Positioning Paper

Investigating appropriate evaluation methods and indicators for Indigenous housing programs

authored by

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACSIP	Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program
AES	Australasian Evaluation Society
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AIHWS	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Services
ANU	The Australian National University
APC	Academic Planning Committee
ATR	Aboriginal Terms of Reference
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAS	Centre for Aboriginal Studies
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CHINS	Community Housing Indigenous Needs Survey
CIRC	Curtin Indigenous Research Centre
CRG	Critical Reference Group
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
FACS	Family and Children's Services
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NSW	New South Wales
RAESP	Remote Areas Essential Services Program
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
VSBI	Victorian Social Benchmarks and Indicators
WA	Western Australia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of this Positioning Paper is to discuss the adequacy and appropriateness of existing evaluation methods and indicators used by government and community organisations in assessing Indigenous housing programs and interventions. This includes evaluations undertaken to develop new initiatives, or to assess processes or measure outcomes to improve the effectiveness of existing programs or make decisions about resources and funding. There is a widely shared perception that existing approaches and measures for housing within the broader population are unsatisfactory, this situation is even more problematic in Indigenous housing contexts, highlighting a critical need for systematic research in this area. A particular focus of the research is to show the importance of developing and utilising evaluation methods and measures that can more effectively inform existing policy processes and whole of government approaches in Indigenous contexts.

This paper provides an overview of the current situation in Indigenous housing in Western Australian in comparison to housing within the broader population. It looks at the different housing issues experienced by Indigenous people in urban, rural and isolated regions throughout Western Australia. There is ample literature and research evidence which suggests there is an undeniable link between housing conditions and Indigenous health, education and social and economic wellbeing, however further research is needed to establish indicators to measure these outcomes and identify causal factors.

Research findings confirm that housing remains a priority area for Indigenous Australians. They also reinforce the need for Indigenous solutions to address this priority area and at the same time enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities to have access to opportunities consistent with the broader society.

Literature about qualitative evaluation approaches is also considered with regard to its relevance to the aims of this research and its potential to contribute to theoretical understandings about the various factors influencing community transformation and sustainability.

In addition, literature by Indigenous writers, researchers and academics is discussed as a basis for deriving a set of principles relevant to the conduct of evaluation in Indigenous contexts. A recurrent theme in the literature is that despite attempts to cloak evaluation in a veil of scientific objectivity and respectability it is an inherently value based and political activity. This means that the potential for all stakeholders to benefit from evaluation findings is largely dependent on existing power relations, access to resources and/or the interpretations, benevolence and good intent of those conducting evaluations. Recognising this fact many Indigenous writers have emphasised the importance for Indigenous people to have control over the research agenda and to have Indigenous values taken into account in evaluations of policies and programs which impact upon Indigenous people.

A persistent theme among Indigenous stakeholders is that Indigenous housing is inextricably linked and fundamental to the achievement of the rights, principles and goals of self-determination. Their position is supported by the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* which spells out the right to housing as fundamental to Indigenous self-determination (HREOC, 1999). In particular Article 23 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 programmes affecting them and as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.*

This paper aims to establish both a conceptual and analytical framework and principles and methodologies for conducting appropriate evaluations on Indigenous housing. A second emphasis in the research will be on establishing qualitative methods and social indicators framework to measure and evaluate program effectiveness in achieving social outcomes which will supplement AHURI research on quantitative and modelling approaches. It will help to overcome some of the shortcomings of quantitative data and difficulties of attaining statistical accuracy in reaching conclusions about programs.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Positioning Paper is divided into five sections. Section One provides an overview of the project. It frames the contemporary situation of Indigenous Australians with respect to housing and other social outcomes within an historical, social and political context. Drawing on Indigenous stakeholder perspectives it briefly discusses the appropriateness of existing housing evaluation approaches and their fit with an Indigenous research and evaluation perspective/agenda. Section Two posits a framework of analysis which encompasses both the contextual scope/breadth in which data needs to be collected and taken into account and the interrelationship between the various housing factors and a range of social outcomes. It suggests that contemporary housing policies, programs and interventions and their interrelationship with other social wellbeing outcomes, including building stronger communities need to be evaluated within a broader social, political and historical context than is usually recognised.

