



MOBILISING RESOURCES TO ADDRESS
THE HOUSING SHORTFALL : THE NEW
STRATEGIC APPROACH TAKEN BY ATSIIC
REGIONAL COUNCILS IN NORTH
QUEENSLAND

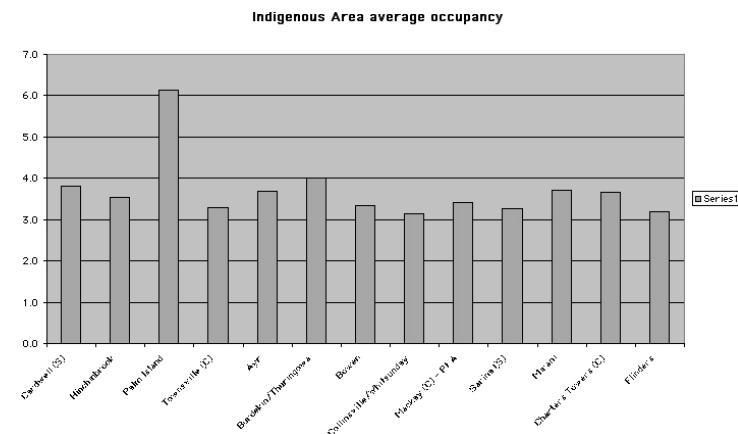
*Paper for the National Housing Conference
to be delivered by Dr Jane Stanley, Director
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Councillor Ian Appo*

Context = Queensland Bilateral
Agreement on Indigenous Housing and
Infrastructure

Case Study = the first two of
Queensland's Regional Housing and
Infrastructure Plans under this
arrangement

Problems in estimating demand

- Indigenous people may choose not to identify themselves for census purposes
- interviewees may underestimate the number of people living in the household
- census collectors fail to collect census returns from all households
- Local leaders can estimate the size of their communities, and can often list them by name. Numbers can be crudely verified in relation to school enrolment figures.



Observations on demand

Large household size continues to be prevalent

There is increasing demand for a range of housing types, including smaller houses

There is significant population movement, particularly from inland areas to the coast, and from remote communities into the larger urban areas



Assessing housing supply

- mainstream public housing
- Aboriginal Housing within the public housing system
- private rental housing
- home ownership
- Indigenous community housing
- mainstream community housing
- aged persons' accommodation
- housing for disabled
- rehabilitation centres
- rural workers' accommodation
- hotels/motels
- boarding houses
- student accommodation
- crisis accommodation
- institutions such as prisons and mental hospitals.



Problems of housing accessibility

- discrimination against Indigenous households, particularly in the private rental market
- land availability for future housing

Indicators of housing shortfall

- overcrowding as a result of people who would otherwise be homeless living with friends and relatives
- people living in caravan parks
- people living in temporary or makeshift dwellings
- people sleeping rough, for example in parks or under bridges.



Observations on the housing shortfall

- large pockets of homeless people and improvised shacks
- high levels of overcrowding in the private rental sector
- backlog of housing provision in DOGIT communities

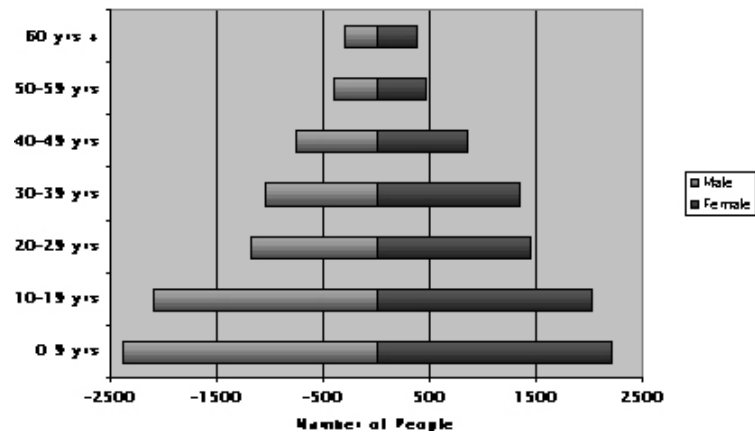


Considerations in developing supply strategies

- whether the Indigenous population was likely to grow
- whether the non-Indigenous population was growing or declining
- current vacancy levels in different housing tenure categories
- current prices and price trends of housing in different sectors
- the prevalent type and condition of housing

Market conditions	Type of response
<p>High level of vacant housing in private ownership, in reasonable condition. High level of demand from a growing Indigenous population.</p>	<p>Act to remove discrimination in the private rental market, eg through head leasing arrangements and increased advocacy support.</p>

Age Structure of Indigenous Populations in Townsville ATSI Region (2001 - ABS Census)



Market conditions	Type of response
High level of vacant housing for sale but not for rent, in reasonable condition. High level of demand from a growing Indigenous population. Declining or stable non-Indigenous population.	Spot purchase housing, and build new houses only where essential to address shortages of particular housing types (eg units).



Market conditions	Type of response
High level of vacant housing for sale, in poor condition. High level of demand from a growing Indigenous population. Declining non-Indigenous population.	Spot purchase housing and renovate. Also consider possible arrangements to assist Indigenous households to renovate housing under "sweat equity" arrangements, with CDEP support.

Market conditions	Type of response
High rate of population growth in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, low vacancy rates in the private sector.	Buy land ahead of the construction program, and build new houses to meet demand. This requires a 2-3 year lead time for effective planning (ie a forward budget commitment on the part of funding agencies).

Observations on local supply capacity

- community housing organisations are struggling to remain viable
- ATSI/ATSIS favours regional housing organisations
- lack of clear expectations for local community organisations in terms of financial performance
- local presence can be essential for successfully managing high risk tenants
- lack of local presence may lead to tenant alienation, low levels of rent payment and high levels of damage to property

Resource requirements for the community housing sector

- housing management – largely wage costs of housing management staff, plus resources to cover rates, insurance and other essential outgoings
- routine maintenance – repair requirements are identified by tenants and through regular housing inspections
- cyclical maintenance – periodic work that is essential if the property is to have an optimal “life”

Observations on resource shortfall

- most organisations with 30 or more dwellings are able to fund their housing management functions from their rents
- larger community organisations (eg 50 dwellings plus) may also be able to fund routine maintenance costs
- small to medium sized organisations, including those in more remote areas (where maintenance costs are higher and rents are lower) may require subsidy for routine maintenance
- no organisations are able to fund cyclical maintenance from their rents

Other relevant issues

- the need to build the capacity of the Indigenous building sector so that Indigenous people benefit from housing investments in terms of employment
- the important role of local community housing organisations in fulfilling non-housing functions in small regional centres
- the extent of unmet need in the two regions, and the particular local problems that have emerged as “hot spots” of housing need.