development in relation to the impact of Indigenous mobility on service delivery was noted by Taylor and Bell in 1996 (Taylor & Bell 1996). This study provided the first national parameters of Indigenous mobility, focusing on overall propensities to move, the net effect of migration on spatial redistribution and patterns of migration flow and resulting spatial networks. Two years later, Taylor again pointed out that understanding and quantifying Indigenous patterns of mobility was vital for adequate planning and service provision. He called for greater recognition of temporary visitors in household/population estimates and more research into their impact and use of services (Taylor 1998). Since then, work on quantifying Indigenous temporary and migratory population movement has been undertaken, as well as some policy analysis, most notably by the Centre for Aboriginal Policy and Economic Research (CAEPR) (Taylor 2006; Prout 2008b; Taylor & Biddle 2008; Biddle 2009; Biddle & Prout 2009).

Despite the improving evidence base, policy development has been slow to respond to the identified issues. In 2008, Prout observed that, although acknowledged as a challenge to service delivery, the temporary mobility of Indigenous peoples 'remains poorly understood within mainstream society' (2008b:1). Mainstream housing policies continue to operate with a service provision paradigm framed around a sedentary population, residing permanently in a single, fixed location. The effect this has on the achievement of service goals is understood by service providers and is experienced as a source of frustration (Prout 2008b). But there remains an absence of policies that are responsive to the realities of Indigenous mobility practices in ways likely to improve Indigenous housing outcomes.

One of the reasons for this is undoubtedly the complexity of the issues. On multiple levels, the nexus between Indigenous mobility and housing service delivery is complex. This complexity is conceptual, empirical and practical. The conceptual complexity relates to the difficulty of developing a conceptual framework, which can form the foundation for service planning. Distinguishing between different types of mobility and their effects on Indigenous housing need is not straightforward, yet this is an essential prerequisite for the development of appropriate housing responses. The most obvious example is the need to distinguish between temporary mobility,

migration and homelessness. Without operationalisable definitions that also take account of the social, structural and cultural forces behind Indigenous population movement, services cannot address the associated housing needs.

The empirical complexity relates to the diversity of mobility patterns and their degree of predictability. The forms that temporary mobility takes are influenced by a wide range of factors, including the historical experiences of local Indigenous populations, cultural norms and values, the physical geography of the area, kinship networks, the policy context, the service environment and the demographic composition of the Indigenous population. There is also considerable regional variation, so that while it is possible to point to general patterns and trends in Indigenous population movement, such as the role of kinship networks in facilitating temporary mobility and migration, their effect is always specific to particular regions.

Some types of temporary population movement are predictable, such as responses to weather events, but some are not. This is especially the case with young Indigenous people whose high representation in the age structure of the Indigenous population accounts for much of the volume of both migratory and temporary mobility (Taylor 2006). Cultural norms of temporary movement related to kinship networks, together with lack of attachment to the mainstream economy, provides an opportunistic orientation to mobility that makes it difficult to predict (Peterson 2004). Patterns of population movement are also subject to changing aspirations, changing access to social, economic and technical resources and the changing policy context. In the Coen region of Cape York, for example, the access of Indigenous peoples to their homelands following the period of forced settlement on reserves, missions and cattle stations, was greatly increased as a result of the availability of motor vehicles (Smith 2004). More recently, Taylor has found that even taking into account the limitations of Census data, the frequency of mobility among the Indigenous population, measured as change of residence, was substantially higher in the 1990s than in the past (2006:12).

The practical complexity of unravelling the relationship between temporary mobility and housing lies in the challenges of delivering services to mobile populations, including those located at a distance from major service centres, as well as the policy context in which housing services operate. Responsibility for Indigenous housing is carried by multiple layers of government, with a wide range of agencies and programs having significant roles. The potential this carries for inaction, delay and confusion is exacerbated in the case of temporary mobility, which is not a clearly defined area of housing policy and is usually only addressed directly insofar as it overlaps with homelessness. This is further compounded by questions of whether, how and where, alternative and improved models of housing service delivery can be provided, and ideological debates about how the state should respond to Indigenous aspirations for cultural integrity and self-determination. The vast literature on Indigenous housing needs, outcomes, policies and programs attests not to the success of governments in responding to these questions, but to the difficulties they have in addressing them.

There is some urgency about these issues as a raft of policies under the Commonwealth Government's 'closing the gap' policy initiative, and the associated National Partnerships with the States and Territories, is transforming Indigenous housing service provision in regional and remote Australia. How the gap is closed, and the effects this has on Indigenous cultural integrity and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state, is, in its own way, as important as the achievement of this policy goal.

1.1 The significance of Indigenous temporary mobility patterns for housing services

If governments are to achieve their policy goal of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia (COAG 2007), then mainstream housing services need to develop policies, programs and practices that better accommodate temporary mobility. Assisting Indigenous peoples to access and sustain appropriate housing is fundamental to their health and wellbeing and has flow on effects on most other dimensions of social life, including education, labour market relationships and health (AIHW 2008; COAG 2008; AHRC 2008). The historical exclusion of Indigenous individuals and families from the private housing market has been exacerbated by the housing affordability crisis that has tightened the rental market, increasing rents and further reducing availability. Despite Commonwealth and State policy initiatives aimed at increasing Indigenous participation in home ownership and private rental markets, it is likely that, for the foreseeable future, the majority of the Indigenous population will continue to rely on the social housing sector for access to stable housing. The importance of social housing for the future wellbeing of the Indigenous population is given further significance because of its youthful age structure. Large numbers of young people and children are affected by how the state responds to the housing needs of the Indigenous population. If housing outcomes are not improved, there is a very real possibility that another generation of Indigenous people will grow up in conditions that contravene Australia's status as a developed nation.

There are obvious cost-benefits associated with enhancing the way in which the social housing sector responds to the mobility of Indigenous populations. Better understanding of the motives behind Indigenous mobility, how this influences population movement and the services Indigenous individuals and communities identify as most helpful should lead to improved targeting of services through the identification of service gaps and the development of strategies more likely to be accepted by target groups than is currently the case. Optimising service provision requires policies and practices that acknowledge the social context and lived experiences of the service population. This is especially relevant to the government sector where Indigenous populations represent a hard-to-reach section of the service population (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2004). Models of housing that understand and are responsive to Indigenous cultural practices of mobility should improve tenancy sustainability, reducing the costs of failed tenancies and housing transfers. It should also assist with the development of holistic models of service delivery that target the needs of sub-population groups such as women and children and young people.

Understanding different forms of mobility, their demographic composition and how these are influenced by the policy environment, should enable services to improve service planning. Better understanding of the requirements for collection and management of data that provides information on the direction, volume and duration of Indigenous population movement would be especially beneficial. Identifying patterns in population mobility would enable housing services to locate facilities where they are needed. Placing them in areas of existing demand should improve service uptake within the target population. It should also assist them to identify and plan for appropriate governance that takes into account of, for example, the need for inter-service or inter-agency agreements. An enhanced capacity to monitor long-term trends in population mobility would also permit housing services to anticipate changes in service demand and to plan accordingly.

Housing services are also affected by the consequences of policy change on Indigenous population movement. The history of Indigenous access to housing shows

that policies targeting behavioural change within Indigenous populations, including attempts at sedenterisation, have unanticipated side-effects (Sanders 2000:238-240). An unanticipated population influx into capital cities and regional population centres places all sectors of social housing under considerable pressure. This occurs directly through an increase in housing demand in these areas, and indirectly through the impact on the tenancy sustainability of existing tenants whose homes are subject to overcrowding. Housing services need to identify and plan for the housing service impact of policy changes currently taking place in regional and remote Australia. In particular, State and Territory housing authorities who carry responsibility, under the new National Agreements, to provide for Indigenous housing in remote Australia, need to evaluate whether and how much these changes will increase Indigenous urbanisation in their jurisdictions. Given what is known about the challenges that Indigenous individuals and families face in adjusting to the requirements of urban living, this represents an important area of policy development for this sector of social housing.

1.2 The study and its aims

This study builds on earlier work by Memmott et al (Memmott, Long & Thomson 2006) which described the temporary mobility patterns of Indigenous individuals and families in the area of Mt Isa. The primary concern of that study was to provide a detailed account of the pattern of Indigenous temporary mobility in remote Australia and to identify the housing service implications of this. This study examines Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility from the opposite end, asking how housing services are responding to Indigenous temporary mobility patterns and how this can be improved. The study will identify and disseminate examples of good practice, including costings of some of these.

The work of Memmott et al (2006) suggests that services need to take account of the patterns of temporary mobility that characterise some Indigenous populations and that are especially prevalent in rural and remote Indigenous communities. In Memmott et al's study, the focus was on circular mobility within a mobility region involving regular journeys from rural and remote communities to regional centres, over periods ranging from a few days to several weeks. The study noted that, while most of the movement is from country to larger population centres, some journeys are initiated in the reverse direction. Memmott et al concur with other evidence on the strength of Indigenous ties to traditional country and conclude that even as Indigenous individuals and families take up residence in cities and towns they will continue to return periodically to country, and that housing services need to recognise this.

Currently, the policies and practices of social housing providers take little account of the temporary mobility of Indigenous populations, despite its association with unstable and unhealthy living arrangements and the difficulties it causes to Indigenous individuals, families and communities and the broader community. Problems include:

- Overcrowding and associated health problems and deterioration of housing infrastructure.
- Poor access to essential health, education and employment services.
- The accumulation of rent arrears and the establishment of poor housing histories.
- Public concern over social disorder and itinerancy.

(DIA 2006:4; Keys Young 1998:53; Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness 2006:21; Flatau et al 2008:9).

The work of researchers at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) has repeatedly pointed out how little is known about the service implications of temporary movements of Indigenous peoples, with policy makers contemplating the service implications of these in an 'information vacuum' (Taylor 2006). Fundamental questions about how services are best identified and provided for in the context of shifting places of residence are currently unanswered. Filling this gap is one of the objectives of this study.

A second objective relates to current developments in Indigenous housing provision in rural and regional Australia. Following the introduction of the NTER in late 2007, there were media, and other, reports suggesting that it had led to an increase in Indigenous population movement from rural and remote Indigenous communities to regional centres (Kearney 2007; Megalogenis 2007; Holmes et al 2007). Since then, it has been argued that much of this movement represented population churn rather than migration, with individuals and families travelling in both directions in the uncertain environment created by the new policies (Taylor 2008). This issue has become more acute with the National Partnership Agreements aimed at closing the gap in Indigenous and non-Indigenous health and social outcomes (COAG 2008). Changes in the way the state provides Indigenous housing has been identified as leading to a potential increase in Indigenous population movement from remote Indigenous communities to capital cities and regional population centres (Central Land Council 2008; Appleton 2009). If this prediction is accurate, it will affect Indigenous demand for social housing across all sectors. It is especially significant for SHAs which under the National Partnership Agreements, have an enlarged responsibility for Indigenous housing that now encompasses remote Indigenous communities as well as metropolitan areas. This study aims to examine whether there is any evidence that these policy changes are associated with an increase in Indigenous urbanisation leading to an increase in Indigenous housing demand in regional centres.

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature and policy context that will inform empirical investigation of these issues.

1.3 Methodological approach

A desk-top literature review was undertaken in July 2008. The review focused on Indigenous patterns of mobility, Indigenous people's experiences of housing, and the policies that addressed Indigenous temporary housing need. While the primary focus of the review was on the Australian experience, relevant international literature was also included. A range of sources were surveyed, including academic journal articles, government and non-government research reports, Federal and State government policy strategies and programs, community programs, and newspaper items and opinion pieces.

Literature was accessed through a series of searches undertaken on citation databases, as well as through the sitemaps of government and community websites. Key citation databases included Web of Science, Sociological index online, JSTOR and Proquest. Newspaper items were accessed through the Australia and New Zealand reference centre. Other websites surveyed included: the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia Policy Online, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Productivity Commission. A range of non-government websites that directly address Indigenous issues were also surveyed, including the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, Women for Wik, Indigenous resources on Informit, *Indigenous Times*,

Koori Mail, Indigenous Land Councils, the Paper Tracker and Indigenous community organisations.

In order to collate information on contemporary Indigenous housing and social policy in Australia, the websites of relevant Federal and State government departments were reviewed, including: the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA); the New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Housing; Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Office of Housing; in Queensland the Department of Communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) and the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services); the WA Department of Indigenous Affairs and Department of Housing and Works; the SA Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Office for Aboriginal Housing; the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Tasmania and Housing Tasmania, as well as relevant authorities in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. In addition, State housing authorities were contacted with a request for any information they could provide on policies and programs that addressed Indigenous mobility patterns.

The survey yielded 277 documents, including 172 research reports and 105 news items, as well as Federal and State government policy statements. The citations were entered and stored in an endnote library. Each document was reviewed in terms of its relevance to the present research project, the type of methods employed, and the key issues and policy concerns addressed.

In providing the background to the study, this paper pays special attention to the policy context, policy implications and service response aspects of the issues implicated in Indigenous temporary mobility patterns as there already exist a number of key studies describing patterns of mobility and the motivations that underpin them.

2 UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS PATTERNS OF TEMPORARY MOBILITY

Geographical mobility is fundamental to Indigenous self-identity (Peterson 2004; Memmott et al 2004; Smith 2004). It is associated with relatedness and autonomy, with kinship networks providing both the means and the motive for its practice (Beckett 1965; Brady 1999; Morphy 2007). Government policies have been the most powerful force shaping changes in the distribution of the Indigenous population, but temporary mobility is also endemic to Indigenous culture and serves as an expression of cultural integrity and personal agency. The forms that temporary mobility takes vary according to the social and geographic context, but whatever the setting, it has deleterious effects on Indigenous housing access and tenancy sustainability. Exclusion from home ownership creates a disproportionate reliance on social housing and the private rental market, yet the prevailing policies on access and tenancy make few concessions to enduring Indigenous temporary mobility practices. Locating these mobilities in their cultural context provides the foundation for considering housing responses.

The literature on Indigenous mobility patterns, including both migration and temporary mobility, can be divided into three main areas, although there is some overlap between them, with the same individuals contributing across more than one area.

1. Demographic analysis of Indigenous population distribution

This literature is concerned primarily to measure and enumerate the changing distribution of Indigenous populations in the context of migration and urbanisation. Most of this work is quantitative and has been undertaken by researchers at CAEPR, from the 1980s to the present day (Taylor 1998; Taylor & Bell 1999; Taylor 2002; Taylor & Bell 2004; Sanders 2004; Biddle & Prout 2009). This approach draws principally on census and other official statistics. The complexity and overlapping nature of Indigenous mobility practices means that this work has necessarily described more long-term patterns of population movement.

2. Anthropological studies

These ethnographic studies examine the cultural foundations and practices of Indigenous spatiality. They are primarily concerned with Indigenous peoples living in remote and very remote Australia (Smith 2004; Birdsall 1988; Prout 2009). Most are written from an anthropological perspective and provide a qualitative, emic account. They describe both the everyday, temporary mobilities that derive from Indigenous culture (Musharbash 2000) as well as the migratory movements of Indigenous groups, drawing on historical and fieldwork research (Little 2000).

