

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:

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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)

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

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Research

Australia's Indigenous population is comparatively small, at an estimated 460,140 people on 30 June 2001, making up only 2.4% of Australia's population (ABS 2002). Despite this, "Indigenous Australians experience some of the worst housing and associated living conditions of any group within the Australian community" (DIMIA 2003). The most common problems with the living conditions of Indigenous people are the inadequate supply of housing and the poor quality of the available housing (Neutze 2000; ABS 2001).

The poor standard of Indigenous housing, judging by 'mainstream' criteria, is particularly evident in remote and very remote areas where over a quarter of the Indigenous population live (ABS 2003). According to the 1999 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS), 81% of the Indigenous population living in discrete communities, lived in remote areas with the majority (54%) in the Northern Territory. The inadequate supply of housing in these remote communities is illustrated by the fact that 13% of all housing was classified as temporary. This translates to over 7000 people in remote communities living in inadequate accommodation such as tin sheds, caravans or humpies. The poor quality of the permanent housing in these communities is illustrated by the CHINS finding that one-third of all community-managed or owned housing needed either replacement or major repairs (ABS 2001).

Indigenous housing has long been Australian housing's 'problem area'. The reasons for this are complex and are partly because the Indigenous population consists of a small, socioeconomically atypical part of the Australian population. They are generally younger, poorer, less educated, have lower rates of employment, a much worse health status and a

disproportionate number live in rural and remote areas (Minnery, Manicaros, and Lindfield 2000; Neutze 2000). For these reasons, Indigenous housing policy and programs do not fit comfortably within mainstream government housing and a range of policies and programs have been developed to address the issue.

Prior to 1967, each jurisdiction was responsible for Indigenous policy and programs. The 1967 Commonwealth referendum reworded legislation enabling the Commonwealth Government to legislate for Indigenous people but did not, however, remove the existing State and Territory responsibility. This resulted in the current shared responsibility for Indigenous housing policy formulation and funding between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. This arrangement has been hampered by tension between the Commonwealth and State/Territories as to who should have the primary responsibility for Aboriginal people. One of the consequences is the current poorly coordinated range of Indigenous housing policies and programs.

Despite a range of concerted attempts to address the perceived problem of Indigenous housing, progress has been slow. In 1971 the then Labor Commonwealth Government undertook to “properly house all Aboriginal families within a period of 10 years” (Heppell 1979 p.20). Although funds for Indigenous housing were increased, the rate of new Indigenous family formation still exceeded the rate of completion of new houses (Heppell 1979 p.21). Needless to say, although the ‘proper housing’ mentioned in the 1971 statement was not defined, the inadequate nature of much Indigenous housing remains an issue today.

At its inaugural meeting in 1992, The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the “National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders”. This seminal document recognised the importance of an improvement in the delivery of programs and services to Indigenous people,

and that the underlying and fundamental causes of Indigenous disadvantage and inequality need to be addressed. It reaffirmed that the Commonwealth and States/Territories have a shared responsibility for the planning and provision of programs and services (COAG 1992; ALGA 2002). This important document is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 where some of its guiding principles are discussed. These include economic independence, empowerment, self-management and self-determination.

This ‘National Commitment’ document, later reaffirmed in a “Reconciliation Framework”, highlights the necessity for Indigenous policy, programs and funding at different levels to be rationalised. It establishes a framework for the negotiation of Indigenous Housing Agreements between each State or Territory and the Commonwealth (COAG 1992; ALGA 2002). The COAG Reconciliation Framework also gave rise to one of the most influential Indigenous housing documents to date. It was produced by the Housing Ministers’ Conference in May 2001 and is entitled “Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010” (FaCS 2002). This document outlines a vision for Indigenous housing, desired outcomes, guiding principles, objectives and implementation strategies to achieve these outcomes within a ten year framework.

One of the implementation strategies to achieve the first objective to “identify and address unmet housing needs of Indigenous people” was to “maintain a national Indigenous housing research program and clearing-house” (FaCS 2002). The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) was tasked with managing the Indigenous housing research program as a national research priority and the area was added to its research agenda.

The 2002 AHURI Research Agenda was the first time that Indigenous-specific housing research priorities were identified and funded, including the research on which this thesis is based. As is to be expected from a research program arising from COAG’s Reconciliation Framework, the AHURI-funded

research project included research into the integration of remote Indigenous housing programs. This aspect of the research will be explored in this thesis.

Considerable thought was given to the best way of researching Indigenous program integration. One of the key issues was that policies and programs differ across jurisdictions. As the Northern Territory and Western Australia have the largest remote Indigenous populations, these two case study areas were selected. A range of case studies within each case study area was then needed to examine the interplay between the various players in Indigenous housing. In addition to the Commonwealth Government, these included the peak Indigenous housing bodies in each jurisdiction, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Regional Councils, Regional Indigenous Organisations and the Community management structures. Reflecting the complexity of the remote Indigenous housing system, this led to five case studies within each case study area, a total of ten case studies. These are discussed in Chapter 4.

The fieldwork for this research was conducted from October 2002 to July 2003. A significant number of institutional changes have occurred since then such as the abolition of ATSIC in June 2004. As the fieldwork occurred while a certain set of programs and policies were in place, this thesis has been written to reflect “that slice of time”.

1.2 Problem Statement

“Indigenous Australians suffer from less adequate and affordable housing than any other group despite the efforts of National and State governments, especially in the past 30 years, to improve them” (Neutze 2000 p.485).

There is undeniably a problem with Indigenous housing in Australia. The current attempts to improve Indigenous housing focus on restructuring and

integrating the current housing programs. This is mainly achieved through the bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreement which is negotiated with each State or Territory under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). These initiatives are further discussed in Chapter 5.

During the fieldwork mentioned above, there appeared to be a dissonance between the policy statements such as those from the National Commitment, which mention maximising participation, economic independence and self-management, and what was observed during fieldwork. Heppell, writing in 1979, refers to similar statements in early Indigenous housing policy. This prompts the question of whether there is an underlying constraint to improving remote Indigenous housing.

There is an emerging body of literature in Indigenous service provision that distinguishes between a supply-driven model of service provision and a demand-responsive model (Fisher 2004; Walker 2003). Maybe a similar distinction applies to the remote Indigenous housing system? This is the reasoning behind the hypothesis and the Systems Social Assessment of the remote Indigenous housing system in Chapter 6

The research question is therefore:

Research Question: Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?

For the purposes of this research, “housing” is viewed as a process which includes the construction, materials management, the maintenance, housing management and other activities associated with Indigenous housing. Furthermore, whether the Indigenous housing system meets the “housing need” of Indigenous people in remote areas is determined by the research participants themselves.

1.3 Aim of the Research

This thesis has three aims: first, to answer the research question mentioned above to contribute knowledge to the understanding of the complex Indigenous housing system; second, to influence government policy towards improving Indigenous housing and third, to test the Systems Social Assessment research method and therefore contribute to the field of Social Assessment.

The research may point to other areas within the Indigenous housing system that require further research.

1.4 Thesis Chapter Outline

The thesis consists of 6 chapters in addition to this Introduction. The introduction has illustrated that the Indigenous housing system is not meeting the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas. To explain why this is the case, the historical context of the current system needs to be understood, including the development of the plethora of policies to manage Indigenous housing. These areas are covered in the first section of Chapter 2.

The fact that the Indigenous housing system is not functioning effectively has been widely recognised and has caused several attempts at Commonwealth, State and local levels to improve the situation. The second part of Chapter 2 discusses the policy background to these attempts to improve the system, while the actual mechanisms in Western Australia and the Northern Territory are outlined in preparation for further discussion in Chapter 5.

The Australian and international literature relevant to remote Indigenous housing is then reviewed which leads to the development of the three characteristics of a successful remote Indigenous housing system. This is compared to the existing system and results in the hypothesis tested in this thesis.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and approach to the research, including Social Assessment as well as the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment, developed in this thesis.

Chapter 4 outlines the case studies which provide a brief profile of the different organisations involved in the study. These case studies provided the vehicle to research the remote Indigenous housing system in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The early part of this Introduction acknowledged that Indigenous housing is viewed by Government as requiring change. To understand the Indigenous housing system, the current and emerging attempts to improve the system need to be reviewed and Chapter 5 details the current policy and program attempts to improve Indigenous housing in remote areas.

Chapter 6 uses the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment to uncover some of the reasons for the continued poor state of Indigenous housing, particularly in remote areas. Chapter 7 concludes this thesis by discussing the research question and the hypothesis as well as recommending areas for further research.

Chapter 2: A Review of Indigenous Housing

This chapter provides background and context to the research question which reads: “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?” It consists of a number of sections, the first of which gives a brief historical and cultural review of Indigenous Australian housing both prior to and after colonisation. This leads to the second section which consists of a discussion of the current policy and programs, including key national policies that shape the current State and Territory Indigenous housing policies and provide a context for the more detailed exploration of the attempts to improve Indigenous housing in Chapter 5.

The third and fourth sections of this chapter then discuss some of the main policies of the Government of Western Australia and the Northern Territory Government. The fifth and sixth sections of this chapter review the Australian and International literature relevant to remote Indigenous housing. This chapter concludes with the development of the characteristics of a successful remote Indigenous housing system and concludes with a discussion of what makes for successful Indigenous housing. These characteristics are tested against the Australian remote Indigenous housing system and this leads to the hypothesis that is tested in this thesis.

2.1 A Historical Review of Indigenous Housing

This section provides a brief overview pertinent to providing a cultural and historical context to Indigenous housing issues today. It includes a discussion of pre-colonial settlements, the impact of colonialism and the early development of policies to manage the “housing issue”.

2.1.1 Pre-Colonial Settlements

Prior to colonialism, Indigenous Australians lived a nomadic lifestyle with a close physical and spiritual relationship to the land. They were hunters and gatherers who moved in response to the availability of food, water, and for cultural reasons such as a gathering of kin. These nomadic groups followed 'circular' migration patterns within distinct geographical areas as the availability of food and water changed from season to season. The size of this traditional country was largely decided upon by the availability of food, water and other resources. The communities within a defined area were linked through kinship, which defined social roles and obligations. Thus, people had an attachment to an area populated by kin groups and followed a circular migratory pattern within that region (National Housing Strategy 1991; Neutze 2000; Ross 2000). This contrasts strongly with long European traditions of farming and land ownership.

This seasonally nomadic existence did not allow for the accumulation of material possessions. As is logical in a nomadic lifestyle, Indigenous people did not have a history of permanent home building and took shelter under trees, cliff overhangs and built temporary structures when needed. As is to be expected in an area as large as Australia, there was a range of shelter types constructed as a response to the environment. Veverbrants Peltharre, an Arrernte woman, distinguishes between the coastal "salt water people" and the "desert people". The coastal environment provided plenty of food, more permanent camps and allowed for more time to be spent on arts and crafts. In contrast, the desert people lived a much harsher existence as they were dependant on water holes and seasonal food (Veverbrants Peltharre 2001 p.1).

The type of temporary shelter constructed was purely utilitarian and bore no relation to status as it did and does in European-based culture. Shelters were built to create shelter from wind and sun. There were, however,

building traditions in some areas such as east Arnhem Land where the wetter climate and more abundant food prompted the regular construction of wet season huts. The cold winters in parts of Southern Australia also necessitated more substantial shelter. Nevertheless, none of these shelters were permanent in nature (National Housing Strategy 1991).

In a valuable ethno-architectural account of the Indigenous architecture in the Gulf of Carpentaria during the turn of the last century, Memmott (2000) describes a repertoire of eight different shelter types. The type of shelter depended on the climate, number of people, the materials available and the projected length of stay. The most common type of Indigenous shelter was the windbreak. This was used in dry periods and built around a fire. (Memmott 2000). These shelters were highly adaptable and were able to be altered to contend with weather conditions or shifted to other sites. In most areas, they were low structures and people either sat or lay down in them. This enabled them to survey the living area and monitor the movements of family. The complexity of the shelter increased with the expected duration of stay and these structures sometimes enabled people to stand (Tonkinson and Tonkinson 1979; Memmott 2000; Heppell 1979).

Memmott comments that these shelters were not 'home' in the Western sense of a barrier against the elements, a place to decorate as well as a place of memories. For Aboriginal people, these memories and associations were with the campsite and the landscape, not the shelter itself. "The artifactual, behavioural and sensory properties of the Western construct 'house' are best construed in the Aboriginal context to be embedded in and between the domiciliary space and the camp rather than in the shelter *per se*" (2000 p.33).

Traditional camps usually accommodated a few closely related family groups. The size of the groups would vary considerably depending on the local resources. There was also considerable cultural variation between

different groups and the spatial layout of these traditional camps was culturally determined (Ross 1987; Neutze 2000).

Culture determines rules for behaviour and these rules dictate behaviour that is appropriate towards different people at different times. Traditional Indigenous Australian culture has a complex social structure which affects the use of space in traditional camps. An example of cultural rules which affects everyday life is avoidance behaviour. Avoidance relationships usually occur between kin and have been described as a state of 'extreme respect'. The extent of avoidance behaviour varies and is evident in visual and verbal behaviour and in the spatial orientation of kin to one another. In her study of the avoidance behaviour among the Yolungu people of northeast Arnhem Land, Fantin (2001) identified eighteen avoidance relationships that have to be observed in everyday life. For example, a mother-in-law and son-in-law should not speak to one another. This has profound implications for the design of living environments, yet is only one of many cultural rules that impact on housing. In addition, the avoidance behaviour practised by the Yolungu will not necessarily be the same for other language groups.

As has been discussed, in pre-colonial times Indigenous people lived in a close relationship with the land. In keeping with a nomadic lifestyle, shelter was situation specific. Flexible temporary structures were the most appropriate type of housing for people who needed to move seasonally or in response to events such as ceremonial gatherings or even death of a family member. Indigenous people's attachment was to the land itself rather than to a temporary structure. People also had a close relationship to kin groups who lived in the same traditional country. These extended kin groups tended to break into smaller groups during times of hardship, and aggregate into larger groups during times of plenty. The number of people camping together could therefore vary considerably over time.

2.1.2 Colonial Times

The nomadic existence of the Indigenous people was disrupted by the arrival of European pastoralists. This began an era of the displacement of people from their land. The National Housing Strategy (1991) discussion paper writes of two periods in Indigenous history that have each caused major cultural trauma. The first was this meeting of two diametrically opposed cultures during the “settlement phase” and the second was the so-called “mission” era (National Housing Strategy 1991).

The cultural trauma during the “settlement phase” resulted from contact between the Indigenous nomadic hunter and gatherers, and European pastoralists. These two groups were culturally very different. On the one hand, traditional Indigenous values focused on sharing, the family group, custodianship over a traditional country, housing as temporary shelter from the elements, and a sustainable use of the environment. On the other, the pastoralists had a greater focus on the individual, on material possessions, on private ownership of land and on permanent housing, often as a display of wealth. These differences have considerable repercussions today. The most topical is perhaps the issue of land rights. The European pastoralists came from a background of intensive agriculture and all land not farmed or permanently utilised in some way was viewed as available for settlement. This cultural difference in attitude to land led to the dispossession of “unused” land and the declaration of Australia as “terra nullius”. In 1992, this was overthrown by the High Court’s Mabo judgement which recognised limited Indigenous property rights and paved the way for the Native Title Act of 1993 (ATSIC 2004).

Prior to colonisation, it was estimated that there were 750 000 Indigenous people in Australia. The settlers brought a range of diseases to which Aboriginal people had no immunity, such as smallpox and tuberculosis. This decimated the population so that by the 1930’s there were only an estimated

74 000 remaining (Khalid 1990, as quoted in the National Housing Strategy, 1991). During this period, most Aboriginal people in Southern and Eastern Australia were displaced from their lands and many tribes in northern Australia were prevented from utilising all former land resources they needed for continued survival in the traditional manner (National Housing Strategy 1991).

The second period causing cultural trauma has been termed the "Mission Era". Colonisation was accompanied by an ethnocentric mind-set that regarded the culture of the settlers as the only correct way of life. This was extended to religion and well-meaning missionaries were sent to convert the 'heathen'. In Australia, mission stations were established in even the most remote areas and had the dual aim of converting people to Christianity and coercing people into abandoning their traditional way of life. This extended to the mission's assisting the government in the forced removal of children from their parents (National Housing Strategy 1991). Attwood (2000 p.41) comments that the Indigenous people's nomadism was seen as "diametrically opposed" to the colonial state's aim of a "civilised life". One of the fundamental intentions of the missions was to isolate Indigenous people from their traditional country and traditional way of life.

Once it was clear the Aboriginal people were not going to 'die out', it was decided to separate them from the non-Indigenous population by moving them into reserves. A change of policy then dictated that they should be moved out of reserves and integrated with non-Indigenous Australians. Many of these policies were implemented through housing strategies. The myriad problems Indigenous people face today are often the result of these insensitive policies. The irony is that these policies were usually instituted with what at the time was considered to be the best interests of Indigenous people at heart. To the policy makers of the past, there could be no higher aspiration than a European lifestyle (National Housing Strategy 1991; Sanders 2000; Neutze 2000).

Indigenous housing has been a major area of intervention by non-Indigenous people. It has long been an area of policy focus as it was often asserted that "...without adequate housing, programs in the health, education and social development fields are doomed to failure" and much reference was made to an "Aboriginal housing problem" (Heppell 1979 p.1). During the first half of the twentieth century, a paternalistic policy focused on protecting the remaining population by separating them from the non-Indigenous majority (Long 2000).

Concerted attempts to address the Indigenous housing 'problems' began in the 1950s and continue today. The initial policies focused on the assimilation of Indigenous people into the non-Indigenous majority and on the provision of 'transitional' housing which was intended to accustom Indigenous people to western-style housing and lifestyles. This assimilation policy was at the centre of the Commonwealth, State Government and Territory's housing policy for over a decade. It resulted in three stages of transitional housing and graduation from one stage to the next was determined by "domestic skill" (Heppell 1979 p.9).

This policy did not recognise the value of traditional culture and 'assimilation' implied a policy of forced change. It failed for several reasons, including that traditional shelter was more comfortable than the transitional housing, usually constructed of unlined aluminium, and there was insufficient funding to implement the policy and provide the necessary support (Heppell 1979; Long 2000).

The failure of Indigenous people to take up the offer to assimilate was generally seen in racist terms as their unsuitability for 'civilised life'. The assumption that Indigenous people needed social advancement was not questioned. The cultural values and norms of the majority, such as the nuclear family and 'neighbourhood respectability', were upheld as the state to which to aspire. Indigenous people were required to adhere to these

norms to escape poverty. As is to be expected, there was considerable resistance to these pressures (Morgan 2000).

By the late 1960's the policy of assimilation had been replaced by that of a very similar 'integration' that was in turn followed by 'self-determination', which was in force by the 1970's. Despite the rhetoric, 'self-determination' was not likely to occur until "...Aborigines themselves had the organisation and authority to decide and direct the pathways that their future development might take" (Heppell 1979:19). Unfortunately, this policy made no attempt to provide the support to foster self-determination.

Heppell (1979:2-3) deplored the lack of housing research to guide policy and similar calls are still being made today (Neutze 2000). Heppell commented on the large amounts of government money that was spent on the "Indigenous housing problem" in the mid-seventies while there was no research into Indigenous housing. He called for research into the spatial and cultural organization of camps and how this and the social institutions change when Indigenous people move into a housing scheme. He commented that the lack of fundamental research into Indigenous housing is probably due to the essential nature of housing for non-Indigenous people of European extraction. They could not understand that housing "might not be a necessary condition of human existence" (Heppell 1979 p.2). The government was more concerned about providing Indigenous housing as cheaply as possible within the existing building codes.

Until 1967, when a national referendum was held, all dealings with Indigenous Australians were the responsibility of the State and Territory governments. Approaches to Indigenous housing varied from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Although there is still a marked variation in policy between the different regions, since 1967 the Commonwealth government also has responsibility for Indigenous housing and provides some policy direction (Minnery, Manicaros, and Lindfield 2000; Heppell 1979).

After the 1967 referendum, Indigenous housing received a considerable funding boost with the stated objective as the housing of “all Aborigines properly within ten years” (Heppell 1979 p.30). The assumption implicit in this statement was that the traditional public European-style housing was suitable. This conventional housing was usually funded by State or Territory Housing Authorities through Housing Associations which consisted of people who were interested in being housed. The problem was that the housing associations also became the conduit for the bulk of a community’s funding. During this time the ‘successful communities’ tended to be those where the control was vested in non-Indigenous administrators (Heppell 1979).

The 1970’s also brought in an era of self-determination with funding increasingly allocated to communities and community groups to manage their own housing. However, little guidance was provided to these communities for self-management and there were few examples of successful culturally appropriate Indigenous housing. Burke contends that Australia is still learning to how to provide and manage housing that acknowledges the cultural needs of Indigenous Australians (2004 p.5).

The legacy of many of the policies mentioned above is an extremely complex policy and institutional framework at both Commonwealth and State or Territory level. The following section deals with the policy and program context for Indigenous housing at the time of the fieldwork. This is an area of rapid change and it is important to note that the policies and programs discussed are those that were in place during the time of the fieldwork in 2002/2003. There have been considerable developments since then such as the recent abolition of ATSIC but it is important to view the case studies and associated analysis within the policy and program context prevailing at the time.

2.2 The Policy Context of Indigenous Housing

As Heppell commented in 1979, "housing has been a focal point for successive governments' Indigenous policies" (Heppell 1979 p.1). It has long been recognised that the housing of Indigenous Australians is of a considerably lower standard than that enjoyed by other Australians and that they endure much higher rates of homelessness (Government of Western Australia 2002). This state of affairs can partly be traced to the 1967 Federal referendum which reworded legislation enabling the Commonwealth Government to legislate for Indigenous people. The referendum did not, however, remove the existing State and Territory responsibility. This has resulted in the current shared responsibility for Indigenous housing policy formulation and funding between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. This arrangement has been hampered by tension between the Commonwealth and State/Territories as to who should have the primary responsibility for Indigenous people. The result has been to entrench the historical inequalities in housing through an ill-coordinated range of policies and programs at Commonwealth and State/Territory level (National Archives of Australia 1992). The range of institutions involved in remote Indigenous housing in Western Australia and the Northern Territory is represented in Figure 1.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to clarify the complex policy and institutional mechanisms that aim to redress Indigenous housing inequities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Firstly, key national policy developments that give direction to Indigenous housing policy are outlined. The various programs and funding mechanisms at Commonwealth level are then discussed, followed by the policy and programs in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The institutions involved in this process are portrayed in Figure 1. This section of Chapter 2 provides a context for the Chapter 5 where attempts at improving the delivery of remote Indigenous

housing through program integration in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory are discussed in detail.

2.2.1 Key National Policies

At present, strategic policy direction is provided by fora that include representation from the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. In recent years, there appears to be a concerted effort at all levels of government to address the issues related to Indigenous housing. This is most evident in a number of key national policies that are currently reshaping the institutional structure of Indigenous housing in Australia. These are:

- The Council of Australian Governments (COAG)'s Reconciliation Framework
- Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010
- Common Reporting Framework.

These will be discussed in reasonable detail here as the analysis in Chapter 6 focuses on the reasons for the dissonance between the national policies and most attempts to improve the system at State/Territory and local level. The key national policies are:

2.2.1.1 The Council of Australian Governments (COAG)'s National Commitment and Reconciliation Framework

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak inter-governmental forum. It was formed in 1992 “to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms which are of national significance and which require cooperation by Australian Governments” (DPMC 2003). COAG is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) (DPMC 2003).

At its inaugural meeting in December 1992, COAG endorsed the “National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Indigenous Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders”. This seminal document recognised the importance of an improvement in the delivery of programs and services to Indigenous people and that the underlying and fundamental causes of Indigenous disadvantage and inequality need to be addressed. It reaffirms that the Commonwealth and States/Territories have a shared responsibility for the planning and provision of programs and services (COAG 1992; ALGA 2002).

As is to be expected of a document of this nature, a number of guiding principles are outlined. These include:

- empowerment, self-management and self-determination;
- economic independence consistent with cultural and social values;
- maximising participation, through representative bodies, in the formulation of relevant policies and programs;
- co-ordination of policies and services to maximise funding and minimise duplication, and to achieve more effective and efficient delivery of services; and,
- clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the various spheres of government (ALGA 2002).

The document also highlights the need for the rationalisation of Indigenous policies, programs and funding at different levels and establishes a framework for the negotiation of Indigenous Housing Agreement between each State or Territory and the Commonwealth (ALGA 2002; COAG 1992). These Indigenous Housing Agreements have become the major mechanism for housing program coordination and rationalisation in the Northern Territory and Western Australia and are further discussed in Chapter 5.

At the COAG meeting in November 2000, the “National Commitment” document was reaffirmed in a “Reconciliation Framework” which emphasised outcomes, program coordination and flexibility as well as partnerships with Indigenous communities. One of the agreed priority actions was “reviewing and re-engineering programs and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people” (COAG 2000 p.7). In addition, COAG committed to two initiatives relevant to this research: first, a trial of an integrative whole of government approach in up to 10 regions or communities; and second, a need for more Indigenous research. It also called for Ministerial Councils to develop benchmarks, action plans, performance reporting strategies and undertook to drive the changes with a review in twelve months (COAG 2000). The expected review reported that all States and Territories had made some progress in addressing the priority areas although the development of action plans and performance reporting was “slower than expected” (COAG 2002).

Although COAG is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers, it also established over 40 Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils and fora, each supported by standing committees of officials (DPMC 2003). These Councils are the chief intergovernmental sectoral policy making bodies. The most relevant for this research is the Housing Ministers’ Conference. It meets at least annually and is attended by the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services and State and Territory Ministers responsible for housing. The Housing Ministers Conference is supported by the Housing Ministers’ Advisory Committee who, in turn have a range of sub-committees providing advice. A number of organisations have observer status at the Housing Ministers’ Advisory Committee, including AHURI (DPMC 2002). In 1996, the Housing Ministers’ Conference appointed a Commonwealth State Working Group on Indigenous Housing and they have had some success in developing documents such as the “National Framework for the Design,

Construction and Maintenance of Indigenous Housing” and the recently revised “National Indigenous Housing Guide” which was produced as part of the national framework and embeds the national principles of safety, health, quality control and sustainability as contributing factors to improved housing outcomes for Indigenous people. In addition, the Working Group established the “Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information” to capture consistent nationally relevant housing information (FaCS 2002).

2.2.1.2 Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010

Probably the most influential document to date in Indigenous housing was produced by the Housing Ministers’ Conference in May 2001 and is entitled “Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010”. This arose out of the COAG Reconciliation Framework documents mentioned above which called on Ministerial Councils to steer the reconciliation process through action plans, benchmarking and performance reporting. The “Building a Better Future” document outlines a *vision* for Indigenous Housing, which focuses on:

- access to appropriate, affordable well-maintained housing;
- a sustainable and active Indigenous community housing sector acting in partnership with governments; and,
- Indigenous housing policies and programs developed and administered with Indigenous communities (FaCS 2002).

The document also outlines the desired outcomes from the “new directions” over the next ten years. These desired outcomes are:

- better housing;
- better housing services;
- more housing;

- improved partnerships;
- greater effectiveness and efficiency;
- improved performance linked to accountability; and,
- the coordination of services (FaCS 2002).

In accordance with the directions from the Reconciliation Framework, this document outlines eight guiding principles and four objectives. These objectives are:

- to identify and address the unmet housing needs of Indigenous people;
- to improve the capacity of Indigenous community housing organisations and involve Indigenous people in planning and service delivery;
- to achieve safe, healthy and sustainable housing; and,
- to coordinate program administration (FaCS 2002).

Each objective has a number of implementation strategies to achieve these outcomes within the ten year framework. One of the implementation strategies to achieve the first objective to “identify and address unmet housing needs of Indigenous people” is to “maintain a national Indigenous housing research program and clearing-house” which enabled the funding of the research on which this thesis is based (FaCS 2002).

A further aspect of the document is a commitment to regular evaluation and review of progress with the first full-scale review to be undertaken in 2005. The regular evaluation and review includes an “annual report to the Housing Ministers and the Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs against the desired outcomes defined in this strategy, and make recommendations for action to address any shortfalls in performance” (FaCS 2002).

2.2.1.3 Common Reporting Framework for States, Territories and ATSI

The Common Reporting Framework was developed by FaCS and ATSI to assist the States and Territories with the strategic planning and reporting required by the “Building a Better Future” document’s regular evaluation and review (FaCS 2002). It was also informed by the plans developed by the States and Territories in implementing the Housing Ministers’ reforms. It applies to all Indigenous housing plans which commence in 2002-2003. The primary role for the first round of data collection is seen as the establishment of a baseline to guide priorities and actions in future years (Parliament of Australia 2002). In accordance with this aim, the Common Reporting Framework is an important part of the Indigenous Housing Agreement in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory. In Western Australia, the Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plans (RHIPs) that are submitted by each Region are based on the Common Reporting Framework. In the Northern Territory, the 5-year rolling Strategic Plans developed by IHANT are developed “having regard to” the Common Reporting Framework (Northern Territory Government, ATSI, and FaCS 2002; Government of Western Australia 2002).

The principles, objectives and implementation strategies within “Building a Better Future” and the “Common Reporting Framework” guide the housing Indigenous Housing Agreements between the Commonwealth Government and the West Australian and Northern Territory Governments. These Agreements are discussed below and in more detail in Chapter 5.

The key policy directions discussed above are implemented both at Commonwealth and State/Territory Government level. The respective roles of these institutions are discussed and provide a context for the detailed discussion of mechanisms to improve Indigenous housing in Chapter 5.

2.2.2 The Commonwealth Government

Within the Commonwealth Government, the responsibility for Indigenous Housing lies primarily with ATSIC, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission, assisted by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). FaCS is the lead agency in the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) that provides strategic direction and a framework for all public housing funding, including Indigenous housing.

This section of the report discusses the role of FaCS, the CSHA and ATSIC.

2.2.2.1 The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS)

FaCS is responsible for a broad range of social policy issues that affect Australians, including housing policy. FaCS focuses on three key social policy outcomes, namely Stronger Families, Stronger Communities and Economic and Social Participation (FaCS 2002). In addition, it is the lead agency in the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) which provides the framework for all housing funding, including Indigenous housing. As a result of the CSHA's importance, it is discussed in a separate section below.

Housing Support forms part of the "Stronger Communities" outcome and consists of two main areas, namely "Housing Support" and "Community Support". As the name suggests, "Housing Support" helps needy households (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) in accessing housing and assists the homeless. The Housing Support Branch is responsible for a range of mainly 'mainstream' housing-related initiatives. These include:

- The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement which is discussed in the section below;
- The National Homelessness Strategy;

- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) which is a national support program assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- The Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP) which is delivered by the Department of Family and Community Services and is funded through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements; and
- The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) which conducts housing research on behalf of FaCS (FaCS 2002).

The “Community Support” element of the “Stronger Communities” Program assists with community capacity-building and improving Indigenous peoples’ living conditions as well as a range of concession arrangements (FaCS 2003). Within Community Support, there is an area called “Building Stronger Indigenous Communities”. This includes the Indigenous Policy Unit which advises FaCS on Indigenous policy issues and assists with Indigenous Housing policy development and program management. One of the relevant programs that FaCS manages is Fixing Houses for Better Health 2 (FHBH2) which builds on the success of the previous program (FHBH) operated by ATSIC and will assess and fix approximately 1500 houses in Indigenous communities across Australia over three years. In addition they also commission research and provide advice on Indigenous issues to the Minister and Executive (FaCS 2003).

2.2.2.2 Commonwealth–State Housing Agreements (CSHA)

Under the *Housing Assistance Act 1996*, the Commonwealth Government has formulated agreements with all State and Territory Governments. These Commonwealth–State Housing Agreements (CSHA) provide strategic direction and a budget for housing and housing assistance, mainly for public housing. The CSHA has a long history and is the main instrument regulating the policy and funding of public housing. These agreements and the related

funding pertain to housing assistance for those in need and not just Indigenous housing. Funding is provided on a 'modified per capita basis' and the State and Territory Governments partly match this funding from their own sources. The agreements are regularly renegotiated. The current Agreement runs from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2008 (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2000, 2001; ShelterWA 2001).

This Multilateral Agreement sets out the content of the Indigenous Housing Agreements which are negotiated separately with each jurisdiction. The Indigenous Housing Agreement is performance-orientated and requires each State to project the level and nature of housing need, the socio-economic environment and its funding resources. On the basis of this information, each jurisdiction formulates a strategic response to their particular situation. Although each agreement is different, they do share common features such as a focus on outcomes, performance measures for these outcomes and an emphasis on joint planning by the affected organisations with clear roles and responsibilities. The agreements must include arrangements for community consultation as well as the development of strategic plans, and are subject to independent review after a certain period of operation (FaCS 1999; Commonwealth Grants Commission 2001).

The bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreements establish a partnership between the State Government, ATSIC and the Commonwealth Government for the planning, coordination and management of housing but have not been signed in all States and Territories. However the two areas that are the focus of this paper, namely Western Australia and the Northern Territory, both have Indigenous Housing Agreements. In fact, the Northern Territory was the first to sign an agreement in 1995 and its effectiveness has already been reviewed. Ministers responsible for the State and Commonwealth and the ATSIC Chairperson signed the current "Agreement for the Provision and Management of Housing and Related Infrastructure for Indigenous People" for both the Northern Territory and Western Australia in July 2002. These

Agreements enable, inter alia, the pooling of most housing-related funds through IHANT in Northern Territory and the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC) in Western Australia. These bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreements are discussed below and, as they are one of the key mechanisms of program integration, they are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

2.2.2.3 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission/Services (ATSIC/S)

The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is the main Commonwealth body involved in the funding of Indigenous housing. ATSIC is a Commonwealth statutory body that was established in 1990 under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989. As determined in this Act, ATSIC is a democratically elected Indigenous organisation that used to be supported by an administrative wing. Towards the end of the fieldwork associated with this research, the administrative wing was separated from the elected wing and renamed ATSIS (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services). The elected wing continues to be known as ATSIC (ATSIS 2003; ATSIC 2003). The structure of ATSIC and ATSIS is reflected in Figure 2.

ATSIC elections are held every three years, the last being in October 2002. These elections elect local representatives to 35 Regional Councils. The Regional Councils form 16 zones, each of which elect a Commissioner to sit on the Board. The ATSIC Board determines national policy whereas the Regional Councils determine local policy. Prior to 1 July 2003, the Regional Councillors played an important role in determining funding priorities in their area (ATSIC 2003). This role of the Regional Councils has been transferred to ATSIS “to clearly distinguish roles within ATSIC and to remove the potential for conflicts of interest in decision-making over funding” (ATSIC 2003; Naidoo 2003).

ATSIS was created on 28 May 2003 by an Order of the Administrator of the Commonwealth and came into effect on 1 July 2003. It provides “corporate services and policy/advocacy support” to ATSIC, the elected representatives of Indigenous Australians (ATSIS 2003). ATSIS representatives serve on the ATSIC Board as well as each of the 35 Regional Councils (ATSIS 2003). Unlike the arrangement that existed prior to 1 July, ATSIS is not a statutory authority and operates under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act). In practice, the elected Indigenous representatives (now known as ATSIC) no longer have any decision-making power over specific grants, loans or contracts. ATSIC will determine the policies and the funding decisions will be made by ATSIS staff, based on the ATSIC policies (ATSIS 2003; Naidoo 2003).