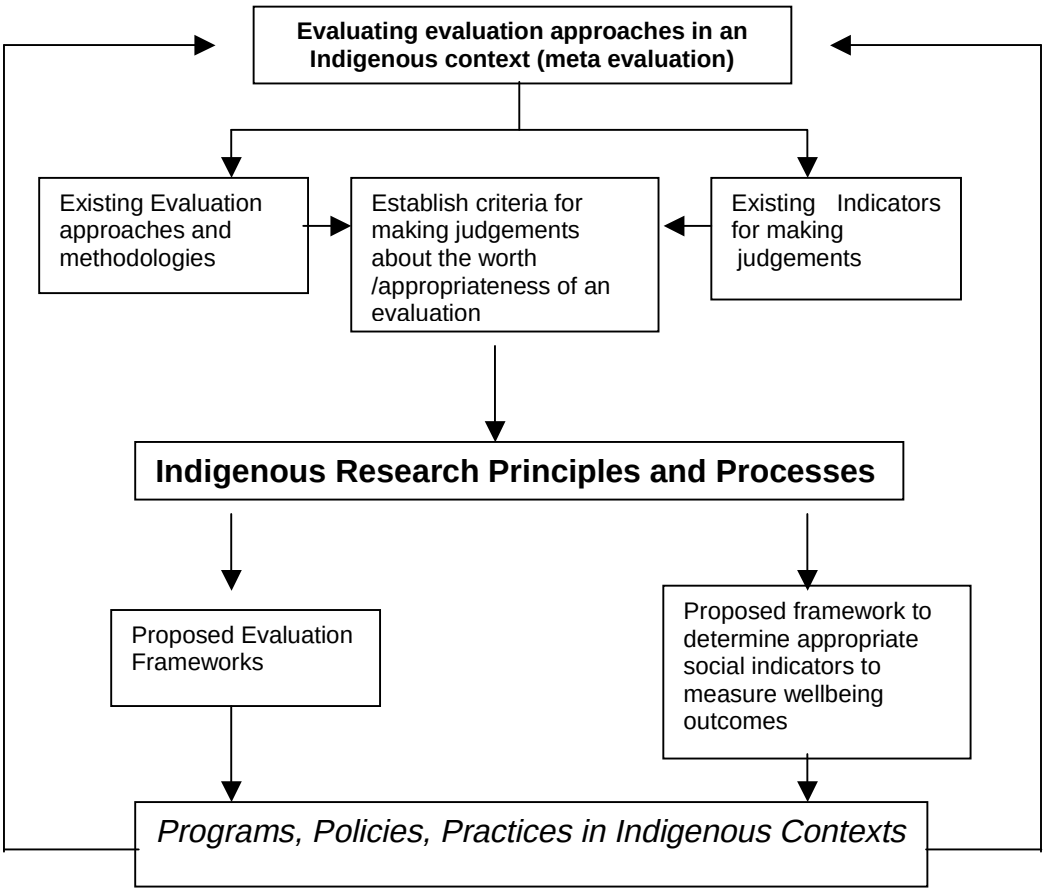
Section Three proposes a framework for evaluation which draws together both program level and wider social goals underpinned by Indigenous research principles, values and rights. This second framework helps to inform how the evaluation ought to proceed as well as identify the types of measures needed. As the research progresses this proposed framework will be applied to an actual 'audit' conducted recently in an Indigenous organisation as a case study to illustrate its appropriateness and application in Indigenous contexts.

Section Four examines issues related to establishing social indicators to measure the effectiveness of housing programs and interventions as they relate to broader social wellbeing outcomes for individuals, families and communities. It discusses existing qualitative and quantitative social indicators which are used to define Indigenous housing needs and socio-economic situation in Australia. This section includes an analysis of the adequacy of information regarding Indigenous disadvantage for informing housing policy and the links between associated variables. Section Five describes the methodology being used to meet the aims of the project.

This paper both identifies and employs Indigenous research principles to argue the need for more comprehensive and appropriate approaches to evaluation in Indigenous housing contexts. In addition to employing these principles as criteria for assessing the 'appropriateness' of existing evaluation approaches we also employ the proposed evaluation framework for analysis to support our position. The use of this 'meta' methodology, which parallels the evaluation framework being proposed to consider the appropriateness of existing evaluations, is also reflected in the way the paper is put together.