3. Policy studies

Policy studies have become more prominent in recent years. They focus on the service implications of Indigenous spatiality and are undertaken by demographers, anthropologists and policy analysts. A case study approach is often taken, sometimes including a detailed analysis of the motives, direction, duration and demography of forms of Indigenous mobility within a specific region (Henry & Smith 2002; Memmott et al 2006; Foster et al 2005; Prout 2008a).

2.1 Enumeration issues

There are numerous and well-described difficulties in surveying mobile populations. In the case of Indigenous populations, these difficulties are compounded by cultural differences that render mainstream demographic categories inadequate descriptors of empirical realities. Terms such as 'household', 'visitor', and 'normal place of residence' apply differently or do not apply at all in many Indigenous contexts and lead to enumeration errors. The concept of 'usual place of residence' sits problematically among people who may be without a fixed residential place and reside in an area within which they may be 'more or less permanently mobile' (Taylor 1998:127). The distinction between 'visitor' and household member is also distinctive. The ABS definition of 'visitors' is 'people who normally reside elsewhere' and they are not counted as household or family members in Census or other official data. To be a visitor is to be a guest. This conceptualisation is inconsistent with Indigenous spatiality, sociality and kin relations. In her case study of a women's camp at Yuendumu, Musharbash, reports that the women distinguished between residents and visitors according to whether they stopped overnight (Musharbash 2000:62). To stay overnight was to make the transition from visitor to resident, with rights to household resources and duties. This relationality was because visitors were usually biological kin or close classificatory relatives. Consequently, Indigenous respondents may define people categorised as 'visitors' according to the ABS definition, as household members.

Longitudinal analysis of survey data must also account for changing subjectivities associated with Indigenous self-identity. Changes in population size may reflect changes in Indigenous self-identification rather than population movement. There are also many practical difficulties in adequately accounting for Indigenous population movement. Measuring population change requires measurement of the same population over time. The best way of doing this is to measure the movement of the same individuals but the relatively small numbers involved, mean confidentiality issues prevent the use of customised data sets derived from ABS surveys (Taylor & Bell 1996). Population change can take place without being identified in survey data. This is especially the case with temporary mobility where the waves of data collection are too far apart to capture short- to medium-term movement. What appears as population stability may mask considerable population movement between data collection periods (Taylor 2006). The ABS 2006 Post Census Enumeration Survey found substantial undercounting of the Indigenous population in many remote towns, Indigenous towns and outstation areas, and higher than expected counts in some regional country towns and city suburbs with temporary mobility implicated in this (Taylor and Biddle 2008).

Administrative datasets provide another potential source of data on trends and patterns in Indigenous population movement. However, this information is often limited by unsystematic data collection and data management practices, by the often limited variables that are available for analysis, and by the ethical considerations that arise in relation to historically over-surveyed populations. Small population sizes also create problems of anonymity so that services holding data may be unable to release it.

These difficulties mean that Census data are inadequate for policy formulation, and administrative data may also be imperfect. Even small case study approaches can face barriers in relocating respondents over time. Care must also be taken to ensure that respondents are representative of the underlying population and that the data obtained are relevant to them (Taylor & Bell 1996).

A number of researchers suggest that the most reliable approach for identifying Indigenous population movement is through a combination of secondary data analysis and the ethnographic record (Taylor and Bell 2004). This suggests that a case study approach, which combines administrative data analysis with qualitative interviews of Indigenous individuals and other key informants, would be an appropriate methodology for examining population movement within a specified area.

2.2 Population trends

Despite the difficulties of enumeration, a series of studies have identified long-term population trends among Indigenous populations, with a key question being the extent and distribution of Indigenous urbanisation. Gray (2004) identifies four main forms of urbanisation:

1. A direct move to migrant areas within the city, usually into State rental housing or else into Aboriginal community-owned housing.
2. The establishment of 'new black towns' in which Indigenous settlements were established away from the main area of white urbanisation and eventually formed a township.
3. Growth in central city areas, such as Redfern in Sydney.
4. Growth in country towns, so that in some locations the Indigenous population is predicted to outnumber the non-Indigenous population.

Taylor found that by the beginning of the 21st century, a massive population shift had occurred with the percentage of the Indigenous population resident in urban areas almost doubling from 44 per cent in 1971 to 74 per cent in 2001 (Taylor 2006:13). He suggests much of this growth is not due to migration but to natural demographic growth of the Indigenous population due to high birth rates as well as increased Indigenous self-identification since the 1980s (Taylor 2006:13).

Taylor's analysis of ABS Statistical Divisions shows a pattern of regional population loss in the remoter parts of most States and the Northern Territory as well as Sydney, while population gains have occurred in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin as well as regional Victoria (see Table 1) (Taylor 2006:18).

Table 1: Statistical divisions with high and low migration effectiveness ratios 1996–2001

Barwon (Vic)	23.6	South West (Qld)	-13.0
Moreton (Qld)	22.5	Western District (Vic)	-13.0
Central Highlands (Vic)	17.1	Murray (NSW)	-13.2
Ovens-Murray (Vic)	16.9	Mackay (Qld)	-13.5
Loddon (Vic)	16.8	Sydney (NSW)	-15.7
Adelaide (SA)	16.8	NT Balance	-21.6
Wimmera (Vic)	16.7	Far West (NSW)	-22.2
Brisbane (Qld)	15.5	North Western (NSW)	-22.3
Gippsland (Vic)	14.2	North West (Qld)	-24.9
Darwin (NT)	12.5	Eyre (SA)	-26.7
Perth (WA)	12.0	Kimberley (WA)	-28.1
South West (WA)	11.8	East Gippsland (Vic)	-29.4

Source: Taylor, J. 2006, *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Discussion Paper No.286, CAEPR and the Australian National University, Canberra, p.15.

A second pattern evident in Perth and Adelaide, involved more permanent migration, possibly linked to better access to affordable housing through a more active Aboriginal housing program in those cities (Taylor 2006:18).

Taylor's overall assessment is that there has been a post-war pattern of population shift within the Indigenous population from remote and rural areas to urban areas and therefore from north and west to southern and eastern Australia (2006:12). But, while the general direction of the flow is towards regional areas and major cities, differences in the rate of transfer between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population, higher net migration among the non-Indigenous population from outer regional areas and the higher Indigenous birth rate, means that, overall, the Indigenous share of the population in the remotest three categories of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) is increasing. Projections suggest that the total population of the desert region will have grown to 189,430 by 2016, representing an increase of 5.8 per cent from its size in 2001 (Taylor 2002). Consequently, a number of regional towns are experiencing an increasing share of the Indigenous population, carrying with it significant service implications (Taylor 2006:65-6).

2.3 Temporal, spatial and demographic dimensions of temporary mobility

Attempts to analyse Indigenous temporary mobility need to be located within the blurred empirical reality that manifests a wide variation of forms and underlying motivations. Regional diversity, the contingent and unpredictable nature of some forms of movement, the range of sub-groups involved, and complicated motivating forces, require careful analysis. The consistency and intentionality of actors cannot be assumed, especially in the context of changing external conditions. Indigeneity is associated with culturally specific forms of mobility, but as forms of lived experience they necessarily escape neat conceptual frameworks. Prout's work is useful here since it acknowledges this, while also providing a helpful analytical framework that will be employed here (2008b). This divides the literature into three areas, temporal, spatial and demographic.

Temporal

Temporal aspects of mobility are concerned with the duration of journeys. One of the features of non-Indigenous constructions of Indigenous mobility is its characterisation as unpredictable and unplanned in the regional and remote context with obvious consequences for service planning and delivery. The idea of temporary mobility as fundamentally irrational and therefore unpredictable is expressed in non-Indigenous constructions of 'the walkabout'. Peterson challenges this construction, arguing that the truth is more complex (2004). He observes that this failure to comprehend Indigenous temporary mobility is partly because Indigenous peoples travel 'with their backs to the world, turned in on their own domains'. This renders invisible the underlying rationality and intentionality that underpins much Aboriginal mobility.

Prout develops this argument, suggesting that although there will always be an unpredictable and contingent aspect to some forms of Indigenous movement much of it is predictable and planned (2008b:7). This includes ceremonial activity, seasonal migration related to weather events, journeys to regional centres for entertainment, service access, participation in Indigenous policy, and participation in the informal Indigenous economy, such as the sale of artworks.

Patterns of travel that are less predictable include those undertaken by young people, especially young men (Peterson 2004; Birdsall 1988). This takes place in a context of detachment from the formal economy and embeddedness in reciprocal kinship networks that normalise the unannounced arrival of the guest. Customary practices can also generate this kind of unplanned travel, including Sorry business. A death in the family creates mobility both on the part of the bereaved family who may vacate the family home, and among more distant kin who must journey to them to pay their respects (Walker & Ireland 2003).

These kinds of journeys are generally short-term, lasting days or a few weeks, but they also involve lengthier periods. This can be the result of choice or because of practical and social barriers to returning home (Habibis et al 2007; Maypilama et al 2004)

Spatial

The ethnographic literature identifies a number of distinctive mobility patterns. These include:

1. Circular mobility involving frequent, short-term movement across an identifiable mobility region that often involve a circuit of temporary stopping places before the return home (Taylor 2006). These areas are not confined within State borders but are dictated by long-standing relationships and connections to people and place, rather than the artificial imposition of administrative boundaries (Memmott et al 2006).
2. Chain or line mobility involves stops over an extended area. This has its origins in the return journeys of Indigenous peoples forced onto government settlements and missions during the period of assimilation back to their original homes many years later. In Western Australia, Birdsall identified a network of kinship connections strung out over 2,000 km along the coast and hinterland (in Peterson 2004).
3. 'Beats' describe areas that are defined by the 'situation of kin who will give them hospitality, within which they can travel as much or as little as they please, and where they are most likely to find spouses'. (Beckett in Peterson 2004).
4. Micromobility refers to 'within settlement' or intra-settlement mobility and involves changed residency from day to day or night to night within the same settlement,

and includes changes in household composition and turnover in household members (Long, Memmott & Seelig 2007:60).

Within these spatial practices, home may be a single and relatively permanent residence, or it may comprise either one or more places or a pattern of 'perpetual movement' along a network of kin-based social relations (Prout 2008b:8).

The presence or absence of these types of travel is influenced by structural factors such as environmental characteristics and the location of population centres; historical factors, including the impact of colonisation; and cultural variables such as language groups, custodial relationship to the land and kinship networks (Memmott et al 2004; Prout 2008b 48:10).

Prout distinguishes five geographical zones implicated in spatial aspects of Indigenous mobility (see Figure 1) (Prout 2008b 48:7–12).

1. In the central desert and northern hinterland, spiritual attachment to country and the associated distribution of kin creates distinctive regions of circular mobility which, in the central zone, have been expanded through the impact of colonisation.
2. In the tropical north, mobility patterns are more spatially constrained than in the desert regions. Colonisation has reduced the prominence of mobility regions by extending them along expanded kinship lines.
3. In the southern hinterlands bordering the desert, mobility regions are less distinguishable and location of kin is the primary determinant of temporary mobility patterns. In some areas, policies of separation and forced removal have expanded these over vast distances. Complex and varied mobility patterns, including beats (Beckett 1965) and chain and line migration (Birdsall 1988) and less easily distinguishable and bounded mobility trajectories only marginally related to ancestral belonging (Prout 2008b:12) have been described.
4. Research on mobility patterns in urban and coastal areas is especially scant. In the 1970s, Gale identified significant intra-urban mobility as well as a pattern of kin residence by newly-arrived migrants until they establish their own homes (1972). This is confirmed by more recent studies that link homelessness with the problems of overcrowding this causes (Habibis et al 2007).

Figure 1: Geographical zones in Australia



Source: Prout, S., 2008b:9

Demographic aspects of mobility

Temporary mobility is influenced by demographic factors related to the life course, with age and gender being the key variables. There is a well-established pattern of high migratory mobility among young, unmarried people. The demands of education and employment, as well as the desire to establish living arrangements apart from the parental home, are associated with in-migration to population centres (Taylor 2006:63). The pattern reverses to some extent, after partnering and the birth of offspring about ten years later with some families returning to country (Taylor 2006; Gray 2004). This results in a relatively high turnover of population in metropolitan areas, compared with the non-Indigenous population. It also undermines assumptions that Indigenous people living in urban areas are a section of the broader Indigenous population since at different times in their life they may comprise the country population (Taylor 2006:18).

Temporary mobility among young men is associated with detachment from mainstream labour markets and with boredom with the quiet existence of remote communities generating frequent movement between places. Smith describes these 'socially peripheral' young men as 'floaters' (Smith 2004). Although some will establish more stable living arrangements with the formation of long-term intimate relationships, anecdotal evidence suggests that a proportion continue with an itinerant lifestyle and

eventually find it very difficult to establish a stable base (Birdsall-Jones pers commun. 2009).

Family violence and family breakdown are implicated in the mobility of women and children (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008; Walker and Ireland 2003). Research on Indigenous women in Adelaide found their mobility was not a lifestyle preference, but resulted from the need to escape problematic situations or because they were forced to leave, with domestic violence implicated in 65 per cent of respondents (Walker and Ireland 2003).

Unlike non-Indigenous communities where mobility declines after young adulthood, it remains high in remote communities with a proportion of older people remaining mobile for reasons related to service access, including health services, and control over motor vehicles, creating a flatter profile of mobility across the life-cycle (Taylor 2006; Prout 2008b:14). Yet there are also 'stayers', senior people, often women, who form the bedrock of both urban and remote communities (Prout 2009b 48; Birdsall 1988). There has been little investigation of the characteristics and motivations of 'stayers', but Prout suggests they are an essential anchor of stability and have influence over the movement of others (2008b).

2.4 Internal and external motivations for mobility

Research on the motivations for Indigenous temporary mobility and migration reveal a complex interaction of factors derived internally from Indigenous culture and externally from non-Indigenous social forces (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). External factors are largely driven by the policies of the state and were historically directed at the control of Indigenous populations, starting with their dispossession from their homelands. White colonisation disrupted traditional patterns of mobility, with forced settlement of Indigenous peoples on reserves, missions and cattle stations (Smith 2004). Externally driven causes of Indigenous mobility patterns are closely linked to broad population movements. The migration of Indigenous communities in the 1960s from remote parts of western New South Wales to urban areas, such as Newcastle and Tamworth, was largely shaped by the policy context (Gray 2004). More recently, demographic changes and housing programs have influenced longer-term Indigenous migratory movements. For example, lack of housing in remote communities shaped Indigenous urbanisation in the mid-1980s in New South Wales (Gray 2004).

Internal factors involve social forces derived from culturally derived Indigenous subjectivities. They are often rooted in customary practices with kinship networks and attachment to country providing both the motive and the medium for travel. Memmott et al's (2006) case study of mobility regions around Mt Isa identifies fourteen different motives for mobility among the local Indigenous communities. These included kinship and social interaction reasons; recreation, entertainment and sport; hunting and bush resources; shopping and business; temporary visits (passing through); visiting traditional country and ceremonial reasons; accessing health; criminal justice system, climate and housing.