In April 2004, while the repercussions of the ‘separation of powers’ were still being felt, the Commonwealth government decided to abolish both ATSIC and ATSIS and transfer their services and programs to mainstream agencies from July 2004 (ATSIC 2004). ATSIC was still one of the main agencies in Indigenous housing at the time of fieldwork so the programs are described as they functioned at that time. There has been very little change to date but the abolition of ATSIC and ATSIS will inevitably have major implications for Indigenous housing.

ATSIC has two Indigenous-specific housing programs, namely:

The **Home Ownership Program**: an initiative to support Indigenous home-ownership. At present, this is effectively an urban program as it is unable to finance houses on community land.

The **Community Housing and Infrastructure Program** (CHIP) which is ATSIC’s second largest expenditure program. There are five CHIP elements:

- *Housing* which provides for capital construction, the purchase and upgrade of rental housing, and recurrent funding for Indigenous housing organisations where the rental income does not cover the administration and maintenance costs (ATSIC 2002).
- *Infrastructure* which provides capital funding for essential services such as water, roads, sewerage, power and other services to rural and remote communities (ATSIC 2002).
- *Municipal Services* which provides recurrent funding for the maintenance of infrastructure such as community power, sewerage services, internal road maintenance in remote areas, and also covers the operational organisations providing these services (ATSIC 2002).
- *National Aboriginal Health Strategy (NAHS)* which provides capital funding for housing and related infrastructure (power, water, sewerage, drainage and dust control) to improve environmental living conditions in remote areas. The program has stringent eligibility criteria. NAHS is administered on a State-wide basis by external program managers who have construction management and engineering expertise (ATSIC 2002). The same priority listing of areas of need are used to allocate the personnel and equipment provided by the Army under the ATSIC Army Community Assistance Program (AACAP) (ShelterWA 2001).
- *Program Support* which provides funding for initiatives that cannot be linked to a single community such as surveys, planning and technology research and design such as the Bushlight Program (ATSIC 2002).

There are areas of overlap between the different elements of CHIP such as between the Infrastructure Program and NAHS. In addition, although the above elements all fall within the CHIP budget, they can be considered separate entities. For example, the pooling of funding is a central component of the bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreements in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The elements of the CHIP budget are,

however, not treated the same. In both cases, the CHIP Infrastructure and Housing elements are included in the pooling arrangement through AHIC and IHANT respectively, but both NAHS and the Municipal Services are not. NAHS is managed as a separate entity and the Papunya case study illustrates that the rigid implementation of programs seems illogical and can be financially detrimental to the community.

The **Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)** is ATSIC's largest funding program and provides training and employment to Indigenous individuals in urban, rural and remote areas. These activities are determined and managed by the communities. The ATSIC CDEP website gives an undated estimate that the CDEP has over 35 000 participants who voluntarily give up their social security entitlements to participate in the program which is funded through over 270 CDEP organisations (ATSIC 2003). Although the CDEP does not fund housing, it plays an extremely important role as an enabling program which, particularly in remote areas, allows for other funding to be maximised. CDEP consists of two elements, the participant wages that pay participants a low wage, and "CDEP On-Costs" which are used to finance the materials for community projects. The range of CDEP-funded projects is vast. For example, in Lombadina CDEP labour is used to supplement a contractor-managed refurbishment program of the houses in the community. In Laramba, the community were so concerned with the cost of the upgrade of some houses through IHANT that they began a process of upgrading houses in the community using CDEP labour. In this context, it is much more than a welfare payment and its importance in enabling other activities to occur should not be underestimated.

ATSIC is also implementing actions aligned to the *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* and the *Reconciliation Framework*. As mentioned above in the discussion of the Reconciliation Framework, ten priority projects have been selected to assist the Commonwealth in

developing new policy that will include a focus on governance and capacity-building (COAG, 2002). On 2 July 2003, Tjurabalan and its Comprehensive Regional Agreement Process was announced as a West Australian site for the COAG whole-of-government service delivery trials to Indigenous communities and regions (Ellison 2003). There were 6 specific goals agreed to for the COAG Western Australia Site Project. These included the following priorities of relevance to this study: Infrastructure Provision (roads, houses, utilities etc); Resource Community Consultation Agents; Building capacity of Residents; and Building capacity of Governments to engage (Alan Stewart Consulting Services 2003).

This section of the report discussed the Commonwealth's role in Indigenous Housing which occurs primarily through FaCS and ATSIC/ATSIS. The following two sections examine the equally complex policy and institutional framework within first, Western Australia and second, the Northern Territory.

2.3 The Government of Western Australia

Housing Policy for Indigenous people in Western Australia has been influenced by a number of documents. The nationally relevant documents were discussed in detail at the beginning of this section and include the 1992 COAG's "National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders", COAG's 2000 Reconciliation Framework and the May 2001 Commonwealth, State and Territory Housing Minister's "Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010" (Government of Western Australia 2002).

In addition, in October 2001, the Government of Western Australia signed an agreement entitled "Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians". Although not housing-specific, this agreement recognises the injustices of the past and provides for the negotiation of a

State-wide Framework to enable agreements at the local and regional level. The intention of these Local and Regional Agreements is "...to protect and respect the inherent rights for Aboriginal people and to significantly improve the health, education, living standards, and wealth of Aboriginal people" (Government of Western Australia 2001 p.3). Horrocks (2003 p.6) summarises the essence of the Statement of Commitment as related to housing as follows: "Regional Councils will be consulted regarding all major initiatives and agreement will be sought for the MOU, RHIP and needs based funding formula" as required under the Indigenous Housing Agreement and, "Regional Councils will be deciding on housing and infrastructure priorities in their region".

In the past, the responsibility for, and provision of funding to Indigenous housing was uncoordinated and divided between a number of government bodies. The Indigenous Housing Agreement of 2002 is an attempt to remedy these problems, and introduce coordination between service providers and funders. The Indigenous Housing Agreement details the provision of housing for Indigenous people in Western Australia and is discussed below.

2.3.1 The Indigenous Housing Agreement

The provision of housing for Indigenous people in Western Australia is outlined in the "Agreement for the Provision of Housing and Infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Western Australia July 2002 – June 2007". The agreement is between two parties, namely the West Australian Government and the Commonwealth Government and is signed by the ATSIC Chairperson, the FaCS Minister and the West Australian Minister for Housing and Works. The current version of this key Indigenous housing policy document for Western Australia was signed in July 2002 and has a four year term (Government of Western Australia 2002). The

Indigenous Housing Agreement, as one of the main program integration mechanisms, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5

The current Agreement is being implemented, the peak body (AHIC) has been established and the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) has been appointed as Program Manager for AHIC. Figure 3 shows State and Commonwealth Funding flows prior to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement whereas Figure 4 shows funding flows after the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement.

2.3.1.1 Department of Housing and Works (DHW)

Within the Government of Western Australia, the provision of housing and related services is the responsibility of the Department of Housing and Works (DHW). Within DHW, the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate (AHID) is primarily responsible for Indigenous housing and related services. The implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreement saw the creation of the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC) which is one of the case studies discussed in Section 4.1.1. AHIC has appointed DHW as their Program Manager to oversee the implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreement. DHW will therefore be discussed further in Chapter 5 under the Western Australian Indigenous Housing Agreement.

2.3.2 Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)

DIA has been charged with implementing the “Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians” referred to in Section 2.4 above. A key aspect of this “Statement of Commitment” is an undertaking to work in partnership with Indigenous people. To this end, the West Australian Government is supporting the development of regional and local agreements, to be developed with the community at local, State and National

Levels (DIA 2002). These agreements are developed according to Regional Agreements Manual produced by ATSIC (ATSIC 2001).

DIA also supports the **Environmental Health Needs Coordinating Committee** (EHNCC), a government body focussed on the sub-standard environmental health conditions in many of Western Australia's Indigenous communities. It consists of 6 State, Commonwealth and Local Government agencies. In 2000 they produced a guideline document entitled "Code of Practice for Housing and Environmental Infrastructure Development in Aboriginal Communities in Western Australia" (Ove Arup and Partners et al. 2000; DIA 2000). Prior to July 2002 when the current bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreement was signed, the EHNCC was one of the few cross-agency coordinating mechanisms.

2.4 Northern Territory Government

As in the case of Western Australia, the main discussion of the Indigenous Housing Agreement occurs in Chapter 5. As with AHIC above, the peak Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT) also forms a case study and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Other innovative program integration mechanisms, namely the Central Remote Model and the Indigenous-initiated Wangka Wilurrara regional partnership agreement are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.5 Australian Remote Indigenous Housing Literature

This section briefly reviews literature relevant to remote Indigenous housing. It begins with a discussion of Indigenous settlements, then discusses Indigenous communities in the Australian context and the nature and design of remote Indigenous housing before briefly discussing literature dealing with the remote Indigenous housing system.

2.5.1 Indigenous Settlements

There is a vast range of Indigenous settlements – from urban enclaves to discrete remote communities and, if anecdotal evidence is to be believed, family groups living traditionally in the vast central desert of Australia. Memmott and Moran (2001) distinguish three types of Indigenous settlements:

- Discrete urban settlements and town camps;
- Discrete settlements that are separate from other settlements; and
- Outlying discrete settlements (centre such as outstations, homelands and pastoral settlements) depending on another service.

Indigenous settlements in urban areas are usually serviced by municipal infrastructure or by a shared arrangement between an Indigenous community organisation and the local authority. These settlements fall outside the scope of this research that focuses on remote settlements.

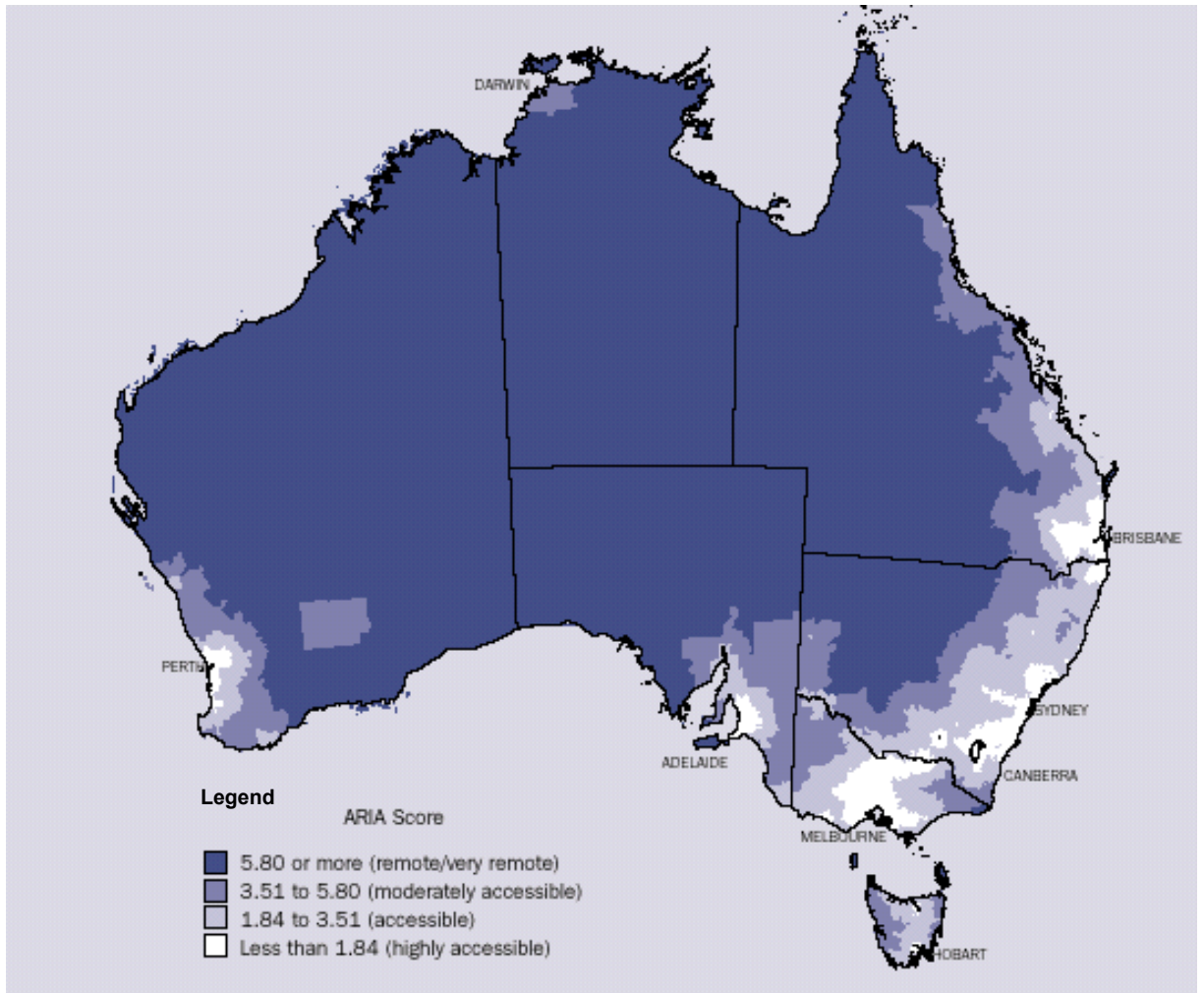
Memmott and Moran's second category of discrete settlements accounts for less than one-third of the Indigenous population. Most are small with a population of less than 50 people but a handful in the Northern Territory have a population of over 1000 and are classified as urban centres. The larger settlements generally have a history as a mission or government settlement. For example, Lombadina was initially a mission. Many of these mission or government settlements consist of several 'communities' who may even speak mutually unintelligible languages. For example, the case study community of Papunya has members of at least five different language groups. Many, but not all, of these settlements have local government status. Those with local government status are expected to provide the necessary municipal services such as education, housing, the provision of road, health care and other services (Memmott and Moran 2001).

The third category, outstations (or homelands), generally comprises family-based settlements on traditional land. There is considerable movement of people to and from service centres and, in the case of the outstation movement, to the original settlement. These settlements are often in extremely remote areas of Australia and present unique challenges in service provision (Memmott and Moran 2001). The following section examines the second and third categories of discrete Indigenous settlements in more detail.

2.5.2 Remote Indigenous Communities

A clear understanding of what is meant by “remoteness” is important when the research is focused on housing in remote areas. Probably the most widely accepted measure of remoteness, and the measure most often used by Australian government departments, is ARIA, the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia. It is a GIS-based (Geographic Information System) classification system and was originally developed for the (then) Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC), now the Department of Health and Aging. A GIS system consists of an ‘intelligent’ map supported by a database. In this case, it uses the road distance between service centres to calculate remoteness. The resulting accessibility or remoteness index has become a standard measure of remoteness and has a broad range of applications. The index consists of five categories namely: highly accessible, accessible, moderately accessible, remote and very remote (DHAC 2001).

In their publication “Housing in remote Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities” the Australian Bureau of Statistics produced a useful map, which is reproduced below. In doing so, they condensed ARIA’s five categories into four by combining the remote and very remote categories (ABS 2001).



Map 1: Accessible and Remote Areas of Australia (ABS 2001)

Critics of ARIA maintain that remoteness should not only be measured by geographical distance from service centres. The Griffith Service Access Frame (GSAF) has been proposed as an alternative and uses a range of criteria such as community size, distance and relative economic resources to define remoteness. It has been argued that policy formulation based on current remoteness indexes disadvantages more remote communities and favours those with more political influence (Griffith 2000).

The case study communities discussed in Chapter 4 would be considered remote/very remote using either the GSAF or ARIA. In 1999, over 80% of

the Indigenous population living in discrete settlements lived in remote area communities. Over half of these people lived in the Northern Territory while the next largest population of Indigenous people living in discrete remote communities lived in Western Australia (ABS 2002, 2001). For this reason, the two case study areas are located in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Remote Indigenous communities share certain characteristics that require a different approach to 'mainstream' communities. In the first place, land is usually held in some form of communal tenure and people are not able to own land. Houses too, are usually owned communally and administered by some form of Indigenous Housing Organisation. Secondly, housing in these remote communities is usually problematic, with an inadequate supply of houses and the poor quality of much of the housing stock being the two main problems. Although the majority of people lived in permanent dwellings, these were usually overcrowded and poorly maintained. The third issue is that of inadequate or inappropriate services such as drinking water, electricity and waste disposal (ABS 2001).

These remote Indigenous communities are reminiscent of communities in developing countries and share the often poor quality of housing and services. In contrast to many other countries a causal link has been made in Australia between Indigenous housing and environmental health. This is mainly due to historical factors which saw inadequate housing as one of the main causes of poor health in Indigenous populations. It is now known that the causes of poor Indigenous health are more complex than adequate housing. Nevertheless, the legacy of this approach remains today and a significant number of Indigenous houses in remote areas are delivered by the "National Environmental Health Strategy" (NAHS) (Anda 1998).

2.5.3 Housing Nature and Design

Housing design should respond to the needs of the inhabitants and should reflect the use of space, which is largely culturally determined. “European-style housing is far from ideal in meeting the cultural and social needs of Indigenous people for whom traditional values are important” (Neutze 2000 p.486). Such housing is inflexible, immobile and isolates its occupants from the activities of other community members. For Indigenous Australian families, as discussed in this chapter, traditional housing was merely a shelter against the elements and ‘living’ is what went on around the shelter (Neutze 2000).

Social relationships largely determined the use of space. Fantin (2001) illustrates this in her study of the Yolungu people of northeast Arnhem Land. She discusses the impact of architecture and design on one aspect of social behaviour, that of avoidance behaviour. Avoidance behaviours are a set of behaviours between kin that are probably best characterised as ‘extreme respect’. Fantin identified eighteen avoidance relationships that have to be observed in everyday interaction (Fantin 2001). This is only one of many types of social behaviours that need to be observed to be a respected community member. The need to observe these behaviours should have had a profound effect on housing design for Indigenous people. Despite the documentation of these living styles, the ethnocentrism of earlier decades dictated that the provision of anything less than European-style public housing would be inadequate.

Indigenous households therefore often have different design needs to the non-Indigenous population. The cohabitation of family kin groups can be by choice or can also reflect a lack of housing – secondary homelessness according to Chamberlain and Johnson (2001). There has been much work done on appropriate design for Indigenous housing in recent times, including work by Indigenous architects, although in 2001 there were only six

Indigenous architects with tertiary qualifications. Whereas non-Indigenous architects have had some success in interpreting Indigenous culture and designing culturally appropriate buildings, promoting Indigenous architects and designers is likely to have more consistent success (Kombumerri 2001).

Indigenous settlements are often characterised by inter- and intra-community mobility. This mobility is most often of a circular local nature (Memmott and Moran 2001). This was seen during fieldwork on the Dampier Peninsula in Western Australia where one extended family of 18 people had three houses - a house in Broome, a house in one of the peninsula settlements as well as a house on an outstation, a family-based settlement on traditional land as described in Memmott and Moran's third category above. The family moved between the urban, remote community and outstation as dictated by school terms, medical appointments and the seasons.

The system of housing provision and management should also respond to the cultural preferences of the remote community. Burke (2004) discusses the provision of housing and housing management in traditional Indigenous communities. His model of Intercultural Housing Management describes a number of continuums on which Indigenous cultures often differ from the mainstream culture. These continuums include Authoritarian/Democratic; Masculinity/Femininity; Risk Averse/Tolerant of Change; Individualistic/Communitarian; High Environmental Connectivity/Low Environmental Connectivity. His model was adapted from the field of intercultural management and provides a useful framework for understanding Indigenous cultures and their housing management. It illustrates the necessity for Indigenous housing and housing management to be culturally appropriate.

5.2.4 Indigenous Housing and Disadvantage

The existing Indigenous housing system has produced inadequate numbers of housing to meet the current demand and the standard of this housing is often inadequate. In 1999, 13% of people in remote communities lived in temporary accommodation such as humpies and caravans and, of the permanent housing owned or managed by community organisations, one-third required major repair or replacement (ABS 2001).

In addition to housing inadequacies, Indigenous Australians are significantly disadvantaged on a number of fronts when compared to non-Indigenous Australians. They have a life expectancy of 20 years less than non-Indigenous Australians and a three-fold higher rate of infant mortality (Murray 2003). Currently, there is a wide and widening gulf between the health status of indigenous Australians and others that could be called “one of the biggest public health failures in the developed world” (Ring and Elston 1999 p.228). The illness and mortality levels of the indigenous population are approximately three times those of the non-indigenous population. This is in direct contrast to the significant improvements in the health of indigenous populations in New Zealand and North America (Ring and Elston 1999; Murray 2003).

These health inadequacies are compounded by the poor condition of housing, particularly in remote areas. This is exacerbated by significant overcrowding and, in 1999 the average occupancy ratio in remote Indigenous communities was 5.8 people per house, compared to a non-Indigenous average of around half that among the non-Indigenous population (ABS 2001).

Housing and the associated living conditions are worse for Indigenous Australians than for non-Indigenous Australians, particularly for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. These poor living conditions and

overcrowding have led to health problems and a significantly disadvantaged population. The current Indigenous housing system has failed to provide sufficient, adequate and appropriate housing to meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas (Neutze 2000).

5.2.5 *The Indigenous Housing System*

There is very little written on the Indigenous housing system in remote areas. In one of the few articles on the remote housing system, (Minnery, Manicaros, and Lindfield 2000) agree that Indigenous housing policy should be approached differently to that for 'mainstream Australians'. They discuss a continuum of roles for the State in providing housing and differentiate three points along this continuum. These are first, "provider" where it finances and builds the housing; second, "enabler" where it enables groups or associations to build houses; and third, "facilitator" where the State plays a minimal role. They develop a detailed and potentially useful 'best practice' framework for use within the current housing system. They do state that the funding streams are "severely proscriptive" and that a more flexible funding "would give the communities more flexibility to respond appropriately (Minnery, Manicaros, and Lindfield 2000 p.251)". While they recognise the problems with the current housing system and make suggestions towards improving the current system, the paper does not recognise the fundamental flaw in the housing system – that control and decision-making over the housing process is located outside the community.

The following section of this chapter discusses the Indigenous housing experience in the United States and Canada and explores the relevant lessons. These concepts contribute to the development of the characteristics of a successful Indigenous housing system. This is then tested against the Australian remote housing system and results in the research hypothesis which is tested in this thesis.

2.6 International Lessons

It is important for any research to be aware of relevant international trends and lessons that can be learned. For this reason, this section of the thesis briefly reviews relevant international experience. This comparison was limited to English-speaking countries whose Indigenous populations followed a similar lifestyle to the Australian Indigenous population prior to colonisation. The Indigenous populations that meet these criteria are the Native Americans of North America. This refers to the North American Indians, the Alaskan Natives and the Inuit and Aluet of Canada, alternatively called the First Nations.

2.6.1 Similarities and Differences

There are many similarities between Indigenous Australians and the Native American peoples. They are all minority populations in their own land and have suffered similar culture change, dispossession of land and often the forced separation of families. Traditional culture was also not homogenous but consisted of thousands of different tribes and bands who spoke hundreds of mutually unintelligible languages (Cornell 2003; Moran 2000, 1997).

There are also significant differences such as the considerably larger populations of Indigenous people, particularly in the United States. One of the most significant differences is the recognition of their status as the first inhabitants of the North Americas, which is in stark contrast to the legal definition of Australia as “terra nullius” at the time of colonisation. This difference is highly significant because the North American Indigenous tribes are recognised in the United States Constitution as distinct governments. This enables them to negotiate treaties directly with the federal government. The United States has 562 federally recognised tribal governments and their sovereignty confers upon the American Indian tribes the right to govern themselves. The situation is similar for Canadian First Nations although

there are still many land claims under negotiation and the policy environment is not as supportive as that in the United States (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2004; American Indian Policy Centre 2004; Moran 2000, 1997; Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs 2004; Cornell 2004).

The differences between the Australian Indigenous population and the North American Indigenous populations are considerable across a number of parameters:

- *Socioeconomic* – Indigenous people have a worse socioeconomic status in Australia than in Canada and particularly worse than in the United States. This situation is exacerbated in the remote areas which are the focus of this research;
- *Education levels* are considerably worse in Australia than either Canada or the United States. In Australia, 48% of the Indigenous population did not finish Year 10 while the percentage is 24% in Canada and 14% in the United States;
- *Unemployment levels* are more than twice those of the United States. This includes the modified 'work for the dole' system of CDEP;
- *Income levels* among Indigenous Australians seem comparable to those of Native Americans but Indigenous Australians probably have a higher cost of living. The cost of living in remote areas is considerably higher than in urban areas;
- *Housing* quality and overcrowding is an issue for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous North Americans although the problems are worse in Australia; and,
- *Home Ownership* among Indigenous Australians is lower than that of Canadian First Nations and around 2.5 times lower than in the United States (Moran 1997 p.4-7; 2000).

2.6.2 Indigenous Governance

One of the most informative and relevant programs for Indigenous Australians is the “Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development”, often referred to simply as the ‘Harvard Project’.

2.6.2.1 The Harvard Project

The ‘Harvard Project’ started in the 1980’s as a research project to explain why certain of the American Indian Nations had managed to build remarkably sustainable economies. The research team expected to find that the successful tribes were better educated or had access to resources for activities such as mining or forestry. The research showed that this was not the case, but instead found a strong correlation between economic success and self-government. They found that self-government or “tribal sovereignty - indigenous control over indigenous affairs”, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for Indigenous economic success (Cornell 2002 p.2; Cornell 2002). This and subsequent research developed five “key determinants of tribal economic success” or necessary factors for development. These are (Cornell 2002, 2003):

- *Sovereignty* or the power of the Indigenous people to make decisions themselves. This means genuine decision-making power over all internal affairs such as resource use, dispute resolution, law-making and law-enforcement. This puts Indigenous people in control of the development agenda and makes them accountable for their decisions;
- *Governing Institutions* underpinning self-government. Sovereignty must be supported by capable institutions to ensure sustainable economic development or “backing up governing power with governing capabilities”. These tribal bureaucracies should be stable, responsible and effective and have a dispute resolution system such as strong effective tribal courts (Cornell 2002 p.5);

- A *Cultural Match* between the formal governing institution and the Indigenous political culture. The governing institutions have to be effective but must also have a cultural fit with Indigenous political culture - “People have to believe in them” and this usually means that they need to be developed by the Indigenous people themselves (Cornell 2002 p.6);
- *Strategic Thinking* or “a systematic examination not only of assets and opportunities but of priorities and concerns” (Cornell 2002 p.7). The Indian Nations that employ strategic thinking and have a vision for the tribe for the future, tend to perform far better economically than those who do not; and,
- *Leadership* to envision a better future and pursue that vision is crucial to success. This can be either individual or group leadership, depending on which is more culturally appropriate.

An analysis of the Harvard Project’s research indicates that where these five elements were not in place, sustainable economic development was difficult and crisis management tended to prevail. When these five factors are put in place and mobilised, together referred to as “nation-building”, they can bring about a remarkable transformation and have been a key aspect of the Harvard Project’s ongoing work. The work of the Harvard Project has expanded to include self-governance and leadership support and training for Indigenous North Americans. Fortunately this work is very well documented by the Harvard Project and offers clear evidence for the success of this approach (Cornell 2002; Cornell 2002; Cornell 2003, 2004; Cornell et al. 2001; Cornell and Kalt 1992; Cornell and Kalt 1998; Cornell and Kalt. 2000; Kalt 2001; Cornell and Kalt 1998).

As far as housing is concerned, Cornell (2004) gives an example of an Alaskan village which took control of its housing from a central bureaucracy. The residents have learned new trades and have also designed new homes that not only cost significantly less than those provided by the centralised

bureaucracy but also have better heat retention. There is also an emerging market in Alaska for these designs and Cornell quotes a tribal leader who said “this is hard work, but it’s our work” (Cornell 2004 p.1).

2.6.2.2 The Harvard Project and Indigenous Australia

Cornell (2002 p.1) states that so far these principles have only applied to North American Indigenous peoples but he would expect the same principles to apply to Indigenous people in Australia. At an Indigenous Governance conference in the Northern Territory of Australia, Cornell (2003 p.3-5) reviewed the similar history of the Indigenous peoples of North America and Australia. He distilled the five key factors into three factors: Indigenous self-government; capable governing institutions; and a cultural match. He stressed that the process should start within Indigenous communities and outlined five key steps for communities towards Indigenous self-government:

- *Find those who are willing to lead;*
- *Change the conversation* - and the view of community governing institutions from a “funnel of goodies” for friends and family to a vehicle to achieve a vision for the nation’s future and to lead in that process;
- *Be tough-minded* and take responsibility for the community’s problems and for solving them;
- *Be strategic* in addressing important and manageable problems and not being overwhelmed; and,
- *Don’t wait* – seize the moment.

Cornell (2003 p.5-7) further outlines six challenges for non-Indigenous government:

- *Recognise the link between decision-making and accountability* and that if one wants Indigenous accountability, Indigenous people need to make the decisions;

- *Find innovative leaders* in non-Indigenous government;
- *Abandon “one-size-fits-all fantasies”* and recognise that Indigenous cultures are diverse and their governance mechanisms are likely to be equally diverse;
- *Listen to local knowledge and solutions* as Indigenous people know their communities better than outsiders;
- *Invest in institutional capacity building* by facilitating the development of effective Indigenous Institutions ranging from councils to mechanisms for dispute resolution; and,
- *Provide models of what works* – usually through stories from other successful Indigenous groups.

This paper, presented at an Indigenous governance conference in the Northern Territory after the end of the fieldwork on which this thesis is based, supports many of the findings discussed in Chapter 6. The essence of this approach is that the only policy orientation that has brought about a consistent improvement in Indigenous peoples position is that of “Indigenous self-determination and self-government” where real power is placed in Indigenous hands (Cornell 2004). In this thesis, these concepts are an integral part of the ‘demand-responsive’ approach which is proposed as an alternative to the current ‘supply-driven’ approach.

2.6.3 Housing Administration

The Indigenous administration system, including housing administration, in the United States is directly affected by the sovereignty of individual tribes. The American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations possess a “nation within a nation” status which is formalised through treaties (American Indian Policy Centre 2004). This means that tribes have a direct relationship with the federal government. The Indigenous administration system in both the United States and Canada therefore consists of two clearly defined levels of

administration, the tribe or First Nation and the federal government (Moran 1997).

In the United States, the federal lead agency is the Bureau of Indian Affairs whereas in Canada, the lead agency is the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. There are also peak representative Indigenous bodies called the National Congress of American Indians and, in Canada, the Assembly of First Nations (Moran 1997; Bureau of Indian Affairs 2004; Indian and Northern Affairs 2004).

As far as Indigenous housing is concerned, the lead agency in the United States is the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Office of Native American Programs. It administers grants to Tribes or 'Tribally Designated Housing Entities' primarily on the basis of need. These grants are provided annually in the form of an Indian Housing Block Grant and recognise the right of tribal self-governance. They are therefore flexible and allow tribes "to design, implement and administer their own unique housing programs" (United States Government 2003 p.2) and HUD provides a range of support activities. In addition, the National American Indian Housing Council is a national non-government organisation which provides training, technical assistance, advocacy and research for member organisations. Their aim is to provide affordable, safe and culturally-relevant housing for Native Americans in the United States (The National American Indian Housing Council 2004).

In Canada, there is a similar but not as well developed focus on self-determination and on supporting First Nations. There is a concerted effort to improve housing on reserves and a policy framework introduced in 1996 enables First Nations to determine how housing funds should be used. This approach is supported by four principles, namely,

- First Nation control through community-based housing programs;

- developing First Nation expertise through capacity development;
- sharing responsibility (with shelter charges and ownership options); and
- facilitating better access to private capital through debt financing (Indian and Northern Affairs 2004).

2.6.4 *Applicability to This Research*

Despite the Indigenous populations in the United States and Canada sharing many similarities with Australia's Indigenous population, the differences are considerable. Indigenous communities in Northern America are usually much larger than those in Australia. Only in the remote and inhospitable north of Canada does the situation approximate that of remote Australia. The Indigenous housing systems are less complex than that in Australia, largely because most Indigenous communities have the same relationship to the federal government as States and Territories do in Australia (Moran 1997).

The fundamental difference between the Indigenous Housing Systems in the North Americas and that in remote areas of Australia is the issue of sovereignty and the associated issue of power relations. The United States, and to a lesser extent Canada, have put policies into place and support Indigenous decision-making. This, according to Cornell (2004 p.1) has been the only "overarching policy orientation" that has brought about a sustained and sustainable improvement in Indigenous peoples lives. In contrast, Indigenous Australians are significantly disempowered.

2.7 Successful Remote Indigenous Housing

This section distils the preceding sections into several criteria for a successful Australian remote Indigenous housing system before evaluating the current remote Indigenous housing system against these characteristics.

It then discusses supply-driven and demand-responsive approaches to remote Indigenous housing.

2.7.1 *Characteristics of a Successful Remote Indigenous Housing System*

A successful Australian remote Indigenous housing system would draw from successful initiatives such as the Harvard Program and would have the following characteristics.

2.7.1.1 Indigenous Control and Self-Determination

This refers to the right of Indigenous people to make decisions about issues that affect them and be accountable for these decisions. The Harvard Project calls this characteristic ‘Sovereignty’ and would mean genuine decision-making power over all housing decisions ranging from design, construction, management and maintenance. This is supported by Article 23 of the Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop all health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions” (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1994).

2.7.1.2 An Enabling Environment

A remote Indigenous housing system that meets the needs of its beneficiaries would provide a supportive and enabling environment. This includes the concepts of empowerment and capacity-building and therefore also the Harvard Project’s support of leadership and development of relevant institutions. It means that the leaders in individual communities can set goals and objectives in the knowledge that there is a flexible funding and support environment to assist them. A practical example of an enabling environment

would be a community which is supported to develop the necessary local skills to build, manage and maintain their own housing. This characteristic embodies the opposite of the “one-size-fits all” housing system.

2.7.1.2 Culturally Responsive

The Harvard Project illustrated that there needs to be a cultural match between communities and their governing institutions. This characteristic extends that factor to include a culturally responsive system of housing provision, including housing design and housing management. The range of Indigenous language and cultural groups in Australia means that the housing system needs to be able to respond to the needs of a range of different language and culture groups.

These three characteristics of a successful Indigenous housing system form an integral part of the ‘demand-responsive’ approach to remote Indigenous housing which is discussed in Section 2.4.5.

2.7.2 *Current Success of the Indigenous Housing System*

In the Australian context, how is the success of a housing system or housing program measured? The majority of houses for Indigenous people in remote areas are effectively public housing and fall under the range of policies and programs discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 5. As Burke and Hayward (2000) comment, Australia is still in the grip of what they refer to as the “new managerialism” driving social housing policy. This is characterised by a systematic public administration method that requires a clear delineation of objectives which are established by elected politicians. These objectives are then translated, by public servants, into outputs with a set of expected outcomes that relate back to the original objective. This process is managed by a set of performance indicators which enable a program’s efficiency and effectiveness to be evaluated (Burke and Hayward 2000 p. 6-

7). These performance indicators are used to indicate the success or otherwise of the housing programs and the housing system.