Figure 1: Meta Research and Positioning Paper Structure

The figure below illustrates both the various elements of the meta-evaluation process and the logic of the paper.



Project Summary

This project is being undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Western Australian Research Centre. This research will provide the means to undertake critical, culturally relevant evaluative research in AHURI priority focus areas in the future, particularly housing interventions/programs for Indigenous Australians (1.1) and strengthening community (6.1).

Research in these priority areas is crucial for Indigenous community wellbeing. There is a need for more appropriate evaluation methods and social indicators to measure and assess the effectiveness and impacts of specific initiatives within broader whole of government strategies formulated within a policy framework of sustainable community development. Such 'community building' initiatives in public housing estates generally encompass a range of programs and strategies specifically designed to target low income, high unemployment, high crime, school truancy and other social problems and concerns. In some instances they are also targeted towards specific groups, such as Indigenous people, youth or seniors. Recent findings by Mullins, Western and Broadbent (2001) highlight the dearth of research in this area.

Discussions with key people in the WA Ministry of Housing, Manguri Aboriginal Corporation and with ATSIC Commissioners and Councillors working closely with housing issues highlight the inadequacy of existing evaluation methodologies and the inappropriateness of existing measures. These senior people confirm the need to

devise more relevant indicators and appropriate processes which will enhance the validity, applicability and policy relevance of evaluations of housing programs and strategic interventions in Indigenous contexts. They emphasise the need to take Indigenous cultural issues and interests into account in housing evaluation and research linking housing and social outcomes and/or building sustainable communities.

In other words there is clearly a need for culturally appropriate research methods to assess the effectiveness of existing housing assistance programs and strategic interventions in achieving specific social outcomes to enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities. There is also a need for evaluation measures and methods which are of sufficient scope and relevance to enable program providers to critically assess how well different forms of housing assistance meet the housing needs of people in different complex circumstances and how well different forms of urban, rural and remote interventions sustain community strengths. It raises questions as to whether mainstream program evaluations can effectively and accurately take account of the impacts of housing initiatives or policy trends on Indigenous (and other) groups. The current AHURI funded research by Moore, Russell, Beed and Phibbs (2001) is very timely, complementary and important in this regard.

As yet no comprehensive research has been carried out to critically evaluate and understand what programmatic, contextual and situational elements are crucial to positively transform and sustain communities. Nor have the characteristics that constitute Indigenous best practice in existing programs been fully articulated as models that could be applied or adapted to other areas in Australia. There is a need for research that can provide a comprehensive understanding of the flow-on effects of various types of housing interventions (if any) on non-shelter outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Preliminary discussions with the relevant housing stakeholders have already signalled the need for:

- the development of social indicators to measure the extent to which housing program processes and practices contribute to broader Indigenous policy goals of social, cultural and economic wellbeing and self-determination, thus strengthening community; and
- documentation and critical assessment of a range of evaluation approaches and identification of most appropriate housing evaluation approaches for use in Indigenous contexts.

Project Aims

This project aims to address the following questions specific to Indigenous contexts:

- What qualitative and quantitative methodologies are required to provide a comprehensive assessment of housing programs and interventions?
- What qualitative and quantitative indicators are most useful and effective in measuring the impact of housing on non-shelter outcomes?

Drawing on relevant literature on Indigenous research and evaluation approaches, this Positioning Paper outlines analytical and conceptual frameworks to consider these questions. We will then use these frameworks to examine and assess the effectiveness of different evaluation approaches and methodologies used a range of different housing programs and interventions for Indigenous people in diverse contexts. We will obtain stakeholder perspectives of the relevance and appropriateness of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and methodologies currently employed to evaluate program goals, objectives and strategies intended to achieve a range of social and economic outcomes. We will also identify and assess the efficacy of existing indicators in measuring these

outcomes for Indigenous people within a broader social and political context in Western Australia.