Prout describes these endosocial factors as 'characteristic of mobilities that are primarily shaped by familial and cultural obligations and conflicts; are intentionally confined within territories of ancestral belonging and/or networks of relatedness; are ceremonial...and reflect and/or engender disinterest in, or alienation from the state' (2008b:16). These motivations appear in the following account of the mobility practices of a Yolnu man:

Longer yearly cycles show a rhythm of movement between one's primary homeland, trips to town for reinforcements and other communities and

centres—maintaining socio-ceremonial networks that hold the wider Yolnu community together. Underlying these everyday activities is the ever-present satisfaction in looking after kin and country and in doing so, ‘following in the footsteps of the ancestors’ and ‘holding ‘ Yolnu law.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/03/2353864.htm>

Family relationships are embedded within a moral economy of cooperation and mutuality and give rise to what Schwab has described as a ‘calculus of reciprocity’ (1995 in Penman 2007). Penman explains that reciprocity is central to the kinship system and structures both private relationships and economic, social and political relations (2007:115). At its heart is a social obligation to care for, and support kin through regular association.

Birdsall Jones and Corunna describe how kin networks sustain Indigenous households and generate mobility in urban areas of Western Australia. In situations of homelessness households turn to kinfolk who currently have housing; relatives in other households provide alternative schooling to children of relatives from other regions; kin networks assist with employment requirements, access to health care and particular lifestyle choices, including alcohol and drug abuse (2008).

Climatic factors are also important. During the wet season, remote communities may be cut off for months at a time so many residents move to regional centres, often staying with relatives. In the Northern Territory township of Maningrida, Fien et al (2008) found the population more than trebled in the wet season, expanding from 800 to 2,600 with average household sizes swelling from 15 to 30. Specific weather events can also generate movement, such as strong winds.

These motivating factors are intertwined so that neat categorisation of the drivers of Indigenous mobility is not possible. They are the result of a negotiation between Indigenous cultural, social and political aspirations, the impact of the state in both facilitating and impeding these and local structural factors, such as housing availability. In Meekatharra in Western Australia, the greater availability of public housing, together with high levels of tenancy failure in remote communities, created movement between small, more remote regional towns (Prout 2008a). Prout suggests that ‘the simplicity of the process of applying for and being offered housing in these more remote towns facilitated greater movement. When a person got tired of being in one place, they could simply move on to the next and be granted housing there’ (Prout 2008a:10). This was understood by some service providers as pandering to the whims of ‘transient’ Indigenous people, but it can also be understood as the result of the interplay between cultural and structural forces, in this case access to housing.

This kind of interplay is not restricted to remote and regional Australia, but also occurs in major towns and cities. Birdsall-Jones and Corunna's account of Indigenous housing careers described how some forms of mobility were legitimated because they were seen as an expression of Indigenous cultural practice. Caring for country, maintaining kin relationships, providing kin support and accessing services were approved, but those associated with social harm, such as family violence and substance use, were delegitimated as not part of Indigenous culture (2008).

2.5 The impact of structural factors on temporary mobility

Structural factors represent an important contributor to Indigenous mobility practices (Prout 2008b). The distribution and size of population centres, the transport infrastructure that connects them, and opportunities for housing, employment and income, influence the motives, direction and size of population flows up and down the

settlement hierarchy. The relationship between regional centres and outlying smaller Indigenous communities is an especially significant influence on mobility patterns.

2.5.1 Housing availability

Indigenous exclusion from the housing market is a primary cause of the mobility of Indigenous peoples, although the use of the term mobility in this context has been called into question (Birdsall-Jones & Shaw 2008). For the overwhelming majority of the Indigenous population, low income makes social housing the only choice for most Indigenous individuals and families. As renters, Indigenous people must conform to the imposition of tenancy regulations that do not apply to home-owners with factors associated with Indigeneity, creating a much higher vulnerability to tenancy failure (Habibis et al 2007). The result is a high level of overcrowding and vulnerability to homelessness. The relationship between housing exclusion and temporary mobility is a central issue for policy planning and is examined in more detail in the next section.

2.5.2 Transport

The availability of transport is an important influence on temporary mobility and is also critical to the survival of communities in remote locations (UnitingCare Wesley 2009; Appleton 2009). For temporary mobility, it influences the direction and duration of journeys with dependence on private cars associated with the development of a vehicular culture (Smith 2002) in which share cars assist with high transport costs that are a heavy impost on low-income households. Lack of transport is associated with being unable to return home after a journey away and with an elevated risk of accident and injury due to unsafe practices associated with this (Harrison & Berry 2008). In extreme remote communities, lack of transport can constrain mobility because of its prohibitive cost and immobilise communities during the wet season (Eringa et al 2008).

2.5.3 Labour market and income opportunities

Labour market opportunities operate as an important variable on both temporary mobility and migration. The Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) assisted in establishing Indigenous communities in locations distant from mainstream labour markets. Its curtailment may result in an increase in both temporary mobility and migration to larger population centres for training and employment. The influence of the labour market is not exerted uniformly, but is mediated by local economic opportunities including the strength of traditional activities, such as hunting, the sale of artworks and the availability of paid jobs (Altman 2009). Kin that depart from the community to seek employment elsewhere also expand the mobility networks of those that remain behind, increasing the potential for their own journeying (Birdsall 1988).

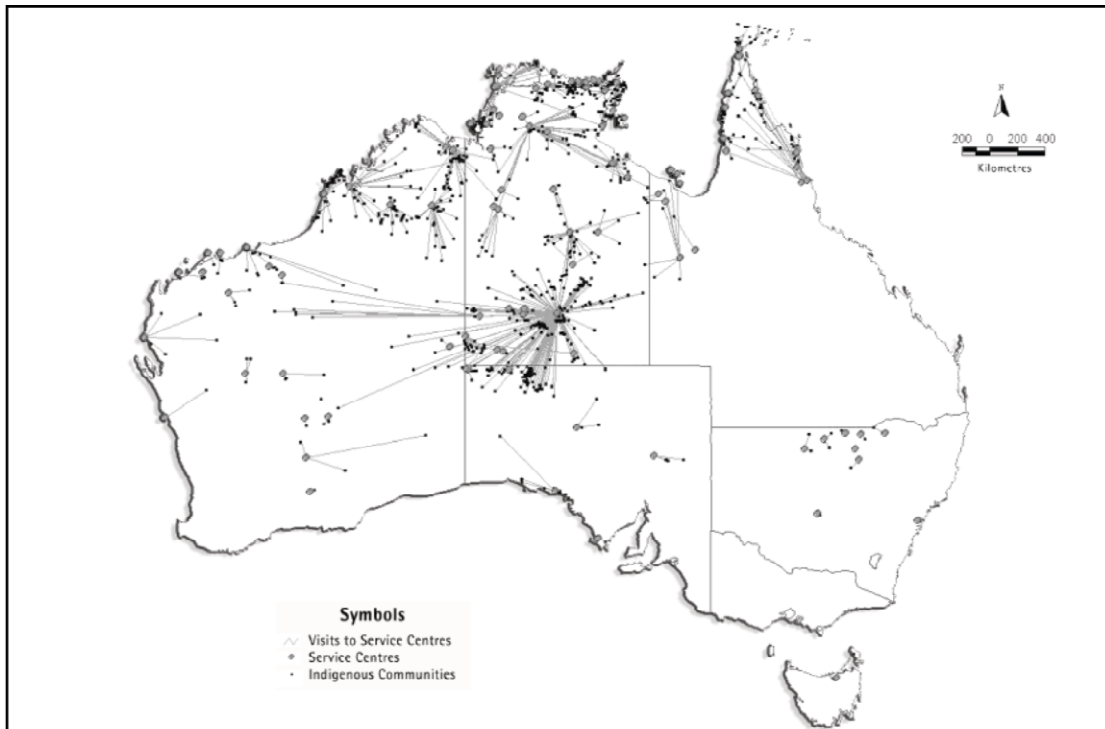
2.5.4 The role of regional centres

Indigenous peoples in remote or very remote locations make regular visits to larger population centres to access mainstream services and to participate in leisure activities (Memcott et al 2006). These act as service hubs for the surrounding population. Regional centres include Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin, Cairns and a number of smaller catchment areas in Western Australia. 1991 census data shows that 7 per cent of the Indigenous population was enumerated away from their usual place of residence compared with 4.9 per cent for the population as a whole (Taylor 2006:23). This creates a 'pool or catchment of population around each service town (Taylor 2006:25). CHINS 1999 data suggests a total of 96 service centres across remote Australia servicing 1,100 smaller communities with a collective population of 80,000 (Taylor 2002, cited in Taylor 2006:25) (See Figure 2) with the proportion of the Indigenous population comprising short-term residents varying considerably between

service centres. The direction of movement from remote region to service centre is determined as much by cultural ties as by distance or transport networks, with some people travelling distances of more than 1,000 kms (Taylor 2006:25).

This flow of movement places Indigenous communities within regional population centres under intense pressure from temporary visitors. In the Northern Territory, issues of mobility are especially acute in town camps, both because of high levels of mobility from surrounding areas and because of historic lack of service provision. Their role as hubs for remote settlements means that they include both a permanent and highly transient population. A survey undertaken over a 12-month period of the 19 town camps in Alice Springs by Tangentyere Town Council provides one of the few sources of information. (See Fig.2 below.) To ensure a comprehensive account of fluctuations in population and the mobility practices associated with these, the study included residents in public housing, and people camping in public spaces (Foster et al 2005)

Figure 2: Journeys to service centres from discrete Indigenous communities in remote Australia



Source: Taylor 2006:24

The study identified three main types of movement:

- i. In and out of the town camps, to communities and other housing or camping in Alice Springs.
- ii. Between town camps.
- iii. Between houses in town camps.

(Foster et al 2005:31).

The size of population moving in and out of the town camps as a whole ranged from one third to two fifths, so that, while the base population was 1,955, the service population was between 2,560–3,300 (Foster, et al 2005).

This mobility is reflected in the demographic profile of town campers. Analysis of the 2001 Census revealed differences in the socio-economic characteristics of residents of town campers in Alice Springs from the rest of the town's Indigenous population, who were closer to those resident in the remote and very remote areas surrounding the town (Sanders 2004).

Pressure on regional centres also gives rise to a significant transient population in public place settings (Memmott et al 2003). It appears that most stay for reasons that include factors outside their control. A study of Yolnu Long-Grassers staying on Larrakia land found that most people from remote areas wished to return to their home communities, but were prevented by many difficulties some of which had led to their departure in the first place. These included fear of violence, suicide, mental illness, aggressive behaviour and 'galka' (sorcery). Others were there for medical-related reasons, either for themselves or to support a relative. They stayed through preference or because there was nowhere else available (Maypilama et al 2004).

3 TEMPORARY MOBILITY, HOUSING SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS

The relationship between housing provision and Indigenous temporary mobility cannot be presented as a straightforward dichotomy between the effects that one has on the other. It is not simply that mobility impacts on housing provision in some ways and housing provision acts on mobility in others. Instead, the way they intersect is highly complex. Low income gives housing availability a structural power over the lives of Indigenous people. In remote locations, the provision of social housing is fundamental to the community's viability. Housing operates as a pull factor in attracting movement to locations where housing is available, and a push factor in making some locations unsustainable.

Dependence on the rental market also makes Indigenous individuals and families subject to the demands for conformity to the behavioural norms of mainstream white culture. The degree to which they are willing or able to accept these is implicated in Indigenous itinerancy and homelessness with the line between choice and compulsion far from clear. But housing providers are also subject to the mobility practices of their clients. Clients who do not show up for an appointment, leave without terminating their lease or become subject to eviction proceedings because of overcrowding, are costly and time-consuming and frustrate the achievement of service goals. Although often understood as an expression of Indigenous agency, these practices take place in the context of factors over which Indigenous tenants have little control, including low economic resources, poor access to housing markets, and the tenancy management policies and practices of housing providers. This intersection between Indigenous cultural practices, structural disadvantage, and the way housing is delivered, is central to an understanding of the distinction between temporary mobility, migration and homelessness.

There are two main areas in which Indigenous cultural knowledge and practice impacts on housing access and sustainability: the gap between Indigenous tenancy skills and the demands of tenancy sustainment and overcrowding associated with visiting and reciprocal hospitality. These are explored in the next two sections in an analysis that highlights the distinction between temporary mobility and homelessness.

3.1 Mobility and homelessness as resistance?

In a helpful attempt to grapple with the question of the voluntariness of Indigenous temporary mobility, Prout observes that the extent to which Indigenous individuals and families wish to engage with mainstream services is not uniform (2008b). She suggests a continuum of engagement with some Aboriginal people actively engaging with services, while others have more 'contested and sporadic interactions' (Prout 2008a:25). The mobility of the former is likely to be associated with migration or with more permanent settlement in a single location. The latter is associated with more transient lifestyles. Underneath this distinction is a difference in the value attributed to access to health, housing and education and a concern with 'family and other socio-cultural obligations' (2008:25). Prout argues that disengagement arises from self-exclusion from "whitefella business", an area of governance in which these individuals have little desire to participate' (Prout 2008a:25). Their limited participation with services represents a compromise between 'compliance with wider societal pressure ... whilst avoiding wholesale engagement with the system' (Prout 2008a:26).

This account suggests that, for a proportion of the Indigenous population, the link between homelessness and itinerancy and Indigenous mobility is Indigenous resistance to demands for conformity to whitefellas ways. What needs to be added is

the context of social and cultural marginalisation in which this resistance takes place. The Keys Young report noted that, typically, SAAP services are used only as 'a last resort' and identified a wide range of factors for this (1998:viii). These included:

- Fear or reluctance in using mainstream services, especially those associated with welfare.
- Fear or reluctance to engage in programs or activities with which they were unfamiliar.
- Perceptions that SAAP services would be unresponsive to their needs.
- Stigma and shame associated with homelessness.
- A dislike of the design of the accommodation facility.
- Distrust of the rules and regulations of the service.
- Lack of knowledge of the availability of the service (1998:viii).

These themes are reiterated throughout the literature. In the Northern Territory community, organisations reported that rather than go through the application procedures for public housing they 'chose' to live in the long-grass (Habibis et al 2007). The Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission of Inquiry found a high level of dissatisfaction among Indigenous tenants and Homeswest service providers. The service providers identified high levels of rent arrears and property abandonment by their Indigenous customers, while tenants described expectations and modes of communication that they could not meet (Prout 2008a). In Meekatharra, in Western Australia, public housing was available but inaccessible to many Indigenous people because of their poor housing history. While 30-40 per cent of Indigenous households were overcrowded, 13 Homewest properties were vacant (Prout 2008a).

These accounts reveal the blurred boundary between voluntary and involuntary exclusion from mainstream housing services with the extent of engagement resulting from a difficult negotiation between cultural factors, housing need and the different forms of available housing. Dulcie Malimara, an Indigenous woman from Western Australia, conveys insight into this choice:

I'm happy staying outside so I can sing, dance, cry, whatever I like. So I'm free enough to stay here. The Housing Commission, it's really hard. You can't even take your family. It's really hard for us to go back in a Housing Commission, 'cause I tried that a lot of times. I told my people not to make noise 'cause that house, it wasn't mine. Neighbours complaining, it was really hard for me and my kids.