In the context of Indigenous housing, the objectives are set primarily by “The Council of Australian Government’s (COAG)’s Reconciliation Framework” and the associated “Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010” which are discussed in Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2 of this Chapter. As mentioned in these sections, the objectives outlined in the Reconciliation Framework include empowerment, self-determination and self-management, participation in the policy and program formulation and the development of partnerships between the different levels of government and Indigenous communities. There is a reasonably good fit between these broad objectives and the three characteristics of a successful Indigenous housing system developed in Section 2.7.1.

These objectives are further defined in the “Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010” document which outlines the housing ministers’ objectives to improve Indigenous housing outcomes in the following ten years. The document outlines their four objectives which are listed in Section 2.2.1.2 and focus on meeting the housing needs of Indigenous people; improving the capacity of Indigenous housing organisations; co-ordinating program administration; and achieving healthy and sustainable housing (FaCS 2002). Each of these objectives have a number of strategies which are supported by the Common Reporting Framework for State, Territory and ATSIC, as discussed in Section 2.2.1.3, that guide the Indigenous Housing Agreements in each State and Territory.

Burke and Hayward’s critique of “mainstream” public housing, where there is a lack of clarity about the linkages between strategic objectives and performance indicators, mirrors the situation in Indigenous housing (2000). This is exacerbated by the difficulty in measuring objectives such as “empowerment”, “self-determination” and “community participation”

compared to the easy measurement of the number of houses built. There has therefore been an overemphasis on the easy to measure indicators and a neglect of the more important but less tangible indicators. This has reinforced the current emphasis on the delivery or supply of Indigenous housing in remote areas and a neglect of these less tangible objectives.

This thesis therefore argues that the remote Indigenous housing system does not meet the characteristics of a successful Indigenous housing system as it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive focus. This focus is further supported by the housing administration's concern with tangible measurable performance indicators. The concepts of supply-driven and demand-responsive approaches are explored in the next section.

2.7.3 Supply-driven and Demand-responsive approaches

There is a small emerging body of literature in Indigenous service provision, mostly originating from the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) in Alice Springs, that distinguishes between a supply-driven model of service provision and a demand-responsive model (Walker 2003; Fisher 2004). Bushlight, also a CAT program, aims to improve renewable energy resources to remote Indigenous communities, using a demand-responsive approach. A supply-driven approach is defined as “an approach to service delivery where the level of service installed within a community is externally prescribed by the service provider or other agency. On the other hand, a “demand responsive approach” is defined as “an approach to service delivery that emphasises communities making decisions on service levels based on their needs, priorities and capacity to sustain the service” (Bushlight 2004).

The opposing concepts of a supply-driven and demand-responsive Indigenous housing system will be used in this thesis. The demand-responsive system has, at its core, the three characteristics of a successful

Indigenous housing system. This involves supporting Indigenous decision-making and self-determination; providing an enabling environment and be sufficiently flexible to be responsive to a range of different culture and language groups and their different priorities.

2.8 Conclusion and Research Question

This chapter has discussed the broad historical and policy context for remote Indigenous housing in general and for the case study areas in particular. It also discussed the range of Commonwealth policies and programs as well as those of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. It is clear that there is a need to rationalise and integrate the large number of programs to avoid duplication and achieve better housing outcomes. This issue was identified at the inaugural COAG meeting in 1992 and has remained an issue. It is explored in detail in Chapter 5.

The second part of this chapter discussed remote Indigenous housing in Australia and relevant international experience. It developed characteristics for a successful Indigenous housing system, compared it against the current system which was found wanting. It then introduced the concepts of supply-driven and demand-responsive service provision with the latter being closely linked to the issue of sovereignty or self-government which appears to be the most significant difference between successful Indigenous communities in the North Americas and those in Australia. In a supply-driven model the control is situated outside the Indigenous community whereas, in a demand-responsive model, the Indigenous community has more control over the process and would therefore exhibit more self-government.

The concepts of supply- and demand-responsive service provision models prompted the investigation of the remote Indigenous housing system in Chapter 6 using the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment.

The research question is therefore:

Research Question: Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?

The **Hypothesis** to be tested in this thesis is: “The remote Indigenous housing system does not adequately meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive approach.”

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the complex issue of remote Indigenous housing while Chapter 2 provided the historical and policy background as well as local and international context for the research. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework and methodology or general research approach used to explore the research question. This question is: “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?”

The general approach to this research is that of Social Assessment which provides a framework for the analysis of the case studies. The theoretical orientations of the thesis are discussed in Section 3.2. This is followed by a discussion of Social Assessment in Section 3.3. Social Assessment is not particularly suited to the analysis of complex systems and Soft Systems Methodology, a process developed to consider complex problematic systems, is outlined in Section 3.4 before the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment is proposed in Section 3.5. Section 3.6 discusses the process followed in the research which includes a discussion of the case study approach and the data gathering and analysis processes.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

In their influential paper titled “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research” Guba and Lincoln (1994) stress the importance of explicitly identifying the research paradigm that guides the research. They identify four competing paradigms in qualitative research, with each paradigm being a set of “basic beliefs” or “worldviews” about the nature of legitimate research (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p.107). These paradigms are differentiated in terms of three aspects: first, their ontology or the form and nature of reality; second, their epistemology or theory of knowledge,

specifically “the relationship between the knower and what can be known”: and third, the methodology or how the researcher will conduct the research (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p.108).

Using the differences in ontology, epistemology and methodology, Guba and Lincoln identified the following four paradigms in qualitative research:

- *Positivism*: the dominant ‘scientific’ paradigm which assumes an objective reality;
- *Postpositivism*: recent attempts to moderate positivism while adhering to the same basic set of beliefs;
- *Critical Theory*: which subsumes several paradigms such as Marxism, materialism and participatory inquiry but assumes value-dependant research; and,
- *Constructivism*: the alternative to positivism which assumes a subjective reality.

Table 1 presents a continuum of paradigms based largely on the extent to which an objective reality is considered to exist. The theoretical orientation of this thesis falls towards the constructivist end of the continuum. It is underlain by the assumption that culture consists of cognitive ‘patterns for behaviour’ rather than only the observable ‘patterns of behaviour’. This perspective asserts that these mental rules or patterns for behaviour govern language, values, ideas and visible behaviour and are mediated by culture, aspects of culture such as gender as well as by experience. Rose (1997 p.7) also places Soft Systems Methodology at the Constructivist end of the continuum in Table 1. With reference to the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology he identifies Soft Systems Methodology’s ontology as being a socially constructed reality, its epistemology is the use of systems constructs to enable learning while its methodology is that of model building and testing.

Item	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism
Ontology	<i>Assumes an objective external reality</i>	<i>Assumes an objective external reality but one that can only be imperfectly apprehended</i>	<i>Historical realism – a reality shaped by context and cultural value-system.</i>	<i>Relativism - local and specific constructed realities</i>
Epistemology	<i>Objectivist - one can perceive an objective reality; findings true</i>	<i>Modified objectivist - possible to approximate reality</i>	<i>Subjectivist – knowledge is value-mediated & value dependent</i>	<i>Transactional or subjectivist; created findings</i>
Methodology	<i>Experimental, empirical verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods;</i>	<i>Modified experimental, critical multiplism; may include qualitative methods</i>	<i>dialogic or dialectical</i>	<i>hermeneutical or dialectical</i>

Table 1: Alternative Qualitative Research Paradigms (adapted from Guba and Lincoln 1994 p.100)

This thesis combines the methodologies of Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology to develop the new methodology of Systems Social Assessments. All three of these methodologies fall toward the constructivist end of the continuum in Table 1. These three methodologies, their similarities and differences, will be explored in more detail in the following sections of this chapter.

3.3 Social Assessment

3.3.1 Introduction and Definition

Social Assessment or Social Impact Assessment is an applied social science methodology concerned with the management of social change. It provides a framework and a process appropriate for applied social research into projects, programs and policies. Social Assessment is best known within the field of natural resource management, often as a component of an integrated environmental assessment. This thesis uses the term 'Social Assessment' in preference to 'Social Impact Assessment' as the term 'impact' has negative connotations.

This section of the thesis discusses first a definition of Social Assessment; second, the different orientations to Social Assessment; and third, the Social Assessment framework used in this research.

The definition of Social Assessment used in this research is that of Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich who define it as "...a process for research, planning and management of change arising from policies and programs" (Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004 p.1). There are a number of definitions of Social Assessment (or Social Impact Assessment) including the lengthy general definition contained within the "Principles and guidelines for social impact assessment in the USA" which was developed by "The Interorganizational Committee on Principles and Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment" in 1994 (revised 2003) in response to legislative requirements (The Interorganizational Committee on Principles and Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment 2003). In 2003, following years of consultation among practitioners, the main international Social Assessment organisation, the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) published the International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. This document states that Social Assessment is a process for "analysing, monitoring and

managing intended and unintended social consequences” of change (Vanclay 2003; Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004).

3.3.2 Orientations to Social Assessment

This thesis argues for an expansion of the usual project-specific role of Social Assessment into the assessment of the effect of social policy and programs and their change, using a Systems Social Assessment. Social Assessments are already used in a wide range of settings and Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (2004) have organised this into four ‘orientations’. These orientations are developed by categorising types of Social Assessment along two continuums – that of “applied” action versus “academic” research and the other of technocratic product versus process. This results in four different orientations to Social Assessment, namely Technocratic-action, Technocratic-research, Participatory-action, and Participatory-research.

	Action Orientation	Research Orientation
Product Orientation Technocratic	<p>Technocratic Action</p> <p>Social Assessment tends to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * national or regional agencies; * ‘top-down’; * often fulfilling legal requirements; * usually within a structured bureaucracy; 	<p>Technocratic Research</p> <p>Social Assessment tends to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * national or regional organisations; * ‘top-down’, academic; * knowledge for knowledge’s sake
Process Orientation Participatory	<p>Participatory Action</p> <p>Social Assessment tends to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * local action for social change; * ‘bottom up’; * often emphasises group consensus; 	<p>Participatory Research</p> <p>Social Assessment tends to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * conducted by or on behalf of an interest group; * often research to validate need for change.

Table 2: Orientations to Social Assessment (adapted from Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004 p.26-28)

It is evident from the above table that there are a wide range of orientations and settings for the practice of Social Assessment. Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich discuss the debate as to what constitutes “legitimate approaches” to Social Assessment as well as the tensions that exist in the field, particularly those between the ‘academic’ and ‘applied’ orientations (Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004 p.29). They advocate that sound Social Assessments should transcend the differences in orientation by concentrating on the ‘middle ground’ as illustrated in the table.

What then is the Social Assessment orientation of this research in terms of this classification? As it was conducted through a University, it may belong in the Technocratic-research quadrant. On the other hand, it was commissioned by COAG through AHURI, both government agencies, to provide policy-relevant information that might contribute to policy change. It therefore could be argued that the research has elements of the Technocratic-action approach. In addition, as the research did involve a relatively participatory process in the gathering of the data, it has elements of the Participatory-research quadrant. It seems that while this research does fall more into the Technocratic-research quadrant of Table 2, it does have elements of other orientations and can be placed in the ‘middle ground’ in the table.

3.3.3 Social Assessment Framework

The Social Assessment framework provides a logical, systematic and flexible process. The Social Assessment process as described by Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (2004) includes 6 phases as discussed below. As mentioned above, the Social Assessment process is flexible and iterative so these phases are not necessarily sequential.

3.3.3.1 Phase 1: Scoping

The scoping phase defines the main issues pertinent to the assessment and delimits the boundaries of the assessment. It is usually based on a collation of secondary data and initial interaction with interested and affected parties. It also identifies information gaps that guide the profiling phase.

3.3.3.2 Phase 2: Profiling

The focus in the profiling phase is the development of a comprehensive overview of the social context of the project. It is developed from a wide range of secondary information collected in Phase 1 and is specific to the proposed activity. This phase also includes the public consultation process and integrates this information into a report.

Phases 1 and 2 are often conducted in conjunction with one another and form part of the assessment phase of the study. Social Assessment, in contrast to many other social research methodologies, gathers only information that is necessary to the research which is focused through formulating 'key issues' that guide the research. These key issues are further developed and refined using inductive reasoning.

3.3.3.3 Phase 3: Comparison of Alternatives

Alternative courses of action or alternative projects are considered and evaluated in comparison to one another. These alternatives are always considered against a "no-development" option.

3.3.3.4 Phase 4: Projection and Estimation of Effects

Each of the alternatives generated in Phase 3, often as a result of the Scoping and Profiling phases, is projected into the future and the likely effects estimated. This assists in the selection of the most suitable alternative.

3.3.3.5 Phase 5: Monitoring Mitigation and Management

Once a project or program is implemented, a system should be put into place to monitor and manage ongoing change and effects.

3.3.3.6 Phase 6: Evaluation

The changes brought about by the project should be subject to periodic review and evaluation to enable practitioners to learn from the project experience.

A project-based Social Assessment would consider different alternatives and then project their likely effects into the future. While this research is more complex than a project based Social Assessment, it does compare the current supply-driven orientation of the Indigenous housing system with an alternative demand-responsive approach.

This thesis combines Social Assessment with Soft Systems Methodology and develops a new methodology called Systems Social Assessment for the study of complex systems. It is particularly useful in the analysis of a system such as the remote Indigenous housing system as it highlights aspects that are often not explicitly considered in a Social Assessment, such as the “owners” of the system (in other words, who has the authority to effect or stop any change) and the ‘Weldanschauung’ or underlying assumptions of the different stakeholders in the system.

As is mentioned above, the research on which this thesis is based was commissioned by COAG through AHURI. As such, it has no brief to progress beyond the assessment phases. Were some of the findings of the research to be implemented, this should be closely monitored and managed, and undergo periodic evaluation.

This thesis argues that Social Assessments have a wider application, particularly in so-called “wicked” problem situations which, as opposed to “tame” problem situations, do not have a clear solution. The concept of “wicked” problems was developed by Rittel and Weber in 1973 to characterise complex problems which have no single right or wrong solution, only better or worse courses of action, and where stakeholders do not agree on “the problem” (Barry and Fourie 2001; Buckingham Shum 1997).

There are few reports in the literature of Social Assessments of complex or “wicked” problems and this is possibly because current Social Assessment practice is focused mainly on the project level. In addition, most Social Assessments do not adopt an approach that is conducive to the analysis of complex problems. The new methodology of Systems Social Assessment offers an approach that is well suited to institutionally complex projects. This assertion is illustrated in Chapter 6 with reference to a research project on the “wicked” complex problem of remote Indigenous housing in Australia and the tool of institutional mapping that was developed for the project.

In summary, although Social Assessment is the predominant research method used in the research, it is not particularly suited to the analysis of a complex system. Soft Systems Methodology offers a useful process and is discussed in the next section before the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment is discussed. There are considerable similarities between the process of Social Assessment as described above and Soft Systems Methodology and the development of a Systems Social Assessment is a logical further step (Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004; Warren et al. 1992; Pollard 1998).

3.4 Soft Systems Methodology

3.4.1 The Development of the Field

Systems thinking is a useful concept or meta-theory to understand complex entities that are themselves made up of interrelated parts. The essential elements of a system are that within its environment, it transforms inputs into outputs. It has to change and adapt to its environment. Systems thinking principles are typical of the biological world and have been widely used in the sciences. These systems share a number of features, for example, that there is an objective reality and that the system has defined goals. The logic of this type of systems thinking, which has become known as “hard systems” is that predictive models can be developed which will identify optimal solutions (Clegg and Walsh 1998). Soft Systems Methodology developed out of a process of investigation that came to the conclusion that “hard systems” may not always be appropriate in every situation. The name synonymous with the development of Soft Systems Methodology is that of Peter Checkland who has spent over 30 years developing the field of Soft Systems Methodology. He has published widely on the topic and has recently published several retrospective articles and book sections which chronicle the development of the field. Checkland’s development of Soft Systems is used in this thesis in preference to many others as his is the most thoroughly developed (Checkland 1999; Checkland 2000; Checkland 2000).

Checkland started off his career as a scientist, familiar with “hard systems” in which problems were tangible, clearly defined, and had a clear solution. He was appointed to a management position and attempted to apply “hard systems” principles to management problems. He found that nothing in his scientific training and experience enabled him to manage “messy” human management situations (Checkland 1999; Checkland 2000; Checkland 2000).

He joined Lancaster University's Systems Engineering Department, an action research facility that focused on real-world problems. These problems needed to be viewed holistically and from a perspective of what works in reality – a holistic and inductive approach which was somewhat different from the scientific community's deductive and reductionist paradigm. They reasoned they were interested in the relationship between theory and practice or knowledge and ideas. Initially, Checkland confesses that they were simply trying to adapt the systems engineering methods to 'soft' management problems but found that performance optimisation methods applicable to industry were not applicable to management issues. This led to the development of a "radically different form" of systems thinking which became known as Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland 1999; Checkland 2000; Checkland 2000)

One of the key aspects of Soft Systems Methodology is that it recognises that there is no objective reality. A central assumption of Soft Systems Methodology is that people view and interpret the world differently, as a result of different cultures, values and experiences (Clegg and Walsh 1998). It is taken as given that people with different interests, roles and responsibilities placed in a given problem situation would view it differently.

There have been considerable developments in Soft Systems Methodology over the years. Nevertheless many of the aspects of the original Soft Systems Methodology have been retained. For example, when Checkland and his team originally developed the concepts which became Soft Systems Methodology, they expected to find actual 'soft systems' operating in human interactions. Now, after over 30 years of development in the field, their understanding is that Soft Systems Methodology and the related model building is simply a structured way of conceptualising problem situations (Checkland 2000).

3.4.2 Soft Systems Methodology's Seven Stage Process

Checkland produced one of his key books “Systems Thinking Systems Practice” in 1981 in which he developed a seven-stage process of Soft Systems Methodology. This is widely used in areas such as organisational change and change management. Rose (2002; 1997; 2004) has developed Checkland’s SSM and has argued for the use of Soft Systems Methodology as a social science research tool (Rose 1997). This thesis argues that the new methodology of Systems Social Assessments provides a more appropriate applied social science research tool.

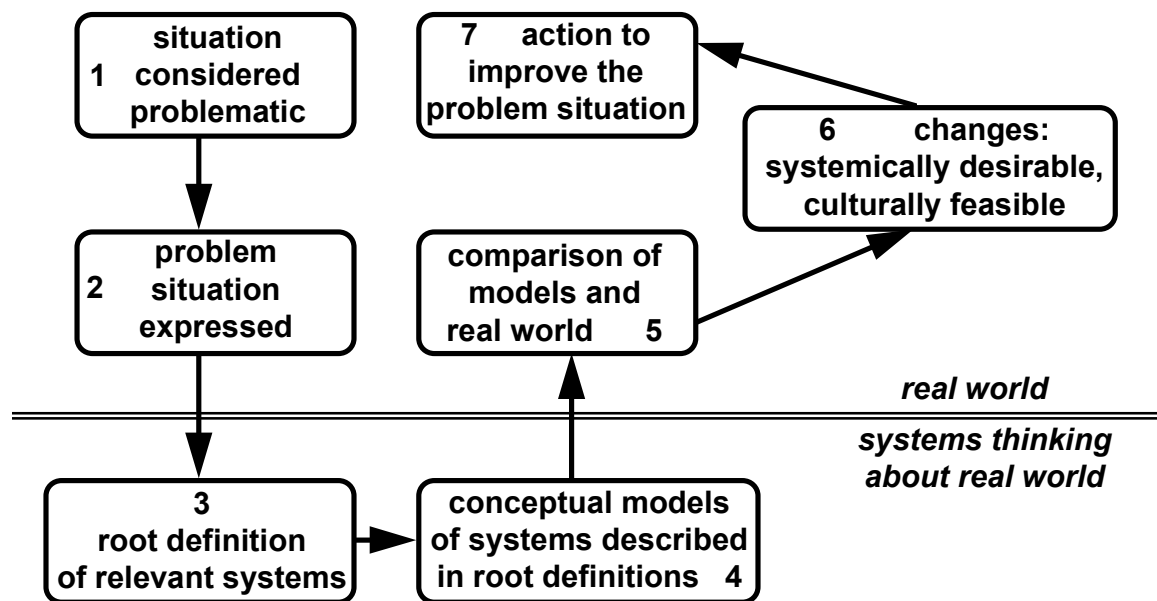


Diagram 1: The Seven Stage Model of Soft Systems Methodology (Rose 2004)

Systems Social Assessment is a participatory activity and the process is undertaken by an analyst/s together with participants from the problem situation. In brief, the problem is defined, modelled and then viewed from different perspectives to shed new light on the problem situation. These new perspectives (conceptual models) are compared with the problem situation (real world) to provide possibilities for alternative actions. The participants

may compare a number of alternative views or models to the problem situation to find the most appropriate course for action. The Seven Stages depicted in Diagram 1 follow.

3.4.2.1 Stage 1: Initial Examination and Scope of Study

The problem and the key role-players are identified and the terms of reference for the study are negotiated as are aspects such as confidentiality and data availability. There should be active participation of the person who enabled the study to occur (the client), the 'person who is responsible for or 'owns' the problem' (the problem-owner) and the person who hopes to improve the problem situation (the problem-solver) (Clegg and Walsh 1998; Jackson 2000).

3.4.2.2 Stage 2: Description of the Problem Situation

Stage 2 involves the gathering of a wide range of relevant information – both primary and secondary. This information informs the development of hand-drawn “rich pictures” which diagrammatically represent the problem situation, and have become synonymous with Soft Systems Methodology. They usually portray aspects of structure, process and focus on what is important in a situation (Rose 1997; Clegg and Walsh 1998). What is useful about this step is that it forces the participants to develop a conceptual model that views the problem differently. This was accomplished in this research through the use of institutional maps, as discussed below in Section 3.4.4.

3.4.2.3 Stage 3: The Development of Alternative Systems

This stage depends on the development of “root definitions” which are short text-based definitions of the system being investigated. This phase involves imaginative new ways of looking at an existing system. Definitions of different perspectives of the system (root definitions) are written, encapsulating the what, the how and the why. These can be task-based or issue based but are usually stated as “a system to do P, by (means of) Y, in

order to Z". A range of root definitions would be developed to provide insight into the problem situation. For example, a university could, inter alia, be seen to be undertaking research, educating and training suitably qualified candidates, and advancing the careers of academics (Rose 2004; Checkland 2000; Clegg and Walsh 1998).

To aid the further description of the systems described, Checkland developed a list of common aspects to be considered when modelling alternative systems and the mnemonic **CATWOE** was developed as a memory aid:

- **C**ustomers of the system (the beneficiaries or victims of the system);
- **A**ctors in the system (the people who conduct the activities of the system);
- **T**ransformation that occurs in the system (what the system transforms from one state to another, the input to the output),
- **W**eltanschauung or "world view" (the underlying values and assumptions of the system or what makes the transformation process worthwhile);
- **O**wners of the system (those who have the power to stop the transformation); and,
- **E**nvironmental constraints (the elements the system has to take as given) (Rose 2004)

3.4.2.4 Stage 4: Model Development

Conceptual Models are built based on the descriptions of the systems developed in Stage 3 - the CATWOE and the "3 E's":

- **E¹** efficacy (will it work, will it achieve the transformation);
- **E²** efficiency (is the system the optimal use of resources); and

- **E³** effectiveness (does the system achieve long term goals) (Checkland 2000; Rose 2004).

A key aspect of Stage 4 is determining how the 3E's will be measured and what performance criteria will be used.

3.4.2.5 Stage 5: Comparison of Model to Real World

This stage involves the comparison of the conceptual models developed in Stage 4 with the problem situation and the 3 E's which specify the performance criteria for any possible change. This effectively compares the conceptual models with the real world problem situation, mediated by the performance criteria of the 3 E's. This should result in changes which are feasible.

In a detailed application of Soft Systems Methodology the practitioner would have developed several different conceptual models in Stage 4. This stage involves the comparison of the conceptual models with reality, a process that highlights problem areas in the actual problem situation and provides direction for future intervention. It should highlight issues such as structural issues and attitude and value differences.

3.4.2.6 Stage 6: Identify Feasible and Desirable Changes

Stage 4 developed a range of conceptual models which Stage 5 compared to the real problem situation. Based on the information derived from these two stages, Stage 6 defines changes that are both feasible and desirable. This stage should occur with the participants in the system that were identified in Stage 1.

3.4.2.7 Stage 7: Action to Improve the Problem Situation

Stage 7 translates the feasible and desirable changes identified within Stage 6 into an action plan to be implemented to alleviate the problem situation.

3.5 Systems Social Assessment

The following section discusses the considerable overlaps between Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology and outlines the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment which is applied to the remote Indigenous housing system in Chapter 6.

3.5.1 Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology

There are many similarities between soft-systems analysis and the approach to issues-orientated Social Assessment, as illustrated in Diagram 2. Both are attempts to conceptualise the 'problem situation' holistically but with a focus on specific issues or problems. Both Soft Systems Methodology and Social Assessment are sufficiently flexible to be used in different settings. In support of a research orientation to Soft Systems Methodology, Rose argues that although Soft Systems Methodology originated as a vehicle for action research, it is also an effective social science research tool (Rose 1997).

As mentioned, the Social Assessment approach used in the research project follows that of Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich. They state that the conceptual approach of Systems Social Assessment influenced their approach to Social Assessment, particularly in the separation of "real world" and conceptual or analytical activities (Taylor, Bryan, and Goodrich 2004 p.100). Pollard (1998 p.51) commented that systems theory will become more important as Social Assessment moves away from project-based studies (Pollard 1998).

As far as actual process is concerned, both follow an inductive and iterative process. Participation of people involved in and affected by the potential changes is also a core concept in both methods. In addition, much of the success of both methods depends on the skill and experience of the practitioner – to a certain extent both are intuitive processes. The conceptual model-building characteristic of both require insight and lateral thinking to view the 'problem situation' or 'issue' from different perspectives.

The process that is followed in a Systems Analysis Social Assessment is very similar to that of a Social Assessment but it provides a more explicit way of conceptualising and analysing systems. There are also differences between Soft Systems Methodology and Social Assessment. Soft Systems Methodology offers a more detailed and structured methodology, probably reflecting its origins in the “hard” sciences. In contrast, Social Assessment has been criticised for its lack of a single methodology (Lockie 2001; Pollard 1998). Probably the most significant difference between Social Assessment and Systems Social Assessment is that Social Assessment incorporates long-term Monitoring and Management in relevant projects.

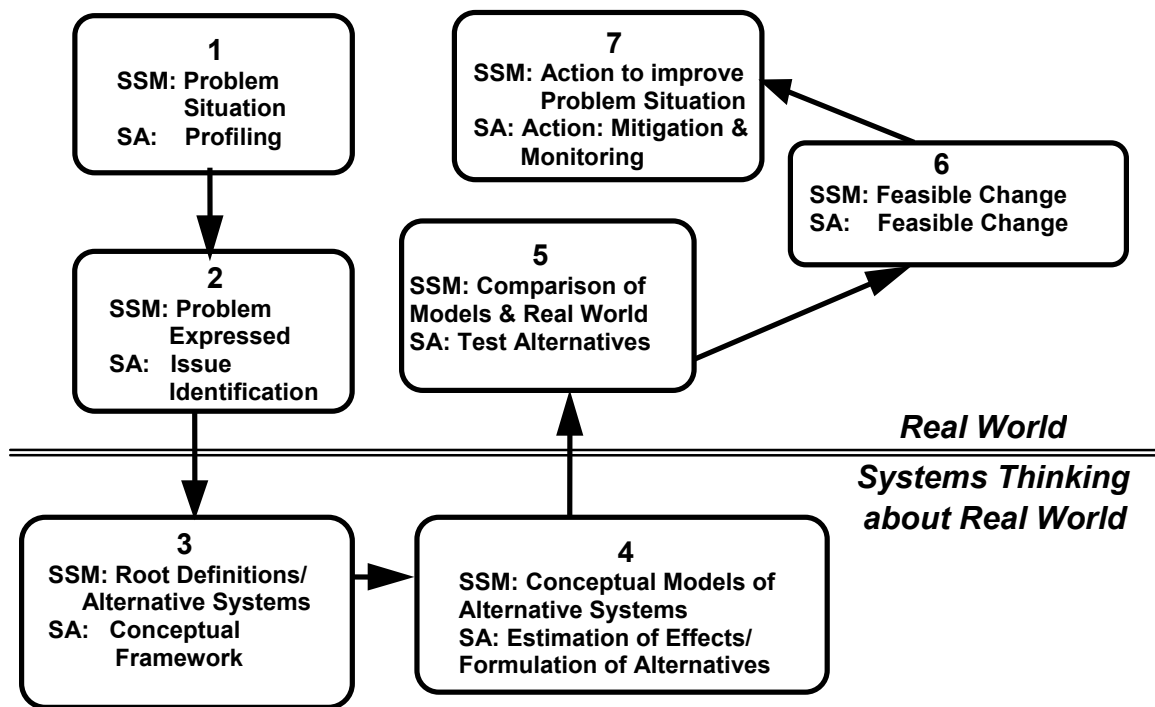


Diagram 2: A Diagrammatic Comparison of the Process of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and Social Assessment (Adapted from Rose 2004 and Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich, 2004)

The new methodology of Systems Social Assessment follows the same process as a Social Assessment but incorporates aspects of Soft Systems Methodology.

3.5.2 The Systems Social Assessment Process

A Systems Social Assessment consists of the following phases:

- Phase 1 Scoping
- Phase 2 Profiling
- Phase 3 Alternative Systems
- Phase 4 Development of Alternative Systems
- Phase 5 Comparison of the Alternatives with the Real World
- Phase 6 Feasible and Desirable Changes
- Phase 7 Action to improve the Problem Situation
- Phase 8 Monitoring, Management and Evaluation

The term 'phase' is preferred to the Soft Systems Methodology's 'stage' as it implies a less rigid process.

3.5.2.1 Phase 1: Scoping

As with a Social Assessment, the initial phase of the analysis involves ascertaining the scope of the system and the collection of mainly secondary information associated with the system. A Social Assessment would usually involve the early stages of community consultation and involvements to start ascertaining the key issues. A Systems Social Assessment involves the more explicit identification of role-players in the system to be studied. These include the person who enabled the study to occur (the client) and those with a key role in the system.

3.5.2.2 Phase 2: Profiling

This phase involves extending the information gathering and analysis process initiated in the Scoping phase. The aim of a Systems Social Assessment is the understanding of a complex system. A Systems Social

Assessment recognises that different role players have different perspectives of the system and that these should be understood in order to understand the whole system.

One of Soft Systems Methodology's prescribed steps is the development of "rich pictures" which are pictorial representations of the problem situation. A Systems Social Assessment is more flexible than the rather prescriptive Soft Systems Methodology. While the utility of a graphic representation of a system should not be underestimated, the use of rich pictures is not always the best solution. In this research project, the tool of institutional maps was developed and is discussed in Section 3.4.4 of this chapter, portrayed in Figures 1 - 12 in Annexure 1 and referred to throughout the thesis.

3.5.2.3 Phase 3: Alternative Systems

The third phase of the process is conceptual and involves the development of alternative perspectives of the problems system. Soft Systems Methodology, as discussed in Section 3.4 of this chapter, refers to the generation of these alternatives by the rather confusing term of "root definitions". A 'root definition' is a short definition of the aims and means of the potential alternative system and root definitions often follow the form of "a system to do P, by (means of) Y, in order to Z" which explains the what, the how and the why of the system (Rose 2004).

A Systems Social Assessment involves the description and analysis of the current system in the Scoping and Profiling phases. Alternatives to the current system are conceptualised in this phase. In the case of the remote Indigenous housing system, this involves alternatives to the current supply-driven system. When considering alternatives to the current system, the CATWOE mnemonic developed by Soft Systems Methodology provides a useful memory aid:

- **C**ustomers of the system (the beneficiaries or victims of the system);
- **A**ctors in the system (the people who conduct the activities of the system);
- **T**ransformation that occurs in the system (what the system transforms from one state to another, the input to the output),
- **W**eltanschauung or world view (the underlying values and assumptions of the system or what makes the transformation process worthwhile);
- **O**wners of the system (those who have the power to stop the transformation); and,
- **E**nvironmental constraints (the elements the system has to take as given. (Clegg and Walsh 1998; Jackson 2000; Rose 2004).

While a Systems Social Assessment used the CATWOE memory aid, it is not a prescriptive tool and other aspects of the system are also considered.

3.5.2.4 Phase 4: Development of Alternative Systems

Phase 4 involves the further development of the system descriptions developed in the previous phase. This explicit modelling of potential alternatives marks a Systems Social Assessment as different to a Social Assessment.

3.5.2.5 Phase 5: Comparison of the Alternatives with the Real World

This phase compares the conceptual models developed in Phases 3 and 4 with the problem situation described in Phase 2. These theoretical alternatives are evaluated against the “3 E’s” namely:

- **E**fficacy (will it work, will it achieve the transformation);
- **E**fficiency (is the system the optimal use of resources); and,

- Effectiveness (does the system achieve long term goals) (Checkland 2000; Rose 2004).

3.5.2.6 Phase 6: Feasible and Desirable Changes

As a result of the comparison of the conceptual models developed in Phase 5, Phase 6 considers the practical outcomes of the study. In other words, what feasible and desirable changes are possible for the problem situation described in Phase 2?

3.5.2.7 Phase 7: Action to improve the Problem Situation

In Phase 7, action is taken to implement the feasible and desirable changes identified in Phase 6.

3.5.2.8 Phase 8: Monitoring, Management and Evaluation

Phase 8 does not occur in Soft Systems Methodology but is one of the important aspects of a Social Assessment. It has a number of purposes, including the monitoring and management of change so that issues resulting from the changes can be addressed quickly. At the same time, monitoring of the process enables negative changes to be mitigated. The evaluation of the process is important as it enables practitioners to learn from the successes and problems experienced by others.

3.6 The Research Process

This section of the chapter reviews the process that was followed during the assessment phase of the project.

3.6.1 Policy, Program and Literature Review

The complexity of the Indigenous housing system required a thorough understanding of the Indigenous housing literature as well as the Commonwealth and relevant State and Territory housing policies and programs. The study began with a comprehensive review of Indigenous

housing and governance history, policies, programs and other relevant literature. The initial literature review culminated in the Positioning Paper and the Annotated Bibliography submitted with the Positioning Paper and are to be found in the Appendices on the accompanying CD (Jardine-Orr et al. 2003).

The research spanned a particularly dynamic period of policy and program change, particularly due to the implementation of the 2003 – 2008 Indigenous Housing Agreement. A thorough understanding of the different policies and programs was important and the policy and program review continued throughout the research project.

3.6.2 User Group

In accordance with AHURI policy, a ‘User Group’ or steering committee was established, concurrently with the literature review mentioned above, to guide the project through all the necessary tasks and to ensure that the research was relevant to policy. The User Group assisted in developing a short-list of potential case studies and, in most cases, also ensured access to up-to-date information sources.