2. THE POLICY CONTEXT

Historical, Social and Political Context of Indigenous Housing

The research is situated in a policy context in which the majority of Indigenous people remain significantly disadvantaged in areas of employment, education, health and housing**.** This situation presents a serious challenge to policymakers, government and community based service providers to design and implement programs and interventions that support the needs, priorities, interests and aspirations of Indigenous people to improve their economic, social and cultural wellbeing. This area has become even more complicated for policy makers given the pressing need to develop policies which create sustainable communities by attending to economic, environmental, social and structural issues and inequities (Ambler, 1999).

This paper suggests that issues related to housing evaluation need to be considered within the broader political and policy context which encompass urban and rural development at state and national levels. Changing policy trends across Australia from public housing provision to private rentals and purchase are gradually extending to country regions with serious implications for people already experiencing disadvantage (Tonts et al., 2000). Arguably, Australia's involvement within the global political and economic arena also has the potential to impact both negatively and positively on Indigenous housing. At the broadest level the fallout of economic rationalism, consumerism and competition globally has influenced most social policy areas, and program planning and implementation processes within government. At the same time the potential benefits of global influences are evident in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* which spells out the right to housing as fundamental to Indigenous self-determination (HREOC, 1999).

Furthermore, the historical context is also critical in evaluation of Indigenous housing. Contemporary housing programs and priorities for Indigenous people need to be understood within a historical context that involves the dispossession of land and the forced break up of families and communities. Housing needs to be contextualised within the general trends of government policy especially those that locate or relocate Indigenous people and Indigenous resistance to these policies (Ross, 2000:4). The history regarding the effects (and effectiveness) of policy changes is neither linear nor complete — as more stories are being told, and as more Indigenous voices are being heard a more complex picture of the social and political reality of Indigenous housing is coming to light. This emerging picture provides a framework for our research.

The findings of the *Inquiry into 'Stolen Children'* (HREOC, 1997) confirm the highly complex and interrelated nature of the many issues still facing Indigenous Australians which span socio-cultural, socio-economic and structural barriers. Education, employment, health, and housing are still priority areas. Recent research emphasises the pivotal role of housing with respect to poverty, employment and access to services including education, health and community building (Ambler, 1999, Shelter WA, 2000).

Throughout Australia's colonial history Indigenous housing policies and the nature and provision of housing, its location, habitability and cultural appropriateness have been largely influenced by state and federal government political agendas and policies toward Indigenous people. The early history of Indigenous housing is one of widespread overcrowding and deplorable housing conditions. Many families constantly moved around to avoid detection by the authorities. They would stay with family members or in disused mining huts or makeshift shelters (Little, 2000:90). As

Read claims 'It is not until, broadly, the entry of the Commonwealth government after the 1967 referendum that Aboriginal housing assumes its more recognisable form of providing shelter, a hearth, a refuge of affection and an armour of security.' Even so, the dramatic shifts in government policies, from assimilation to self-determination, in the late sixties to early seventies have not resulted in corresponding changes in the provision of housing for all Indigenous Australians.

The disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people has continued (Ross, 2000:8). Recent media coverage in *The West Australian* and *Aboriginal Independent* of issues ranging from violent deaths to high speed chases involving Indigenous people as both victims and perpetrators have, in every instance, been linked to overcrowding and/or housing evictions and homelessness.

Since 1997 there have been a number of significant and much needed changes in Indigenous housing policy, programs and infrastructure to address the urgent housing needs in urban rural and remote areas. The State and Commonwealth Governments and Aboriginal Housing Board (WA) established an agreement to adopt a coordinated approach to the provision of housing. This was followed in 1998 by the transfer of the Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program (ACSIP) and the Remote Areas Essential Services Program (RAESP) from the Aboriginal Affairs Department to the Ministry of Housing (WA). According to the Chair of Aboriginal Housing Board, 'For the first time in WA Aboriginal people are involved in the planning and prioritising of housing and infrastructure for both our remote and urban communities,' (Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit, 2000:3).

These infrastructure changes and program initiatives will have significant implications for the future. It is important that the outcomes of policy and program changes and restructuring can be critically and appropriately monitored and evaluated to more meaningfully inform all stages of the policy and funding process. It is also essential to carry out longitudinal research in different Indigenous contexts to identify links between housing and broader social outcomes.