Source: Department of Indigenous Affairs 2006.

This account of how expectations relating to noise and tenancy occupation impeded one Indigenous woman's attempts to achieve housing stability problematises the construction of resistance as an act of agency. For Dulcie Malimara, the exercise of choice takes place within a context of severe constraint, which is both economic and cultural. She has tried public housing 'a lot of times', but the imposition of dominant cultural norms have prevented her from remaining there, and her response has been to draw on her own cultural values and return to living in public spaces where she can at least express herself without constraint. This account complicates the picture of Indigenous itinerancy as a straightforward choice, revealing instead a much more tangled relationship, with the way housing services are provided an important contributing factor.

3.2 Overcrowding, mobility and homelessness

The overcrowding of Indigenous households is sometimes understood as a cultural preference rooted in traditions of co-residence with kin and the visiting practices that accompany reciprocal hospitality (Birdsall-Jones & Shaw 2008). But it is also the result of a shortage of appropriate, affordable housing (Urbis Keys Young 2005). It is implicated in long-term Indigenous population movement. In the mid-1980s, the Aboriginal Family Demography Study (cited in Gray 2004:216-7) found that overcrowding was the main reason for Aboriginal families moving from their former mission homes into the towns. Fien et al also describe how Indigenous peoples from Palm Island are forced out of their homes to the mainland because of the severity of overcrowding (2008:42).

Overcrowding due to lack of housing is also implicated in itinerancy because it may be experienced as unpleasant and undesirable. Too many people in a constrained environment with inadequate resources can lead to breaches of relationship boundaries and make life unpleasant for all. The 2002 NATSISS survey found a close correlation between stress and overcrowding (Penman 2007). For many Indigenous households overcrowding is associated with resources being stretched beyond their reach, with privacy being compromised and elevated tensions and conflict. Visitors may be welcomed, but not if they stay too long and household resources cannot provide for them.

This kind of forced mobility occurs in both urban and remote environments. The NATSISS survey found that 40 per cent of respondents in remote communities identified overcrowding at home as stressful (Penman 2007). Cooper and Morris (2005) describe how Indigenous women who travelled to Adelaide due to family conflict in their remote home community were forced to move frequently because they could not bear staying in overcrowded homes. Similar sentiments are described by Birdsall-Jones and Shaw (2008:16) whose respondents explained that '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'.

These accounts suggest that overcrowding that results from external pressures is experienced quite differently from that associated with a cultural preference for shared living and dense household size. While the latter is an expression of agency and cultural identity, the former is an expression of marginalisation, exclusion and lack of choice. This distinction leads Birdsall-Jones and Shaw to argue for the need to distinguish overcrowding associated with cultural practices, such as visiting to attend 'Sorry day' ceremonies, and overcrowding that result from housing exclusion. The latter is caused by external social arrangements, beyond the control of the individual, while the former is derived internally from Indigenous culture (2008).

This analysis suggests that a distinction can be made between temporary mobility and homelessness. Temporary mobility is voluntary, culturally sanctioned and occurs in a context of housing stability. Homelessness is involuntary, problematic for Indigenous households, and occurs in a context of housing insecurity. While both are facilitated and regulated by the kinship system, in one case, mobility is the result of housing exclusion, but in the other it derives from culturally sanctioned practices. This is not to say that the effects of the housing affordability, and Indigenous housing exclusion exist in isolation from cultural factors. Rather, the two interact to create and maintain Indigenous disadvantage.

Yet, as in the analysis in the previous section, the clarity of this distinction may not be so evident. A study of town camps in Alice Springs identified staying too long as one of the bad things about having visitors. Their preference was for 'one or two nights

and then returning to the bush'. When asked to describe 'bad things' about having visitors, one town camp respondent reported 'difficulty controlling noise, fighting, people getting angry and domestic violence', 'giving us cheek'; 'start to humbug a lot of money, smokes and gunja'; 'They bring their in-laws and other people instead of coming themselves, then they stay too long and got no way of getting home' (Foster et al 2005:37). In this account there is no suggestion that the visitors do not have a home. The difficulty is that the whole household comes, they cause trouble, they stay too long, and they are unable to return home. This example exposes the opaqueness of motivations in the context of structural disadvantage. If people 'got no way of getting home' and overcrowding is experienced as stressful, especially if it threatens housing tenure, then 'someone must leave' so that temporary mobility segues into itinerancy whose voluntariness is far from clear.

4 THE POLICY CONTEXT

The housing implications of the temporary mobility of Indigenous populations has long been recognised by Commonwealth and State governments. However, the issue has taken on increased significance for SHAs in the context of the new National Partnership Agreements that underpin the Closing the Gap policy platform that commits Commonwealth and State governments to improvements in Indigenous housing outcomes (COAG 2007).

A major strategy for improving Indigenous housing outcomes is the mainstreaming of Indigenous housing, including the transformation of housing provision and management in regional and remote Indigenous communities. This includes changes to land tenure arrangements, a shift from Indigenous-controlled community housing to public housing provision, reformed tenancy arrangements, and the implementation of a hub and spoke model of service delivery with centralisation of infrastructure and services in regional centres.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing transfers responsibility for housing in remote Australia from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories (COAG, 2009). This makes SHAs the major deliverer of housing for Indigenous people across all jurisdictions and locations in Australia and increases the need for them to develop policies that engage with the effects of temporary mobility on Indigenous tenancy sustainability.

The nomination of priority remote Indigenous communities as part of the roll out of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, together with the National Partnership on Remote Service Delivery has raised questions about the future of many smaller remote communities that have not been awarded priority status, especially in the context of the promotion of the new model of service delivery. These developments have potential to increase population movement and churn between remote outstations and communities, small towns and regional centres as well as long-term migration (Taylor 2008; Appleton 2009, Tangentyere Council 2008). This chapter reviews these developments.

4.1 From CHIP to ARIA

Until 2007, in addition to mainstream public and community housing, social housing for Indigenous peoples was provided through two Indigenous-specific housing strands. The State owned and managed Indigenous housing program (SOMIH) and Indigenous community housing organisations (ICHOs) and, in New South Wales, Aboriginal Community Housing Providers. Most of the ICHOs were remotely located and closely associated with local Indigenous community councils. In 2008 in the Northern Territory, where all State and Commonwealth funds targeted for Aboriginal housing were directed to ICHOs, rather than the SOMIH sector, the proportion of Indigenous adults living in community housing was 63 per cent (Porter 2009:4).

Since 1992, delivery of housing and infrastructure to ICHOs was organised under the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) introduced this in 1982 with the aim of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are able to live in a location of their choice. Its introduction was a major support for the homelands movement which saw substantial growth in the resettlement by Indigenous peoples of remote parts of Australia (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007).

A review of the CHIP program in 2007 found that it had contributed to 'policy confusion, complex administration and poor outcomes and accountability of

Government funded housing, infrastructure and municipal services' and should be abolished (PriceWaterhouse 2007). CHIP was seen as an outmoded, inefficient and inappropriate model of housing service delivery, which was wasting taxpayers' money and failing to meet its goal of providing appropriate housing for remote Indigenous communities. The CHIP Review recommended that housing service delivery for this target group should be modernised, reformed and refocused. The recommended strategies for achieving this included:

- Mainstreaming housing provision by transferring responsibility for housing provision and management from ICHOs to public housing.
- Encouraging home ownership through measures including land tenure reform.
- Shifting infrastructure from remote areas to more centralised locations.

In response to these recommendations, the then Coalition Government replaced CHIP with the Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation Program (ARIA). The 2007–08 Federal budget included funding of \$293.6 million with a promise to increase housing investment in remote areas. Although partly superseded by the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (discussed below), ARIA remains in existence. Its features include a focus on facilitating Indigenous home ownership through changes to land tenure arrangements and government sponsored financial support schemes, such as the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land program (HOIL). These interventions seek to support Indigenous people living on community land to buy their own homes (Memmott et al 2009).

4.2 Land tenure reform

The main policy vehicle for land tenure reform is the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPRIH). The NAHA replaces the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Agreement (SAAP). The primary aim of the NAHA with regard to Indigenous housing is 'improving access by Indigenous people to mainstream housing, including home ownership' (Council of Australian Governments 2009b).

More direct impact on remote community housing is achieved by the NPRIH, which has established a ten-year remote Indigenous housing strategy aimed at:

- Significantly reducing severe overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities.
- Increasing the supply of new houses and improving the condition of existing houses in remote Indigenous communities.
- Ensuring that rental houses are well maintained and managed in remote Indigenous communities.

Source: Council of Australian Governments 2009a: part 2, clause 11.

The goal is to achieve 'normalised' service level standards in remote Indigenous communities with 'normalised' defined as a situation in which:

...a remote Indigenous community is serviced by municipal and essential services delivery arrangements that are accountable through an agreed framework and reflect a standard of service delivered to non-Indigenous people in communities of similar size and location' (Council of Australian Governments 2009a: Part 1, clause 10e).

One of the outputs required to achieve this goal is the:

progressive resolution of land tenure on remote community-titled land in order to secure Government and commercial investment, economic development opportunities and home ownership possibilities in economically sustainable communities (Council of Australian Governments 2009a: part 2, clause 13g).

To accomplish this, governments are requesting Aboriginal people residing on community-titled land to give government the right to lease that community-titled land on which housing and infrastructure currently exists, for a period of 40 years. The only alternative offered is the withdrawal of housing and infrastructure funding. The response to this request has been mixed. In Alice Springs, for example, the Tangentyere Council has consistently opposed proposals by successive Federal Governments to acquire 40-year leases over land on which town camps are situated (Graham 2009a). In Queensland, the Cape York Peninsula Land Councils have expressed confusion over the requirements of the NPRIH scheme (Barry 2009). But some communities have accepted Federal Government offers of service and infrastructure in exchange for land tenure agreements. These communities include Groote Elandt, Maningrida, and Wadeye in the Northern Territory (Macklin 2009a; 2009b).

4.3 Mainstreaming of Indigenous housing

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing provides \$5.5 billion of funding over 10 years to address severe housing shortages, overcrowding, homelessness and poor housing conditions in remote communities. Under the Agreement responsibility for Indigenous housing in remote Australia has been transferred from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories (COAG, 2009) making SHAs responsible for Indigenous housing across all jurisdictions and in all locations. As well as capital works (see below) State and Territory governments are required to implement standardised tenancy management and support in State owned housing 'consistent with public housing tenancy management' (COAG 2008:29).

How SHAs implement their expanded responsibility is being negotiated in each State with the extent of direct housing provision and management dependent on factors including the response of local Indigenous communities, the strength of the local ICHO sector, and the degree of remoteness. In Western Australia, the Department of Housing is providing housing infrastructure and housing management services to 2,400 houses in 140 discrete remote communities, with plans to extend its services to other communities deemed to be sustainable (DIA 2009:13). In the Northern Territory, Territory Housing will manage all new houses in remote locations provided by the New Remote Housing System. In South Australia, new housing and upgrades for remote communities will be managed by the South Australian Government's Office for Aboriginal Housing in their Department for Families and Communities. In Queensland, the 'one social housing policy' commits the State to a uniform system of public housing, with separate Indigenous programs. As a result, programs such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban rental program have been made consistent with the mainstream public housing policy framework. If ICHOs wish to access the \$60M provided to the Queensland government to upgrade houses currently managed by ICHOs they must either become a registered housing provider or transfer their housing assets to the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services).

Table 2: Percentage of Australia's Indigenous population living on homelands

<i>AUS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>NEW SOUTH WALES</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>TAS</i>
21.9	38.0	26.4	23.8	16.1	14.9	13.4	N/A

Adapted from Senate 2009:34

These changes affect large numbers of Indigenous individuals. Table 2 shows the proportions of the populations affected. Nationally it encompasses over one fifth of Australia's Indigenous population, including nearly 40 per cent of the Indigenous population in the Northern Territory and over one quarter of the population in Western Australia (Senate 2009:34).

In Victoria, the ICHO sector is predominantly located in urban and regional centres, with 20 ICHOs managing over 500 dwellings. The Victorian Office of Housing has invited each ICHO to participate in a process towards recognition under the Victorian housing framework. ICHOs will retain control and ownership of their properties, and have the option to register as a housing agency, partner with a registered housing agency, or accredit for housing services. Separate to the Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, the Victorian Office of Housing is working with Aboriginal Housing Victoria in a process of independence towards an integrated property and tenancy management business. AHV recently attained housing provider status and is aiming to become a housing association in the future.

4.4 A new service delivery model for regional and remote Indigenous communities

Included within the NPRIH is a commitment to improving access to affordable accommodation centres in regional centres to support employment, education and training opportunities in these areas. This forms part of a broader response to the CHIP Review's recommendation for greater centralisation of service delivery in remote and regional areas. The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery establishes a new service delivery model for Indigenous peoples living in remote communities. It provides a substantial injection of new funding to 26 remote communities, of which 15 will be in the Northern Territory, four in Cape York and the Gulf regions in Queensland, two in APY lands in South Australia, two in the Murdi Paaki region in western New South Wales, and three in Western Australia with at least two in the Kimberley (COAG 2008). The aim of this policy is to raise the standard and range of services provided to a level consistent with services provided to non-Indigenous Australians in similar sized and located communities. The communities have been selected on the basis of their potential for economic development with the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs referring to COAG's plan to 'maximise the role of priority communities as service hubs that support improved outcomes for both residents in those communities and those living in neighbouring areas' (Macklin 2009c).

These changes follow other shifts in Commonwealth and State and Territory governments' approaches to service provision in remote Indigenous communities with all levels of government directing infrastructure funding to larger communities deemed to be economically 'viable'. This policy direction is evidenced in the Commonwealth's Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Territory Government and in the Northern Territory Government's policy of not supporting the establishment of new outstations (Northern Territory Government 2008a).

4.5 Other policy changes: CDEP and income management

One of the mechanisms for improving Indigenous participation in the mainstream labour market has involved changes to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. In remote Indigenous communities, CDEP was the primary provider of employment. It is recognised as one of the factors that has suppressed migration from rural and remote communities to more densely populated areas (Taylor and Bell 1996). The provision of CDEP is now drastically curtailed. Positions judged to equate to employment in the formal economy are being converted to paid jobs. In locations with established economies, positions that do not meet the required criteria are being converted to unemployment programs, with Job Services Australia the main provider of employment services. Elsewhere, those currently receiving CDEP can continue until June 2011, while new participants will be required to apply for income support. To encourage those on unemployment programs to access jobs outside home communities, a mobility and accommodation allowance is provided, as well as support to maintain connection with home communities, through, for example, paid provision for visits home.