Members of the User Group included:

- ATSIIC and ATSIIS;
- The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (Darwin Office);
- The Western Australian Department of Housing and Works (Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate);
- The Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs;
- The Western Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet; and,

- Northern Territory Department of Community Development, Sports & Cultural Affairs – Indigenous Housing & Essential Services Unit (IHANT secretariat)

Two formal User Group meetings were held in Perth and Darwin and regular contact maintained throughout the project using email and telephone.

3.6.3 Case Study Approach

The development of detailed case studies in two different jurisdictions and at four administrative levels was used as the vehicle for the research process. Stake (2000 p.436) refers to a case as “a bounded system” and this study consists of two such case areas. The “bounded system” in each case area consists of the four administrative levels from community to State/Territory. In effect, each of these administrative levels form what Stake calls “cases within the case” (Stake 2000 p.447). To avoid confusion, the broader area will be referred to as the case study area and the term case study will be reserved for the four administrative levels in each jurisdiction.

Table 3 describes the administrative levels researched. The first administrative level researched is that of the Commonwealth Government which provided the policy context for the research and is discussed in Chapter 2. Four administrative levels were then researched within each jurisdiction. These were the ATSIC Regional Council; the Regional Service Providers including ATSI Regional Offices; and in each of the four communities, the Community Council/Committee; and the Community Housing Management Staff. The latter two administrative levels, researched in each of the four communities, are collectively referred to as Community case studies throughout the thesis. These levels, the information gathered at each level and the research methods used are shown in Table 3.

Level	Information gathered	Research Methods
Commonwealth Government	Policy, Programs and their implementation	Literature Review, Program and Policy Review, Semi-Structured Interviews and email correspondence.
State/Territory (including AT SIS State Offices)	Policy, Programs and their implementation	Literature Review, Program and Policy Review, Semi-Structured Interviews and email correspondence
ATSIC Regional Council	Policy, Programs and their implementation	Literature Review, Program and Policy Review, Semi-Structured Telephone Interviews, Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups
Regional Service Providers (including AT SIS Regional Offices)	Programs, their implementation and perceptions	Literature Review, Program and Policy Review, Semi-Structured Telephone Interviews, Semi-Structured Interviews, Focus Groups and email correspondence
Community Council/Committee; Community Housing Management Staff	Program Implementation and Perceptions	Semi-Structured Telephone Interviews, Semi-Structured Interviews, Focus Groups

Table 3: Administrative Levels of the Research

3.6.4 Data Gathering

case studies were selected from both Western Australia and the Northern Territory to represent State, Regional Council, Regional Indigenous Service Provider and two Indigenous Communities. The selection of the case studies was a complex process and is presented in Section 3.4.5.

Three data gathering methods were used plus a further tool called ‘institutional mapping’ was developed:

- *Focus Groups:* A total of eighteen focus groups at different levels of the Indigenous housing system were held in various parts of Western

Australia and the Northern Territory. Focus Groups are essentially group interviews where the topics under discussion are narrowly focussed. In this case, the groups were focussed around remote Indigenous housing programs and their management. Focus groups were held with the:

- State/Territory Level
 - Western Australia User Group 2002
 - Department of Housing and Works (AHIU) 2002
 - ATSIIC and DCDSICA Alice Springs Focus Group 2002
- Regional Council Level
 - Kullarri Regional Council 2002 and 2003
- Regional Indigenous Organisation
 - Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation 2002 and 2003
 - Ngaanyatjarra Services 2002
 - Tangentyere Construction 2003
 - Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation 2003
- Community Level – Community Council
 - Lombadina Community Council Focus Group
 - Djarindjin Community Council 2002 and 2003
 - Wirrumanu 2002
 - Laramba Community Council 2002 and 2003
- Community Level – Housing Management
 - Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation
 - Laramba Administration

- *Semi-structured Interviews:* A total of 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews were used as they enable a conversational style interview while still covering defined areas;
- *Semi-Structured Telephone Interviews:* A total of fifteen lengthy semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted prior to the commencement of fieldwork; and
- *Institutional Mapping:* The need for a tool to portray the complex layers of organisations and programs emerged prior to the first round of fieldwork. The research team found that a schematic portrayal of the different organisations and programs assisted them to understand the relationships between agencies and programs. The research team drew up organisational maps to represent their understanding of the interrelationships and discussed these at focus groups and in interviews during the first round of fieldwork. Feedback was obtained from different sources and the institutional maps continually updated during fieldwork to capture inputs. Early in the fieldwork, the team realised that two types of institutional maps were needed at community level:
 - an organisational map which illustrates the relationship between agencies and programs; and
 - an institutional flow map which illustrates the flow of funding and information between organisations.

The institutional maps were essential in developing a detailed understanding of the housing system at the different levels. The following institutional maps were developed and are included in this thesis after the References:

- Organisational maps:
 - The ATSI & ATSI Regional Council Structure (Figure 2);
 - Kullarri Regional Organisational Structure 2003 – 2004 (Figure 6);
 - IHANT Housing Management, Maintenance and Construction (Figure 9);
 - Central Remote Model (Figure 11);
 - Central Remote Regional Council Training and Employment Model (Figure 12); and,
 - An Alternative Housing Delivery Model for the Kullarri Region (Figure 13).
- Institutional flow maps:
 - Pooling of WA Indigenous Housing Programs according to 2002 Bilateral Agreement (Figure 5);
 - Northern Territory Funding Flows in terms of the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement (Figure 8); and,
 - NT/IHANT 2002/2003 Funding Process Map (Figure 10).
- Combined organisational maps and institutional flow maps - the institutional maps at State and Commonwealth Level were able to show both the organisational structure and the funding flows in one map:
 - Commonwealth and State Indigenous Housing Institutions and Funding Flows (Figure 1);
 - West Australian Indigenous Housing Programs prior to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement (Figure 3); and,
 - West Australian Funding Flows after the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement (Figure 4).

These institutional maps provided a useful tool and were discussed at focus groups and interviews. Many people commented that they had never before

understood how different organisations related to each other. The people who understood the overall institutional structure of Western Australia and the Northern Territory were few and far between. The institutional maps also provide an important component of the Systems Social Assessment as discussed in Chapter 6.

The questions that guided the semi-structured interviews differed according to the research level but covered the following areas:

- State/Territory (AHIC, IHANT):
 - The current Indigenous housing programs, their structure and scope;
 - Formal and informal evaluations of the current programs;
 - New Indigenous housing program initiatives and proposals;
 - The institutional structure of the State/Territory's Indigenous housing sections as well as proposed changes and linkages between programs;
 - Program integration mechanisms; and,
 - Suggestions for improvement.
- Regional Indigenous Organisations:
 - Each Organisation's involvement in current Indigenous housing programs;
 - The Organisation's institutional structure, proposed changes and linkages to other institutions;
 - The Organisation's perspectives on new program initiatives;
 - The Organisation's perspectives on program integration; and
 - Suggestions for improvement.
- Communities:

- Each community's perspectives on current Indigenous housing programs;
- The community's institutional structure;
- The community's perceptions of Program Management, Community control and management, and,
- Suggestions for improvement.

The fieldwork was conducted by a team of two or sometimes three researchers, always including the author and the Indigenous Housing Specialist. The questions at community level were usually asked by the Indigenous Housing Specialist on the team to ensure the most appropriate use of language and cultural sensitivity. The focus groups discussions and interviews were comprehensively transcribed by the author. These notes were then typed and checked for accuracy by the team members present and where possible, by others attending the focus group or interview. These records of focus group meetings and interviews provide the main source of information for the data analysis.

Cross-cultural research does present considerable challenges in research of this nature. In this case, the Indigenous team member, his wide network and the considerable cross-cultural experience of the other two team members made the research process relatively trouble-free.

3.6.5 Selection of Case Studies

The selection of the case study areas and concomitant case studies was a difficult process. The research required a research area with four case studies from different administrative levels namely, community, regional Indigenous (umbrella) organisation, ATSIC Regional Council and the key State/Territory Indigenous housing entity responsible for formulating policy and implementing programs (IHANT and AHIC).

The selection of the final case studies was determined by several factors. These were:

- Input from the User Group (for example in suggesting communities that form part of the Central Remote Model and Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement in the Northern Territory);
- Examples of best practice, based on recommendations from the User Group;
- Accessibility to minimise the cost and logistics involved in visiting remote communities;
- Access to the four case study “levels” mentioned above;
- Willingness to participate in the research; and,
- Personal contacts of the research team with the community and regional organisation members.

A fairly lengthy process preceded the selection of the final case studies. Secondary information was collected and telephone interviews conducted on a short-list of possible case studies. These were further refined with reference to the factors above. The case studies that were selected are shown in Table 4:

Organisation	Western Australia	Northern Territory
State/Territory	AHIC, Perth	IHANT, Darwin/Alice Springs
Regional Council	Kullarri Regional Council, Broome	Central Remote Regional Council, Alice Springs
Regional Organisation	Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation, Broome	Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation, Alice Springs
Communities	Lombadina and Djarindjin, Kullarri region	Papunya and Laramba, Apatula region

Table 4: Case Studies

The above communities became confirmed case studies only after they were contacted telephonically and via correspondence and their agreement given to participate in the study. The limited direct and tangible benefits to the community, primarily the communication of an Indigenous policy perspective, were explained. In accordance with Murdoch University's research policy, ethical agreements were developed and signed by all organisations that participated in the research.

The issue of research confidentiality presented difficulties in this project as all focus group or individual respondents were interviewed in their official or semi-official capacity. The approach to confidentiality followed in the project depended on the administrative level of the interview. Community Council focus group or interview respondents are only identified by their affiliation whereas the government policy-makers are identified by name, where relevant.

Detailed profiles of each of the ten case studies were drawn up on the basis of the secondary information and semi-structured interviews. These profiles were initially drawn up prior to fieldwork and continually revised to keep them current. The case study profiles were twice sent to the relevant organisation to ascertain accuracy and also discussed during fieldwork. These case study profiles form the basis of the discussion of the case studies in Chapter 4 of the report.

3.6.6 Fieldwork

Four intensive fieldwork trips, lasting an average of around ten days each, were undertaken as listed in 5:

Field Visit Date	Jurisdiction	Purpose
October 2002	<i>Western Australia</i>	Initial meetings with case study communities and organisations to finalise ethical agreements, define the case study within the research program and gather initial data.
November 2002	<i>Northern Territory</i>	As above
May 2003	<i>Western Australia</i>	Second round of meetings to conduct focus groups and interviews.
June/July 2003	<i>Northern Territory</i>	As above

Table 5: Fieldwork Program

There was an unintentionally large gap between the two ‘rounds’ of fieldwork, due to several reasons. These included the unanticipated difficulty of coordinating a visit at a time suitable to several different organisations and communities; the 2002 ATSIC elections occurred in the middle of the program and prevented earlier visits to the new Regional Councils and, staff changes and tragedies occurred in some communities which delayed field trips.

3.6.7 Data Analysis

The detailed field notes of the focus groups and interviews enabled the continual development of the case study profiles and together these provided the main data for analysis. Data was analysed by disaggregating the information from the interviews and focus groups into issues. The issues were further supported by the triangulation of data from different sources and geographical areas. These issues were then categorised according to the local or regional nature of the issues and then collated into themes. These

themes are presented in Chapter 6 during the discussion of the current housing system.

3.7 Conclusion

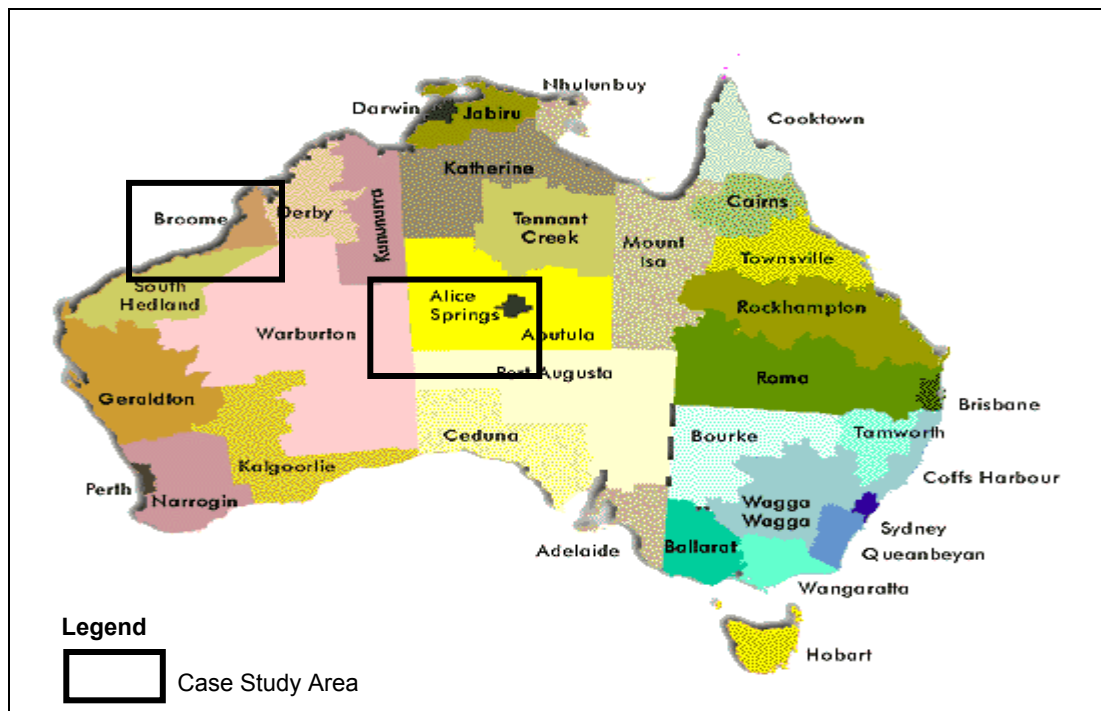
This chapter has discussed the methodology used in the research, namely Social Assessment and the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment. It also presented the research process which enabled the data collection and analysis. This chapter is followed by a brief discussion of each of the case studies (Chapter 4), an analysis of the remote Indigenous housing program integration mechanisms (Chapter 5) and, a Systems Social Assessment of the remote Indigenous housing system (Chapter 6).

Chapter 4: Case Studies

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, more detail is presented on the Western Australian and Northern Territory case studies to provide context for the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6. Firstly, the ATSI Regions in which the case study areas are located are discussed relative to the other 36 ATSI Regions. Secondly, a background to the organisation and/or community that was the subject of the case study is provided.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, to enable the different levels of program integration to be understood, case studies at these different levels were selected. These case studies fall into two case study areas – one in Western Australia and the other in the Northern Territory. These are indicated in Map 2 below.



Map 2: ATSI Regions showing the Case Study Areas (ATSI 2004)

Both case study areas depicted in Map 2 form part of ATSI regions of significant disadvantage. In 2000 the Australian Bureau of Statistics was commissioned by the Commonwealth Grants Commission to develop Indigenous indices of disadvantage to allow relative comparisons of disadvantage across all ATSI regions. These indicators of disadvantage were derived from a range of sources, namely the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, and the national perinatal data collection conducted by the National Perinatal Statistics Unit of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. These indicators represent levels of housing, education, family structure, income, mobility, employment in low-paying occupations, health and access to community services. To date, no similar index has been derived from the 2001 census information (Coakes Consulting 2004).

Table 6 shows a ranking of all ATSI regions in Australia according to the index of socioeconomic disadvantage. The index is grouped into four quartiles: 'least disadvantaged', 'less disadvantaged', 'more disadvantaged' and 'most disadvantaged'. The case study areas fall within the Broome ATSI region in Western Australia and into the Apatula ATSI Region in the Northern Territory. The Broome Region is located in the third quartile of disadvantage and is ranked 26th of the 36 ATSI Regions. The Apatula ATSI Region is ranked as the most disadvantaged ATSI Region in Australia.

ATSIC Region	Rank	Quadrant
Hobart	1	Least
Brisbane	2	Least
Wangaratta	3	Least
Queanbeyan	4	Least
Adelaide	5	Least
Perth	6	Least
Sydney	7	Least
Rockhampton	8	Least
Ballarat	9	Least
Wagga Wagga	10	Less
Darwin	11	Less
Roma	12	Less
Coffs Harbour	13	Less
Geraldton	14	Less
Tamworth	15	Less
Narrogin	16	Less
Alice Springs	17	Less
Cairns	18	Less
Kalgoorlie	19	More
Townsville	20	More
Mount Isa	21	More
Ceduna	22	More
South Hedland	23	More
Bourke	24	More
Torres Strait Area	25	More
Broome	26	More
Port Augusta	27	More
Kununurra	28	Most
Warburton	29	Most
Katherine	30	Most
Derby	31	Most
Cooktown	32	Most
Jabiru	33	Most
Tennant Creek	34	Most
Nhulunbuy	35	Most
Apatula	36	Most

Source: ABS (2000). *Report on experimental indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage indexes*. Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Prepared by: EBC (2004).

Table 6: Relative Ranking of Socioeconomic Disadvantage by ATSIC Region (adapted from Coakes Consulting 2004)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics also developed several other more specific Indices of Disadvantage. These included Indices of Economic Disadvantage, Habitat, Education and Training Disadvantage, Housing Disadvantage and Health Disadvantage. These Indices are shown in Table 7 and will be discussed with reference to the two case study areas.

The Index of Economic Disadvantage includes variables such as: households with income below the poverty line; people over 15 years of age with no post-school qualifications; CDEP as a percentage of the total working age population; and, adults over 15 years of age classified as labourers or related workers. As can be seen in Table 7, the Apatula ATSI region is the most economically disadvantaged ATSI region in Australia whereas the Broome ATSI region is ranked the 25th most economically disadvantaged region out of 36 regions and therefore falls into the third quartile ('more disadvantaged').

The Habitat Index indicates disadvantage relating to health, housing and infrastructure and is based on variables such as: housing quality; the number of households with no motor vehicle; the number of households with no electricity or gas provision; the number of perinatal deaths; and, the number of foetal deaths. The Broome ATSI Region, with a ranking of 25 relative to the other ATSI regions, falls into the third quartile ('more disadvantaged') of habitat disadvantage. The Apatula Region is ranked 35 out of 36 ATSI Regions and is therefore one of the most disadvantaged regions in Australia.

The Index of Education and Training Disadvantage is based on variables such as: people who never went to school; people with no post-school qualifications; people not attending school; people who left school below year 10; and, people lacking fluency in English. The Apatula ATSI region is again the most disadvantaged ATSI Region according to the Index of Education and Training Disadvantage with a ranking of 36 out of the 36 Regions. In contrast, Table 7 shows that the Broome ATSI Regions falls

into the second quartile of disadvantage ('less disadvantaged') with a ranking of 15 against the other 36 ATSI Regions.

The Index of Housing Disadvantage includes variables such as households in improvised dwellings; households that are in 'need of repair'; households containing two or more families; households with a high ratio of people to bedrooms; and households with inadequate facilities for bathing. According to Table 7, the Broome ATSI Region falls into the third quartile ('more disadvantaged') with a relative ranking of 26 whereas the Apatula ATSI Region is again ranked in the fourth quartile ('most disadvantaged') with a ranking of 35 out of the 36 ATSI Regions.

The Index of Health Disadvantage includes a wide range of variables drawn from the hospital separations and national perinatal data sets (such as suicides, diabetes, alcoholism, number of separations). The Broome ATSI Region again falls into the third quartile ('more disadvantaged') of the health index of disadvantage. Contrary to the other indices, the Index of Health Disadvantage places the Apatula ATSI region as 10th ('less disadvantaged') across all 36 ATSI regions (Coakes Consulting 2004).

These Indices of Disadvantage show that the Broome (Kullarri) region is relatively less disadvantaged than the Apatula Region across all Indices except Health Disadvantage. Nevertheless, probably as a result of their remoteness, both are relatively more disadvantaged than other ATSI regions.

ATSIC Region	Ranks				
	Economic	Habitat	Education	Housing	Health
Hobart	1	1	5	13	1
Sydney	2	19	1	22	3
Brisbane	3	4	2	3	2
Ballarat	4	13	6	20	7
Wangaratta	5	2	8	2	4
Adelaide	6	9	4	1	19
Queanbeyan	7	5	10	10	5
Darwin	8	11	9	9	12
Coffs Harbour	9	22	3	25	8
Perth	10	7	7	5	18
Rockhampton	11	6	16	6	11
Wagga Wagga	12	3	14	4	14
Tamworth	13	17	12	18	15
Narrogen	14	15	13	21	20
Kalgoorlie	15	20	18	17	35
Roma	16	10	19	8	17
Cairns	17	14	11	11	23
Alice Springs	18	12	21	15	25
South Hedland	19	23	23	19	34
Geraldton	20	8	25	7	33
Townsville	21	18	24	16	22
Mount Isa	22	21	26	14	28
Torres Strait Are	23	27	17	28	13
Bourke	24	24	22	23	30
Broome	25	25	15	26	27
Ceduna	26	16	20	12	32
Port Augusta	27	28	27	27	29
Kununurra	28	30	28	31	26
Cooktown	29	32	30	32	36
Katherine	30	31	33	29	16
Nhulunbuy	31	36	29	36	9
Jabiru	32	34	31	34	6
Tennant Creek	33	33	35	33	24
Derby	34	29	32	30	31
Warburton	35	26	34	24	21
Aputula	36	35	36	35	10

Note: A rank of 1 indicates low relative disadvantage, while a rank of 36 indicates high levels of relative disadvantage

Source: ABS (2000). Report on experimental indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage indexes. Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Prepared by: EBC (2004).

Table 7: Relative Ranking of Socioeconomic Disadvantage by ATSIC Region (1996) (adapted from Coakes Consulting 2004)

4.2 Western Australian Case Studies

4.2.1 The Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC)

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC) was formed under the terms of the Agreement for the Provision of Housing and Infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Western Australia July 2002 – June 2007 (Government of Western Australia 2002). This Agreement is commonly called the ‘Indigenous Housing Agreement’ and introduces significant changes to the provision of Indigenous housing in Western Australia. These changes are aimed at addressing the previous lack of inter-agency coordination in the funding, planning and delivery of Indigenous housing and infrastructure. The key change is the pooling of all Commonwealth, ATSIC and State housing and infrastructure funding which is now allocated using a single policy framework (Government of Western Australia 2002). This mechanism for program integration is further discussed in Chapter 5 and is illustrated in Figure 5. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the funding flows before and after the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement.

The Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate (AHID) within the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) provides a program management and secretariat function to AHIC. As Program Managers, AHID are tasked with the implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreement discussed above. This specifies the development of State Strategic and Operational Plans and the development of a broad “Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plan Framework” agreed to by the Regional Councils. This RHIP Framework is then used by each Regional Council to derive its own Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plan. These are submitted to AHID for approval. In addition, AHID is responsible for the allocation of the pooled funds to the nine Regional Council areas according to a funding formula agreed to by the Regional Councils. Each Regional Council’s RHIP forms a business plan for

the region's housing and infrastructure construction, maintenance and management. As such it is updated on an annual basis (Government of Western Australia 2002; Horrocks 2003).

AHIC formulates Western Australia's strategic policy for housing and infrastructure, develops State strategic and operational plans and allocates the pooled funds to the nine Regional Council areas according to a needs-based funding formula. As such they establish the funding framework for Indigenous housing in Western Australia. AHIC, and its program manager AHID, were selected as a case study to enable an understanding of the Indigenous housing policy and program framework within which the other Western Australia case studies are situated.

The implementation of the current Indigenous Housing Agreement occasioned considerable changes in the Western Australia Indigenous housing sphere. Many of these changes occurred during the period of the research and included the formation of AHIC, the restructuring of AHID and the introduction of a new housing and infrastructure planning framework. These new RHIPs introduced a mechanism for each Regional Council to develop a multi-year housing and infrastructure plan through consultation within the region. In previous years, funding was by an annual allocation. Under AHIC's leadership, this has changed to a system that has the intention of prioritising allocation on the basis of need. The period of the research did not, unfortunately, encompass the implementation of the restructured AHID programs.

Figure 2 shows the institutions involved and the funding flows prior to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement whereas Figure 3 shows the pooling of funds according to the Indigenous Housing Agreement.

4.2.2 The Kullarri Regional Council

The Kullarri Regional Council is the ATSIC Regional Council for the Broome area, the areas around Broome and the Dampier Peninsula, as is shown in Map 2. Figure 2 shows the structure of ATSIC and ATSI. The Kullarri Council represents 8 community and regional organisations. These are 3 Broome-based organisations (Burrnguk Aboriginal Corporation, Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation and Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation) as well as 5 major community organisations. Of these 5 community organisations, four are on the Dampier Peninsula (Bardi Aborigines Association Incorporated, Beagle Bay Community Inc, Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation, Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation) and one south of Broome (Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange Inc) that is also the largest. Two of these communities, Djarindjin and Lombadina, are also case studies in this research. The organisational structure of the Kullarri Region 2003–2004 is portrayed in Figure 6.

The 1999 – 2002 Kullarri Regional Council prepared a comprehensive Regional Plan to guide all its activities. The Regional Plan was widely workshopped within their area and the former Chairperson travelled intensively to discuss the plan with communities. These meetings occurred in all 5 of the communities outside Broome as well as 24 outstations and 3 “emerging communities” and are listed in the Regional Plan (Kullarri Regional Council 2002).

This Regional Plan presents a workable mechanism for program integration at the regional level. However, since the development of the plan, Regional Council elections were held and during May/June 2003 the newly elected Regional Council was in the process of revising and updating the Regional Plan.

The role of the Kullarri Regional Council in program integration will also be affected by the so-called 'separation of powers' which came into effect on 1 July 2003. Prior to this date, ATSIC consisted of elected Councils supported by an administration section. As of 1 July, the former ATSIC was separated into an elected wing (still called ATSIC) and an administrative wing that was named AT SIS (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services). The elected wing retains a policy-formulation role whereas the allocation of funding now falls to AT SIS (AT SIS 2003; ATSIC 2003).

Under the Housing Agreement, the new Council submitted its first Regional Housing & Infrastructure Plan (RHIP) by April 1 2003. This interim RHIP was replaced by a 5-year RHIP to be submitted to the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) by December 2003. This plan will provide the basis for housing and infrastructure provision in the region from 2004–2009.

The implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreement is a process that will take several years. Several of the programs that are intended as pooled funds are still subject to contractual arrangements and pooling of the funds can only take place once these contracts have expired at the end of 2003/2004 (Government of Western Australia 2002). In addition, the process of implementing the new structure occasioned by the Housing Agreement will take time. In the Kullarri Region, there are negotiations between the Kullarri Regional Council and the DHW as to the form of a potential Regional Housing Authority (RHA). Although it is envisaged by DHW that a potential RHA would not be in place until the 2006/07 financial year (Familiari 2003 pers. comm. 25/11/2003), the nature and form of the potential RHA has caused much speculation in the region. The funding process in place in 2003-2004 is shown in Figure 7.

The Kullarri Region has a history of good governance and strong Indigenous organisations. The Kullarri Region was suggested as a research area by members of the User Group and the Regional Council agreed to be part of

the research. This was largely as a result of the research team's good contacts in the area. The latter is particularly important as participating in a research project of this nature shows no tangible benefit for participants.

The Kullarri Regional Council case study provided an example of a capable, proactive Regional Council. A greater focus on housing at a regional level was mentioned by several research participants as progress towards greater local control over housing and other service delivery. If this were to occur, it would require a relatively empowered and representative regional organisation such as the Kullarri Regional Council.

4.2.3 Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation

The Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) is a Broome-based Indigenous Resource Agency which has been serving Indigenous communities in and around Broome since 1983. It is the regional Indigenous service organisation for the Dampier Peninsula, including Lombadina and Djarindjin, the two community case studies. It is managed by a Director (Neil Gower) and guidance is provided by the MAC Committee. It employs in excess of 400 people and has a considerable asset base estimated at around \$20 million (Gower 2002 pers. comm. 16/9/02) including houses in Broome and houses and infrastructure in remote areas. MAC is involved in a wide range of activities such as a night patrol, a security company, a tourism company and an architectural and design company which, although based at Mamabulanjin, is run in conjunction with the Indigenous resource agencies in Derby and Fitzroy Crossing (AHIU 2001).

Mamabulanjin also operates as an Indigenous housing authority and grant funding conduit for CHIP and other funding. Figure 7 illustrates its role as a grantee organisation in the flow of housing and infrastructure funds to communities. This was illustrated during the second round of fieldwork as the houses at Lombadina were being upgraded under the AACAP program.

Lombadina had submitted a successful in-house bid to manage the upgrade but the funding could not flow direct to Lombadina and had to flow through Mamabulanjin as the 'grantee' organisation for the funding (Interview with Lombadina Corporation CEO, 29/5/03).

Mamabulanjin was willing to be involved in the study, despite little benefit to the organisation, due to personal contacts with the research team and a concern for Indigenous housing in the region. Mamabulanjin was an important case study as it enabled an understanding of the role of the regional Indigenous service organisation within the Indigenous housing system in Western Australia. It is a well-managed Indigenous owned and directed institutional structure that could potentially play an even more important role in Indigenous housing in the region.

4.2.4 Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation

Djarindjin is situated about 200 km north of Broome on the Dampier Peninsula. Djarindjin is situated adjacent to the smaller community of Lombadina and the two communities share a school, clinic, church and cemetery but each has their own council and shops.

During the first fieldwork trip, the research team met with the then Chairperson of the Community Council and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO reported that Djarindjin had a population of around 250 people but that there were only 45 houses, including 7 staff houses. This worked out at a ratio of around 6.5 persons per house but he reported that many of the houses were in poor condition and may have to be demolished. Ironically, as a result of the training of local people through the AACAP project, the community does have the capacity to assist in the building of houses. The 2002 Chairperson expressed the wish that people would be trained as builders and they could then move out and build on outstations. The current Management Support Program (MSP) team is also capable of

building houses and it would give them a sense of pride and be motivating for the new generation (Djarindjin Focus Group 16/10/2002).

In response to a discussion about what is perceived to be the ad hoc nature of housing provision, the then Chairperson promoted the idea of a Development Planning process to housing. In this process the community would identify their needs and prepare a “Development Plan” for the long term provision of housing. Any housing built in Djarindjin could be based on this plan, not on a funding formula (Djarindjin Focus Group 16/10/2002). The meeting considered that it would lead to a better outcome for the communities if the RHIP were to support such a process.

Djarindjin residents do not pay rent as such but a levy according to the number of adults living in a house. This has led to the inequitable situation where a family of seven adults pay \$175 per week for an inadequate house in poor condition. Over 95% of the people in Djarindjin do pay their levies (Interview with Djarindjin CEO, 28/5/03).

Djarindjin was part of the ACSIP capacity building program which included some committee training and, more importantly, management capacity-building. This took the form of ‘top-ups’ to the salary of the CEO for a 3-year period. The CEO played an enabling management role and was also responsible for the selection and training of his successor. Djarindjin is a considerably larger and more diverse community than Lombadina despite them sharing some of the same infrastructure. It also has a more mobile and somewhat more traditional population than Lombadina.

The Djarindjin case study provided insight into the capacity building possible and the positive impact of a capable CEO.

4.2.5 Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation

Lombadina is a wholly Indigenous owned and run community situated around 200 km from Broome on the Dampier Peninsula. It was originally a mission station and has developed into one of Australia's best examples of a well-run remote Aboriginal community. Lombadina is adjacent to the larger community of Djarindjin. The current settlement of Lombadina was established in 1987 when it was still a mission and it has taken 15 years for the community to build Lombadina to its current state (Lombadina Focus Group 16/10/2002).

The Lombadina Community has a population of approximately sixty, mostly descendants of the Bardi tribe. They operate a shop, bakery and craft shop and share a school, clinic, church and cemetery with the adjacent community of Djarindjin. Lombadina obtains its water from bores but purchases power from the power station at Djarindjin. Assisted by the natural beauty of the area, Lombadina operates a successful tourism venture and has accommodation (backpackers and chalets) as well as a variety of tours and boat charters. (KAA 2002).

Housing in Lombadina was first provided in 1991 by the then Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC). It was during this time that Lombadina received funding for 4 houses which they supplemented with CDEP funds and managed to build 7 houses. All the other houses were later provided by ATSIC but through different schemes. In the early 90s the ATSIC Broome field officers were responsible for housing and although they were not experts, they were close to Lombadina and the arrangement worked well (Interview with Lombadina Corporation CEO, 29/5/03).

According to the interview held with Lombadina's CEO, the 'in-house bid' where the community housing management project manages a project, is one of the ideal forms of housing delivery for larger projects and they would

prefer to manage smaller projects themselves. During the second fieldwork trip, the houses in the community were in the process of being upgraded as a result of a successful in-house bid under the AACAP program (Interview Lombadina Corporation CEO, 29/5/03).

The Chair and CEO of Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation were asked why the community was successful. They gave the following reasons:

- *Largely family-based:* The 60 inhabitants of Lombadina are mainly members of the Chairman's extended family. The family has historical links to Lombadina as his mother was born at Lombadina and he was born in Bardi Country.
- *Skills and Urban Experience:* Most of the residents have spent some time working outside Lombadina so they have acquired skills and confidence, as well as the experience to appreciate the lifestyle at Lombadina.
- *Employment of Local Staff:* Lombadina has a policy of only employing local staff.
- *Consistency:* Staff and Council usually remain the same from year to year.
- *Leadership:* The Lombadina Chairman is well respected in the community. The CEO commented that not all the people might like him but all respect him. In contrast to some other communities, the Chairman works alongside the other CDEP workers.
- *Innovative Incentive Programs:* The Chairman implements an incentive scheme that involves monetary (CDEP top-ups from tourism) and non-monetary (a trip by car) incentives. In addition, the community is charged a low rental rate and it is expected that if something breaks, the tenant will repair it themselves (Lombadina Focus Group 16/10/2002, Interview with Lombadina CEO, 29/5/03)

Lombadina is well known for its strong leadership and agreed to be part of the research project. Its success factors relate to a small cohesive family-based, and well-managed community with a strong and competent leadership.

4.3 Northern Territory Case Studies

4.3.1 The Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT)

IHANT is the peak Indigenous housing authority and establishes the policy in the Northern Territory. Together with its Program Manager, DCDSCA, it is responsible for the delivery of housing to Indigenous communities across the whole of the Northern Territory. It was established in 1995 under the first Indigenous Housing Agreement between the State and Commonwealth Governments. This first Housing Agreement has been reviewed and replaced by a subsequent agreement for a further five years. The review of the four years pre-IHANT and the four years post-IHANT indicate a significant improvement in efficiency and in results, despite no significant increase in funds (enHealth Council 2001). The only concern noted was the exclusion of the NAHS program from the pooled funds. Figure 8 illustrates the Northern Territory funding flows in terms of the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement.