Evaluation and Research in Indigenous Contexts

Governments, Indigenous peak bodies and community organisations share policy goals which acknowledge the need to develop more integrated strategies and 'whole of government' programs to address economic, health, social, cultural and housing issues in ways that strengthen Indigenous communities and build social capital within the broader society.

At the same time there is widespread agreement that existing evaluation methods and measures for housing are inadequate (Moore, Russell, Beed & Phibbs 2001). This inadequacy is even greater in Indigenous contexts. There is a need for culturally inclusive evaluation measures and methods of sufficient scope and relevance to enable program providers to critically assess the effectiveness of housing assistance programs and strategic interventions in achieving specific social outcomes. This Positioning Paper emphasises the need for Indigenous stakeholders to have input into both the evaluation methods and indicators established to measure the effectiveness of housing programs and interventions for Indigenous Australians.

There is general agreement in the literature pertaining to the conduct of research and evaluation that guidelines for undertaking research in Aboriginal contexts need to be ethical and culturally appropriate. This is borne out in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) ethical guidelines and university research policies, if not always observed in practice (APC minutes, May 2001). However, there is less widespread agreement as to what constitutes ethical and culturally appropriate research in Indigenous contexts. As a consequence most existing research guidelines, practices and methodological approaches are inadequate and

inappropriate. Guidelines generated from within a dominant research paradigm recognise that research should be respectful of research participants rights to confidentiality and safety, and only proceed with participant informed consent. However, most guidelines fail to recognise Indigenous needs, rights and interests or seldom produce research outcomes which assist Indigenous families, communities achieve their individual and community aspirations and future goals.

Our research highlights that there is growing body of literature by Indigenous academics and researchers (Arbon, 1992; Oxenham, 2000; Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999) which, taken together, advocates a set of principles and processes that go well beyond mainstream ethical guidelines and research practices. The widespread adoption of such a proposed research framework could help inform mainstream research and evaluation principles and practices in critical areas of housing and social services.

Moreover, there is an extensive array of report findings and recommendations based on widespread consultation with Indigenous groups and communities which have ministerial endorsement of all Australian government bodies which further support the need for such a framework. For example Recommendation 51 of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (RCIADIC) contains a number of the principles pertaining to the conduct of research in Indigenous contexts which are relevant and applicable to program and policy evaluation. Despite the fact that these and other principles, discussed in greater detail below, have been endorsed by all Australian Governments they appear to be largely ignored in the existing sphere of program and policy evaluation. (Although recently Recommendation 51 has been re-emphasised in an agreement regarding the collection of information in Indigenous contexts.) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Services, 2000)

Key Indigenous stakeholder/community views on evaluation

Our preliminary discussions with Indigenous stakeholders (see Appendix 1) suggests that few research and evaluation projects in the area of housing specifically acknowledge Indigenous methodologies or adhere to a set of negotiated principles. There is agreement among many of these stakeholders that existing program evaluations ignore cultural differences, that assessments at an individual level fail to take account of how previous policies, including the dispossession of land and removal of children, has led to a legacy of widespread family dislocation. This situation is of considerable concern to Indigenous communities and organisations, especially given the pervasive, indeed, in most instances mandatory, nature of evaluation of government programs and public service providers. There is widespread agreement that research and evaluation in Indigenous contexts needs to be undertaken in accordance with ethical and culturally appropriate guidelines. That the methods need to be collaborative, participatory, respectful and that there should be Indigenous involvement in all aspects and phases of the process.

These findings are supported by the findings of a summit on Indigenous housing in Western Australia held in May 2001 by Derbarl Yerrigan Aboriginal Health Centre. Many of the papers and discussions at the forum are critical of existing housing policy and practices and offer a challenge to service providers on a range of issues including ‘monitoring and evaluation’.

A Proposed Analytical Framework

The analytical and conceptual framework developed below attempts to represent the contextual factors and complexities that need to be considered in undertaking housing evaluation in Indigenous contexts (See Appendix 2). Based on the literature

such as Read (2000), Gray and Auld (2000), Shelter (2000), *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and drawing upon Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics the framework encompasses the various factors that appear to be involved in various aspects of housing.