Compulsory income management has also been introduced in some remote Indigenous communities including the NTER prescribed areas, Cape York in Queensland and Kimberley and Cannington in Western Australia. This intervention involves quarantining 50 per cent of an individual's Centrelink payments for expenditure on essential items. The Second Report of the Senate Selection Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities (Senate 2009) suggests that income management will constrain mobility since many accounts can only be accessed from within their homeland communities.

4.6 The impact on remote communities

Within Indigenous communities, the available literature indicates that the response to some of these policy changes has been one of confusion and concern that they are taking 'us back to the old days of pushing us into towns' (Coyne 2009:8). Box 1 below provides a contextualised account of the impact of negotiations over government leases over community lands in three communities in Western Australia. It reveals high levels of anxiety about the future of their communities as well as the difficulties of negotiating with three levels of government. It also shows the determination of individuals within the community to maintain control over their communities despite having little room for manoeuvre.

A similar response is apparent in many of the submissions from Indigenous community organisations to the Reports of the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities (Senate 2008; 2009). These describe worries that the changes to CDEP will compromise the operation of the communities and broader concerns that the effect of changes to service provision and employment in remote and regional Indigenous communities will create population movement away from the smaller communities to larger population centres.

Income management also has implications for population mobility in remote and regional Australia. Submissions to the Second Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities (Senate 2009) describe the inconvenience of income management on daily life in remote communities. Inability to access funds at locations distant from home communities has also been identified as adding to the number of people from affected communities who become stranded and unable to return home after a journey away (Birdsall Jones pers. commun. 2009).

Box 1: The response of three Indigenous communities to 'normalisation'

Preliminary fieldwork in three Indigenous communities in the coastal area of northern Western Australia provides some indication of the difficulties that communities experience in negotiations aimed at normalisation of service provision. The communities are located on the northern coastline and hinterland of Western Australia. Mungullah is on the outskirts of Carnarvon, Burringurrah is near Mt Augustus, and the independent Indigenous community established by the Koorda Club is near Gascoyne Junction. Mungullah and Burringurrah are both field sites for this research.

The Western Australian Government had begun the process of seeking the agreement of each community to hand the State a 40-year lease over the town's buildings, which were held on community title. The initial reaction of the Mungullah and Burringurrah communities was one of alarm: 'The State just wants to take over all the Aboriginal people's land' they said. They badly needed repairs and upgrading on basic infrastructure, including street lighting and sewerage. They understood that without the lease the Department of Housing would refuse any funding for infrastructure. They said that once they signed the agreement they would lose the independence they had struggled to achieve over the 26 years of the community's existence and all the rental payments would go to the Department of Housing.

The mood of the community's Management Committee was grim as it prepared to meet with Department of Housing representatives in September 2009. Over two days an agreement was worked out that retained their existing housing officer, a portion of the rent moneys and repairs and upgrading for both the housing and the community infrastructure. They were very happy.

When the Western Australian Department of Housing went to negotiate with the Indigenous community at Gascoyne Junction in early September 2009, they were met by the community's management committee and its (pro bono) legal advisors. The questions they raised concerned the contrast between the State government's intended acquisition of a 40-year lease on community land and ordinary land and real estate practices (Graham 2009b; Graham 2009c; *National Indigenous Times* 2009).

The Burringurrah Community management committee was due to meet with the DoH representatives in early October, but had another set of difficulties to deal with. Ongoing difficulties with the community store had led the FaHCSIA appointed administrator to inform the Federal Government that the community was bankrupt. The community was informed that further Federal and State funding would be terminated which meant no funding for administration, housing maintenance and repair or community infrastructure apart from the supply of water and electricity. Only separately funded programs would remain, including the school, the health clinic, CDEP and a community maintenance officer. But two days later the town received a reprieve from the Shire CEO who, on being informed that Burringurrah would no longer be viable, stated:

'Oh that,' he said. 'That's not going to happen. Don't know whose bright idea it was, but whoever it was has no idea what's going on out there. We've got too much happening out there for it to just disappear. For a start, we've got a \$6 million police station going in out there, with all the telecommunications to go with it. They can't cancel Burringurrah now. Just not on.'

So Burringurrah Aboriginal Community was reprieved; at least until next time.

Concerns about the impact of these changes on population movement are reflected in media reports suggesting that the introduction of the Northern Territory Emergency

Intervention in 2007 created 'hot spots' of migration from remote areas to urban centres. A number of submissions to the NTER Review Board in 2008 also suggested that the disruption caused by the introduction of the NTER had led some individuals and families to move to local regional centres in numbers that stretched local services beyond their capacity (Taylor 2008). Population centres widely reported to be subject to this pressure on local services included Alice Springs, Darwin, Mt Isa and Coober Pedy.

These accounts are echoed in other reports on the impact of similar measures elsewhere. Liquor restrictions introduced at Fitzroy Crossing have been linked to an increase in the number of Indigenous people travelling to adjacent population centres unaffected by these restrictions (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). Submissions to the NTER describe how alcohol restrictions are associated with people travelling from remote communities to larger regional towns, taking their families with them and increasing demands on shelters and community organisations (Senate 2009:102).

The evidence to support claims that government policy changes have been driving increased levels of Indigenous mobility are scanty and contradictory. A qualitative study undertaken by Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation in 2007 in the early stages of the NTER found that over an eight-week period there was an estimated 20 per cent increase of public space dwellers living on Larrakia land in the Darwin area (Holmes et al 2007), but this finding is not supported by research undertaken by the Northern Territory Government Treasury over a similar period (in Taylor 2008). Taylor reports that the Northern Territory Treasury's analysis of administrative data including school enrolments, priority housing applications and sobering up shelter admissions for periods from 2003 to 2008 did not indicate an unusual rise in urban service episodes in 2007 relative to trends in the past five years (Taylor 2008:92).

Taylor also examined Centrelink data on customer monthly change of usual residence address on the assumption that this would provide a more direct indication of changes to rural-urban movements than the data used by the Northern Territory Treasury. His analysis concludes that 'however powerful the perception of urban drift in the Northern Territory, the fact is average annual growth of the Indigenous population resident in the Territory's main population centres of Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs over the past 20 years has not been markedly different from that recorded in the rest of the Territory'. He notes, however, the inadequacy of current research and the need for closer investigation of the relationship between policy change and Indigenous population movement (2008).

4.7 Summary

There are major reforms taking place in all areas of Indigenous social policy, with housing a central focus. These largely target remote areas, with a new service provision model for regional and remote Indigenous communities driven largely by COAG National Partnership agreements. This includes encouragement for the growth of regional centres, which will operate as service hubs for surrounding communities and a corresponding withdrawal of support for smaller remote Indigenous communities. Changes from ICHO managed housing to public housing represents a further transformation of the way housing is provided and managed in Indigenous communities. These are substantial changes and include the potential for Indigenous population movement into regional centres as well as increased population churn. Some of these movements may be voluntary migrations associated with labour market access, while others may be motivated by a combination of voluntary and involuntary responses to these developments. The impact is likely to be felt across the government and non-government housing sector including community housing, town

camps and crisis and transitional housing services. This situation indicates an urgent need for the social housing sector to develop a better understanding of how these developments will impact on remote communities, and on housing demand in regional centres. If State and Territory housing services are to frame appropriate service delivery responses, then reliable information must be collected.

Given substantial and consistent evidence of the strong ties that Indigenous peoples have to their homelands, it cannot be predicted that population movement will be in only one direction. The experience of history, as well as current research, suggests that Indigenous peoples will strive to maintain connection to their ancestral lands. Culturally motivated mobility is likely to be an ongoing feature of Indigenous lifestyles. The research also shows that housing stability does not act as a brake on commitment to culturally sanctioned temporary forms of mobility, but to some extent facilitates it. Rather than creating sedenterisation, for at least a proportion of the Indigenous population, secure housing provides a stable base which permits people to travel. The impact of stable housing on mobility also extends beyond the immediate household to the broader network of kin connections whose mobility trajectories are expanded as people travel longer distances to visit their relatives.

The mobility impacts of the changes in Indigenous housing provision and land tenure arrangements are especially relevant to SHAs since they now carry an enlarged responsibility for housing provision and management in remote Indigenous communities. It is among individuals from these communities that customary practices of temporary mobility have been shown to be strongest. SHAs therefore have a particularly urgent need to understand the significance of recent policy changes for tenancy sustainment. This is the subject of the next chapter.

5 HOUSING SERVICE IMPLICATIONS AND RESPONSES

Temporary mobility carries with it implications for many aspects of housing service delivery. This includes housing design and service planning, the location of services, and the mix of facilities including temporary, transitional and permanent housing as well as the targeting of specialised service needs, such as women and children. It requires the development of flexible policies and operational procedures that respond to cultural practices, such as attendance of Sorry Day ceremonies and co- or multi-locational residence in ways that support tenancy sustainability. Locating facilities for temporary visitors within existing mobility regions is also likely to improve the achievement of service goals. The complexity of temporary mobility means that such developments require careful planning in ways that take account of the diversity of needs and forms of mobility within the service population, as well as negotiation with stakeholders, including both the service population and local communities.

Although it is possible to generalise about the implications of temporary mobility for the provision of housing services, the significance of local factors such as history, geography, regional mobility patterns, and regional facilities, require locally developed solutions. What is important or possible in one area, may not be relevant to another. A central requirement for this is reliable information about the mobility patterns and population composition of the service population as well as an understanding of the motives impacting on temporary movement.

5.1 Housing design

Temporary mobility carries with it implications for housing design. These have been recognised in Commonwealth Government guidelines on the design of remote Indigenous housing (Commonwealth State and Territory Housing Minister's Working Group on Indigenous Housing 1999). These include features associated with the high number of visitors households often receive such as additional spaces for sleeping, wide verandas, with closed off areas and coverings that provide shelter from rain, fenced yards, more than one food preparation and toilet area with screens to prevent observation of entering and exiting, robust fixtures and fittings and more regular maintenance schedules. Environments need to be child friendly with adequate, lockable and childproof storage facilities.

The most recent review of Indigenous housing design in remote areas does not directly address the design implications of Indigenous patterns of mobility, but many recommendations are made in the context of the moral economy of kinship and the high occupancy levels and turnover of population that accompany this (Fien et al 2008). It notes that in considering housing design it is important not to focus on generalised numbers, but on the 'family groups who need a house with particular qualities' (Fien et al 2008:59). In some locations, avoidance relationships may be a consideration as well as kin membership, age and gender. In this case, structures should provide areas for separate living as well as shared social spaces such as verandas and yards so that people can occupy the same building without creating stressful situations (Fien et al. 2008).

The same principles apply in the planning of transitional and temporary accommodation where cultural norms may require separate provision for unmarried men and women as well as facilities that provide for avoidance relationships.

Although all these requirements may not apply in urban settings, there is certainly a need for larger houses with extra bedrooms and/or large verandas, which can accommodate visits from kin.

5.2 Service planning

Developing strategies for addressing temporary mobility requires reliable information about temporary and longer-term patterns and trends within service catchment areas. This point has been consistently made by Taylor (1998; 2006; 2008). He explains that 'greater predictability in the estimation of future policy needs in such regions requires a detailed examination of which groups in and around cities contribute most to population movement and their effect on the demographic structure and socioeconomic status of the regional population' (2006:19-20). Variables should include numbers, duration, times and locations of journeys, as well as the composition of the population. This information needs to be collected routinely by SHAs, and with short data capture periods, of at least three months or less.

An important concept developed by Taylor is that of the service population. This can be defined as the residents and non-residents who are, on average, likely to be present in a dwelling at any given time in the course of a year (Taylor 2006:28). It is distinct from the resident population in that it takes account of temporary visitors. Prout (2008b:25) suggests that where the difference between these two figures is high, funding should be provided to account for this. This kind of mobility index should be built into funding models enabling resources to be directed at areas such as Coober Pedy, which is a key stopping place for the highly mobile Indigenous populations travelling from Pitjantjatjara lands. It is especially important for town camps where the number of visitors is far higher than in mainstream housing.

Some forms of mobility places are difficult to predict, but others are predictable and open to calculation and service planning. Obvious examples are routine visits to regional centres for essential services, influxes associated with regular sporting and cultural events and with seasonal weather patterns. Accurate enumeration would provide the foundation for improving services. For example, tenancy management procedures could provide for the pressures on SHA tenants to accommodate kin during these periods with supports available to ensure that these do not lead to tenancy failure. Temporary forms of accommodation, appropriately designed to accommodate the variety of needs, could also be planned in areas identified as subject to population pressures.

This kind of information is especially important for the 26 remote locations designated as regional centres by the National Partnership on Service Delivery in Remote Australia. Identifying changes in the volume of population movement to these locations, the duration of visits, and the composition of the population, will enable SHAs to understand how Indigenous communities are responding to the new facilities and the impact of the other policies being implemented in homeland communities. For the same reason, it is equally important to identify and monitor population movement to other population centres historically subject to this kind of population change.

Improved data collection would also enable services to identify the pattern of temporary mobility that prevails within the region. This would enable facilities to be provided to areas accurately, where they are needed and therefore most likely to be used. This point was made by a number of Indigenous community organisations and NGOs in their submissions to the Second Senate Select Committee's Report on Regional and Remote Housing (Senate 2009) as part of their concerns about the selection of the Indigenous communities designated as service hubs. They suggested that if this were not done the service centres would be under-utilised by the targeted

populations in surrounding areas. Conversely, if housing is located at existing sites of temporary population movement it should assist SHAs in their management of overcrowding of Indigenous tenancies in these areas.

5.3 Community consultation

The need to develop services in consultation with Indigenous communities and stakeholders is strongly emphasised in the literature. The absence of consultation increases the likelihood that services will not be appropriately planned and implemented and risk under-utilisation. SHAs need to establish mechanisms that encourage Indigenous involvement in service planning and implementation as well as one-off procedures related to specific service developments. To minimise the risk of 'consultation burn-out', especially among individuals who are frequent spokespersons for their communities, consultation needs to be well planned and to cover as many areas as possible in one program. Linking it to tangible results is also highly beneficial so that the benefits of the process are visible and encourage future engagement.

Consultation is also required if data sharing arrangements with services, departments and agencies are being considered. It is also a requirement for the establishment of databases on population movement. Over-surveying of Indigenous populations is a well-established ethical issue (NHMRC 2003) and contributes to Indigenous disengagement from mainstream Australian institutions. However, this needs to be balanced against the need for accurate information for effective service planning and provision. Sensitive consultation with Indigenous stakeholders is therefore essential.

5.4 Flexible policies and practice

The administrative arrangements of social housing providers have long been identified as a barrier to Indigenous housing access and a contributor to itinerancy and homelessness (Keys Young 1998:v). Lengthy housing application procedures that require applicants to identify a permanent address and to remain for the duration of the process can be problematic for highly mobile populations. So are inflexible application policies that require individuals who do not respond to offers to commence the procedure again (Habibis et al 2007). The exclusionary effect is particularly acute among first-time visitors from remote areas who lack both the experience and understanding of the requirements of mainstream housing services. Unstable accommodation arrangements, language barriers, and distrust of mainstream services are also implicated in lack of engagement with housing services (Roberts & Burgess 2004).

Temporary mobility also contributes to poor housing histories preventing eligibility for State-run housing programs. A failure to conform to requirements for notification of absence due to sudden departure to attend Sorry business, or because of hospital admission, can lead to rent arrears and unpaid repair bills for damage caused by other occupants following the tenant's departure. Most SHAs require these to be erased or substantially reduced before public housing eligibility can be re-established. Rent arrears can also accumulate if tenants leave without terminating their tenancy.

More flexible policies in relation to housing debt, occupancy levels, undeclared occupants and termination arrangements would reduce the levels of tenancy failure. Protocols for the management of space during periods of high usage, such as ceremonies and the football season, would also reduce breaching of tenancy agreements due to overcrowding.

Where SHAs take over responsibility for Indigenous housing from ICHOs in remote locations, they will also need to develop more flexible policies, which account for forms of residence that fall outside of existing categories. In particular, they will need

to provide ways of addressing bi-locational and multi-locational residence in which their tenants may wish to maintain more than one place of residence (Prout 2008b:8).

5.4.1 Housing service responses

Tenancy management represents one of the major areas of difference between State housing provision and Indigenous community housing. Documentation on the tenancy management practices of ICHOs is scant, a point noted in the CHIP review (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2007:21). Insofar as the review considers tenancy management this is defined solely in relation to tenancy allocation, preparing lease arrangements, managing rent collection and co-ordination of repairs rather than in relation to practices that support tenancy sustainment. Although Eringa et al's analysis of the capacity of ICHOs (Eringa et al 2008) provides more insight into their operation and management practices there is little detail of policies on tenancy management relevant to temporary mobility.

Within Commonwealth and State housing services the contribution of some housing access and tenancy management practices to exclusion from public housing and high rates of Indigenous tenancy failure is recognised. Some SHAs are providing more flexible policies on housing access, tenancy occupation, as well as employment of Indigenous staff and cross-cultural training programs. Measures of relevance to the implications of mobility for tenancy management and housing access employed by SHAs include:

- A reduction in the eligibility period for Indigenous migrants by Housing ACT.
- In Western Australia, public housing policy development is being undertaken in the context of the Equal Opportunity Commission investigation into discrimination in public housing against Aboriginal peoples. The *Finding a Place* report (Equal Opportunity Commission 2004) made far-reaching recommendations that are now being implemented by the Department of Housing and Works, in partnership with the Commission. One result has been the introduction of more flexible policies in relation to tenants who breach administrative requirements due to absence on family practices, such as Sorry business or law days. For example, tenants receive several reminders before the rental subsidy ceases. There is also a debt moratorium to assist Indigenous tenants to pay off debts that have accrued from previous tenancies. This offers a substantial discount off the debt once a lump sum is paid and arrangements are made to pay off the remainder in instalments.
- In New South Wales, the New South Wales Department of Housing provides Indigenous public housing tenants with an extra bedroom on request as well as a house with an extra bedroom in recognition of their cultural obligation to provide for relatives or friends.

5.5 Service needs of remote communities

In remote communities, temporary mobility contributes to overcrowding although this is principally framed in Indigenous policy as caused by severe housing shortages in these areas. Reducing this is a core goal of the National Agreements relating to services in remote and regional Australia. In the Northern Territory, the rollout of the Strategic Housing and Infrastructure Program to 73 remote Indigenous Communities is aimed at addressing this. It will provide 750 new houses, 230 rebuilds and 2,500 refurbishments by 2013 (Macklin 2009b). Given the role of housing in facilitating the maintenance of kinship ties (Birdsall 1988), it is possible that these communities will experience an increase in temporary visitors, especially if housing in other locations is not similarly developed.

This, together with the consistency in the strength of Indigenous connection to country, is likely to create a need for temporary accommodation in these areas as well as in locations not designated viable. Recent research equating homelands with positive health and social outcomes is associated with their portrayal as places of healing, and individual and cultural renewal. This is apparent from studies that identify health benefits associated with traditional lifestyles (McDermott 1998; Andreasan & Hoy 2009; Garnett et al 2007; Rowley et al 2008) as well as other studies, which describe how remote and very remote communities offer an antidote to the stresses of more densely populated areas (Morice 1976).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, suggests provision of healing camps and cultural events should be supported to allow connection with country. He argues that these could play a role in returning to Indigenous people a sense of dignity, identity and spiritual wholeness (HREOC 2007). Fien et al (2008) also suggest that transient cultural sites need to be developed in and around remote communities. This is especially relevant in light of suggestions for the establishment of bush 'healing camps' for Aboriginal men, including men's shelter and short-term drying out facilities (Coyne 2008).

Such visits are likely to be of a temporary nature and carry with them a need for temporary housing. Temporary accommodation should be planned to fit the location and should involve service users in design and provision. Forms of community housing need to reflect the context, climate and purpose. In remote areas, building ablution blocks, shelters and demountables could be provided for visitors. Visitors' camps could assist in problems of overcrowding and occupation of unsafe or unhealthy structures. These provisions should meet environmental health and safety standards. Fien et al (2008) describe the temporary shelter for visitors in Maningrida in the Northern Territory as 'chicken coops'. These are large, open walled sheds which provide shelter for visitors from outstations who stay for months at a time to escape being cut off in their outstations during the wet season. One of the difficulties facing temporary housing provision is that the acute shortage of housing in many remote communities means that temporary homes become permanent, adding further to the stock of sub-standard housing in use by Indigenous populations and blocking their intended use. For this reason, simply building more temporary facilities cannot be undertaken without also meeting the need for more permanent homes.

Fien et al suggest a cluster model of housing 'based on a range of house and/or room sizes on enlarged blocks' (2008:53). Separate family groupings can be accommodated on the same block, but in different buildings. Separate living spaces could also provide for different generations and groups of young men and girls (2008:60).

The availability of transport to and from regional and remote communities plays an important role in reducing or increasing the poor housing outcomes associated with Indigenous mobility. A number of submissions to the second report of the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities describe the poorly serviced roads that connect these outstations with regional towns, and the difficulty of finding adequate transport for visits to and from regional towns (Senate 2009). There are also accounts of Indigenous people visiting towns from remote areas becoming trapped there as lack of money, inexperience of city life and language barriers make return home difficult. This is associated with a high level of injury. The AIHW identifies a high rate of transport-related injury among Indigenous peoples, which is partly caused by their use of poorly serviced cars in remote communities (2008). Submissions to the Senate Select Committee (2009:103) also describe how alcohol restrictions result in drinking areas being established outside prescribed

communities in places often located close to highways; putting people are risk of being hit by passing vehicles. There is a need for services that assist people to return to their homeland communities through strategies such as vouchers, and cheap transport such as shared community vehicles.

The transport needs associated with mobility to and from remote communities is to some extent supported by 'return to country' programs operated by the States or Indigenous community organisations. These include the Community Harmony strategy in Darwin, a service operated by Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs, and the Safe Tracks program in South Australia, which is described in more detail below.

5.6 Migrants

Indigenous in-migration from rural and remote areas to capital cities and regional towns and cities is likely to increase. This trend is identified by Taylor (2006) and is also likely due to the youthful age structure of the Indigenous population as well as changes to CDEP and the effects of the National Agreements relating to regional and remote Australia.

In Canada, Indigenous people moving to Winnipeg for the first time were found to be more vulnerable than those who had previously visited, because they lacked the knowledge and the networks necessary to negotiate the new environment (Distasio & Sylvester 2004). While there are no Australian studies that have specifically focused on the needs of newly arrived migrants from remote areas to urban ones, the research that does exist points to similar problems. The difficulties identified include language barriers, lack of familiarity with services, and lack of the tenancy sustainment skills necessary in towns and cities (Flatau et al 2009).

Living skills programs need to be provided that cover environmental health, care of fixtures and fittings, use of equipment including toilets and stoves, basic repair strategies for electrical and plumbing, provision of cleaning kits and communal tool kits as well money management skills and peer support to help overcome problems of loneliness and isolation (Fien et al 2008:34; Walker and Ireland 2003). Tenancy management skills are also essential, especially in the first weeks of arrival. Other forms of support include a range of accommodation options including hostel and transitional housing. Information about essential services including housing also needs to be provided, together with translation services. Such services are especially important for young people who lack experience of managing independent living.

Providing for the needs of migrants requires policies that provide clear, operational definitions that distinguish between temporary mobility and migration. This distinction also needs to be reflected in budget commitments.

5.6.1 Housing service responses

Both mainstream and Indigenous housing organisations provide living skills programs. In the Northern Territory, Territory Housing is collaborating with an Indigenous community organisation to provide support and living skills programs to Indigenous public housing tenants. A similar initiative is being undertaken by HomesWest through the In-Home Practical Support Program.

Other initiatives addressing the needs of migrants in the Northern Territory include a reduction in the eligibility period for public housing for Indigenous people seeking permanent accommodation. Territory Housing's Community Harmony Strategy involves Larrakia Nation working with elders to develop protocols for respect for Larrakia country. Strategies include an information and referral service for itinerant groups, assisting itinerants to return to their homelands, and support to find suitable

housing (Northern Territory Government 2008). There are also plans to establish a Tenancy Advice Service which will provide a single contact point for information on housing options, financing, training and relationship building.

In Western Australia, HomesWest has a number of programs and policies targeting Indigenous migrants. These include:

- The relaxation of policies on establishing identity for public housing applications.
- Support and referral of Indigenous individuals unaware of their income support entitlements.
- A review of assessment procedures for public housing to ensure that clients are not disadvantaged as a result of 'living on the land'.
- A Tenancy Support and Skills Development Program within Aboriginal Housing. This also funds Aboriginal organisations to provide culturally appropriate advocacy support services and serves as a mechanism for community consultation on urban housing issues.
- In Queensland, there are two state government programs focusing on migrants moving from rural and remote locations to urban ones. The Off Communities Investment Project is an accelerated program to house applicants on the Housing Register who are currently living in Yarrabah or Cherbourg or on Palm Island, and wish to relocate away from these communities to areas with improved access to housing, employment opportunities, education and health services. In 2007, the Queensland Government invested \$16.5M to buy accommodation to provide out-of-turn housing solutions for eligible applicants. An additional \$5M was provided for the 2008–09 financial year.

The Community Mobility Project (Townsville) and the Gunya Support Program (Cairns) are part of an initiative over three years by the Department of Communities. The aim is to improve access to education, training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have relocated to Cairns and Townsville from Mona Mona or as part of the Off Communities Investment Project. The program uses a case management framework to support clients to sustain tenancies and access services that will help them overcome any barriers limiting their participation in the workforce.

5.7 Temporary accommodation

Inadequate temporary accommodation for Indigenous people places pressure on homelessness services with a significant proportion of the demand for crisis and transitional accommodation related to unmet need for this (KeysYoung 1998).

Temporary visitors require short-stay accommodation, such as hostels and transitional camps in ways that take account of the needs of demographic sub-groups and their related service needs. In regional centres these include the regular visits families make for goods unavailable in their local communities and for entertainment; family members visiting relatives attending for long-term educational, training, employment and health services.

These facilities need to be planned on the basis of reliable information about population movement and the demographic composition of the service population. Other considerations include the development of service and inter-agency agreements as well as Indigenous organisations. Clear identification of service goals, target groups, and eligibility, and priority criteria are also necessary as well as the management of relationships. For example, should families and single people be housed within the same facility and should single people be segregated according to

gender? If so, how will single adults travelling with kinfolk be managed? What provision will be made for customary relationships between different language groups?

Other planning considerations include the location of the facility, which must take account of the views of the local community and Indigenous preferences. If the hostel is too far out of town, for example, this could impede reasonable access to centrally located services. There are also operational issues, such as whether or not alcohol consumption will be permitted.

Local factors are also critical, including local mobility patterns, the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous housing services, funding considerations, agency arrangements, demographic variables, and spatial considerations such as the availability and location of a building or land. For example, in Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, there is considerable movement between the city and the Aboriginal community of Leonora, around 250 kilometres north. The main streets of the suburb of Boulder is one of the sites that some of these visitors stay in overnight. The local Council responded to the associated health needs of these temporary visitors with provision of 'bush camp' facilities comprising an ablution block and a supply of firewood. However, the area became identified in the media as a place of substance abuse and associated violence that threatened the health and safety of adults and children. The local Council sought State government funding to develop the site as a short stay facility for visiting Indigenous people. When successive attempts failed, the Council withdrew its support for the facility altogether (Haslam McKenzie 2009:57-8).

5.7.1 Housing service responses

Responsibility for the provision of Indigenous temporary accommodation is spread across a wide range of State, Commonwealth and local agencies but the principal targeted program is provided by the Commonwealth Government agency, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL). To the extent that the requirement for temporary accommodation overlaps with homelessness, then States have responsibility through their role in implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Other State and Commonwealth agencies also have a role, including health, mental health, employment, education and aged care and disabilities. Local Government is implicated through its management of public land and its registration and support of facilities, such as caravan parks and bush camps. Within the community sector, Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations are also providers of temporary accommodation, either directly or through the Commonwealth Government's Community Hostel Grants program operated through AHL Ltd.

The Keys Young report into Indigenous homelessness identified the high level of unmet need for culturally appropriate temporary accommodation for Indigenous populations as one of the causes of homelessness (Keys Young 1998:v). Ten years later there are some strategies, but they are relatively few. The literature suggests that within the Indigenous community housing sector there are responses, but little is known about what these are or how they operate.

Aboriginal Hostels Ltd

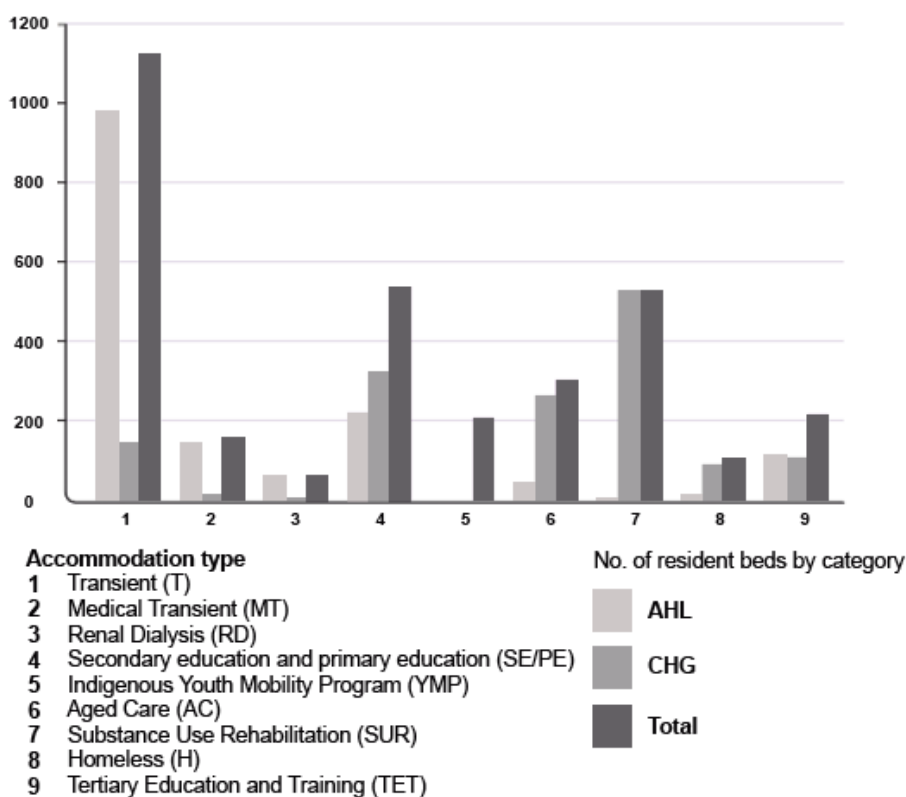
Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) provides provision for temporary accommodation for Indigenous populations. AHL is a Commonwealth Government Agency whose role is to provide a culturally supportive network for Indigenous temporary accommodation. It is operated and staffed by Indigenous people. Established in 1973, it operates through a combination of direct service provision and subsidies to community-operated hostels through the Community Hostel Grants program. Total resourcing in 2006-07 was \$45.5 million. It also researches emerging needs and consults with local communities.

The program operates 142 hostels and, in 2007, provided 3,300 beds each night. AHL provides a culturally supportive network where most staff and all residents are Indigenous people. In 2006–07, occupancy levels averaged between 70 to 75 per cent.

The program covers a range of specialised services:

- *Homeless hostels* provide accommodation for homeless young people and adults and support to develop life skills for independent living.
- *Transient hostels* provide short-term accommodation in towns and cities for people and families seeking permanent housing and employment, as well as those attending for services and commitments away from their homes and communities. It also provides for homeless people.
- *Medical transient hostels* provide accommodation and support for individuals and their families accessing medical treatment in towns and cities.
- *Primary, secondary and tertiary education hostels* provide accommodation for students studying away from home.
- *The Indigenous Youth Mobility Program* provides for young persons aged 16-24 who are participating in education, training and employment programs under the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations Indigenous Youth Mobility Program.
- *The Substance Use Rehabilitation Program* provides accommodation for young people and adults, and their family, accessing treatment programs (Limited 2008).

Figure 3: Comparison of Aboriginal Hostels and Community Hostels Grant Provision



Source: Aboriginal Hostels Ltd 2008 *Annual Report 2007-8*, Australian Government, Canberra:14

Figure 3 above shows that the majority of temporary accommodation is provided directly by AHL for 'transients', followed by secondary and primary education and substance use rehabilitation. Secondary and primary education, IYMP and substance use rehabilitation accommodation are principally provided through the grants program. Provision for renal dialysis and homelessness are both very low.

Occupancy rates range from 29 per cent to 100 per cent and vary by sector, with direct provision by AHL Ltd the highest.

The Keys Young Report (1998:vi) identified three limitations on the ability of AHL to address the needs of homeless people. These included:

- A shortage of AHL hostels in some areas.
- Costs that were beyond the capacity of some Indigenous people, especially when they had to pay 'up-front'.
- Lack of support staff for people in crisis or in need of support.

Since then, there has been some expansion, with the number of hostels increasing from 135 to 143 and an expansion of targeted programs including the IYMA, substance use rehabilitation, transient and homelessness programs. In 2007–08, the number of beds available within the AHL program was 3,219 compared with 3,000 in 1998 (AHL 2008:12; Keys Young 1998:53).

Pilbara Community Visitors Strategy

In the Pilbara, in Western Australia, the Pilbara Government Managers Indigenous Forum has been developing the Pilbara Community Visitors Strategy since 2006. This aims to provide an integrated response to an increase in Indigenous migrants to regional towns as well as an increase in itinerancy in the area around Port Hedland, following the recommendations of the Port Hedland Service Gap Analysis and Policy Report. The aims of the strategy are to:

- Provide assistance to a pathway out of a transient lifestyle by provision of existing support programs and outreach services via agency agreements and collaboration.
- Support appropriate accommodation to meet the short-term needs of community visitors from remote communities and crisis needs of current campers and homeless on the CBD fringes.
- Recognise that the trend has impacted upon student attendance at remote independent and government schools, and results in non-attendance while students are in regional centres.
- Develop and implement new support services to deal with identified issues of intoxication through increased support to community patrols.
- Recognise that Indigenous people are in towns for various reasons and can become stranded, particularly after being discharged from systems (medical, courts), and that transport is a considerable factor in responding effectively to visitors.
- Recognise that the TLO's (traditional land-owners) speak for this country and that agreed cultural protocols for visiting town-based country need to be developed.

The Strategy involves five areas of development:

- Provision of a managed camping area.
- Community patrols.

- Support for students.
- Provision of transport.
- Cultural protocols and community engagement.

Source: Department of Indigenous Affairs 2006.

In South Australia, Housing SA administers the Safe Tracks Program in coordination with a range of government and non-government services. It is a response to the movement of Anangu travelling between remote communities to regional centres. There are two Transitional Accommodation Centres—Wangk's Wilurra at Ceduna, and Lakeview at Port Augusta. These facilities are open 24/7 and employ staff with local knowledge and language skills. They provide *wiltja*, facilities for short stay accommodation, assist clients into alternative housing, and help them return to their home community. They also facilitate access to local government and non-government services and agencies.

In Western Australia, HomesWest provides a free, Homeless Helpline available 24/7 for itinerants, operated in conjunction with the Salvation Army Careline, which takes after hours calls and the Crisis Care Line operated by the Department of Community Development. This provides a coordinated response to Indigenous homelessness and itinerancy, working across welfare and government agencies, including direct links with SAAP and private service providers of crisis accommodation support.

Other measures under consideration by the Department of Housing and Infrastructure include:

- Improved communication to tenants through greater use of local, regional and national Indigenous press and other specialised newsletters to ensure that people are not indirectly discriminated due to a temporary transience.
- Delay of backdating of rent increases until repeated attempts to make contact with Indigenous tenants have failed.

In the ACT, the *Homelessness Report* recognises the needs of transient populations coming into the ACT (ACT Department of Disability Housing & Community Services 2003). Housing ACT is introducing an Indigenous Housing Assistance Program that will cater for the cross-border and mobility needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Alice Springs temporary accommodation

As part of its Alice Springs Transformation Plan, the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have announced a joint initiative to provide three new short to medium managed accommodation facilities in Alice Springs targeting people requiring renal treatment, transitional accommodation and additional beds within an existing facility operated by the Salvation Army (Knight, Snowdon & Hampton 2009).

Tangentyere Council

In 2003, Tangentyere Council proposed a comprehensive strategy to address the impact of visitors to the Alice Springs Town camps in collaboration with the Central Land Council, ATSIC, Ljere. Artepe, Four Corners Council and Alice Springs Town Council (Tangentyere Council 2003).

5.8 Population sub-groups

Within the Indigenous population there are a number of groups with specific temporary housing needs. The requirement for accommodation can vary from an overnight stay to semi-permanent periods. These include health, criminal justice, education and training and employment related services.

Within the health sector, there are a number of health conditions that require regular or continuous attendance at larger regional centres. The prevalence of chronic disease, unacceptably high within the Indigenous population as a whole, increases in prevalence towards the remote end of the settlement continuum. Indigenous:non-Indigenous ratios for lung cancer are 0.6 for men and women; 1:8 for Ischaemic heart diseases (males); 1:6 for stroke (males); 6:2 for diabetes (females) and 21:4 for end stage renal disease (females) (SCRGSP 2007). High levels of substance use also create a need for attendance at treatment clinics. Most remote communities and small regional towns have one or more individuals who require bi-weekly or more dialysis treatment. For many, the distance, cost and unavailability of transport mean they must move to the facility to receive it, with other family members either visiting them or also staying with them. The requirement for accommodation includes not only the individual in need of treatment, but also family carers who may stay with them and other kin who visit. Inability to access appropriate accommodation can lead service users to return to their home community and severely endangering their health (Habibis et al 2007).

Pre- and neo-natal service needs sometimes require Indigenous women to stay for lengthy periods in regional centres and they can find themselves unable to sustain or find appropriate housing, with subsequent damage to health. In 2008, in the Barkly region around Tennant Creek, expectant women were forced to travel to Alice Springs because of a lack of local services, preventing involvement of partners and family at the time of the birth (Koori Mail 2008).

Students require integrated service provision. One of the responses of the Commonwealth Government to inadequate education provision in remote settlements is to establish education boarding facilities in regional centres. A similar requirement for long-term travel away from home is being developed as part of proposed changes to CDEP. These measures necessitate planning for appropriate travel to and from the home communities, for contact with family and kin, and for programs to facilitate adjustment to urban living. Employment and training programs also need to consider the accommodation and housing support needs of young people on low incomes, who will face the housing sustainability challenges common to all young people establishing an independent life, but without the support networks or cultural knowledge that their non-Indigenous counterparts usually possess.

Women and children escaping unsafe situations in the home are a further group. Cooper & Morris (2005) identified high levels of mobility among Indigenous women and children in response to domestic violence, and argued that this stressful situation is compounded by disconnection from local communities as well as poor access to housing services due to cultural differences. Despite eligibility for priority housing they can still face considerable barriers to accessing appropriate housing and in adjusting to urban life when they first arrive in their new environment (Walker & Ireland 2003; Cooper & Morris 2005). Language barriers, difficulties accessing income, and the sustainability of new arrangements can be compounded by demand sharing and humbug (Walker & Ireland 2003). Early intervention and a range of supports are needed to assist them and their children to negotiate their new environment and prevent homelessness and entrenched difficulties.

The extreme over-representation of Indigenous individuals in juvenile and criminal justice services requires a presence in major towns and cities for both short and prolonged periods of time. Court attendance, payment of fines, legal aid, imprisonment and detention can require presence in a town or city for weeks, months, or years. During these periods, when individuals are likely to need support, they may be cut off from their families, increasing their social isolation. Families and communities may be many miles away, and if they do come to visit, they may have nowhere suitable to stay and instead live in some form of homelessness. When individuals leave detention or prison they may have lost the cultural skills they need to negotiate the rental housing market, making them vulnerable to homelessness. Transition programs that bridge the dependence enforced by incarceration and assist in the establishment of independent living is required.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that older people, especially older men, are an important target group. These individuals may have never established a stable home and so become dependent on relatives for somewhere to stay and may be asked to move on (Birdsall pers. commun. 2009). They require programs that will meet their immediate needs for safe, affordable and appropriate shelter as well as longer-term solutions in the form of transitional and permanent housing. However, there appears to have been little investigation of how this group can be assisted into culturally appropriate stable housing.

Older people whose health does not permit them to maintain independent living also require social support and access to health services. In many remote communities there is little health care, so if older people become frail and can no longer maintain independent living they must settle in towns and villages where the more specialised, and long-term care they need is available. Culturally sensitive accommodation services are required, ideally located close to the community where they live.

These programs need to be developed in the context of the youthful composition of the Indigenous age structure. High fertility and mortality rates create a large proportion of young people and a relatively small proportion of older people, the reverse of the non-Indigenous distribution. Taylor estimates that the growth in the number of Indigenous young people aged 15-24 years will grow by almost 20 per cent in the period 2001 to 2016. The growth is even greater in the prime working age group aged 25-64 years. Over the same period, this group will have grown by 34 per cent, from 15,644 individuals to around 20,644 (Taylor 2002).

5.8.1 Housing service responses

The ACT's 2003 *Homelessness Report* identifies the need for supported accommodation of transient populations, men and women leaving custody, or involved with the criminal justice system, or who require support for substance use. The action plan identifies support as including case management, connecting people to community and essential services, such as mental health, alcohol and drug, emergency assistance, advocacy, tenancy management and financial advice and support to provide assistance as and when it is required (ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services 2003:10).

In the Northern Territory, there are plans to provide a facility for Indigenous Territory housing tenants receiving renal treatment, using a community housing model. Other initiatives include the development of a collaborative approach to provide a range of supported residential facilities for people with special needs, including remote community patients receiving treatment in rural areas and the expansion of programs to support Indigenous young people and single parents.

The Indigenous organisation, Wunan Foundation, which operates in the East Kimberley, offers an innovative program that combines employment and training with accommodation facilities and is supported by the West Australian Government.

5.9 Cross-jurisdiction partnerships

Mobility practices are not contained within State and Territory borders generating a requirement for SHAs to develop cross-jurisdiction protocols and partnership (Memmott et al 2006). The NTER saw population movement from the Northern Territory over the border to Queensland and Western Australia. Current efforts to develop a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous policy need to extend to the establishment of protocols for collaboration that traverse State and Territory borders. Regions where this applies include APY lands, which cover South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia and other areas between the Northern Territory and Queensland, and between Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

6 CONCLUSION

Temporary mobility is not inherently problematic for housing services. This is especially the case in market economies whose inherent flexibility enables adjustment to meet the diversity of market demands. Nor is the combination of temporary mobility and cultural difference necessarily a challenge. Different patterns of housing demand are integral to multicultural societies. What is critical to Indigenous temporary mobility is the context of structural disadvantage in which it takes place, as well as its implications for Indigenous cultural survival. It is the clustering of cultural difference, Indigenous reliance on social housing, low economic resources, the visibility of some forms of Indigenous homelessness and itinerancy and the combination of Indigenous resistance to, and rejection by, mainstream housing services that makes developing effective responses challenging.

Within the social housing sector, the existence of temporary mobility and its role as an expression of Indigenous culture, as well as its effects on poor housing access and housing instability is understood. Less understood is the way temporary mobility articulates with homelessness, leading to difficulties disentangling the two. Social housing providers see the effects of temporary mobility on overcrowding and subsequent tenancy failure, but lack the infrastructure and strategies to prevent this. The effects of seasonal migration on the number of Indigenous individuals and families living in public spaces such as riverbeds and parks is also visible, but programs that provide for the diverse needs of these groups are lacking. Unanticipated influxes of Indigenous populations into regional towns and urban centres are experienced as service pressures, but improved understanding of the motives for this and its implications for medium- to long-term housing demand is needed. This kind of population movement is especially challenging when it involves cross, or tri-State borders.

The National Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing requires the States to provide 'standardised tenancy management and support consistent with public housing tenancy management' (COAG 2009). How this is interpreted in light of the different forms of spatial practices that prevail in remote regions of Australia will be a critical factor in achieving the 'closing the gap' policy goal. The effects are potentially far-reaching given the size of the Indigenous population living in these areas.

There are policies within Commonwealth and State and Territory housing programs that go some way towards accommodating the temporary mobility of Indigenous populations. These include support programs for new migrants to urban environments, including life skills programs, translation services, the employment of Indigenous workers and specialised support services. There are also some Return to Country programs that assist visitors to return to their homelands. As well, there are, in varying stages of development, initiatives to support the housing and transport needs of temporary visitors to regional towns located within recognised mobility areas. However, provision is limited, patchy and inconsistent and, in remote settings, public housing providers may be poorly prepared to deal with people who live 'between places' (Memmott et al 2006).