IHANT is housed within the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs (DCDSCA) who are also appointed as Program Managers by the Agreement. The Agreement also stipulates that wherever possible, the Principal Program Manager will contract Indigenous community organisations to deliver services ranging from the construction of new houses, the renovation and maintenance of existing houses and the delivery of infrastructure related to housing. In addition, IHANT is required to assist Indigenous community organizations with building their housing

management capacity (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002).

DCDSCA and ATSIC provide a joint secretariat for IHANT. The overall management of the IHANT program is provided by the Indigenous Housing Branch (IHB). IHB is located within DCDSCA and offers policy advice on Indigenous housing and services, and program management functions including grant management and acquittal, support to ICHOs in the management of housing stock, and land use planning and land servicing design for the IHANT program. (Local Government Focus 2001; Territory Housing 2001, 2002; Sullivan 2003 pers. comm. 14/9/2003).

IHANT's funding is delivered through three programs – the Construction, Maintenance and Management Programs as indicated in Figure 9. Figure 10 uses IHANT's 2002/3 budget to illustrate the flow of funds from IHANT to communities. IHANT also plays a major role in the so-called "Central Remote Model" which is discussed in detail in Section 5.4.2.2 and portrayed in Figures 11 and 12.

As opposed to AHIC, IHANT has had considerably more experience with the pooling of funds. It has successfully implemented the pooling of funds for a number of years and has delivered funds through its three programs.

4.3.2 The Central Remote Regional Council (CRRC)

The CRRC was known as the Papunya Regional Council until a resolution was passed in December 2001 to change the name, to avoid confusion with the Papunya Community and the Papunya Ward. The CRRC is the ATSIC Council for the Apatula Region (see Map 2) which covers the southern half of the Northern Territory and surrounds Alice Springs but does not include the greater Alice Springs area (Central Remote Regional Council 2002). Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the Regional Councils.

The Apatula Region of the Northern Territory is one of the few ATSI Regions that have a majority of Indigenous people - a 75% majority in this case (ABS 2002). There are 38 communities who have a population of 50 or more. In the Apatula Region 90% of the Indigenous population speak Aboriginal languages as a first language. In addition a significant number of people report difficulty with spoken English. The main languages include Alyawarra, Western, Southern, Central and Eastern Arrernte, Anmatjere, Luritja, Pintubi, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri (Central Remote Regional Council 2002).

As far as housing is concerned, the CRRC 2002 Annual Report reports that 20% of households live in improvised dwellings and a further 46% live in overcrowded multi-family households. In addition, many households lack basic health hardware. In response to this situation, the CRRC has developed an innovative strategy that has become known as the “Papunya Model” and later the “Central Remote Model”.

The Central Remote Model is an innovative Indigenous-initiated approach to program integration at the regional level. It is discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.2.2 and illustrated in Figures 11 and 12.

The CRRC was selected as a case study because, together with IHANT and DCDSCA, it initiated the innovative Central Remote Model. The Council also demonstrates strong leadership and an Indigenous-initiated approach to regional program integration.

4.3.3 Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation

Tangentyere was formed in the 1970s as a response to the lack of services for the town camps in Alice Springs. It has developed into a large, multifaceted organisation with a CDEP program and a night patrol. The office complex provides a “one-stop shop” for the inhabitants of the town camps and the services include a bank, Centrelink, the Jobshop

(employment and training) and a mail pickup service that is used by over 2000 people (Griffiths pers. comm. 11/11/2002). Tangentyere plays a major community development role in the Training and Employment Program in the seven remote communities forming the pilot implementation of the “Central Remote Model”. The structure of the Central Remote Model is illustrated in Figure 11 and Figure 12 portrays the Training and Employment Model.

Tangentyere is a large regional Indigenous service organisation that provides a range of services, mostly through subsidiaries, to the greater Alice Springs region. It provides the case study communities with a housing construction and training service and their role in the Training and Employment component of the CRRC is pivotal to the success of the program. Tangentyere Aboriginal Council’s role in the Central Remote Model is discussed in Section 5.4.2.2.

The Central Remote Model consists of three elements – first, a single project manager to manage the projects in a region; second, standardised house designs; and third, an employment and training program to promote the development of an Indigenous construction sector in remote areas. Elements of the strategy include preference for Aboriginal contractors and the establishment of 6 building teams which consist of one trainer/builder and 4 trainees per team (Central Remote Regional Council 2002).

The latter component of the model, the Training and Employment Program, is probably the most innovative component of the Central Remote Model. It involves a three-year strategy to form community building teams by training four local apprentices per community to Certificate Three level in General Construction. The Regional Council’s long-term goal is to eventually form building teams on each community so that they can bid for any construction and housing maintenance contracts in their region (Interview with Regional Council Chair 12/11/2002).

4.3.4 Papunya Community Council Inc.

Papunya was established around 1960 “as one of the last impulses of the assimilation policy of the white Australian government” (Galerie Bahr 2002). About 1000 individuals from a number of different language and cultural groups were resettled in Papunya. The amalgamation of people who were used to living in nomadic family groups caused considerable social tension. It was during this time of social upheaval that the Aboriginal art movement started and a move outwards from Papunya began (Galerie Bahr 2002).

The Papunya of recent years is a community of around 320 people situated about 220 km west of Alice Springs. Papunya has nine outstations with a combined population of around 100, increasing the population that the settlement serves to around 420 (ATSIC 2002). It is one of the seven communities in the CRRC area that are part of the pilot “Central Remote Model”. Papunya is the home of Central Zone Commissioner Alison Anderson who lives in Papunya with her family.

Papunya now has 54 dwellings for the approximately 420 residents. Electricity is supplied through diesel generators and payment is through the swipe card system. Water is obtained from bores (ATSIC 2002). Papunya is a ‘dry’ community and anyone found bringing alcohol into Papunya will have their car confiscated (Telephone interview with Town Clerk 19/9/2002).

There is a local community primary school as well as a health clinic which share a building with the community offices. They have a small supermarket that supplies fuel. The health clinic is staffed by three nurses with support from the Flying Doctor Service when necessary (NT Government 2003).

Papunya was selected as a case study because it was one of the communities involved in both the CRRC and the Wangka Wilurrara initiatives. One of the key players in the latter is Central Zone Commissioner Alison Anderson. Prior to becoming an ATSIC Commissioner, Alison

Anderson was the Town Clerk of Papunya. She spoke the range of Indigenous languages used in Papunya and was a cohesive force in the community. Her absence to become the Zone Commissioner left a void in the community.

4.3.5 Laramba Community Council

Laramba is located on an excised portion of Napperby Station and is about 220 km northwest of Alice Springs. It is a fairly small community of around 300 people, housed in 32 houses. According to the Community Information Access System (CIAS) database, the actual housing requirement is for 50 houses. The community is supplied by water from bores located around 30 km from the settlement. Undersized pipes result in water shortages during periods of peak demand (ATSIC 2002). Both the water and electricity services are controlled by the owner of Napperby Station (Laramba Community Council Focus Group 30/06/03). Laramba is a comparatively isolated community and has its own primary school, clinic and Centrelink service. The community is well served by sporting facilities as they have a football oval, a basketball court and a softball diamond (ATSIC 2002).

Laramba has a history of strong leadership as Clarry Robinya, the Chair of the CRRC, is from Laramba and Laramba has benefited from his high profile on the Regional Council. He is closely related to the President of the Laramba Council, the traditional owner of the land, and his energy and drive helped develop Laramba into what has been called a “model community”. There were a range of successful programs such as a community garden and a Women and Childcare Centre (Laramba Administration Focus Group 30/6/03).

During the first fieldwork trip in November 2002 the then CRRC chair and the then Town Clerk were interviewed, and asked about the reasons for Laramba’s success. They listed the following:

- *Indigenous Leadership*: leadership is provided on a day-to-day basis both within Laramba and within the region. Their strong leadership enables them to challenge ATSIC when they feel it necessary.
- *Continuity and Strength of Purpose*: They have a long-term focus and continuity; both have been involved in Laramba for many years. The non-Indigenous people are not in Laramba long-term and must follow their rules. “They must fit in with us”.
- *Voice in Regional Council*: Laramba community has had a voice in the Regional Council through Clarry Robinya since their establishment.
- *Knowledge of Programs and Policies*: The Current CRRC Chair’s long term position on the Regional Council enabled him to get to know the ATSIC programs and policies and to use this knowledge to Laramba’s advantage.
- *Community Support and a Shared Vision*: The Laramba community share a vision of a stable community with decision-making according to traditional consensus (Laramba Focus Group 12/11/2002).

Unfortunately, Clarry Robinya and the Town Clerk left the community in December 2002 after a dispute and now reside in Alice Springs. For the first time in Laramba’s history, a non-local person is now the Town Clerk.

The Laramba Community is incorporated under the Northern Territory Council Association Act. It is one of 10 communities that form part of the community government area governed by the Anmatjere Community Government Council situated in Ti Tree, around 200 km from Laramba (Telephone Interview with ATSIC Field Officer, Melissa Martin, 25/6/03). Laramba is supposed to obtain housing maintenance as well as other housing-related support through Anmatjere which is the recipient body of the maintenance funding from IHANT/DCDSCA. The arrangement has not worked well in the past and alternative arrangements were made with ATSIC. Laramba has been given notice from ATSIC that this alternative

arrangement must end and funding must flow through Anmatjere (Laramba Administration Focus Group 30/6/03).

Laramba was suggested as a case study by members of the User Group as an example of a 'model' community that was also part of the CRRC. However, during fieldwork, the research team found that its 'model' community status was largely due to the Regional Council chair who was a member of the community and closely related to the traditional leader. It later emerged that Laramba had a special dispensation regarding funding flows enabled by the Regional Council chair. This is in the process of being withdrawn.

4.4 Conclusion

This Chapter began by examining the two ATSI Regions in which the case study areas are situated relative to the other 36 ATSI Regions. This illustrated that, according to a number of variables, the Broome and Apatula ATSI Regions fall within the more disadvantaged and the most disadvantaged of ATSI Regions respectively.

A brief outline of each community followed in order to provide a background to the discussion of the research in the next two chapters. The remoteness of the communities provided a major challenge to field research and data gathering. The dynamic, complex and changing policy environment made detailed understanding of the case studies a difficult process. For the communities themselves the delivery, management and maintenance of housing and infrastructure services in these remote areas is expensive and difficult to sustain. This creates a huge gap between national policy formulation and sustaining services at a community level. Nevertheless, the case studies enabled the relevant and current policies and programs to be understood at a national, regional and community level.

Chapter 5: Program Integration Mechanisms

5.1 Introduction

Indigenous housing in remote areas of Australia is delivered through a wide range of housing-related programs, mostly designed and implemented with little input from the beneficiary communities. There is a tension between the need for efficient programs with rapid, visible results and the need for a time-consuming process of community involvement and the development of partnerships. The current need for visible housing results has led to what can be called a 'supply-driven' approach, as was mentioned in Chapter 2. This refers to the provision of housing to remote communities mainly by external contractors who import skills and materials and depart leaving a physical structure but no other benefits to the community. In this approach, the management of housing and related infrastructure and activities is located outside the community, often some considerable distance away. This approach tends to foster reliance on external supply of goods and characterises many remote Indigenous communities who have become dependant on welfare, the external provision of goods and services and have developed a 'culture of entitlement'.

This thesis argues that the problems associated with Indigenous housing are largely because of its supply-driven service delivery approach. The control of the process is situated in the hands of bureaucrats located far away from remote communities. Nevertheless, these bureaucrats recognise that there are problems with Indigenous housing and that changes need to be made. This Chapter discusses the current attempts, from a supply-driven approach, to improve the delivery of Indigenous housing to remote areas.

Despite the plethora of Indigenous housing programs as illustrated in Figure 1, it is generally acknowledged that the Indigenous housing area is problematic and does not adequately meet the housing needs of Indigenous

people, particularly in remote areas. This inadequacy of remote Indigenous housing is partly due to historical issues and policies and these are briefly reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology followed during the research and Chapter 4 provided a brief outline of the case studies.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss ways to improve the Indigenous housing delivery process. This Chapter discusses the current attempts to simplify the Indigenous housing system. Chapter 6 uses a Systems Social Assessment of the remote Indigenous housing system to present an alternative view and an alternative course of action.

This chapter discusses program integration in each jurisdiction at two levels. These are:

- State/Territory – the Indigenous Housing Agreements in Western Australia and the Northern Territory;
- Regional Mechanisms which include:
 - Comprehensive Regional Agreements (WA);
 - Central Remote Model (NT);
 - Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement (NT).

The discussion of the formal mechanisms is followed by a discussion of the perception of these mechanisms obtained during the interviews and focus groups within the case studies.

5.2 State and Territory Level Program Integration

Indigenous housing programs are provided by various Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies. In the past, there was considerable criticism of the Indigenous housing system regarding duplication of effort and for a lack of co-ordination. The response to these valid criticisms has been to launch a

process of program integration. While this is minimising duplication and promoting co-ordination, it still entrenches a supply-driven approach within the Indigenous housing system.

5.2.1 The Indigenous Housing Agreements

The most significant development in improving program integration in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory are the Indigenous Housing Agreements. Both agreements were concluded in terms of the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA) which provides strategic direction and a budget for housing and housing assistance, mainly for public housing. The Housing Agreements establish a partnership between the State Government, ATSIC and the Commonwealth Government for the planning, coordination and management of housing. These Indigenous Housing Agreements enable, inter alia, the pooling of most housing-related funds through the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC) and the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT). (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002; Government of Western Australia 2002).

5.2.1.1 The Western Australian Indigenous Housing Agreement

The current Housing Agreement is the second to be signed for Western Australia and represents a partnership between the Commonwealth Government, the Western Australia Government and ATSIC for the provision of housing and infrastructure. The previous agreement was signed in 1997 and was due to end in 2000 but was extended for a further two years to enable a review to take place. The review, completed in 2001, commented that the results of the first Housing Agreement were most evident at management level, including cross-agency cooperation, and in the formulation of policy. These changes had not filtered down sufficiently to the operational level (Arto Consulting 2001). The recommendations of the review formed the basis of the current Indigenous Housing Agreement

(Horrocks 2003; Government of Western Australia 2002). The Indigenous housing programs that existed prior to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement are illustrated in Figure 3 whereas Figure 4 illustrates the funding flows after the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement.

The main change brought about by the current Indigenous Housing Agreement is the establishment of a framework for the pooling of housing and housing-related infrastructure funding. Pooled funding includes funding from Commonwealth Sources (FaCS and ATSIC), the Western Australian State Treasury as well as the lead agency for Indigenous Housing in West Australia, the Department of Housing and Works. Within the Department of Housing and Works, the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate (AHID) is primarily responsible for Indigenous housing and related services. (Government of Western Australia 2002). The Indigenous Housing Agreement requires that AHID, as Program Manager, assist ATSIC Regional Councils to develop 5 year rolling Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plans to determine program funding priorities. These Plans will need to be endorsed by AHIC (Horrocks 2003).

The Department of Housing and Works has recently undergone considerable restructuring after an internal review, occasioned by the implementation of the Housing Agreement mentioned above (Ellender pers. comm. 22/8/2003). This has resulted in the disbanding of the Aboriginal Housing Board (AHB), which has guided Indigenous housing programs since 1978, and the formation of the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC). The AHIC will oversee the pooling of Commonwealth, ATSIC and State Government funds and their allocation, based on the Indigenous Housing Agreement. The AHID has been appointed as Program Manager for a period of three years (Horrocks 2002). As the peak Indigenous housing body in Western Australia, AHIC is one of the case studies discussed in Chapter 3 and this relationship is illustrated, with reference to the Kullarri region, in Figure 6.

AHIC/AHID Programs

Program arrangements within the Department of Housing and Works reflect the principles of the Agreement, with the major components being:

- Ensuring Indigenous communities have access to essential service infrastructure (water, waste water and power);
- Ensuring appropriate essential service infrastructure is well maintained and serviced;
- Improving community infrastructure such as roads, drainage, community recreational and administrative facilities;
- Normalising or regularising essential infrastructure and municipal services (eg. rubbish collection) in Town Reserve Communities;
- Providing new housing to meet urgent housing needs;
- Upgrading, renovating and providing ongoing maintenance of existing housing;
- Providing community governance initiatives, including management support training, funding of housing officers, and the development of community administrative & information systems;
- Providing employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities in areas such as housing construction and maintenance, and technical aspects of essential service maintenance and repair;
- Ensuring that Indigenous people and communities are closely involved in all aspects of planning and development of initiatives and programs that affect their lives and have maximum opportunities to gain work and management contracts; and,
- Ensuring that Indigenous people and communities have maximum decision making opportunities in relation to the planning and

development of programs and initiatives that effect their lives (Ellender pers. comm. 22/7/2003).

In line with the changes brought about by the signing of the Indigenous Housing Agreement, such as the formation of AHIC, the programs delivering the above elements are undergoing change. At the time of fieldwork, these changes were not finalised and had not permeated to communities, particularly not those in remote communities. This section will therefore describe the programs managed by the AHID as they existed until mid-2003 (see Figure 3). The changes in programs and AHIU/AHID structure will then briefly be outlined. The specific programs in place until mid-2003 were:

- Community Construction Program (CCP);
- Remote Areas Essential Services Program (RAESP);
- Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program (ACSIP); and,
- Management Support Program (MSP).

These will be discussed in turn.

Community Construction Program (CCP) provides for the construction and maintenance of housing in Indigenous communities and Town Reserves. The program is targeted to areas of demonstrated need. It funds the design, tender and construction of new housing as well as selective maintenance in discrete Indigenous communities unable to access other housing assistance. Communities play a role in the design and siting of the house and there are also training and employment opportunities for community members associated with the program's activities. Typical capital works programs have provided for around 50 new dwellings annually (DHW 2001; Ellender pers. comm. 22/7/2003).

Remote Areas Essential Services Program (RAESP) provides a repair and maintenance service for power, water and wastewater infrastructure in

remote communities. In Western Australia it is implemented in conjunction with ATSIC under a joint contracted management arrangement. It operates in over 80 remote Indigenous communities in Western Australia to service power, water and wastewater systems and to rectify any problems. Regional RAESP service providers rotate visits to these communities every 6-8 weeks and also provide an emergency call out service for breakdowns in these services. In addition, training and employment is provided by RAESP to community-based Essential Service Operators. During fieldwork, the Essential Services Operator in the case study communities was based at Djarindjin. Regular water testing for impurities is also funded under the RAESP as part of its environmental health focus (DHW 2001; Ellender pers. comm. 22/7/2003).

As part of RAESP's employment and training objectives, fully accredited training programs and employment initiatives utilising the TAFE networks in regional Western Australia are provided in RAESP communities, in order to assist with longer term employment opportunities. The training revolves around technical management, maintenance and repair of essential service infrastructure (DHW; Ellender 2002 pers. comm. 22/7/2003).

Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program (ACSIP) is an integrated program to provide housing and infrastructure services to specific larger communities. Its intention is to ensure that remote Aboriginal communities have access to the municipal and administrative services that would be expected in a similar-sized town in Western Australia. It was established as a pilot program in 1996 in an attempt to take a holistic approach to the improvement of health, living standards and quality of life of people in remote communities (DeLuca pers. comm. 19/5/2003). The benefits of the pilot program were considerable but, after review, the program has been refined to focus on the following main objectives:

- to increase the involvement of local government in the delivery of municipal services;
- to ensure better community management and administration;
- to improve power, water and sewerage services to a standard that would be expected in another similar sized town; and,
- to contribute towards improved environmental and individual health outcomes through sealing of internal community roads, establishment of greening and reticulation projects and construction of recreational facilities, including swimming pools (Horrocks 2002; DHW 2001; Ellender pers. comm. 29/7/2002).

In early 2003, fourteen larger communities were benefiting from ACSIP funding (DeLuca pers. comm. 19/5/2003). The case study community of Djarindjin in particular benefited from ACSIP as the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff presents an ongoing problem in remote areas. ACSIP topped up the remuneration package for the Chief Executive Officer to enable the employment of a highly suitable candidate. In addition, administrative training for office and council staff was conducted in both Djarindjin and Lombardina in 2002.

Management Support Program (MSP) provides Indigenous communities with maintenance and housing management assistance to manage their ongoing housing and infrastructure needs and to carry out necessary repairs and maintenance. The MSP assists in identifying the work needed and in implementing a works program. The community are fully involved in all phases of the program and qualified tradesmen provide on the job training to community members so they are skilled to carry out the work themselves. In addition, communities receive management training in the preparation of a housing management plan which addresses issues ranging from rent collection and tenancy agreements to account keeping, payment of wages, correspondence, banking requirements and ongoing arrangements for

repairs and maintenance. The current MSP has a renewed emphasis on supporting effective housing management. In late 2002 thirty communities were benefiting from the MSP, and a further thirteen communities were given housing management support through a related program called the Management Incentive Program (Ellender pers. comm. 29/8/2002).

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the programs mentioned above are all to be changed and rationalised. The AHIU has been restructured into four departments, namely:

- Community Housing Construction and Upgrades;
- Remote Areas Essential Services Program (RAESP);
- Sustainability and Development Program; and
- Urban Programs.

The various programs discussed were disbanded and reformed with all the construction and maintenance program elements becoming part of the “Community Housing Construction and Upgrades” whereas the governance and capacity-building components of the programs become part of the “Sustainability and Development Program” (DeLuca 2003).

The departmental changes were only finalised when the contractual arrangements had run their course. For example, the RAESP is project managed by engineering consultants ARUP, with regional sub-consultants. The contract only expired at the end of the 2003/2004 financial year, after which the funds become available for pooling under AHIC. In terms of the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement, the funds committed to CCP, MSP and ACSIP were pooled soon after the signing of the Agreement and were available for redistribution by AHIC (Government of Western Australia 2002).

Figure 3 illustrates the Western Australia Indigenous housing programs during the previous Housing Agreement. Figure 4 illustrates the pooling of Indigenous housing funding according to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement.

5.2.1.2 The Northern Territory Indigenous Housing Agreement

As in Western Australia, the Indigenous Housing Agreement is the main program coordination mechanism in the Northern Territory. In 1995, it was the first State or Territory to enter into an Indigenous Housing Agreement. This first Indigenous Housing Agreement spanned the years 1996 to 1999 and established IHANT (Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory), the peak Indigenous housing body in the Northern Territory to coordinate the various programs addressing Indigenous housing. The Indigenous Housing Agreement provides for the pooling of Indigenous housing funds from ATSIC and other Commonwealth sources as well as the Northern Territory's contribution. These pooled funds are allocated by IHANT and used for all aspects of housing ranging from the construction of houses to the renovation of existing homes. The amounts concerned are considerable. As illustrated in Figure 10, in the 2002/2003 Financial Year IHANT received a total of \$42.3 million, made up of \$19.5 million from the CSHA, \$16.6 million from ATSIC and \$6.1 million from the Northern Territory Government (Whitehead pers. comm. 7/11/2002).

As agreed in the terms of the initial Indigenous Housing Agreement, it was reviewed at the end of the first four-year period. Prior to the first Housing Agreement, ATSIC and the Territory Housing Department funded and managed two separate streams of housing provision for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. The review showed that the arrangements under the Housing Agreement had improved the efficiency of Indigenous housing funding. However, there were still problems that needed to be addressed. The first issue, the need for accurate benchmarking and

indicators to monitor and evaluate progress, has been addressed in the current Housing Agreement. The second issue was that of the separate delivery of the NAHS program and the consequent problems that it created (Alexander J Dodd and Associates 1999). This is currently under review.

The current Indigenous Housing Agreement's aim is "...to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous people by implementing joint arrangements for the effective planning and delivery of housing and related infrastructure". The Agreement lists 13 objectives to improve housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These include:

- enabling the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making at all levels;
- formalising a partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Northern Territory Government;
- increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of housing delivery and maximising the value of available funds;
- coordinating related and linked funding programs;
- providing housing assistance to those in greatest need;
- increasing accountability for allocation of funds and assets, and evaluation of program outcomes; and
- ensuring the effective on-going management of housing and related infrastructure (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002).

The Indigenous Housing Agreement outlines the roles of the parties to the Agreement (the Commonwealth, ATSIC and the Northern Territory Government) and details the powers and functions of IHANT. When this key Indigenous housing body was established in 1996, it was the first of its kind

in Australia. The next section discusses the structure of IHANT as well as its three Housing Programs.

IHANT

The IHANT Board is made up representatives of the signatories to the Indigenous Housing Agreement, namely the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory Government and ATSIC. The Commonwealth representative is nominated by the FaCS Minister, the Northern Territory Government's Territory Manager nominates not more than seven representatives and ATSIC is represented by ten nominees. These ATSIC nominees are made up of the Chairperson or their nominee from each of the seven ATSIC Regional Councils in the Northern Territory, the two elected ATSIC Commissioners and the State Policy Manager or their nominee (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002).

The Indigenous Housing Agreement requires that IHANT develop a five-year rolling Strategic Plan for the delivery of housing and related infrastructure to Indigenous Northern Territory Communities. This Strategic Plan is to be revised annually and is to obtain direction from the national policy documents discussed at the beginning of this section, inter alia "Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010" and the "Common Reporting Framework for State, Territory and ATSIC Indigenous Housing Plans". The Strategic Plan provides for the evaluation of the programs on an annual basis and for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan itself. In addition, the Agreement stipulates the development of a three-year rolling Operational Plan (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002; IHANT 2001).

The Agreement appoints the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs (DCDSCA) as Principal Program Manager, responsible for the planning and delivery of the IHANT program. This occurs through an annual Memorandum of Understanding between DCDSCA and IHANT. The

Agreement also stipulates that wherever possible, the Principal Program Manager will contract Indigenous community organisations to deliver services ranging from the construction of new houses, the renovation and maintenance of existing houses and the delivery of infrastructure related to housing. In addition, IHANT is required to assist Indigenous community organizations with building their housing management capacity (Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002).

DCDSCA and ATSIC provide a joint secretariat for IHANT. The overall management of the IHANT program is provided by the Indigenous Housing and Essential Services Unit (IHES). IHES is located within Territory Housing within DCDSCA. They offer policy advice on Indigenous housing and services and are responsible for land use planning and land servicing design for the IHANT program (Local Government Focus 2001; Territory Housing 2001, 2002).

IHANT delivers Indigenous housing and related assistance to remote communities through three programs. These are the Construction, Maintenance and Housing Management Programs and are illustrated in Figure 9. The programs will be discussed in turn.

- The Construction Program is usually delivered through Project Managers to individual remote communities. The Project Manager appoints and manages contractors from outside the communities who construct the houses and the associated infrastructure. The houses are allocated according to need, based on the Community Information Access System (CIAS), which contains information on housing needs throughout the Northern Territory. This database is managed and administered by DCDSCA and it generates a “Housing Needs Report” which determines the housing need of the region and hence the funding. These funds are allocated by each Regional Council to the Indigenous Housing Organisations in the area (IHANT 2003). The ATSIC/ATSIS separation

of powers will impact on this arrangement as the allocation of funds will be performed by AT SIS and not the Regional Councils.

Concern has been expressed as to the validity of this database (ATSIC and DC DSCA Focus Group 2002) and it has subsequently been decided that IHANT will purchase the effective computerised Indigenous Housing Management System (IHMS) as currently used at Tangentyere Housing (Loades pers. comm. 2/7/2003). This IHMS is the cornerstone of Tangentyere's successful Housing Support Model (Griffiths pers. comm. 3/7/2003).

The Central Remote Regional Council, with DC DSCA and AT SIS, developed the Central Remote Model to increase the efficiency of the project and broaden employment opportunities for local youth. The Central Remote Model is discussed in Section 5.4.2.2 below.

- The Maintenance and Management Programs are in place to enable IHANT to make maximum use of its funding. In January 2000, IHANT produced a booklet entitled "Minimum Standards for Housing Management". The booklet is targeted at Indigenous Councils, Housing Associations and Homeland Resource Centres and their staff. It explains IHANT's strategies for improving housing management and makes the minimum standards for housing management explicit. The booklet defines housing management as consisting of three elements: first, rent collection; second, accounting for the money collected and spent; and third, organising the repair and maintenance of housing (IHANT 2000).

The booklet also defines what rent money is and what it can be used, for such as repairs and maintenance, insurance and housing management staff. It specifies, for example, that rent should not be spent on capital items unless urgent and essential repairs and maintenance have already been completed. It sets minimum rental amounts for different types of housing. In addition, it establishes the criteria for an IHANT

“Maintenance Grant”. This is on a sliding scale, depending on the condition of the house, from a maximum of \$1700 per house per annum. The maintenance grant is payable on condition certain criteria are met, including that they:

- Meet the minimum standards for housing management as set out in the booklet mentioned above;
- Employ a Housing Manager; and,
- Conduct regular Environmental Health Surveys (IHANT 2000, 2003).

The booklet also provides for community housing organizations to allocate a “one-off” amount, from their grant, of up to \$50 000, to establish a housing office (IHANT 2000). In addition, the Housing Management Program provides annual funding to eligible Indigenous Housing Organisations of either \$500 per house or \$40 000 per organisation, whichever is greater. This funding is used to employ a housing manager to implement housing management in terms of IHANT’s guidelines. “IHANT management funding is aimed at achieving improved community control through local skills development and training in administration and management” (IHANT 2000). In November 2002, Laurie Rivers, the then Alice Springs DCDSCA Manager, commented that the program had had “untold success” with all but one of the communities in the area collecting rent (ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002).

As mentioned above, ATSIC’s funding of NAHS through the CHIP program is not pooled and distributed through IHANT. According to a report by Urbis Keys Young, which investigated the “Accountability in Indigenous Environmental Health Services – Australia 2002”, NAHS funding in the Northern Territory is largely (over 50%) spent on housing to address severe overcrowding problems. NAHS funds are also used to provide essential services such as water and energy. As is the case in Western Australia, the

capital works priorities are based on Health Impact Assessments. The establishment of priorities is coordinated with the Territory Health Services who play an advisory and support role (Urbis Keys Young 2002). This implies that two different mechanisms are used to decide on housing need at the community level.

5.3 Regional Program Integration Arrangements

There are a number of emerging regional integration mechanisms that are specific to Western Australia or to the Northern Territory. Three of these will be explored in this section. They are:

- Comprehensive Regional Agreements (WA)
- Central Remote Model (NT)
- Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement (NT)

5.3.1 Comprehensive Regional Agreements (Western Australia)

In October 2001 the Government of Western Australia signed an agreement entitled “Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians” (Government of Western Australia 2001). Although not housing-specific, this agreement provides for the negotiation of a State-wide Framework to enable agreements at the local and regional level. These regional and local agreements provide an important opportunity for the integration of housing and other programs. The Department of Indigenous Affairs in Western Australia has been charged with implementing the “Statement of Commitment” and ATSIC has produced a Regional Agreements Manual (ATSIC 2001) to guide the process.

As an example of the Comprehensive Regional Agreements process, this research project concentrated on the Tjurabalan Comprehensive Regional Agreement. The word “Tjurabalan” has specific reference geographically to

Sturt Creek and to the Native Title determined area of 20th August 2001 in the Federal Court (Alan Stewart Consulting Services 2003).

On 2 July 2003, Tjurabalan and its Comprehensive Regional Agreement process was announced as a West Australian site for the COAG whole-of-government service delivery trials to Indigenous communities and regions (Ellison 2003). There were 6 specific goals agreed to for the COAG Western Australian Site Project. These included: 'Infrastructure Provision' (roads, houses, utilities); 'Resource Community Consultation Agents', 'Building capacity of Residents to engage', and 'Building capacity of Governments to engage' (Alan Stewart Consulting Services 2003).

The Kimberley Land Council was developing a capacity building program so that Tjurabalan communities could effectively involve themselves in this project as equal partners. This COAG project is funded jointly by the Department of Transport and Regional Services and the Department of Indigenous Affairs. The key outcomes from this project will be the completion of a scoping study of the physical, social, cultural, environmental, governance and economic profile of the Tjurabalan communities; building capacity within the communities and the Government sector (at all levels) to enhance participation and sustain the outcomes of the scoping process; and advice and recommendations to the Tjurabalan Governing Body on an effective long term capacity building program to ensure that the aims of the Tjurabalan project are achieved.

5.3.2 The Central Remote Model

The "Central Remote Model" (CRM) was developed by the Central Remote Regional Council (CRRC) in association with ATSIC and IHANT, in response to the increasing costs associated with the prevailing community-by-community approach to the provision of housing under IHANT's Construction Program, and the lack of opportunities for Indigenous youth in remote

communities (IHANT 2002; Whitehead pers. comm. 7/11/2002; Laramba Focus Group 2002). The Central Remote Model is illustrated in Figure 11.

The CRM involved three main changes to the prevailing housing system. These were:

- Single Project Manager

The appointment of a single regional Project Manager for a number of contractor-built housing construction projects (under IHANT's Construction Program). The intention was to introduce economies of scale, greater construction efficiencies as well as a more co-ordinated approach.

- Standardised Designs

One of the aims of the model is the development of a range of standard, high quality designs with standard, robust and interchangeable fixtures and fittings to make maintenance easier in future (ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group). Although these standardised housing designs give people a limited choice, it also enables the use of standardised materials, fixtures and fittings that can make maintenance easier.

- The Training and Employment Program

The Training and Employment Program, as illustrated in Figure 12, is probably the most innovative component of the CRM. It involves a three-year strategy to form community building teams by training four local apprentices per community to Certificate Three level in General Construction. The Regional Council's long-term goal is to eventually form building teams at each community so that they can bid for any construction and housing maintenance contracts in their region (Laramba Focus Group 2002).

At the inception of the pilot project, Tangentyere Job Shop won the tender to be appointed as the Regional Training Organisation. The original Project Manager (Quantec) had undertaken to provide technical construction support such as building inspections to the trainees but, as a private sector organisation, this was not cost-effective for them. Once the original contract came to an end, construction support was sourced from Tangentyere Construction. They are now also responsible for the coordination of all construction material as well as a building inspection service (Loades pers. comm. 2/07/2003; Anderson and Robinya 2003; ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002).

Since 2001, the CRM has been piloted in seven communities west of Alice Springs. The pilot project required an innovative approach by IHANT and DCDSCA who negotiated multi-year funding within an annual funding context (ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002).

The CRM represents an innovative approach to Program Integration, particularly the integration of housing construction with the training and employment program. The latter's success is largely due to the involvement of Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation.

As the Regional Training Organisation, Tangentyere Jobshop approached the community council in each of the seven pilot communities to select the building apprentices. They employ a builder/trainer for each of the pilot communities to provide hands-on training. The training is funded through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' (DEWR) Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) which tops-up apprentice salaries and provides a tool and clothing allowance. Additional funding is provided by the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DEET) for literacy and numeracy support. The competency-based on-and off the job training is provided by the Registered Training Authority,

Centralian College (ATSIC and DCDSICA Focus Group 2002; Anderson and Robinya 2003).

The communities pay the trainees' basic wage from their CDEP. That is then topped up through STEP to become a reasonable wage. In terms of the partnership agreement with Tangentyere Jobshop, communities provide accommodation for the builder trainers as well as funding the trainees' accommodation when they are on block release training in Alice Springs (ATSIC and DCDSICA Focus Group 2002; Anderson and Robinya 2003; Tangentyere Focus Group 2003).

Two of the IHANT houses in each of the pilot communities were identified as training houses and by July 2003 most of the first houses were complete or nearly complete. The training is also progressing well. The Manager Community Building Teams at Tangentyere Job Shop commented that although the CRM is a challenging project, over 50% of the trainees have passed Certificate 2 in Construction in 12 months whereas it is usually an 18-month certificate. William Tilmouth, the Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation Director, added that this represents hard work from Tangentyere and from the young guys. "It blows away the myth that Aboriginal people don't want to work" (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003).

5.3.3 Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement

The Wangka Wilurrara Model is the first of a series of planned regional partnership agreements in the Northern Territory. The proposal entails a regional governance agreement with ATSIC, government and other stakeholders, including the regional council if necessary. This is proposed to change the current 'silo' nature of the current agreement (ATSIC and DCDSICA Focus Group 2002).

The Luritja-Pintubi people of Central Australia are a mobile population who mostly live in the four communities of Walungurru/Kintore, Watiyawanu/Mt

Liebig, Papunya and Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff, to the west of Alice Springs. For several years these communities expressed concern about their poor educational and health status and the resulting social problems. An additional concern was the lack of inclusion of traditional landowners (TOs) in existing decision-making structures. These service delivery and governance issues were discussed among the community for around three years. They pro-actively identified a need for the development of a regional service delivery model and composed a song and a painting (drawn by Commissioner Alison Anderson and portrayed in Diagram 3) to convey their ideas and the structure to the broader Luritja-Pintubi community (DCDSCA 2002; ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002). Commissioner Anderson has given permission for her painting to be reproduced in this thesis. The Painting, entitled "Reform in the West MacDonnell Region" is reproduced below. The caption following the painting describes how the painting reproduces the process in a manner easily intelligible to traditional communities.

The community formed an Indigenous Steering Committee of community representatives, chaired by ATSIC Central Zone Commissioner Alison Anderson. The Committee works with the local Territory and Commonwealth government in the development of a Regional Agreement. A new governance structure that incorporates traditional authority structures and provides enhanced service delivery is envisaged (DCDSCA 2002; ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002).

The Government response has been to support this initiative both formally and informally. DCDSCA has supported the emerging regional mode and provided capacity-building where requested. On a formal level, the Government departments and agencies of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth have formed an Officers' Network with a core membership of ten people and the ad hoc involvement of other departments as needed. In addition, a Program Management Group of ATSIC, DCDSCA, the Central

Land Council and recently the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services has developed to provide support for the Indigenous Steering Committee in the formation of the provisionally named, Wangka Wilurrara Regional Authority (DCDSCA 2002; ATSIC and DCDSCA Focus Group 2002; Kleiner pers. comm. 22/9/2003).



Diagram 3: Reform in the West MacDonnell Region

Description: Alison Anderson, ATSI Central Zone Commissioner, produced this painting early in the development of a reform process in service delivery and potential governance arrangements in the West MacDonnell Region of Central Australia. The top two circles are the Indigenous Steering Committee on the left, whose members are all community representatives, and on the right a working party made up of officers from Local Government, DCDSCA, ATSI, Health agencies, Education, PAWA and others. The circle below represents a new regional body with sub committees for the proposed Council functions surrounding it. All linkages are two-way. The store function lies directly between the Regional body and the Health committee thus being directly accountable to these bodies only. A Customary Law and Land body site is to the right of the new regional body. A short video was also produced that explains the reform process in language and was used with the painting to promote discussion in all the communities concerned.

5.4 Program Integration Perceptions

This section of the chapter discusses the perceptions of the integration mechanisms from the fieldwork. The general consensus is that all the initiatives discussed above are positive in that they start to simplify the complex Indigenous housing arrangements. These arrangements are so complex that few people involved in the interviews and focus groups fully understood the programs and funding arrangements.

This section discusses the perceptions of the research participants of the Indigenous Housing Agreements and the three Regional Integration Mechanisms namely, the Comprehensive Regional Agreements (WA), the Central Remote Model (NT) and the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement (NT)

5.4.1 Perceptions of the Indigenous Housing Agreements

The implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreements in Western Australia and the Northern Territory is the most significant development in improving program integration in these jurisdictions. The pooling of housing funding under the Indigenous Housing Agreements has improved program coordination (Alexander J Dodd and Associates 1999).

One cannot compare the progress of AHIC with IHANT as IHANT was established by the first Northern Territory Indigenous Housing Agreement, signed in 1995, and AHIC was only established in mid-2002 under terms of the 2002 West Australian Indigenous Housing Agreement. AHIC will also only be fully operational after the end of the current committed contracts – that is in 2004/5. The review of the first Northern Territory Indigenous Housing Agreement did, however, indicate that IHANT has definitely made a difference in improved coordination of programs which has had a flow-on

effect to improved housing construction, management and maintenance (Alexander J Dodd and Associates 1999).

Despite the improved program integration occasioned by the Indigenous Housing Agreements, the complexity of Indigenous housing arrangements was cited as an issue of concern by a range of people from community to government. The institutional mapping tool that was discussed in the methods sections proved invaluable at all levels of meetings. For the majority of people, it was the first time that they had seen a representation of the different government departments, programs and organisations involved in the funding process. People at Community, Regional Organisation and Agency level commented that they found the institutional maps useful and an educational tool. The range of policies and programs occasioned by a 'supply-driven' orientation presents an extremely complex policy and program environment for all involved in the field. Not only is the Indigenous housing 'system' complex but the programs and program elements often change. It is therefore not surprising that the research team found inadequate information and communication to be an issue. Numerous examples from our fieldwork can be cited. For example, none of the four community case study communities was aware of the seminal policy documents discussed in Chapter 2 – most notably the "Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010" and the Common Reporting Framework. Copies were provided to all communities and the importance of the documents and their relationship to the Indigenous Housing Agreement and to the current research was explained.

Together with insufficient appropriate information, poor communication is a feature of both the Western Australian and the Northern Territory housing delivery systems. There appears to be inadequate attention given to communication and information dissemination. There are a number of possible reasons for this situation:

- A perception by the relevant government agencies that the primary conduits for information to communities are the Regional Councils. While Regional Councils are the elected representatives of the communities, their primary role is not as information conduits to communities on behalf of various agencies. The dissemination of information and *co-ordinated* communication with communities and individuals is the responsibility of the individual agencies.
- The administrative burdens on often under-resourced and under-skilled Indigenous community housing organisations only add to the almost permanent state of near crisis management that many of these organisations operate in. The research team was under the impression that the communities had to complete a wide range of community reports and forms that are of questionable relevance to each community.
- The implementation of the Indigenous Housing Agreement in Western Australia gave particular insight into the process. The implementation of this Agreement required the restructuring of virtually all housing and infrastructure programs in Western Australia.

The second round of fieldwork in Western Australia was preceded by the restructuring of the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate (AHID), as illustrated in Figure 6. In the case study area, the Kullarri Region, it was agreed at the Regional Council level that the programs will be delivered in the Kullarri Region through a Regional Housing Authority (RHA) (Lombadina Focus Group 2003; Familiar pers. comm. 30/05/2003). The funding for each region is, according to the Indigenous Housing Agreement, determined by the Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plan (RHIP) within a framework developed by AHIC (Government of Western Australia 2002). The Regional Councils submitted an interim RHIP (2003-2004) and had until December 2003 to finalise a three-year interim RHIP (2004-2007) which will determine their funding for the next three years (Ford pers. comm. 31/7/2003). AT SIS play a significant role in developing the RHIP in partnership with AHID and

according to a funding formula developed by AHID. The subsequent draft goes to ATSIC for endorsement to AHIC.

The RHIP determines future housing and infrastructure funding, and concern was expressed at a number of levels about the difficulty of planning for a range of communities over a number of years. Ironically, a logical solution to the issue of a relevant RHIP was raised at community level both in Western Australia and the Northern Territory with reference to the development of the specific community. This suggestion involved the drawing up of a consultative development plan on all aspects of the particular community's future development. This would be a 'living document', subject to change as circumstances changed, and while obviously including areas other than housing, would provide a clear direction for future development. The RHIP would draw from each of the Development Plans. A further benefit of a development planning approach for housing is that it would introduce sound planning rather than the relatively ad hoc approach to the allocation of houses.

The need for a flow of information between agency and community was mentioned above and this is supported by the team's observation that there was little clarity as to the form the RHA would take in the Kullarri Region. The research team witnessed much uncertainty and insecurity from respondents in the Kullarri Region about the form of the RHA. This is a significant issue for the region and many organisations and people have a vested interest in its success.

Prior to the second round of fieldwork, meetings had been held between the ATSIC Kullarri Regional Council and the AHID, the Program Manager for AHIC. A draft Memorandum of Understanding was discussed but no conclusions reached. During fieldwork, the issue of the potential form of the future RHA was discussed at different fora. For example, the Lombadina Workshop developed the model shown in Figure 13 as one possible

response to the regional structure. This alternative regional housing structure involves a joint venture by all 8 of the “major communities” in the Kullarri Region. This “Umbrella Body” of management would formulate policy and procedure. In addition, they would have a Construction and Maintenance Company that is wholly owned by the 8 major communities and would return all profits to the communities. This Umbrella Body could be contracted by AHIC to provide Construction and Maintenance for the region. Depending on their capacity, they could outsource aspects of their operations under a Provider Support Contract – for example, the Funds Administration or Accounting to KAA; Training to Nirrembuk Indigenous Resource Organisation, or TAFE; and the Contract Management and support to, for example, Mamabulanjin. The relationship between the Umbrella Body, its Construction and Maintenance Company and the local communities would be by means of a Service Contract, negotiated with each community. The direct arrangements that form part of the model provide the flexibility that would allow Lombadina to manage those aspects of the construction and maintenance that they wished to manage. This flexibility permits those communities with the necessary capacity to manage the construction, maintenance and related projects (Lombadina Focus Group 2003).

The willingness to debate these issues at different fora and at different levels indicates to the research team, a desire for communities to be involved in decisions that affect them. Decisions that affect communities and resource organisations should ideally be made in a transparent way and based on agreed factors or criteria. At the very least, information should be shared with those affected by the potential changes.

The implementation of the Housing Indigenous Housing Agreement in Western Australia will probably have a positive impact on program integration in the State as it will reduce program complexity. Nevertheless it

still operates largely from a 'supply-driven' approach, the alternative to which is discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.2 Perceptions of the Regional Integration Mechanisms

5.4.2.1 Comprehensive Regional Agreements (WA)

During fieldwork the Tjurubalan process was still in its initial stages. Nevertheless, it is clear that comprehensive regional agreements arise from a community's expression of its ties to 'country' and more specifically in Australia from a community's pursuit of recognition of its 'native title'. Thus a native title determination can serve as a vehicle to guide policy formulation for the delivery of integrated housing and infrastructure services.

5.4.2.2 Central Remote Model (NT)

The Central Remote Model is an innovative concept and is illustrated in Figure 11 and the Training and Employment Program in Figure 12. This section discusses the implementation of the Central Remote Model. To recap, the model consists of several elements. These are:

- Single Project Manager
- Standardised Design
- The Training and Employment Program

As far as the *Single Project Manager* is concerned, prior to the Central Remote Model pilot, two streams of funding flowed to the communities from IHANT – one for the Central Remote Training and Employment Model with Tangentyere Construction as the Project Manager and the other for 'mainstream' construction by external contractors, with the project managed by Quantec (Papunya Town Clerk 2003).

The original intention was for the single Project Manager (at that stage Quantec) to assist with aspects of the Training and Employment model such as building inspections. However, they were not keen to assist because of the time and the insurance risk (ATSIC and DCDSICA Focus Group 2002). These aspects of the Training and Employment Model were taken over by Tangentyere Construction in July 2003 when they were appointed as Project Manager of the Training and Employment Program. When asked about the success of the Central Remote model, the Executive Director William Tilmouth commented that “it started with a movement down from the Papunya Council and another up from Tangentyere and met in the middle”. Mr Tilmouth commented that Tangentyere has “two black hands on the steering wheel”. He also said that the fundamental principles of the Training and Employment Program and of Tangentyere itself are transportable to other organisations and situations (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003). An important lesson for the program is that it is difficult for a company with a profit motive to be involved in a developmental activity. Tangentyere Construction is committed to working for the community and has a vision that focuses on capacity building (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003).

The change of Project Manager in mid-2003 should have solved many of the problems experienced by the communities such as inadequate flow of materials and delays in building inspections. Soon after being appointed as Project Manager for the Training and Employment Program, Tangentyere Construction applied to start stockpiling materials. This is possible as the standardisation of designs means a standardised materials list and materials can be bought in bulk with substantial discounts (Griffiths pers. comm. 03/07/2000).

The *Standardised Designs* (and standardised materials) epitomises the current ‘supply-driven’ system where the cost-effective delivery of houses is paramount rather than an approach which responds to the demands of the communities. The benefits of this strategy are based on values such as cost

efficiency. This strategy severely limits people's housing choices and people are conditioned to accept what is offered.

The issue of cost is a major concern in the drive to provide adequate housing in Indigenous communities. The current mindset assumes that compliance with the relatively high technical specifications of the standard Building Code of Australia and the Northern Territory Environmental Health Standards is the only option. The author has extensive development experience in South Africa, including experience in researching, establishing and managing Indigenous housing projects where an alternative approach was adopted. This focused on alternative building methods which often upgraded traditional building methods. An alternative building code was developed in the mid-eighties to enable the certification of alternative technologies as structurally sound. This was known as the Minimum Agrément Norm and Technical Advisory Guide (MANTAG) and it enabled communities to construct their own structurally sound houses (using skills in the community) and often to their own design. The usual building inspection and planning approvals process was followed with the exception that the stringent requirements of the National Building Regulations did not have to be adhered to (Agrément South Africa. 2003).

The *Training and Employment Program* has clearly had a positive impact on both Northern Territory case study communities. The Laramba Community Council was demonstrably proud of its trainees and commented that they have "come on well" (Laramba Community Council Focus Group 2003). The Papunya Town Clerk reported that the houses built by mainstream contractors are often vandalised. The potential vandals were chased away from the training house by the trainees during construction and, despite the house being unoccupied while waiting for a building inspection during the change-over of project managers, no vandalism occurred (Papunya Town Clerk 2003). A further unintended benefit to the community is that the builder-trainers have started assisting the trainees with budgeting and

banking and these skills are likely to be transferred to the broader community (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003).

There are a number of lessons to be learned from the Central Remote Model's Training and Employment Program:

- The program was initiated by Indigenous leaders on behalf of community concerns – Clarry Robinya, the Chairman of the Central Remote Regional Council commented that “one must not sit back and wait for government but do things oneself” (Laramba Focus Group 2002). One of the instigating factors of the Training and Employment Program was concern expressed by community elders about the limited future for their youth in remote areas;
- The strong Indigenous leadership from primarily the CRRC and Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation;
- A strong Indigenous focus – the project was developed by an Indigenous organisation, managed by an Indigenous organisation and the training is provided mostly by Indigenous builder-trainers (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003);
- The program was designed with community needs in mind – the Training and Employment Model was developed to address the need for “local training, local jobs” (Laramba Focus Group 2002). When applications for building trainees were called for, there were many applicants. The council selected the initial applicants and they were then assessed by the Centralian College who had the final say in the selection of trainees;
- Involvement of the communities in, for example, the selection of the trainees/apprentices and a sharing of responsibility for the costs;
- A problem-solving approach among the partners above and a desire to ‘make it work’;

- An enabling approach from government departments and agencies;
- The adoption of a 'community development' approach;
- The project pays the trainees the same wages that are paid to 'mainstream' apprentices (Tangentyere Focus Group 2003).
- The project responds to the need in the communities for employment creation, the local development of skills, the need for local repair and maintenance skills and a need for local employment for the young adults.

The August 2003 evaluation of the Central Remote Model pilot reviewed the model's functioning against its objectives. The delivery of the construction-only houses was found to be achieving significant cost efficiencies when compared to the former model (SGS Economics and Planning Pty. Ltd. 2003). These cost efficiencies, when considered over the assumed 30 year life of the house, are expected to be "approximately \$120 000 per house" (SGS Economics and Planning Pty. Ltd. 2003 p.5). It was found that, from an economic perspective, the training and employment program represents a cost neutral outcome.

While the intangible results of the Training and Employment Program are not emphasised in the tender for the evaluation of the Model (IHANT 2002), the success of the model represents more than a "cost-neutral outcome". As is mentioned in the discussion of the model above, the training and employment aspect of the model is the most innovative and had a positive impact on the various communities. Much of the success of this model is due to the 'community development' approach of Tangentyere Job Shop through their development of partnerships with the communities and supported by DCDSCA.

5.4.2.3. The Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement (NT)

The Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement has been progressing well. In the Wangka Wilurrara model there would be a 5-person management board for each community (the typically 10-12-person Community Council would be abolished) and the members of this new board would also become the council members on Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council. Traditional Owners would be outside the main negotiations with government but would be deferred to in matters related to land and culture. Some Traditional Owners seek a stronger role in negotiations with government. Nevertheless there are two interrelated concepts being developed in the WWRPA model: good governance, in a stronger regional service framework *and indigenous self-governance* (Scarvelis pers. comm. 2/7/2003).

5.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has illustrated the current arrangements to simplify the remote Indigenous housing system in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. These attempts to improve the current Indigenous housing system occur largely within the 'supply-driven' approach. This chapter also reviewed some innovative Indigenous-initiated initiatives including the Central Remote Model and the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreements. These initiatives have a mostly 'demand-responsive' approach but are difficult to sustain in a largely supply-driven service provision environment.

This Chapter illustrated that the remote Indigenous housing system exemplifies the 'supply-driven' approach to service delivery. The current 'supply-driven' Indigenous housing system and an alternative 'demand-responsive' housing system are analysed in detail in Chapter 6, using the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment.

Chapter 6: A Systems Social Assessment of the remote Indigenous housing system

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 introduced the concepts of demand- and supply-driven service delivery and the assertion that these are useful concepts to apply to remote Indigenous housing. This led to the research hypothesis which reads “The remote Indigenous housing system does not adequately meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive focus.”

Chapter 5 discussed the current attempts to improve Indigenous housing through program integration and came to the conclusion that many of the problems lie in the predominant supply-driven approach of the Indigenous housing system. This led to the need for a more thorough analysis of the system. Systems analysis is not common in Social Assessments so, as introduced in Chapter 3, the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment has been developed to examine this complex system. Chapter 3 discussed the considerable overlaps between Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology and described the new methodology of a Systems Social Assessment.

This thesis distinguishes between a supply-driven approach to remote Indigenous housing provision and an alternative demand-responsive approach. It contends that the current Indigenous housing system epitomises the supply-driven approach. The term ‘demand-responsive approach’ as used here, includes the active empowerment of remote Indigenous communities to make decisions regarding service delivery and other aspects of their community. This alternative approach embodies the characteristics of a successful Indigenous housing system as developed in Chapter 2. These characteristics are ‘Indigenous Control and Self-

Determination', the creation of an 'Enabling Environment' and a 'Culturally Responsive' system. This approach would challenge the 'Aboriginal welfare economy' by developing and using skills within remote communities.

This chapter describes the process of a Systems Social Assessment of the remote Indigenous housing system. It first outlines problematic aspects of the current system before developing a conceptual model of the alternative, an empowering demand-responsive approach to remote Indigenous housing. These two approaches do not present an either/or situation but are end points along a continuum. This is why, in Chapter 3, the remote Indigenous housing system was described as a 'wicked' problem, or a problem that does not have a clear solution, as complex problems usually result in situations to be alleviated rather than problems to be solved.

6.2 Systems Social Assessment

A Systems Social Assessment, as described in Chapter 3, involves an 8 phase process of analysis. These eight phases are outlined and then discussed with reference to the remote Indigenous housing system. Most of the phases are virtually identical to the early phases of a Social Assessment. As is discussed in Chapter 3, the Systems Social Assessment, as with a Social Assessment, would continue after the problem analysis phase in the longer-term monitoring and management of the program or project.

6.2.1 Phase 1: Scoping

In this phase, the scope of the system is determined and the key role-players in the system are identified, such as the person who enabled the study to occur (the client) and those with a key role in the system. Scoping also involves the collection of mainly secondary information and the early identification of the key issues.

The system to be analysed is that of the remote Indigenous housing system as it exists in the Western Australian and Northern Territory case study areas. The client in the original study was AHURI, funded by and therefore representing the Australian Commonwealth Government. The participants in the study were outlined in Chapter 3 and in both case study areas, include:

- The peak Indigenous housing body (AHIC in Western Australia and IHANT in the Northern Territory);
- ATSIC Regional Councils;
- Regional Indigenous Service Providers; and,
- Community Management (Lombadina and Djarindjin in Western Australia and Papunya and Laramba in the Northern Territory).

The terms of the research were discussed in detail with all involved in the study, both telephonically and during the first round of fieldwork. During this visit, willingness to participate in the research was ascertained and ethical agreements, developed in terms of Murdoch University's ethical protocols, were explained and signed.

6.2.2 Phase 2: Profiling

The focus in a Social Assessment is usually the understanding of a project and its environment whereas the Systems Social Assessment focuses on understanding a more complex system. One of Soft Systems Methodology's prescribed steps is the development of 'rich pictures', which are pictorial representations of the problem situation. A Systems Social Assessment is more flexible than the rather prescriptive Soft Systems Methodology. While the utility of a graphic representation of a system should not be underestimated, the use of 'rich pictures' is not always the best solution. In this research project, the tool of institutional maps was developed and is

discussed in Chapter 3, portrayed in Figures 1 to 13 and referred to throughout the thesis.

During the Profiling Phase, the gathering of information initiated in the Scoping Phase continues. In this research project, both secondary and primary data were collected to understand the context of the research and to obtain the participants' perspectives. As with a Social Assessment, several key issues or themes emerged from the gathering of primary and secondary data. These were: the complex nature of the Indigenous housing system; the centralised nature of decision-making and administration; a lack of clarity whether the community or the government agency is the "customer/client"; and, a lack of focus on the community. These key issues define the main problems with the Indigenous housing system that emerged during fieldwork and will be discussed in more detail below.

6.2.2.1 A Complex System

The Indigenous housing system is undeniably complex and needs to be simplified. This issue and Government attempts to improve it were discussed in the previous Chapter. Comments about the complexity of the system were made at virtually all interview and focus groups. A greater understanding of the system was assisted though the development and discussion of the institutional maps.

As well as being remarkably complex, it is also relatively inflexible and this is best illustrated by the Papunya example in Section 6.2.2.2 below. Further evidence of the inflexibility of the system emerged during discussions on the Central Remote Model when the considerable prior planning necessary to access multi-year funding to fund the construction of the training houses in each community became evident (ATSIC and DCDSKA Focus Group 2002).

6.2.2.2 Centralised Decision-making and Administration

This issue is one of the most significant and provides considerable insight into the functioning of this supply-driven system. Most of the policy and decision-making about Indigenous housing in Western Australia is made by AHIC and its Project Manager, the AHID, who are both based in Perth, around 2300 km from the case study area. A similar situation exists in the Northern Territory with most major decisions being made by IHANT and their project manager, DCDSKA, located in Darwin but with a regional office in Alice Springs.

In both jurisdictions, Indigenous housing and housing-related programs are usually delivered through a private sector Program Manager appointed by AHID or DCDSKA. These Program Managers tend to be Engineering Consultancies, usually far removed from the community. For example, the NAHS (National Aboriginal Health Strategy) is currently delivered outside the pooled funding arrangements of IHANT and AHIC. It is program managed by Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) in Western Australia and by Arup in the Northern Territory. These Program Managers also sub-contract their responsibilities. For example, both the case study Communities in the Northern Territory have the NAHS program regionally project managed by GHD (Papunya Town Clerk 2003).

All four of the Community level case studies cited this 'program management at a distance' as an obstacle to effective housing management (Papunya Town Clerk 2003; Laramba Administration Focus Group 2003; Laramba Community Council Focus Group 2003; Laramba Focus Group 2002; Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation CEO 2003; Lombadina Focus Group 2002, 2003). It perpetuates a paternalistic attitude toward Indigenous communities – planning *for* and not *with* communities. The following examples will illustrate the point:

- Papunya has a severe overcrowding problem with 32 houses for a population of around 440 people – an average of over 13 people per house with 30 occupants in one house and the associated pressure on services and increased maintenance. The Papunya Town Clerk provided an instructive example of the inadequate program management and poor program coordination that occurs in communities. Although this example is of a program delivered outside the pooled funding arrangement, it is one of the most illustrative examples. The housing backlog in the Northern Territory is calculated on the number of bedrooms. The NAHS Program Managers therefore came up with a ‘solution’ to this situation through adding bedrooms onto existing houses. This was to occur at a cost of \$60 000 per house (classified as a ‘major upgrade’) as opposed to building more houses. According to the Town Clerk, this was done with no community consultation and is not what the community wants as four-bedroom houses require more cleaning and encourage unwanted visitors. The community leadership was also shocked at the cost of the additional bedroom (and toilet) and came up with their own alternative. This option involved performing ‘minor upgrades’ (installation of window panes, doors and painting) to 4 existing houses for a total cost of \$65 000, thus adding 9 bedrooms to the housing stock and saving money. However, the terms of the NAHS funding don’t permit the funding of ‘minor’ upgrades, only ‘major’ upgrades (Papunya Town Clerk 2003). The ATSIC CHIP/NAHS Policy Officer confirmed that the NAHS focused on major upgrades and that minor upgrades are expected to be part of maintenance. He explained that NAHS budget is allocated according to a health survey with the focus on remedying the situation as soon as possible. For this reason, contractors rather than trainees are used to enable the construction of the structures as soon as possible (ATSIC CHIP and NAHS Policy Officer 2003).

This example illustrates the following:

- an example of a supply-driven approach involving planning for and not with the community to meet external policy needs rather than the needs of the community;
 - inadequate consultation and decision-making to meet the priorities of the community; and
 - a rigid and financially unsound application of program guidelines.
- Lombadina's Chairman discussed some of the problems the community had in the past with externally managed programs. He explained that many years ago, ATSIC field staff acted as Program Managers. Although the ATSIC field staff did not necessarily have all the relevant skills, they were locally based, willing to help and could be contacted easily. Currently all the housing and housing-related programs are managed by external Program Managers, mostly based in Perth. He gave the example of an irrigation project that was funded by NAHS. He and others in the community had had experience with the installation of irrigation but, according to the Chair, the Program Manager (then PPK, renamed PB) and the Project Manager (GHD) refused to let the community install the irrigation system themselves. NAHS funded contractors to put in the irrigation system which was expensive, did not work properly and was not what the community wanted. After installation, the community management had to adjust the installation as it was not providing even coverage (Lombadina Focus Group 2002). The supply-driven approach assumes that communities have no useful skills or expertise to contribute to projects.

The principles of some of the key documents discussed in Chapter 2 focus on community participation and community responsibility. An example of this is the vision and principles of the "Building a Better Future" document, yet the institutional structure does not enable this and in some cases, it

actively discourages greater community responsibility and decision-making power. The actual decisions about funding or the use of that funding are made at government agency or program/project manager level. The Community Councils or Committees are generally not involved in informed decision-making. Where they express a concern about cost and value for money, the community concerns tend to be secondary to the rigid implementation of the guidelines.

The housing guidelines did permit more flexibility in the past. In the early 1990's the Lombadina community were able to build their own houses and stretch the funding to build more houses. They were funded (by the then Aboriginal Development Corporation) for the construction of 4 houses but the program was flexible enough to permit the community to use CDEP labour and on-costs (then from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) to supplement this amount and build 7 houses (Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation CEO 2003). The Project Manager for the Lombadina housing renovation project was asked for an assessment of the houses built by the community. His comment was that the 7 houses constructed in the past by the community, with the assistance of contract carpenters, are holding up as well as others of a similar construction (Kullarri Building Company Project Manager 2003).

The complexity of the housing programs and funding structure is effectively disempowering as it is virtually unintelligible at community level. It is difficult for communities to participate in a process whose funding structure and process is difficult to understand.

6.2.2.3 The Customer/Client

The case study communities displayed varying levels of management capacity. Nevertheless, the clear message from all case study communities was a desire to be more involved in decisions that affect them and a commitment to more responsibility. This issue of the 'ownership' or control

of the housing process was flagged as a key issue early during the research process, but was put most strongly by the Town Clerk of one of the communities when he was questioning the behaviour of the Program and Project Managers. He said government agencies, Program and Project Managers are ultimately there to provide housing and housing-related infrastructure to communities. Despite this, the perception exists among these Program and Project Managers that the government agency is the client or customer, rather than the community. He stated that the community should be treated as the customer and be able to manage the housing process themselves. He gave several examples of control being situated outside the community. These include:

- The community gave input into the development of a community layout plan and specified preferred locations for new houses. The NAHS Program Managers have the final say in the location of the houses and can override the preferences of the community, apparently without negotiation or explanation. Both sides probably have valid reasons for their preferred option and a process of informed negotiation/consultation could probably resolve the issues in most cases and deepen the understanding of issues on both sides. For example, on the community side there are cultural issues to do with location of houses and their proposed occupants whereas the Program/Project Manager is often more concerned with cost and technical issues such as the availability of services;
- A house is in the process of being constructed but neither the Town Clerk nor the community knows which agency is funding the house construction or who will occupy the house; and,
- Community management is often not consulted or informed about activities occurring in their community. For example, the Papunya Town Clerk commented that the community had no say in the appointment of

contractors to build houses in their community (Papunya Town Clerk 2003).

6.2.2.4 Lack of Focus on the Community

The examples provided in the preceding sections illustrate that control of the Indigenous housing system lies in bureaucratic structures far removed from remote communities. Not only are communities inadequately informed and often excluded from decisions that involve them, but they are not seen as a resource in the housing process. Several of the housing programs mentioned in Chapter 5 involved the development of skills in the community. Despite this development of skills, little attention is paid to the utilisation of these skills and community members' desire to improve their situation. The following examples will illustrate this point:

- In Laramba, the research team was told that four houses in the community were recently upgraded through IHANT Construction Program funding at a cost of around \$60,000 each. This included painting inside and out, the re-tiling of the bathroom and kitchen, the painting of the floors and the installation of a new air conditioner. The upgrades were project managed by IHANT's Project Manager, Quantec and the upgrades done by private contactors. The Acting Community Clerk reported that the community felt that \$60,000 per house was a lot of money for the results obtained. They decided to use CDEP labour and operational costs to upgrade the Community Council Chairperson and traditional owner's house to demonstrate what they were capable of doing at minimal cost (Laramba Administration Focus Group 2003). During the fieldwork, the research team noticed that work was beginning on another Community Councillor's house.
- Lombadina is a well-functioning, well-organised community with strong community management and leadership. Community members have a range of skills in building and they have been involved in the building of

houses and are responsible for the maintenance of the gravel roads in the area. During fieldwork, the community was involved with the execution of an 'in-house bid' with funding under AACAP. This involved Lombadina tendering to manage the renovation of the majority of the community houses using a combination of skills from outside the community and assistance from CDEP workers. In terms of the current arrangements, funds cannot flow directly to Lombadina but have to be routed through a regional organisation that is the official grantee. In this case the grant funding is channelled through Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation, a Regional Resource Agency, and Lombadina has to send invoices to them for authorisation. According to the CEO, the in-house bid is one of the ideal forms of housing delivery of larger projects for Lombadina. They would prefer to manage the smaller projects themselves but, under the current arrangements, cannot do so (Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation CEO 2003).

- The MSP developed a range of skills within Djarindjin and was regarded as a successful program. According to the CEO of Djarindjin, a significant issue is that there appears to be no plan for the community once these skills have been obtained. He suggested as an example the formation of a local building company which could utilise and develop the existing skills. In Djarindjin's situation the skilled local people are very keen to use their skills, yet houses continue to be built by outside contractors. He illustrated the commitment of the skilled community members by referring to a recent contract for the repair of 21 roofs and the installation of 35 solar hot water systems that was awarded to Djarindjin. A carpenter from outside Djarindjin was employed but all the other workers were from Djarindjin. The project was scheduled to run from June to October but the workers were so keen to work that they worked weekends and finished in September, a month early. The Djarindjin CEO attributed this success to the workers being paid decent

wages (as opposed to being expected to do skilled work on CDEP wages) and were proud of their work (Djarindjin CEO 2003).

In other areas, people are not assisted to access existing economic opportunities to improve their circumstances. For example:

- The Laramba Community was requested to become part of the research because of its excellent history of self-management. Laramba is situated on an area excised from Napperby Station. Although both power and water are funded by PowerWater (PAWA), both services are provided by Napperby Station. The infrastructure which is funded by the Northern Territory government is located on Napperby station and not at the community and is managed, through a direct service contract with PAWA, by the station owner. The community has a number of issues with this arrangement – for example, the station owner does not usually inform the community when he will turn off the power or for how long it will be off. In addition, there are very few employment opportunities for Laramba community members and PAWA provides funding for an Essential Services Operator which could be paid to a community member rather than the Napperby Station owner. Another potential source of income for the community is the maintenance of the gravel roads in the region. The community has a grader and grades the internal roads themselves under the CDEP. In the past, the community has tendered for the maintenance of the regional roads but the tender has always been awarded to the Napperby station owner in preference to the Laramba community (Laramba Community Council Focus Group 2003).

In some remote areas, there is a need for the development of basic housing-related maintenance skills that would provide employment for community members. For example:

- Laramba's Acting Community Clerk told the research team that the lack of local expertise, materials and equipment means that any repairs and

maintenance become very expensive. He gave the example that a plumber from Alice Springs would charge \$600 just to travel to Laramba, excluding any work (Laramba Administration Focus Group 2003).

The above examples illustrate that the current remote Indigenous housing system is highly centralised, and that control is mainly vested in bureaucrats with insufficient knowledge of remote communities. The problem has been identified as inadequate investment in infrastructure rather than an inadequate investment in people. This approach is evident in the foreword to the second edition of the “National Indigenous Housing Guide” which states that “Lack of attention to detail in house design, careless or sub standard construction and no cyclical maintenance make houses unsafe, affect health and waste valuable resources” (FaCS 2003). While there is a need for more housing, this thesis argues that the focus should be shifted from the housing structure to a people-focussed process of housing provision – from a supply-driven to a demand-responsive approach. The following stage further analyses the current supply-driven approach as well as the alternative demand-responsive approach.

6.2.3 Phase 3: Alternative Systems

In the third phase of the process, brief descriptions of alternative perspectives of the problem’s situation are considered. In the case of the remote Indigenous housing system, this involves alternatives to the current supply-driven system. The first phase in the consideration of the alternative systems is their description along the lines of Soft Systems Methodology’s “root definitions” which usually follow the form of “a system to do P, by (means of) Y, in order to achieve Z” which explains the *what*, the *how* and the *why* of the system (Rose 2004).

This thesis concentrates on analysing two systems, first the current supply-driven approach which focuses on the supply of adequate housing (System

1); and second, a demand-responsive approach which enables communities to demand houses that meet their needs (System 2).

