Transitional housing and conditionality for Indigenous social housing tenants in Mt Isa and Tennant Creek.

Daphne Nash and Paul Memmott

Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, UQ

With Mark Moran, Christina Birdsall-Jones, Shaneen Fantin, Rhonda Phillips and Daphne Habibis

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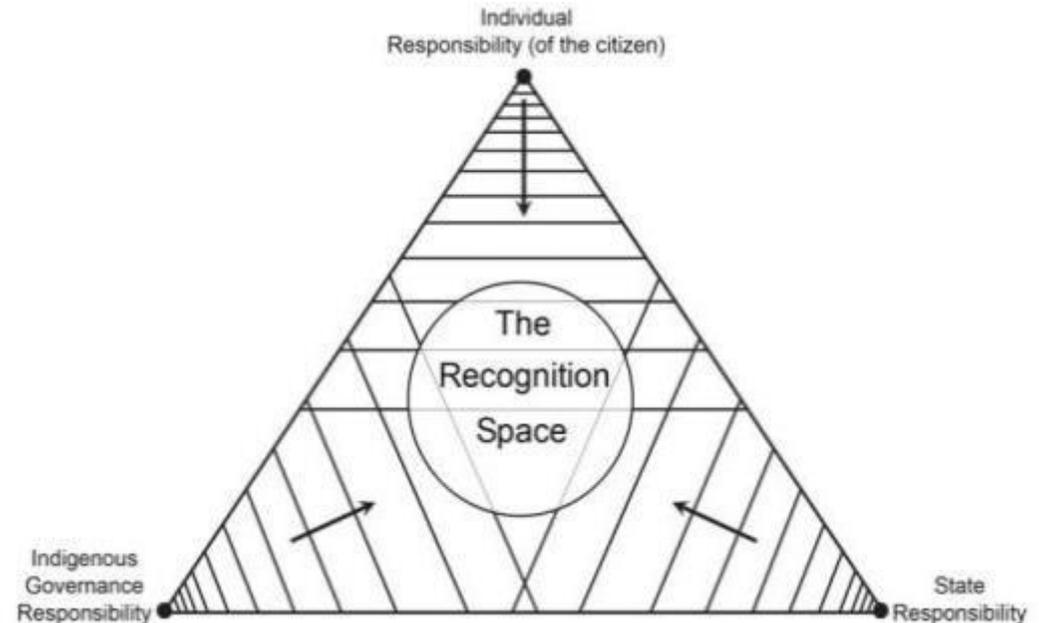28th-30th October 2015

IMYRP Project: Indigenous Lifeworlds, Conditionality and Housing Outcomes

- Longitudinal study (2012 - 2016) funded by AHURI

- Examines the interaction between the conditionalities of housing assistance (e.g. tenancy rules and duties) and Aboriginal lifeworlds (including kinship and social capital), and the effects of this dynamic on achieving sustainable housing outcomes.

- Argues for the importance of a 'recognition space' that demonstrates the relationships between the three intersecting continuums of responsibility.

The recognition space

A set of relationships and organisational arrangements which aim
- to support the development of positive policy outcomes
- by balancing the competing demands of individual tenants, the state, and intermediary organisations.

Individual Responsibility (of the citizen)

The Recognition Space

Indigenous Governance Responsibility

State Responsibility

IMYRP findings: enablers of the recognition space

- Effective face-to-face communication
- Stability and flexibility in frontline relationships
- At least some Indigenous staff in housing offices
- Strong community governance structures

Five IMYRP case studies

Social housing tenancies in Mt Isa and Tennant Creek

- Shortage of appropriate housing; lack of maintenance
- Many Indigenous households experienced crowding; person/s living with disabilities
- Majority of Indigenous people lived in social housing
- Indigenous lifeworlds worked against the rules of tenancy at times
- Tenancy management was coercive, despite some flexibility of individual frontline officers
- Indigenous tenants are not homogenous group; range of needs
- Some tenants struggled with the rules and lost their tenancies

Transitional housing

- Key concepts: accommodation and support
- Other terms include:
    - 'transitional accommodation'
    - 'supported housing'
- Transitional housing provides for people with high and very high needs who would be otherwise homeless linking them with support services to assist them into permanent housing
- 'Supportive housing' model (Housing First) and 'continuum' model
- Funded by government; community-managed

Jimaylya Topsy Harry Centre Mt Isa

- Residential homeless centre with a 'managed drinking' program for majority Indigenous clients
  - Accommodation for singles; couples
  - Education/training and support services
  - Funded and managed by DHPW

Recreational 'wet' area

Source: DHPW (2015)

- Transitional Support Houses (5)

Source: DHPW (2015)

  - 'Continuum' model; single site
  - Applicants for social housing
  - Pay rent towards 'white goods', furniture for mainstream rental
  - Strict rules (behaviour; training) – enforced (incl. peer pressure)
  - On-site support e.g. compulsory TAFE; counselling
  - Some service integration – Homelessness Community Action Plan for Mt Isa
  - Centre funded through DHPW with regular reviews
  - Indigenous management and staff
  - Clients from Mt Isa and other communities (Barkly and Gulf)
  - Clients are referred, e.g. by police and other services
  - 126 clients housed: 66 mainstream and 43 still remain (July 2015)