In planning for temporary mobility and the potential for increased Indigenous urbanisation, social housing providers need to address the probability that population movement will be bi-directional, with at least a proportion of the Indigenous population maintaining their connection with homeland communities. Both new arrivals to regional centres who lack experience of urban environments, and temporary visitors to remote Indigenous communities, require housing and related services.

The historical background of Indigenous disengagement from mainstream housing services exacerbates these issues. Memories of negative experiences, and resistance to requirements for behavioural change, necessitate policies that provide for the engagement of Indigenous communities and that are responsive to cultural realities. Policy developments also need to be managed against the expectations and demands of the non-Indigenous community, which is not always sympathetic to the needs of Indigenous individuals and communities.

Practical measures to address these complex issues include improving data collection procedures as a preliminary to reliable analysis of current and future service demand. This is especially important for the 26 remote locations designated as regional centres by the National Partnership on Service Delivery in Remote Australia. Identifying changes in the volume of population movement to these locations, the duration of visits, and the composition of the population, will enable SHAs to understand how Indigenous communities are responding to the new facilities and the impact of the other policies being implemented in homeland communities. It is equally important to identify and monitor population movement to other population centres historically subject to this kind of population change.

Employing the concept of the service population, rather than the residence population, when calculating service demand in areas with a high number of visitors is a key recommendation (Taylor 2006). Related to this is the development of a mobility index that can be built into funding models so that budgets provide for the fluctuations in service demand associated with temporary mobility (Prout 2008b).

It would also assist social housing providers to develop clear guidelines on how to distinguish between homelessness, temporary mobility and migration as a preliminary for developing programs to address these. This requires further empirical and conceptual work to understand and analyse the relationship between them and the implications of this for meeting housing needs.

The study proposal that is designed to address some of these knowledge gaps is outlined in the following chapter.

7 STUDY DESIGN

The aim of this study is to examine how housing services can improve their responses to Indigenous patterns of mobility. Its objectives include to:

1. Contribute to the evidence base about rising levels of urban drift among Indigenous peoples, to identify the reasons for this and the implications for housing policy, and to disseminate strategies for social housing organisations to monitor and plan for these changes.
2. Provide good policy guidance and cost-effective strategies and models of housing delivery, which better provide for Indigenous patterns of mobility.

The guiding research questions ask:

1. What is known about good housing policy and practice in relation to Indigenous patterns of mobility?
2. What evidence is there of an increase in Indigenous urban migration?
3. What are the reasons for this increase?
4. What are the policy implications of any identified increase in Indigenous urban migration?
5. What strategies do social housing providers have to monitor and plan for this influx?
6. What good practice examples are there of responses to Indigenous housing need which take account of Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility?
7. What are the resource implications of these examples?

This Positioning Paper locates these questions within the following policy contexts:

- SHAs in the NT, WA, SA and Queensland are replacing ICHOs as managers of Indigenous social housing in remote and regional Australia. The spatial practices of Indigenous households, for example, bilocal residence, high occupancy levels and unannounced departures, represent a challenge to existing tenancy management practice within the SHA sector. There is a need for improvements in the way tenancy management policies and practices take account of this.
- New models of service delivery in remote and regional Australia are centralising resources in larger population centres. This, together with initiatives to increase Indigenous engagement with the formal economy, has potential to increase the number of Indigenous migrants to larger regional centres. These migrants will require:
 1. Assistance in planning their move in ways that account for temporary mobility patterns and enduring attachment to homelands.
 2. Access to appropriate housing, including temporary and transitional accommodation.
- Anecdotal evidence, supported by a small number of studies, suggest that an unintended side-effect of some of the policies directed at Indigenous populations in remote and regional Australia are associated with an increase in Indigenous population churn, involving temporary movement up and down the settlement hierarchy. This has been associated with increased demands on housing and related services in major towns and regional centres and associated itinerancy. Housing services have little information about the motivations for these

movements, and lack data on their volume, direction, duration and demographic composition.

In responding to the knowledge gaps and service development requirements associated with these issues this project will focus on:

1. Identifying the motives for (a) temporary mobility and (b) migration by Indigenous individuals and families and the relationship between this and the introduction of policies such as income management and the declaration of dry areas.
2. Developing definitions and concepts that assist housing services to distinguish between:
 - Homelessness and temporary mobility.
 - Temporary mobility and migration.In ways sensitive to Indigenous lifeworlds and aspirations.
3. Analysing Indigenous medium- and long-term population movement in a number of locations in remote and regional Australia.
4. Provision of examples of models and strategies for housing provision and tenancy management that take account of temporary mobility in urban, regional and remote locations.
5. Identifying strategies for social housing providers to assist Indigenous migrants into stable, appropriate and sustainable accommodation.

7.1 Methods

A case study approach will be employed that will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques. Previous research by Taylor (2006) and Prout (2008b), suggests that this kind of triangulation affords a degree of robustness to findings on Indigenous population movement not available from a single approach.

Six case studies will be selected, two in each of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia according to the following criteria. Inclusion criteria are that they:

- Include population centres across the urban/remote continuum, as defined by ASGC criteria and incorporating known areas of temporary mobility movement.
- Include population centres in which some of the policy changes identified in Chapter 4 are being implemented.

7.1.1 Consultative framework

Involvement of Indigenous respondents in the reporting of the studies will be incorporated into the study. Indigenous community leaders and, where possible, service users who contributed to the case studies will be given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the preliminary findings. They will be provided with a draft of the report and asked for their comments, prior to production of the Final Report.

7.1.2 Case study locations

Port Augusta/Coober Pedy

Port Augusta is a major regional town located 300km north of Adelaide in South Australia and is described as the 'southern gateway to the Northern Territory'. Coober Pedy is an outback opal mining town located a further 850km north east of Adelaide.

Both have been identified as 'hot spots' of Indigenous population movement. Indigenous people in the regions surrounding both towns are very mobile, often moving between Port Augusta, Davenport, and remote communities in the far north and north-west of South Australia and between Coober Pedy and the Pitjantjatjara lands. Some of this movement is seasonal, but recent policy changes, including the introduction of the NTER and the declaration of dry areas, have been associated with increased temporary mobility. Port Augusta is also the site of a transitional accommodation facility and there are plans to develop one at Coober Pedy.

Port Adelaide, SA and surrounding areas

Anecdotal evidence suggests an increase in the number of temporary Aboriginal visitors to the Adelaide metropolitan area from the *Anangu* Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in the north of South Australia with Port Adelaide identified as an area where the concentration of visitors has been highest. A range of State, Commonwealth, Indigenous and non-Indigenous community organisations provide housing and housing-related services. The SA Dept of Families and Communities operates the Safetracks program, which provides assertive outreach and return to country programs. The Uniting Church in Australia, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide and UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide offer programs directed at the needs of temporary visitors. The No Pulgi program based at the Nunkuwarrin Yunti health service delivers health services to homeless Aboriginal people in Metropolitan Adelaide.

Tennant Creek

Tennant Creek is one of the prescribed communities under the NTER. As well as being subject to income management and alcohol restrictions, five year compulsory leases were placed over the Tennant Creek town camps in 2007, with a subsequent sublease negotiated and agreed by Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation the following year.

The Gove Peninsula in east Arnhem Land, including the towns of Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala

As well as being a prescribed area under the NTER, and subject to alcohol restrictions, the area is distinctive in being ALRA land and in the strength of customary lifestyles. The mobility region extends as far as Darwin.

The Gascoyne region in north-west Western Australia, incorporating Mungullah and Burrungurrah and possibly including Gascoyne Junction, with Carnarvon as the regional centre

Mungullah is on Federal community-owned land, with an ICHO under pressure to mainstream. Burrungurrah is on ALT communally owned land with people moving regularly to Mungullah. People from Gascoyne Junction make frequent journeys to Carnarvon. Burrungurrah can also be cut off during the wet season. Carnarvon experiences extreme overcrowding due to the strength of kinship networks and the small number of remote settlements. Historical and geographical factors combine to make Carnarvon a focal point for Indigenous population mobility in Western Australia. Anecdotal advice is that, rather than a need for temporary housing, permanent housing is needed to reduce levels of overcrowding.

Broome and Bidjidanga in the western Kimberley coastal region south of the Dampier Peninsula in Western Australia

This is an area with a high number of Indigenous settlements, and with seasonal patterns of mobility. People travelling to Broome come from communities around the Dampier Peninsula and across the Kimberley, including Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing

and Balgo, as well as One Mile camp, close to Broome itself. Fitzroy Crossing has been identified as a mobility 'hot spot' due to changes in alcohol regulation. The absence of kin in Broome is an important influence on mobility patterns and contributes to a high level of transient circulation in the town camps and spaces around the city. Personal communications suggest that service providers and participants believe that camps should be established in Broome for remote visitors.

7.1.3 Sampling and instrumentation

A convenience sample of the service population and service providers will be sought.

The service population will include:

- Indigenous tenants of public housing, SOMIH housing and Indigenous and mainstream community housing.
- Indigenous users of temporary accommodation, including Aboriginal Hostels, (former) SAAP services, town camp facilities, bush camps and public space sites.
- Migrants to regional centres.
- First-time visitors and migrants to metropolitan areas.
- Residents of outlying communities across the rural/remote settlement spectrum who make regular journeys away from home, including visits to regional centres.
- A range of Indigenous sub-population groups, including young men, young women, women with children, families, health needs groups, older men and women, criminal justice involvement and students.

The service provider population will include:

- Housing officers, managers and policy officers within relevant sections of SHAs, SOMIH, Indigenous and mainstream community housing.
- Town camp bosses and managers.
- Remote community managers.
- Temporary accommodation providers.
- Indigenous community leaders.
- Providers of temporary accommodation, including Aboriginal Hostels.
- Service providers from housing-related services including employment, health and education.

Instrumentation

Interview schedules have been drafted and ethical clearance granted by relevant HRECs. The administration of the schedules will be modified according to feedback from respondents, but the broad areas to be covered are:

Service providers

- Knowledge and experience of local Indigenous mobility patterns and identified reasons for these.
- The relationship between temporary mobility and homelessness.
- The housing service implications of this, including specific sub-population groups.
- Current policies, programs and practices that address this: strengths and weaknesses of these.

- Views on the relationship between policy change and Indigenous short-, medium- and long-term population movement.
- Examples of good or innovative practice for the research team to follow up.

Service users

- Motivations for both migration and temporary mobility.
- The influence of policy changes on these movements.
- Experiences of travelling and finding somewhere to stay, including use of housing and related services and their views on these.
- Preferred arrangements for temporary and long-term housing needs.
- Services and strategies that would support their migrant and temporary mobility accommodation needs.

7.1.4 Analysis of administrative data

A quantitative analysis of administrative data will be undertaken to identify and describe any apparent changes in the direction and scale of Indigenous medium- and long-term mobility over periods of policy change in selected case study areas. A panel dataset will be constructed with baseline indicators established to identify apparent changes in housing service demand.

The objective is to conduct this analysis for each of the case study sites. However, it is possible that the data necessary for this analysis may not be available or accessible in some locations. A feasibility study undertaken for this purpose suggests that data held by Housing SA will be suitable for this purpose. What follows describes the proposed analysis of this data for Port Augusta/Coober Pedy.

A panel data set will be constructed using tenant and waiting list snapshots of public housing, including Indigenous tenants and SOMI housing from Housing SA. The dataset will be used to derive some baseline indicators, and before/after policy change indicators, that imply changes in housing service demand. The aim of the construction of the panel dataset will be to follow Indigenous housing applicants and tenants through events including entry into waiting lists, entry into housing, changes in household size and composition, movement within tenancies, and termination of tenancies. These events may specifically indicate geographical location or movement. Others may imply elements of location or movement.

Snapshots will be taken at quarterly intervals over the period 2005-2009. Variables collected for each tenant/applicant will include whether they are in a tenancy, property location and type, start and end date of tenancy, number of tenants, waiting list requests, basic demographic information including constant and time-varying information and indicators of tenancy disputes. Analysis will focus on in- and out-migration, cyclical and aggregate pattern and the spatial and demographic characteristics of waiting list applicants with the baseline propensity being used to measure change. Changes to be analysed will include:

- Trends in housing demand by location.
- Frequency of tenancy turnover.
- Changes in household composition (number of tenants and relationships).
- Changes in leaseholder within the same household.
- Breaches of tenancy agreement.
- Changes in types of tenure.

This analysis will be used to compare patterns with the non-Indigenous population within the same dataset.

The goal will be to identify:

1. Movement of individuals and households who are either in, or wish to be in, SOMI or public housing, over the medium and long-term within and between different locations of the study area.
2. Indicators of urbanisation as evidenced by trends in the aggregate volume of population movement from smaller to larger population centres.

The methodological and environmental limitations of this kind of administrative data are acknowledged, including that waiting list applications are not an accurate indication of the housing needs of Indigenous populations in the service catchment area. Where available, the analysis will be triangulated with other administrative data, for example, from Indigenous housing organisations and health services, and Safe Tracks Transitional Accommodation Programs in SA. This will also assist with the sample bias inherent in the use of data held by SHAs since they cover only a proportion of the population and also exclude individuals who choose not to identify as Indigenous.

A further limitation is that the methodology implicitly assumes that where the tenant is registered is where they are living and so ignores short-term migration outside of the system, or in between waves (snapshots).

The study period needs to enable comment on trends before and after key policy events. This provides a quasi-experimental analysis of any change over time. Constant movements within each period might indicate consistent circulatory and cultural movement of the population. Shifts between the two periods might indicate 'migration' changes, relating to policy.

Confidentiality and appropriateness of the data released is of high concern. Only aggregate data will be presented and Housing SA will remove all identifying information.

7.2 Analysis and report

For each of the case study sites, a thematic analysis of the service provider and service population interviews will be undertaken, focusing on:

1. The self-identified motivations of the service population for both temporary mobility and migration, and the influence of the policy context on this.
2. How well these motivations are understood by different sections of social housing providers, eg, SHAs and ICHOs.
3. The accommodation problems experienced by the service population that are associated with temporary mobility and migration, and the effects this has on homelessness and itinerancy.
4. The policies and strategies employed by mainstream and Indigenous housing services that provide for temporary mobility, how effective these are and how they could be improved.
5. The policies and strategies currently employed by mainstream and Indigenous housing services that provide for migration, how effective these are and how they could be improved.

Within each case study area where administrative data is available, the statistical analysis will provide a summary account of medium- and long-term trends in the direction, location, volume and demographic composition of Indigenous SOMI tenants, as well as changes in the volume and profile of Indigenous applicants for public housing, over a 5–7 year period.

This will be combined with the interview data and the literature to provide an explanation of fluctuations, increases and decreases in Indigenous population movement in terms of identifiable factors such as seasonal changes and the introduction of new policies in the case study area.

Each case study will comprise a chapter of the report and will include an analysis of the geographic, demographic and social characteristics of the region, including the policy context and relevant Indigenous housing issues.

The implications of these findings for the study's guiding questions will be collated in a summary chapter.

A separate section will provide costed examples of good practice, such as an example of a visitors' camp, an Inter-agency service agreement providing housing support to a sub-population group, and a Return to country program.

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