System 1: Supply-driven approach: A system to construct remote Indigenous housing, using tax dollars, to meet requirements that all Australians have a similar standard of housing.

System 2: Demand-responsive approach: A system to construct remote Indigenous housing, using tax dollars, while enabling and empowering communities to use the economic and other opportunities offered by the process and to fulfil their own development objectives.

These systems are then further described often using the mnemonic **CATWOE**:

Customers of the system (the beneficiaries or victims of the system);

Actors in the system (the people who conduct the activities of the system);

Transformation that occurs in the system (what the system transforms from one state to another, the input to the output),

Weltanschauung or world view (the underlying values and assumptions of the system or what makes the transformation process worthwhile);

Owners of the system (those who have the power to stop the transformation); and,

Environmental constraints (the elements the system has to take as given (Clegg and Walsh 1998; Jackson 2000; Rose 2004).

An elaboration of the two extremes along the supply-driven and demand-responsive continuum would be as follows:

6.2.3.1 Supply-driven approach:

- **Customers of the system:** the nominal beneficiaries of the system are intended to be remote Indigenous communities but the main beneficiaries are, as one research participant put it, ‘the Indigenous housing industry’ which is made up of bureaucrats, public and private sector program and project managers, the housing contractors and others in the system;
- **Actors in the system:** there a number of actors in the system, and some are also possible beneficiaries. Actors in the system include Commonwealth and State/Territory governments, ATSIC and ATSIIS, as well as all the people in the ‘Indigenous housing industry’.
- **Transformation:** tax dollars are transferred through the system to produce housing to a relatively standard design.
- **Weltanschauung or world view:** there are a number of assumptions that underlie the supply-driven remote Indigenous housing system. These include the assumption that the most rapid, efficient and effective supply of housing to remote communities is the best. The second is that local Indigenous people are not capable of making decisions about the allocation of housing funding and third, that adequate housing will solve a multitude of social ills.
- **Owners of the system:** the system is owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and only they have the ability to stop or change the process of transformation.
- **Environmental constraints:** include the predominantly welfare-based economy in remote areas; the limited access to mainstream economic activities and the limitations of various types of land tenure in remote communities, most of which are communal.

6.2.3.2 Demand-responsive approach:

An elaboration of the alternative, demand-responsive system using the mnemonic CATWOE would be:

- **C**ustomers of the system: the remote Indigenous communities;
- **A**ctors in the system: this proposed ideal system would involve a system to enable the empowerment and development of remote Indigenous communities. The actors would include a supportive bureaucracy including 'social facilitators' at community level who would assist in social transformation of the community. No actors should have a vested interest in the system;
- **T**ransformation: tax dollars into houses through a process of utilising and developing community skills in building and maintenance. The focus would be on the community rather than on aspects outside the community.
- **W**eltanschauung or world view: that people in remote Indigenous communities need a greater say in their own development. Housing-related activities, from materials supply through to construction and maintenance provides one of the few economic activities in remote areas. These economic opportunities should be recognised and developed so that the benefits stay within the community.
- **O**wners of the system: the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, in partnership with local communities, and a joint decision is needed *to stop* or change the process or transformation
- **E**nvironmental constraints: the vested interests in the existing Indigenous housing industry provide a considerable constraint to any major change in the system. This includes a range of activities from materials supply to construction companies and extends to project management and

government bureaucracy concerned with the supply of Indigenous housing

6.2.4 Phase 4: Development of Alternative Systems

In Phase 4, the descriptive definition/s in Phase 3 are further developed into conceptual models of alternative systems. It is this explicit modelling of potential alternatives that is of benefit to Social Assessments. This is usually a process implicit in the Social Assessment process but a Systems Social Assessment makes this process explicit in the development of these alternatives.

6.2.4.1 A demand-responsive system

The demand-responsive system would focus on the remote communities and adopt a sustainable community development approach. This implies the following principles:

- Housing is viewed as a process, not an end product;
- This process includes some of the few economic opportunities available to remote communities (materials supply/manufacture, construction, maintenance) and these opportunities should, as far as possible, remain within the community;
- This process involves an active and equal partnership between government and communities;
- People and communities are viewed as resources and assets in the housing process rather than part of 'the problem'. In most cases, communities will come up with their own practical solution to problems;
- The focus shifts from the physical to the non-physical such as developing leadership skills, encouraging active participation from all sectors of the community, and training in appropriate skills;

- Communities are facilitated to lead the process of housing (with the necessary support) and are viewed as the customer – in other words more of the control shifts from the housing bureaucracies to the community;
- Communities are provided with choice – this may mean that at first, housing and housing-related infrastructure would be contracted out. In time it is hoped that this will change as communities become more empowered and are assisted in developing appropriate institutions;
- The recognition that a “one size fits all” approach does not work for all communities;
- A ‘transparent’ inclusive communication process that recognises that communities, as equal partners in the process, have a right to information flows.

The explicit discussion of sustainable community development as an integral part of a demand-responsive approach is beyond the scope of this thesis. There is a vast body of literature on sustainable community development that would provide tried and tested approaches and methodologies that could be adapted for remote Indigenous communities. Australia’s government funded development agency AusAID, would seem the obvious source for this expertise. Ironically, despite the demonstrable need for community development within Australia, it focuses its community development efforts externally. It maintains an extensive internet-based community development resource called the “AusAID Knowledge Warehouse” whose contents could be put to good use in remote Indigenous communities in Australia (AusAID 2003).

A system to enable a demand-responsive housing system would correspond with the three criteria for successful remote Indigenous housing which were developed in Chapter 2. These criteria imply

- Policies and programs to promote and enable Indigenous self-determination. This implies a community development focus with a concomitant investment in people rather than in structures. Emphasis would be placed on existing examples of strong Indigenous leadership such as the Tangentyere Aboriginal Corporation and ways of replicating their success. The success of the Central Remote Training and Employment Model is largely due to Tangentyere's community development activities and focus;
- An enabling policy and institutional environment at Commonwealth and State levels that provides flexible funding while ensuring transparency and accountability. These flexible and demand-responsive programs would enable the development of housing-related economic opportunities in communities or a region; and,
- A culturally responsive environment that enables the development of culturally-appropriate leadership and institutions so that there can be indigenous control over Indigenous affairs.

An example of a similar community initiated system originated in the Lombadina Focus Group and is illustrated in Figure 13. This Indigenous-initiated model fulfils many of the criteria of a demand-responsive approach and also illustrates that communities are adept at coming up with innovative solutions.

This proposed model involved a joint venture by all 8 of the "major communities" in the Kullarri Region. This 'Federation' would be a management body to formulate policy and procedure. They would also own a separate Construction and Maintenance Company (wholly owned by the 8 major communities) and would return all profits to the communities. As the building material costs in remote areas are so high, the building company could develop a building material manufacturing capacity (Lombadina Focus Group 2003).

Within the current system, this 'Federation' could be contracted by AHIC to provide Construction and Maintenance for the region. Depending on their capacity, they could outsource aspects of their operations such as the accounting and training. It was proposed that the relationship between the Federation, its Construction and Maintenance Company and the local communities would be contractually negotiated with each community. These arrangements would provide considerable flexibility and would, for example, allow a community such as Lombadina to manage those aspects of the construction and maintenance they wished to manage. This flexibility would also permit those communities with the necessary capacity to manage the construction, maintenance and related projects. An integral part of the model is the construction and maintenance training and capacity-building components (Lombadina Focus Group 2003).

The proposed model presented in Figure 13 and discussed above to a certain extent presents a compromise between the demand-responsive and supply-driven approaches, and leads logically into the next phase where the ideal model described in Phase 4 is compared to the real world.

6.2.5 Phase 5: Comparison of Alternative Systems

Phase 5 involves the comparison of the theoretical model developed in Phase 4 to the description of the problem situation in Phase 2. The theoretical model is then subject to the "3 E's" namely:

- **Efficacy** (will it work, will it achieve the transformation);
- **Efficiency** (is the system the optimal use of resources); and
- **Effectiveness** (does the system achieve long term goals) (Checkland 2000; Rose 2004).

An initial examination of the demand-responsive approach against the 3.E's is as follows

- **Efficacy** – houses are built, the system does work and the community is more involved in the process;
- **Efficiency** – houses are an efficient use of tax dollars as they are built using local or regional skills and to a standard agreed upon locally.
- **Effectiveness** – as the housing process is largely community-controlled, the housing standards may not meet the high standards of the “owners” of the system (X number of houses built to a high standard) but would meet those of the beneficiaries. In addition, the demand-responsive system would in time result in more effective communities, more in control of the wider housing and related economic development process.

The 3 E’s and the discussion of the example put forward by the Lombadina Focus Group as discussed above prove that a more demand-responsive approach is feasible. Recent policy statements referring to partnerships and a greater role for communities point to government’s willingness to consider a changed approach. Nevertheless there are a number of major changes that would need to occur:

- An enabling institutional structure – moving away from the disempowering structure discussed in Section 2;
- A focus on people and creating an enabling and culturally appropriate housing process rather than a focus on the physical buildings; and,
- A commitment to a process of sustainable community development in remote communities – with an equal commitment to funding.

6.2.6 Phase 6: Feasible and Desirable Changes

The definitions of a supply-driven and demand-responsive approach, as discussed in Phase 3, can be conceptualised as two ends of a continuum. The discussion of the Comprehensive Regional Agreements (WA); the Central Remote Model (NT); and the Wangka Wilurrara Regional

Partnership Agreement (NT) in Chapter 5 all have aspects of the demand-responsive approach. This occurs however, within an environment that strongly favours the supply-driven approach.

The political will to change to a more demand-responsive approach appears to exist and has done for some time. In Section 2.2.1.1, COAG's 1992 "National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders" was discussed. Its guiding principles include elements typical of the demand-responsive approach discussed in Phase 4 of the Systems Social Assessment. These principles include:

- empowerment, self-management and self-determination;
- economic independence consistent with cultural and social values; and
- maximising participation, through representative bodies, in the formulation of relevant policies and programs (ALGA 2002; COAG 1992).

This, and other similar policy statements in more recent documents such as "Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010", the Indigenous Housing Agreements in Western Australia and the Northern Territory (Government of Western Australia 2002; Northern Territory Government, ATSIC, and FACS 2002), illustrate that openness to a demand-responsive approach has existed at the highest policy levels for some time. This is matched by an eagerness for a demand-responsive approach to housing provision at community level as is illustrated in Phase 2 of the Systems Social Assessment. The stumbling block is the Indigenous housing system with its emphasis on a supply-driven approach.

While there are aspects of a demand-responsive approach that can be incorporated into the current system, it is likely that the considerable vested interests in the current system will obstruct the transformation of the supply-driven into a demand-responsive Indigenous housing system. For this

change to occur, the current supply-driven approach needs to be openly recognised and bureaucratic change actively managed. This process of change would need to occur with considerable incentives for those involved in the Indigenous housing 'industry'. Any change would be a long-term process.

6.2.7 Phase 7: Action to improve the problem situation

This Systems Social Assessment did not progress to this phase. Ideally, the feasible and desirable changes identified within Phase 6 would be translated into an action plan to be implemented to alleviate the problem situation. Although the development of an action plan is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are possibilities for change in the short-term and long term.

In the long-term, the Indigenous housing system would need to undergo a transformation into a demand-responsive system with a community development approach. This would require a considerable mindset change on the part of the Indigenous housing industry but is possible in the long term with an effective change-management process. Central to this transformation will be the development of Indigenous leaders and culturally appropriate institutions. Examples of successful Indigenous community housing management would need to be publicised to illustrate that change is possible. Examples would include the Harvard Project example where a remote Alaskan community took control of their own housing, developed new skills and designed new homes that are more cost-effective and warmer than the houses previously provided to them.

In the short term, much can be done within the current supply-driven housing system to involve communities in decisions that affect them. In addition, local employment opportunities in housing construction and maintenance and even in materials supply can be created. This could extend to facilitating the training of local tradesmen who could, for example, provide a

plumbing service to communities within a region. These changes do require alterations to the current programs and particularly to the program management process.

6.2.8 Phase 8: Monitoring, Management and Evaluation

As with Phase 7 this study has not progressed beyond Phase 6. The Monitoring, Management and Evaluation of change are important aspects of a Systems Social Assessment. Its purpose is to manage the change process that provides the opportunity to intervene and mitigate negative issues and enhance positive elements. Evaluation is an equally important aspect of any process so that the experiences contribute to the development of the field.

6.3 Conclusion

In this Chapter, the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment was used to examine the Indigenous housing system. It expanded on the two alternative housing systems mentioned throughout this thesis, namely the supply-driven and the demand-responsive approaches. Problems with the current Indigenous housing system are discussed in Phase 2; Phase 3 saw the definition of an alternative system. The point was made that the supply-driven and demand-responsive approaches represent two end points on a continuum and these alternative approaches were developed in more detail in Phase 4. Phase 5 involved a comparison of the alternative conceptual system (the demand-responsive approach) to the 'real world'.

The Systems Social Assessment shows that, at the highest policy-making levels, there is a policy environment that encourages a demand-responsive approach. Elements of this approach can even be seen in the Indigenous Housing Agreement within Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Despite this, there is an overwhelming supply-driven approach to Indigenous housing. The conclusion of the Systems Social Assessment is that the

considerable vested interests in the maintenance of the current Indigenous housing system will inhibit the change to a demand-responsive approach.

The Systems Social Assessment also provides answers to the both the research questions and the hypothesis. The research question reads “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?” while the hypothesis states that “ The remote Indigenous housing system does not adequately meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive approach.”

Firstly, it illustrates, through an examination of ‘the problem’ in Phase 2, that the supply-driven characteristics of the system present a problem for remote communities, and secondly, that an alternative demand-responsive approach provides for more opportunities to address issues such as local skills development and deployment and the need for community participation. The current supply-driven Indigenous housing system provides a significant constraint to improving Indigenous housing for people in remote communities.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 1, the Introduction to this thesis, outlined the poor state of housing in remote areas of Australia. It discussed the context for the research project that provided the data for the thesis and explained that the research into remote Indigenous communities would be limited to two case study areas in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the two jurisdictions with the largest remote Indigenous populations. It also introduced the research question: “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?”

The Introduction provided information that the current remote Indigenous housing system is not working particularly well or effectively. It also introduced the fact that the current Commonwealth and State governments have introduced new policies and procedures to improve the system. These improvements were discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2 provided a background and context to the research and discussed the relevant Australian Indigenous housing history, its policies and programs. It reviewed the Australian and international literature and developed three characteristics of successful remote Indigenous housing: Indigenous Control and Self-Determination; an Enabling Environment; and, a Culturally Responsive System. Chapter 2 reviewed the concepts of ‘supply-driven’ and ‘demand-responsive’ approaches to service delivery. A ‘Supply-driven’ approach to housing delivery implies that the level and type of housing are prescribed by an external service delivery agency. The alternative ‘demand-responsive’ approach refers to an approach where communities make their own decisions regarding housing based on their needs and priorities. This ‘demand-responsive’ approach to housing includes the characteristics of

successful remote Indigenous housing. Chapter 2 concluded with the Research Hypothesis: “The remote Indigenous housing system does not adequately meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive approach.”

In Chapter 3 the methodology that was employed in the two case study areas was discussed. The methodologies of Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology that contributed to the development of the new methodology of Systems Social Assessment and were reviewed and these were applied in Chapter 6. In Chapter 3, the case study approach, the selection of case studies and the process of data collection and analysis were also discussed.

Chapter 4 provided a brief background to each of the ten case studies, with five in each of the areas. In Chapter 5 the attempts to improve the current remote Indigenous housing programs were reviewed and analysed. These attempts range from the State/Territory level Indigenous Housing Agreements to the local, Indigenous-initiated Wangka Wilurra Regional Partnership Agreement in the Northern Territory. In Chapter 6 the Systems Social Assessment methodology developed in Chapter 3 was used to analyse the current remote Indigenous housing system.

This thesis concludes with this Chapter. Its aim is to answer the research question “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?” To this end the following will be reviewed:

- The current government attempts to improve the Indigenous housing system;
- The supply-driven focus of the Indigenous housing system;
- The Research Question and Hypothesis;

- The thesis' contribution to Social Assessment theory; and,
- Conclusion and opportunities for further research.

7.2 Current Government Strategies

The Indigenous housing system in Australia is extremely complex, as is illustrated in Figure 1. The need to simplify and streamline the process has been recognised by government and has resulted in a range of attempts to integrate housing-related programs. This need to rationalise the Indigenous housing system is a main element of key National policy documents such as COAG's National Commitment and Reconciliation Framework, "Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010", the Common Reporting Framework for State, Territory and ATSIC which were discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The principles contained in these documents strongly influenced the multilateral Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement which paves the way for the bilateral Indigenous Housing Agreements negotiated with each State and Territory.

The Indigenous Housing Agreements that concluded with Western Australia and the Northern Territory are the main program integration mechanisms at the State and Territory levels. These Indigenous Housing Agreements enable, inter alia, the pooling of most housing-related funds through IHANT in the Northern Territory and the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council (AHIC) in Western Australia. These Housing Agreements were introduced in Chapter 2 and discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The Northern Territory implemented many of the principles of the National Commitment in its first Indigenous Housing Agreement in 1995. These included the creation of IHANT (the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory) and the pooling of most housing-related funds. This Indigenous Housing Agreement was reviewed in 1999 and a second agreement entered into. The parties to the Indigenous Housing Agreement

are now fine-tuning innovative housing and housing-related service pilot programs such as the Central Remote Model. In contrast, Western Australia chose to delay the pooling of most funds and the creation of AHIC (Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council) until the second Indigenous Housing Agreement that was signed in 2002. The timing of the research on which this thesis is based, was fortuitous but difficult as it coincided with the implementation of Western Australia's Indigenous Housing Agreement.

In Chapter 5, three innovative regional program integration mechanisms are also discussed. The first, the Western Australian Comprehensive Regional Agreement was only in its initial stages during fieldwork. The second, the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Partnership Agreement and particularly the third, the Central Remote Model in the Northern Territory, had progressed further.

Wangka Wilurrara and the Central Remote Model represent initiatives from Indigenous communities in response to what they see as poor outcomes from previous service delivery programs. Both initiatives seek to gain more control over the delivery process at a local and regional level. The Central Remote Model embodies elements of both the "supply-driven" and "demand-responsive" Indigenous housing approaches discussed in Chapter 6. The Training and Employment Program represents an Indigenous initiative that has developed into a partnership between communities, their representative leadership (Central Remote Regional Council), an Indigenous corporation (Tangentyere) and enabled by government departments (primarily IHANT and DCDSCA). On the other hand, the standardised designs of the Central Remote Model embody the housing "supply-driven" approach and focus on cost saving while not necessarily reflecting the best interests of the communities.

These regional program integration mechanisms are exceptions rather than the rule and may provide a way forward in other regions. The implementation of the programs in the Northern Territory involved

considerable innovation and advance planning to overcome the inflexible system. The national policy documents mentioned at the beginning of this section also call for empowerment, maximising participation and partnerships between communities, government and other organisations. These partnerships are difficult to form in the current centralised and inflexible supply-driven housing system.

In conclusion, within the current system:

- The Indigenous Housing Agreements in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory represent a sound attempt to integrate programs and reduce program complexity within the current system. The establishment of IHANT has considerably improved program coordination and integration and, given its policy and restructured programs, AHIC is likely to do the same;
- Regional Agreements could become a framework for the delivery of housing and infrastructure services within a region while addressing the aspirations of traditional owners and the needs of native title determinations;
- The training and employment aspect, and the development approach, of the Central Remote Model could be replicated in other areas throughout Australia;
- Strong Indigenous leadership and Indigenous control is important in developing Indigenous initiatives;
- Greater opportunities for program integration appear to lie at the regional or local level and partnerships between the Community, Government, and Indigenous organisation in attaining community development should be supported; and,
- None of the programs and initiatives reviewed meet the three characteristics of a successful remote Indigenous housing system,

namely, Indigenous control and self-determination, an enabling environment and a culturally responsive system.

It is clear from the research that the current Indigenous housing system is not meeting the housing needs of people in remote areas because of its supply-driven approach. This is contrary to the sentiments expressed in the key policy documents discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 has illustrated that the focus is on the integration of existing supply-driven housing programs and not on meeting the housing needs of Indigenous people.

7.3 The Supply-driven approach of the Indigenous Housing System

The current attempts to improve the Indigenous housing system in Western Australia and the Northern Territory largely involve rationalising and simplifying existing housing programs. However, the prevailing supply-driven approach of the Indigenous housing system and its inherent constraints have not been recognised as an issue. This led to the Systems Social Assessment in Chapter 6.

There is a need for a rapid supply of housing and related infrastructure. The pressure for the construction of houses, and the 'new managerialism' in social housing which emphasises measurable performance indicators has led to the development of a predominant 'supply-driven' approach to Indigenous housing. This has resulted in the present centralised delivery of a physical house in the most cost-effective way.

The description of the problem situation in the second phase of the Systems Social Assessment of the Indigenous housing system in Chapter 5 gave examples of some of the housing problems experienced by remote communities. These include:

- A complex and inflexible housing system that often does not respond to the needs of communities;
- A centralised decision-making structure that locates control far from remote communities;
- Program and project-management that is relatively inaccessible to communities and is far from the partnership approach advocated in policy documents;
- Inadequate consultation and flow of information between the communities and the funding bodies;
- A perception by some communities that the program and project managers view the government funding agent as their client rather than the community;
- A focus on the rules and regulations of the particular program rather than the needs of a particular community;
- Communities are viewed as part of the housing problem to be solved rather than as a resource with useful skills, ideas and local knowledge; and
- The absence of a development or empowerment approach.

These problems are all symptomatic of a housing supply-driven approach and the research has clearly shown that the beneficiaries of the Indigenous housing system would largely prefer a demand-responsive housing system.

7.4 Research Question and Hypothesis

The research question that has guided the research reads “Why does the remote Indigenous housing system not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas and what is an alternative system?” The analysis of the existing housing system in Chapter 5 and the Systems Social Assessment of the housing problems experienced in remote Indigenous

communities as detailed in Chapter 6 illustrate conclusively that the current Indigenous housing system does not meet the housing needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a predominantly housing supply-driven approach.

The hypothesis that “The remote Indigenous housing system does not adequately meet the needs of Indigenous people in remote areas because it has a supply-driven rather than a demand-responsive approach” is therefore accepted.

7.5 Theoretical Contributions

Social Assessments have tended to concentrate on project-level issues and not one example of a Systems Social Assessment could be found in the literature. One of the reasons for this situation is that there is not an explicit methodology to follow. Chapter 3 of this thesis presented a new methodology of Systems Social Assessment, which combines aspects of Social Assessment and Soft Systems Methodology. This new methodology offers a structured process for the analysis of complex policy and institutional systems and was used to analyse the remote Indigenous housing system as presented in Chapter 6.

7.6 Conclusions and Further Research

In this thesis, the current Indigenous housing system as it relates to the two case study areas in Western Australia and the Northern Territory has been examined. The research has shown that the current system has a predominantly supply-driven approach and that an alternative ‘demand-driven’ approach offers a greater likelihood of meeting the housing needs of remote Communities.

Characteristics of successful remote Indigenous housing, central to the demand-responsive approach were developed in Chapter 2 and need further elaboration and testing.

The area of Indigenous housing, particularly in remote areas, is remarkably under-researched and there is a need for further research into virtually all aspects of Indigenous housing. These areas include: comparative international research into creating an enabling environment for demand-responsive housing system with lessons to be learned from the successful Australian Indigenous organisations and the Harvard Program in the United States and Canada; reviewing of the current performance management system for Indigenous housing bureaucracies; research into the potentially important role of the Indigenous organisations at regional and local level; and research into community housing preferences at local level and how best to enable remote Indigenous communities to develop the leadership, management and construction-related skills to meet their housing need. The issue of transforming a supply-driven system into a more demand-responsive Indigenous housing system and the resulting bureaucratic culture change requires further exploration.

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Figure 1 Commonwealth and State Indigenous Housing Institutions and Funding Flows

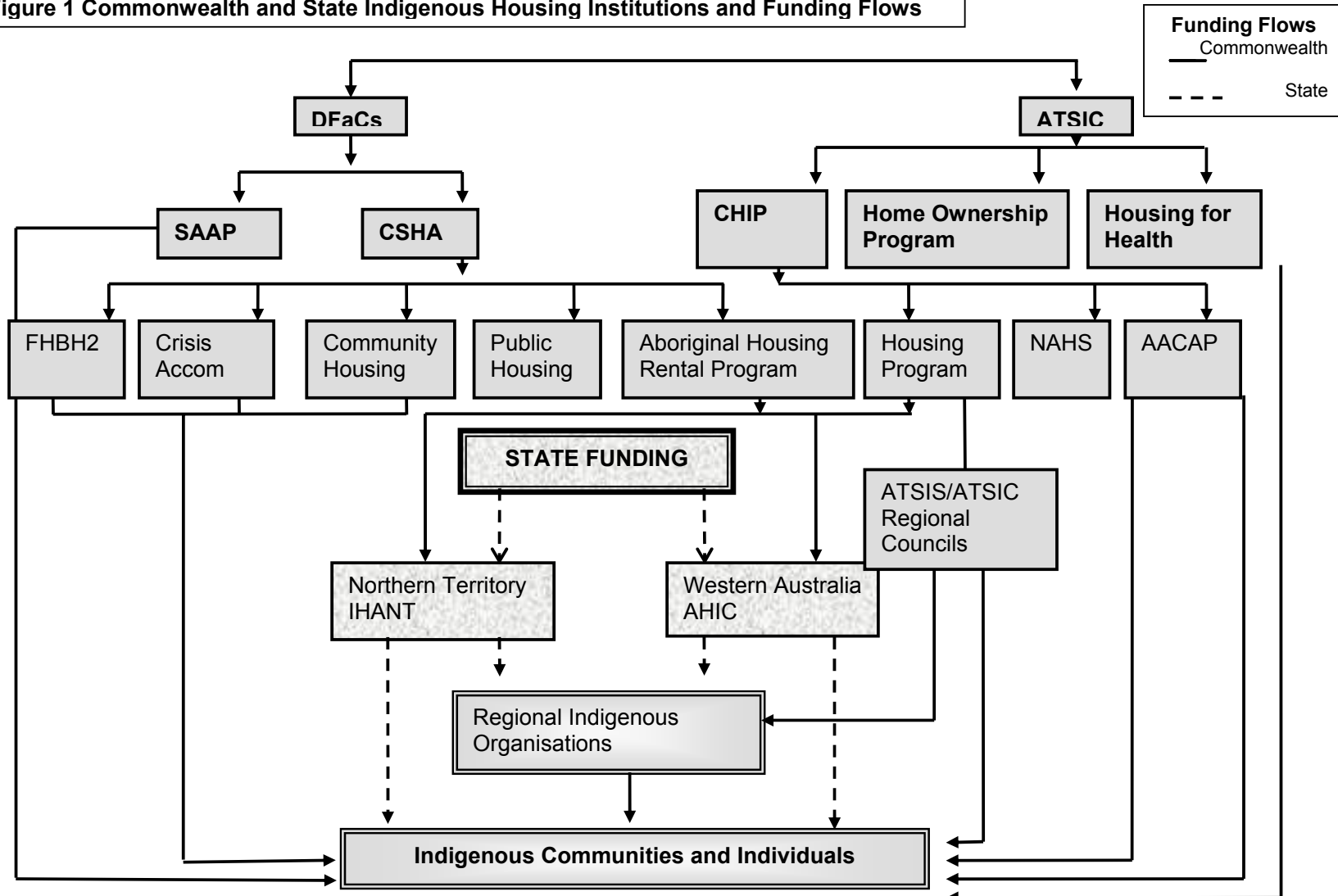


Figure 2: The AT SIS & AT SIC Regional Council Structure

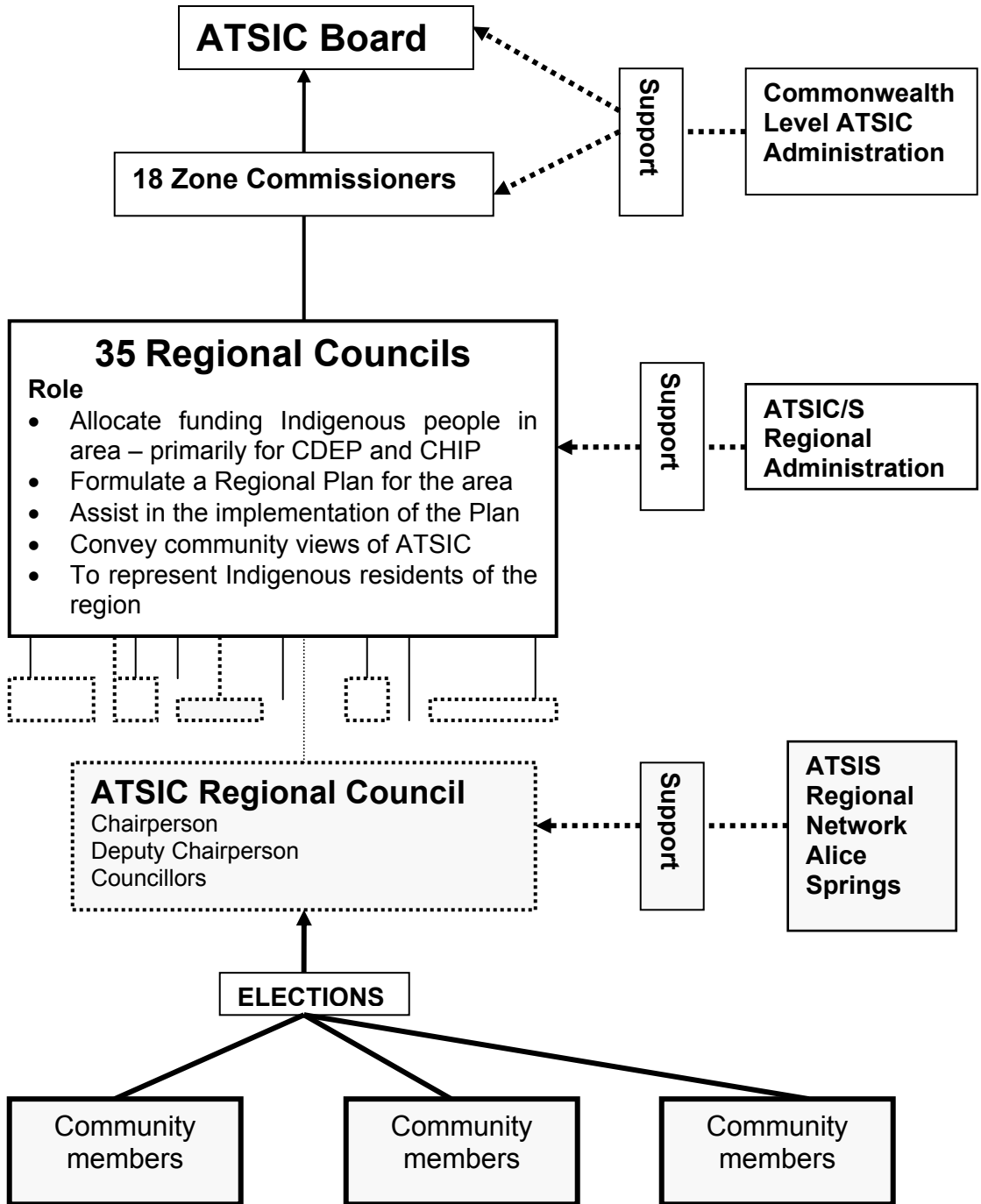


Figure 3: West Australian Indigenous Housing Programs prior to the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement

KEY
 - - - Commonwealth Funding
 State Funding

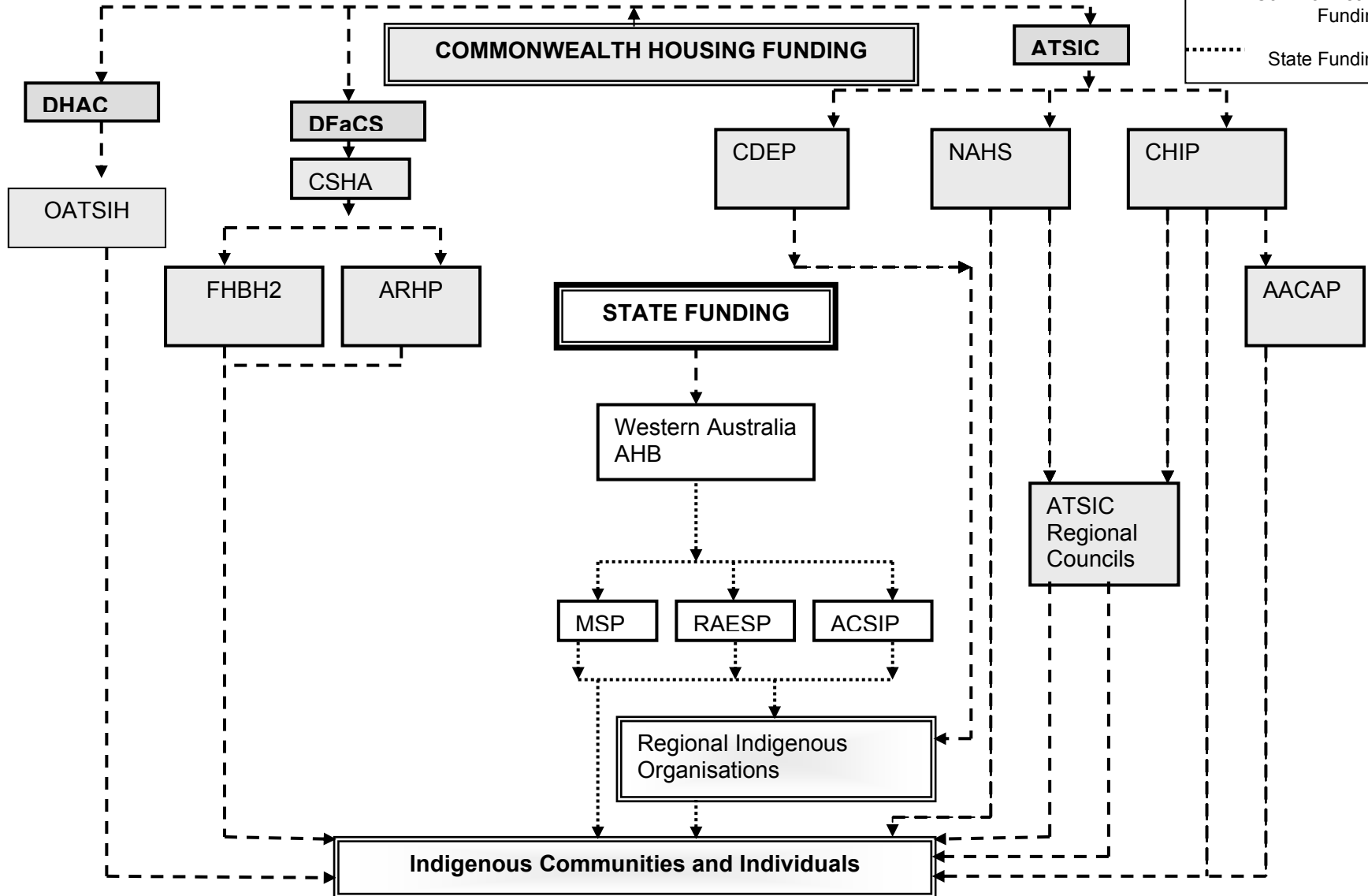


Figure 4: West Australian Funding Flows after the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement

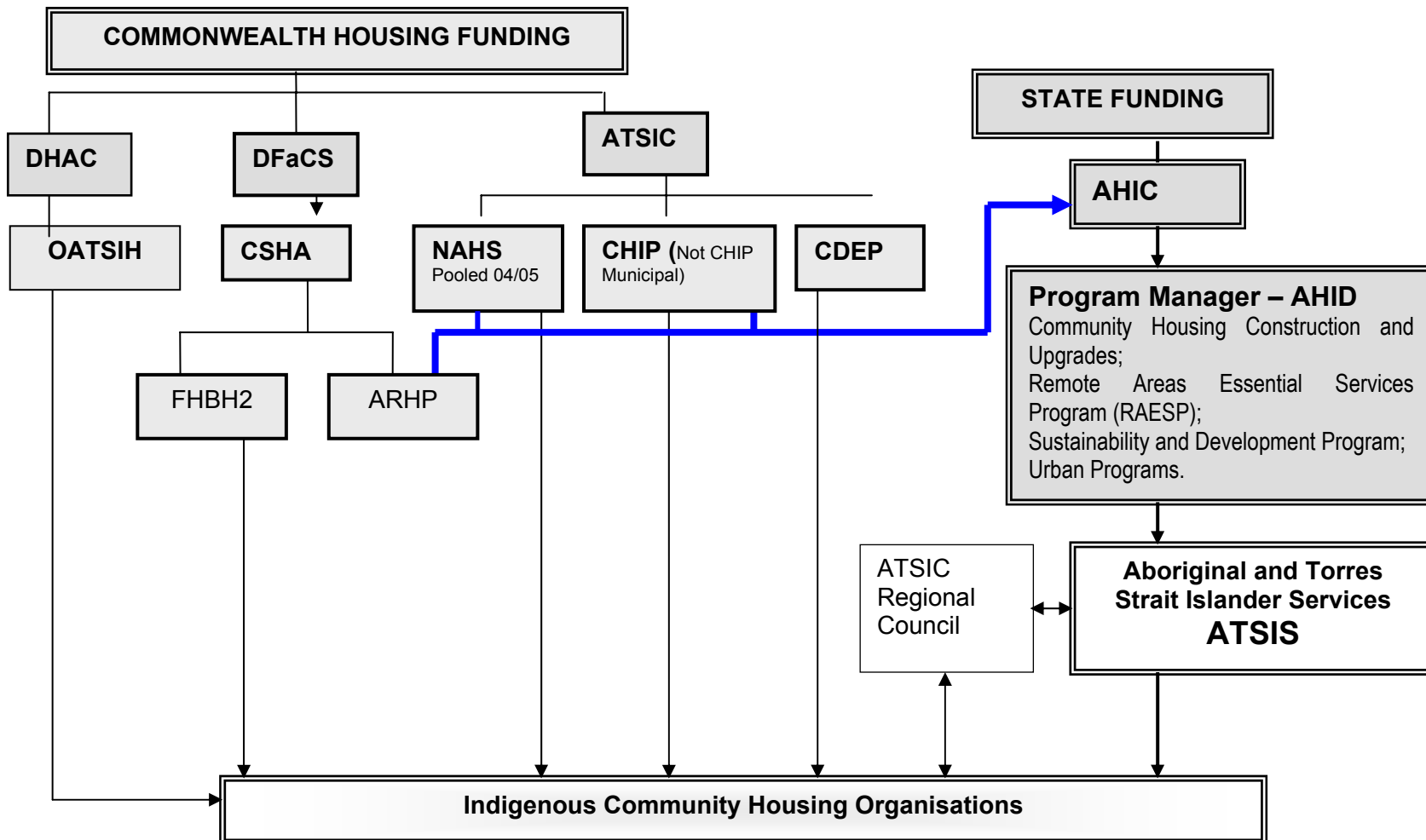


Figure 5: Pooling of WA Indigenous Housing Programs according to 2002 Bilateral Agreement

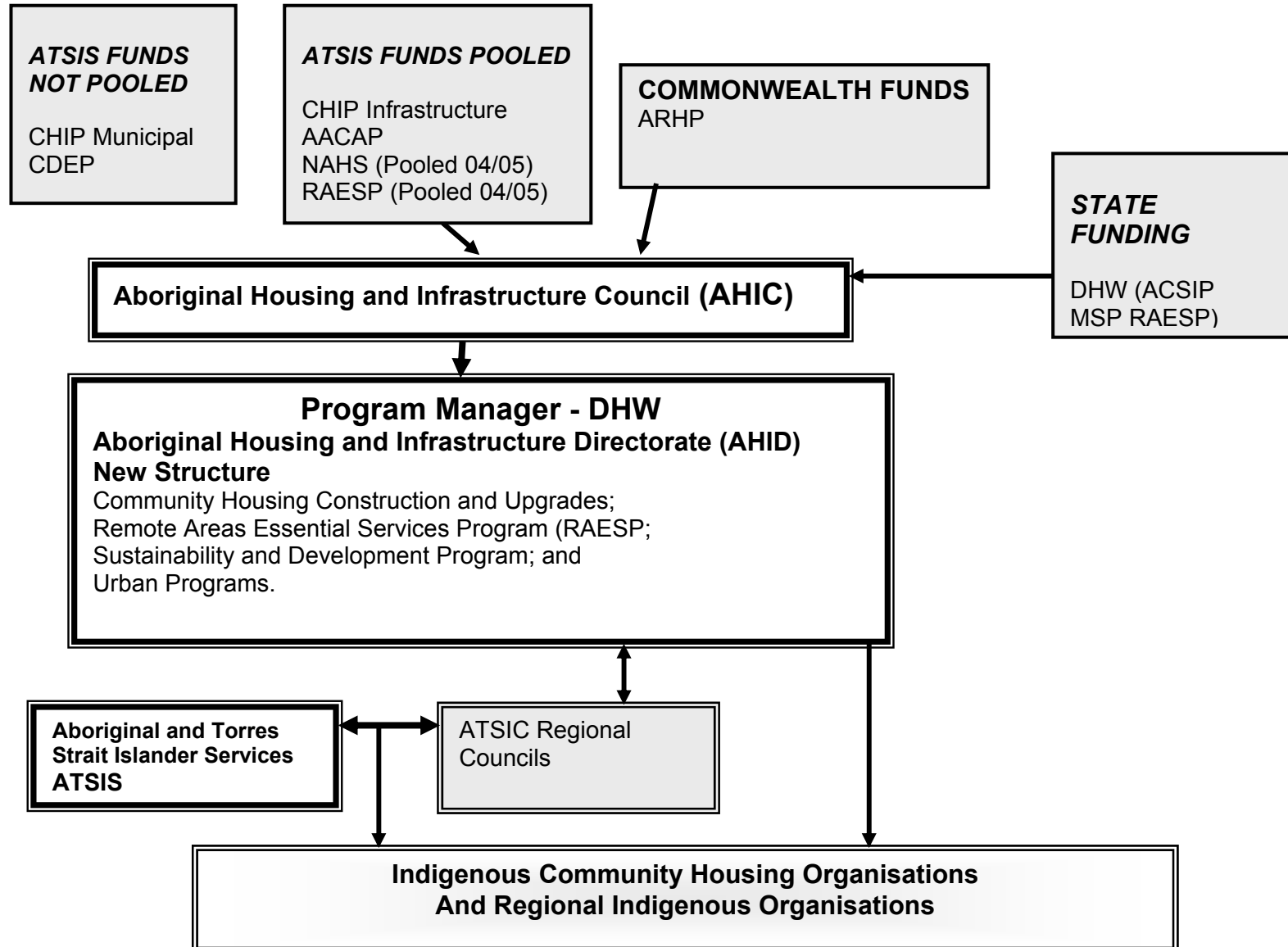


Figure 6: Kullarri Regional Organisational Structure 2003 - 2004

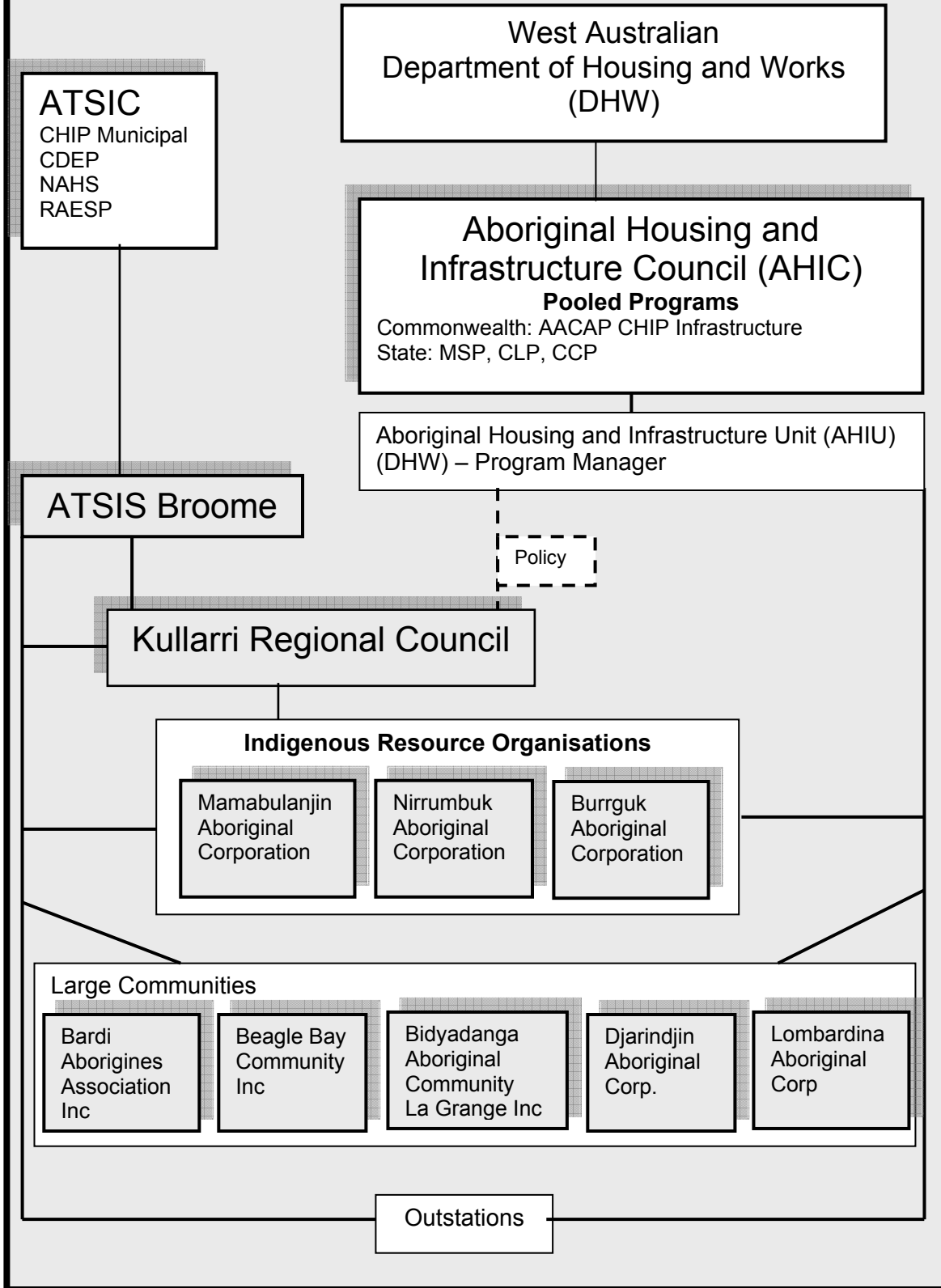


Figure 7: Kullarri Regional Funding Process 2003 - 2004

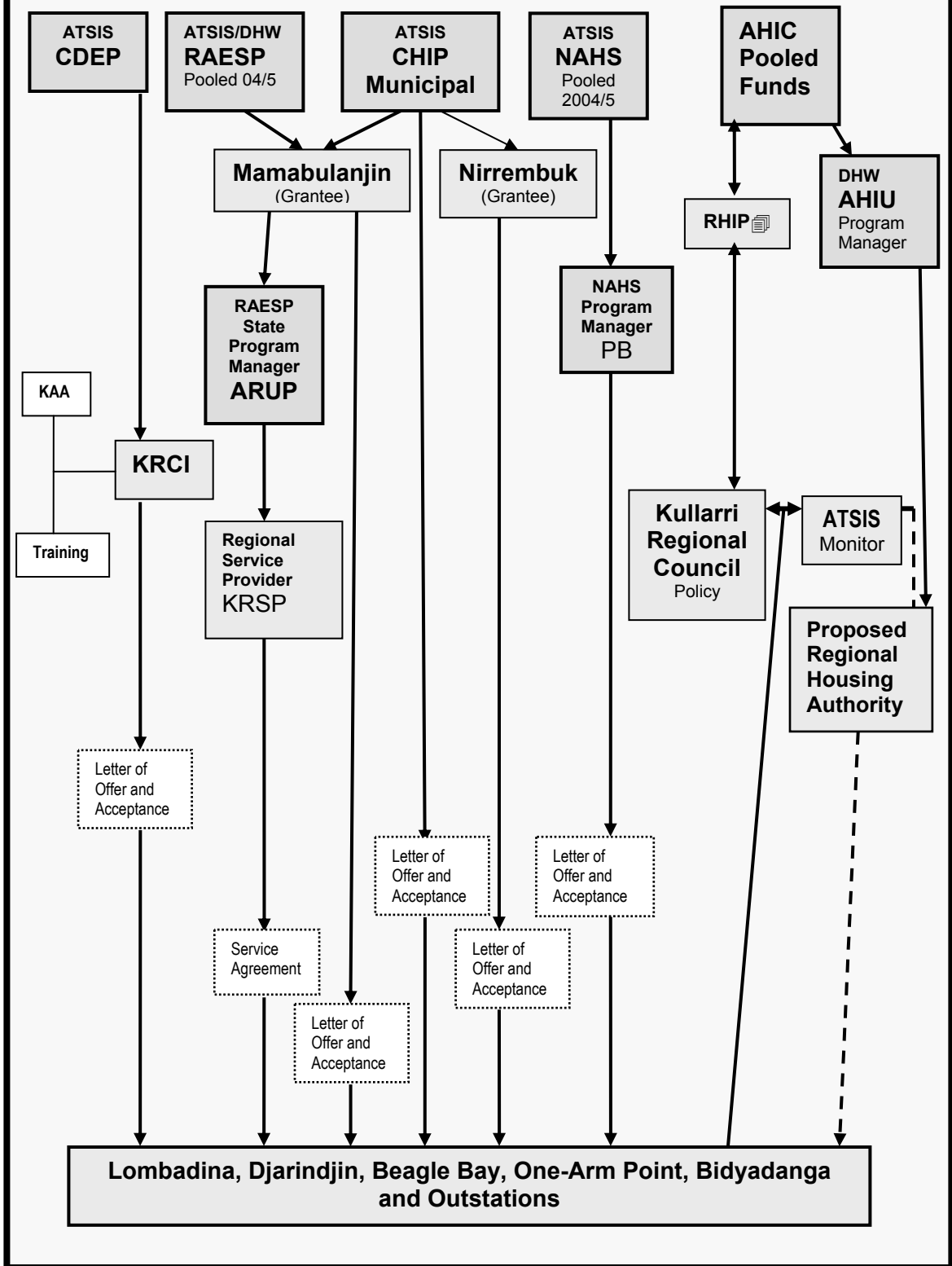


Figure 8: Northern Territory Funding Flows in terms of the 2002 Indigenous Housing Agreement

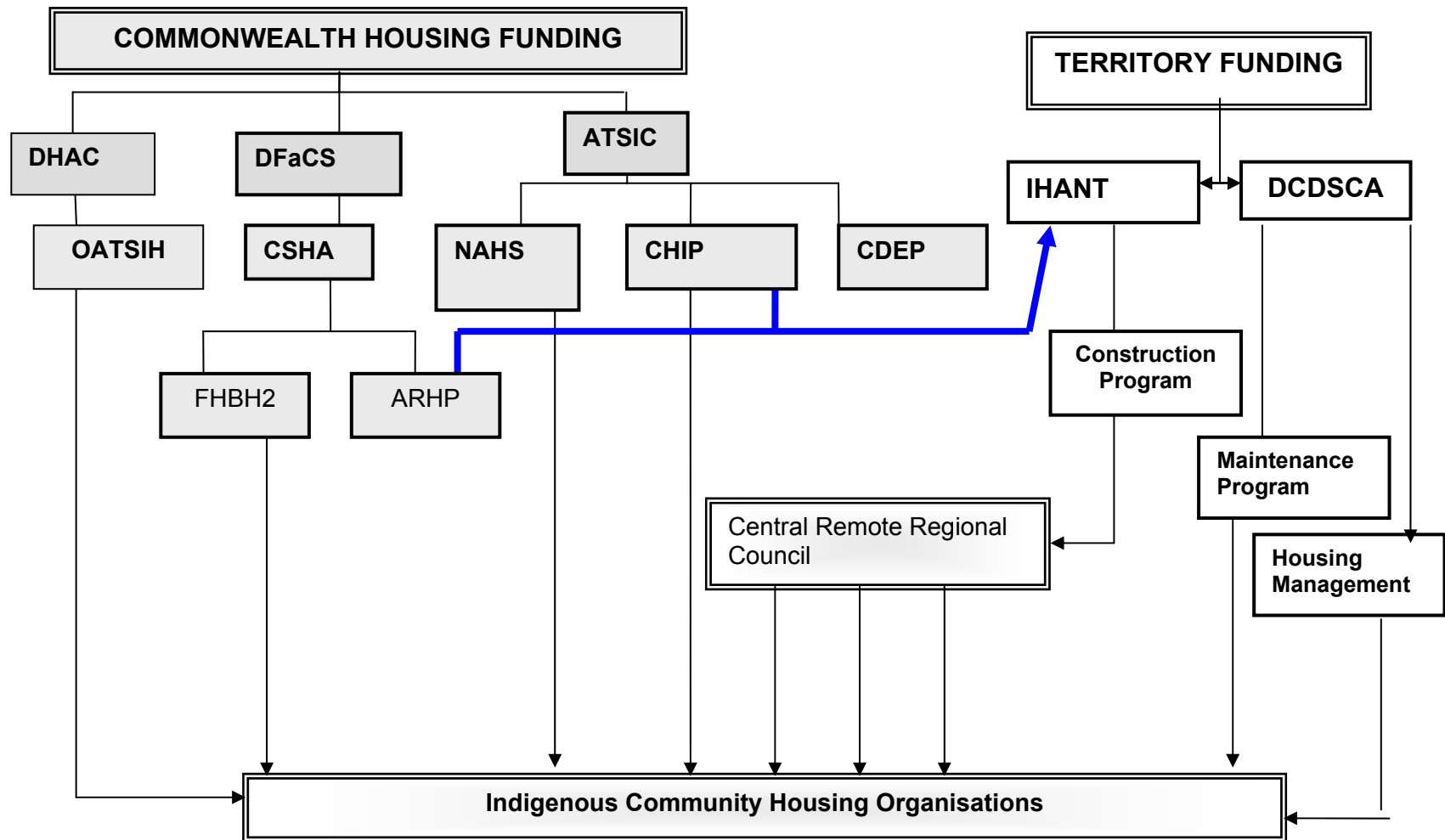


Figure 9: IHANT Housing Management. Maintenance and Construction

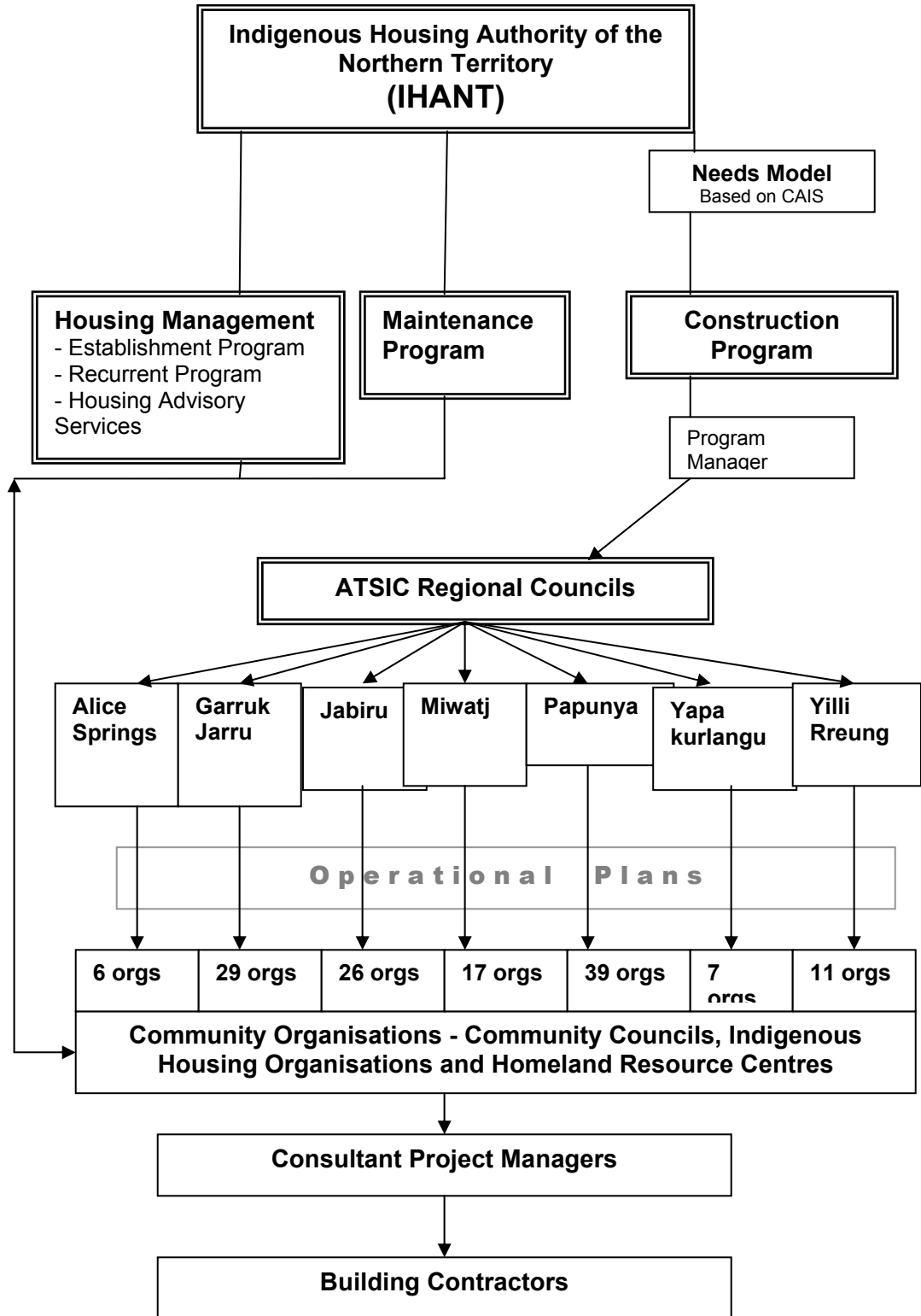


Figure 10: NT/IHANT 2002/2003 Funding Process Map

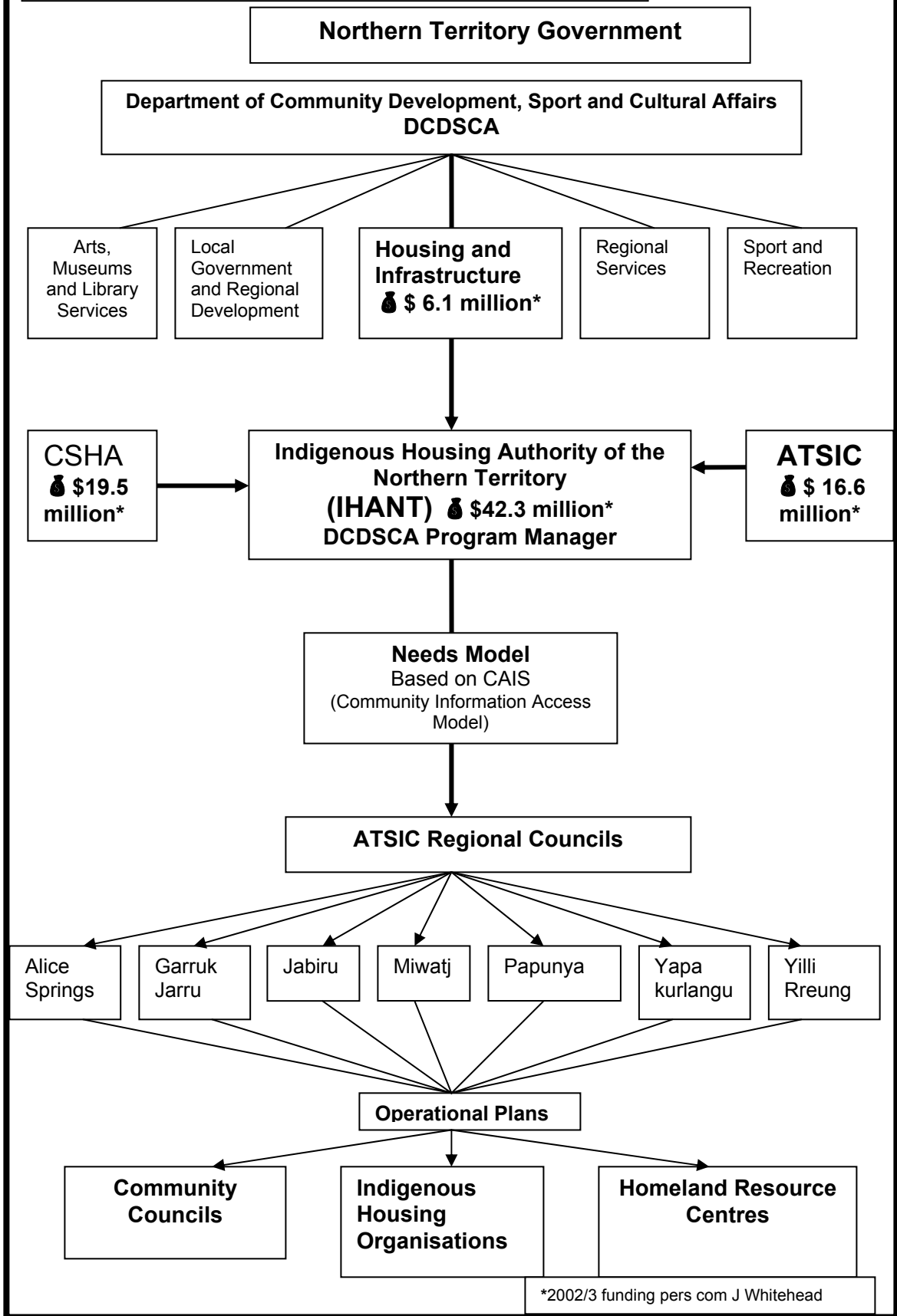


Figure 11: Central Remote Model

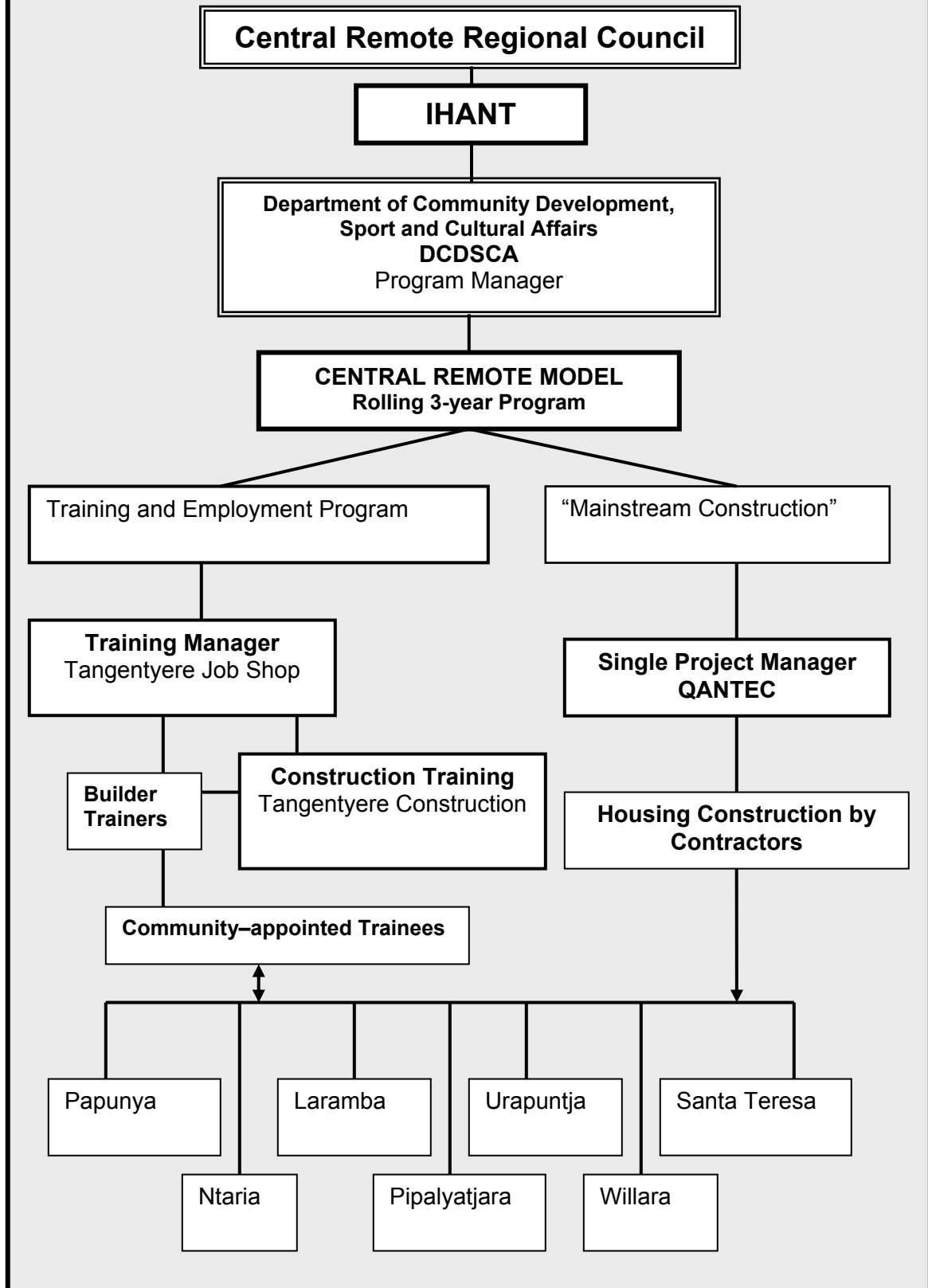


Figure 12: Central Remote Regional Council Training and Employment Model

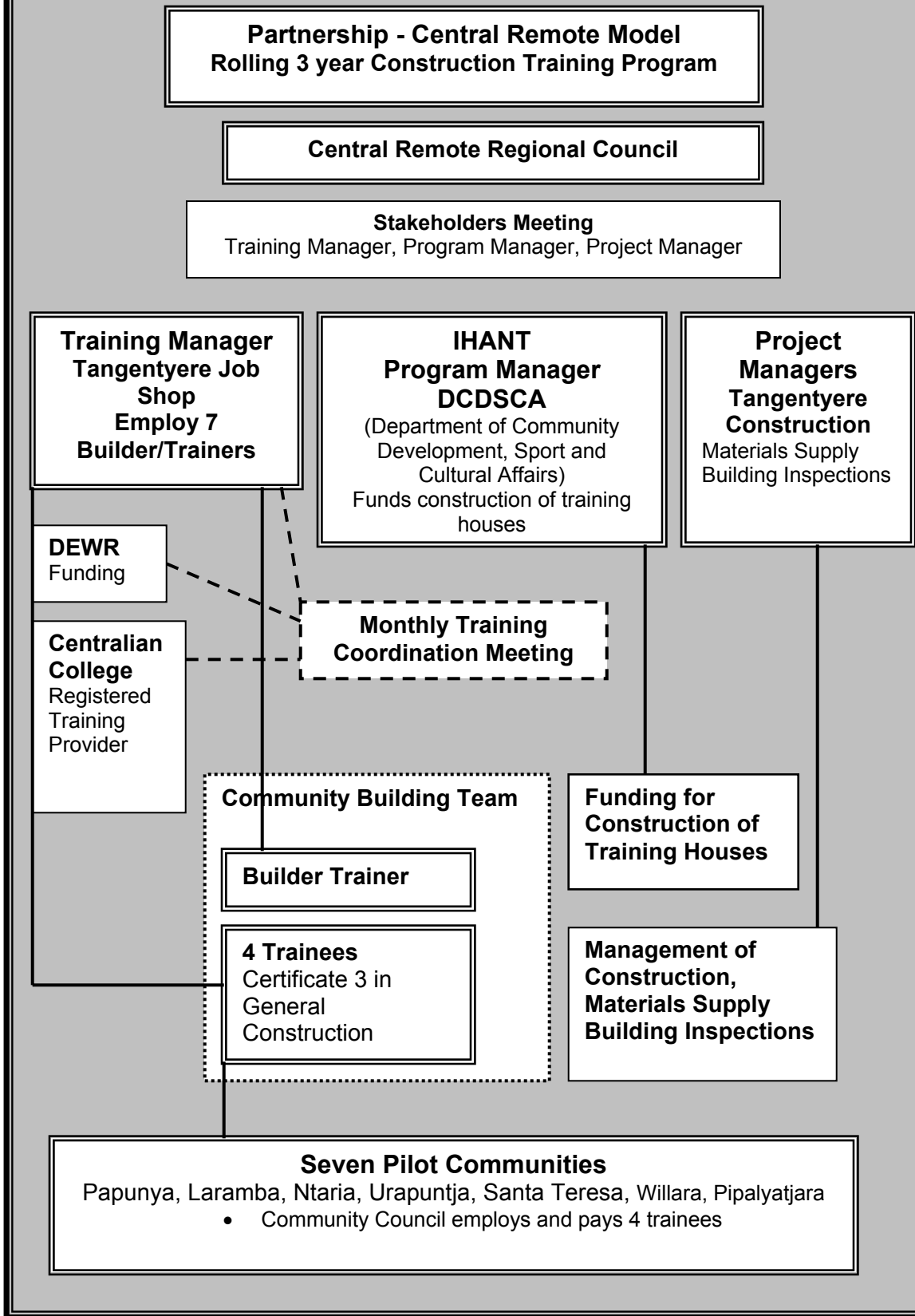


Figure 13: An Alternative Housing Delivery Model for the Kullarri Region