The framework attempts to illustrate and encompass the interrelationship between particular housing variables such as location, affordability, standard of housing and size (habitability) and other social variables such as health, economic, employment, education and social wellbeing.

Moreover, it also shows the complexity of Indigenous disadvantage in the broader socio-political arena. The interaction and resistance between community perceptions, government policies, economic / social / political / legal histories, and Indigenous responses to these, creates a fluid, reactive and responsive environment for overcoming or exacerbating Indigenous disadvantage. The dynamic and fluid interaction which occurs at the interface between Indigenous people and the dominant society is further illustrated in Figure 1 in the next section.

While this framework does not necessarily specify a causal relationship between these variables it is suggestive of the interrelationship and the social indicators that may be involved depending on the specific type of housing evaluation being conducted. It also allows for the pivotal and interdependent role of disadvantage at the intersection between housing and other social outcomes. The efficacy of these variables will be discussed with groups and the framework trialed as an analytical tool in developing the final paper.

In order to assess and/or propose evaluation approaches that are appropriate, and of utility and worth in Indigenous housing it is useful to outline our standpoint, which frames the ensuing discussion and the remainder of the study. We began by providing a brief historical overview which we suggest frames the various issues in Indigenous housing in varying contemporary circumstances and gives rise to particular kinds of evaluation questions.

The situation we outlined above continues irrespective or despite the significant social research findings which highlight the urgent need for far reaching changes. Part of the reason for this difficulty may be the sheer enormity of addressing so many interconnected issues when there are so many factors which contribute to the complexity of the situation at one time. Another reason may be that programmatic evaluations carried out in relevant areas fail to take account of social, political or historical factors. As a consequence evaluation recommendations often focus on the minutiae of improving program operations, and policies continue to focus on specific outcomes rather than addressing broader structural and systemic issues.

Many Indigenous authors in *Settlement* highlight the 'contested colonial relationships' between governmental attempts through housing to control how Indigenous people 'are supposed to live' and an Indigenous position that housing concerns 'sociality, acculturation, identity, oppositions and control.' (Read, 2000:x). Their different viewpoints illuminate the complexity of the contemporary situation and raise critical questions which are fundamental to evaluation and research in Indigenous housing particularly when linked to notions about strengthening community, and building capacity and social capital. Locating Indigenous housing evaluation and research within the context of colonial history and contemporary social circumstance requires us to ask such questions as suggested by Read:

[when looking at Aboriginal dwellings] 'What forms of human sociality are expected to be encouraged by the design, location, materials and their relation to each other? [When looking at contemporary housing programs] What forms of human sociality are expected to be discouraged? Were Aboriginal people consulted? Do they administer the funds, choose the designs, allot the priorities and manage the rental properties? Of the cities we must first ask how many Aboriginal people are homeless,

followed by questions like: does the disposition and design of Aboriginal homes foster or erode Aboriginal extended kin structure? (Read 2000 :v)

Our research suggests that the nature of housing has had, and continues to have, direct and indirect consequences for the social wellbeing of Indigenous Australian individuals, families and communities. For all sorts of complex reasons this study shows that a large percentage of Indigenous people are homeless or living in substandard housing, and that on all indicators currently used they remain disadvantaged compared to non-Indigenous people.

The current social/demographic context of Indigenous Australians

An analysis of ABS data provides the following demographic picture of Indigenous people in WA. In the 1996 census the total population of Indigenous people was estimated to be 386,000 (2.1% of the total population). Of the total Indigenous population 56,000 (or 14.55%) were living in Western Australia, comprising some 3.18% of the total population of WA (ABS, 1998b). The Indigenous population is increasing at a much greater rate than the non-Indigenous population (55% cf. 12 %). This is due partly to a 'greater willingness of people to report their Indigenous origin on the census form' (ABS, 1998a) and also because birth rates are almost twice as high among Indigenous women compared with non-Indigenous women.

Indigenous families are generally structured quite differently to non-Indigenous families. On average they are larger then non-Indigenous families averaging 3.9 per household as compared to 3.1 for all Western Australian households. Indigenous families with 6 or more children under the age of 15 represented more than 2% of Indigenous households compared to only 0.2% for all Western Australian families. Only 12% