

Remote Indigenous Housing System – A Systems Social Assessment

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Andrea Jardine Orr

Papers presented by the Author leading to the completion of this PhD:

Jardine-Orr, A. (2004) *Remote Indigenous Housing: A Soft Systems Social Assessment*, Paper Presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) Annual Conference, 26-28 April, Vancouver, Canada

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Abstract

Indigenous Australians make up a mere 2.4% of the population of whom around a quarter live in remote and very remote parts of Australia. The poor state of Indigenous housing in remote areas is generally acknowledged as one of Australia's most intractable housing problems. The thesis examines why the remote Indigenous housing system does not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and discusses an alternative system.

The aim of the thesis is to understand why the remote Indigenous housing system is not meeting people's needs, despite policy statements that emphasise empowerment and partnerships. This understanding of the current remote Indigenous housing system involved placing it in historical, policy and international contexts and examining the current attempts to rationalise and streamline the system.

The service-delivery concepts of supply-driven (externally prescribed) and demand-responsive (community determined) are applied to remote Indigenous housing. The characteristics of successful remote Indigenous housing, namely Indigenous control and self-determination, an enabling environment and a culturally responsive system, are developed and found to be characteristic of a demand-responsive system. The research hypothesises that the remote Indigenous housing system's supply-driven focus is largely responsible for the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas not being met.

This was tested using the new methodology of a Systems Social Assessment which is developed by combining Social Assessment and Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology.

This methodology illustrated that the current remote Indigenous housing system has a supply-driven focus where the housing 'solutions' are controlled and largely provided from an external source, in this case the Commonwealth and State governments and their agents. The thesis discusses an alternative demand-responsive focus where remote communities have more control over the nature and delivery of their housing that may prove more successful.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| AACAP | Army ATSIC Community Assistance Program |
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACSIP | Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program (DHW) |
| AHB | Aboriginal Housing Board (now AHIC) |
| ADC | Aboriginal Development Commission |
| AHID | Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate (formerly AHIU) |
| AHIU | Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit (now AHID) |
| AHIC | Aboriginal Housing & Infrastructure Council (formerly AHB) |
| ALGA | Australian Local Government Association |
| ATSIC | Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission |
| ATSIS | Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Services |
| CAT | Centre for Appropriate Technology, Alice Springs |
| CDEP | Community Development Employment Program, ATSIC |
| CHIP | Community Housing and Infrastructure Program, ATSIC |
| CHINS | Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey |
| CLC | Central Lands Council |
| COAG | Council of Australian Governments |
| CRRC | Central Remote Regional Council |
| CSHA | Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement |
| DCDSCA | Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, Northern Territory |
| DEET | Northern Territory Department of Education and Training |
| DEWR | Department of Employment and Workplace Relations |
| DHW | Department of Housing & Works, Western Australia |
| DHAC | Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (now Department of Health and Aging) |
| DIA | Department of Indigenous Affairs (formerly AAD), Western Australia |
| DIMIA | Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, |
| DPMC | Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| DPL | Commonwealth Department of the Parliamentary Library |
| FaCS | Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services |
| HUD | United States Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| IAIA | International Association for Impact Assessment |
| IHANT | Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory |
| IHES | Indigenous Housing & Essential Services Unit, Northern Territory |
| KRCI | Kullarri Region CDEP Incorporated |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSP | Management Support Program (DHW) |
| NAHS | National Aboriginal Health Strategy (ATSIC) |

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|--------|--|
| NATSIS | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| RAESP | Remote Area Essential Service Program, Western Australia |
| RHA | Regional Housing Authority Western Australia |
| RHIP | Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plans |
| SIA | Social Impact Assessment |
| SA | Social Assessment |
| SSM | Soft Systems Methodology |
| STEP | Structured Training and Employment Program |
| WA | Western Australia |