BRADAAG
Tennant Creek

- Barkly Regional Alcohol & Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG) includes: Residential rehabilitation; sobering-up shelter; transitional housing (off-site units); post-release prisoners program
- Transitional accommodation and support for post-release prisoners from Barkly Work Camp
  - Single site – one three-bedroom house (6 beds)
  - Short term government funding (NTDCS Nov. 2012-June 2014)
  - 13 clients through residential program
  - Coercive management approach with support services
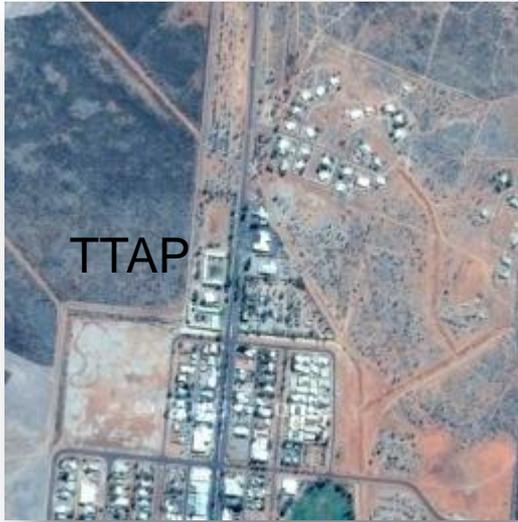 - Indigenous Board members (2 of 10)

Men's housing at BRADAAG

Source: JDKeeffe

TTAP
Tennant Creek

- Tennant Creek Transitional Accommodation Program (TTAP)

  - Nov. 2012 - Dec. 2014
  - Single site; former motel (30 en-suited rooms)
  - Business partnership model; no government funding
  - Housing – employment/education approach
  - Pathways in – lost tenancy; homeless (most disadvantaged)
  - Limited support – Indigenous officer, Anyinginyi Health
  - 75% Indigenous staff in motel including BWC prisoners
  - 9 tenants transitioned to housing (social and private)

TTAP

TTAP

TTAP

Tennant Creek Transitional Accommodation Project (TTAP)

Source: Google Earth

Anyinginyi staff housing Tennant Creek

- Anyinginyi Health Corporation – since 1984 (sole primary health care provider since 2010)
- Staff housing program began in 2013
  - Employment and housing history affected by disadvantage
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Supportive housing – rent to buy
  - Scattered sites; no surveillance; regular inspections
  - No direct government funding
  - Indigenous Board and most staff are Indigenous
  - 7 of 8 staff continuing in program in 2015

Anyinginyi staff housing in Tennant Creek

IMYRP findings: enablers of the recognition space

Table comparing transitional housing programs:

	Jimaylya Topsy Harry Centre	BRADAAG (prisoner program)	TTAP	Anyinginyi (staff housing)
Secure funding	✔	x	x	✔
Tenancy agreement mutually respected (strong rules)	✔	✔	x	✔
Stable and effective frontline relationships	✔	x	x	✔
Integrated services	✔	✔	✔ x	✔
Indigenous staff and management	✔	✔ x	x	✔
Indigenous governance	✔	✔ x	x	✔

Key elements for positive housing outcomes

- **Secure funding**: sources; cycles; appropriate levels
- **Tenancy agreement with strong, mutually respected rules**: coercion, inducement, negotiation
- **Stability and flexibility in frontline relationships**: knowing and understanding the Indigenous clients; adapting the rules
- **Service integration and support**: planned collaboration; appropriate to needs at different stages
- **Indigenous staff in housing offices**: local community knowledge, integrity and belonging
- **Strong Indigenous community engagement and governance**: consultation with Elder groups

Conclusions and policy implications

- Increasing demand from clients with a wide range of needs, including multiple and complex physical and mental health issues
- Both 'supportive housing' and 'continuum' approaches have had success
- Success is linked to: good governance; Indigenous community engagement; local knowledge; detailed planning/costing of specific programs (i.e. funding); a balanced approach for enabling clients without excessive involvement in their lives; AND available housing
- Appropriate housing and support services must be flexible to meet the needs of all disadvantaged Indigenous clients, including employed and people living with disabilities
- There are multiple pathways into homelessness and governments must recognise the many ways in which housing needs are not being met and consider local initiatives that can enhance the 'recognition space'.

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- More information on this research: www.ahuri.edu.au/nrv/imyrp

Acknowledgements

- Indigenous social housing tenants in Mt Isa and Tennant Creek, BRADAAG clients and prisoners from the Barkly Work Camp (BWC).

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- Senior management and frontline staff in Mt Isa DHPW and Tennant Creek NTDoH

- Managers in NT Dept of Correctional Services and BWC.

- IMYRP team

- AHURI

www.ahuri.edu.au

Policy context

- Australian Government
  - *The Road Home* (Aust. Govt 2008); National Partnership Agreements including NAHA and NPAH; A Place to Call Home (APTCH)
- Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) provides short-term housing assistance for:
  - Applicants transitioning from crisis/supported accommodation; experiencing homelessness; with a short duration of need
  - Specific solutions referrals e.g. child safety and disability needs
  - Transfers e.g. failed tenancy due to rent arrears (DHPW 2013)
- NT Department of Housing provides:
  - Crisis and short term accommodation for homeless people
  - Managed, supported and transitional accommodation services
  - Referrals to other services, e.g. to Anglicare Supported Housing Program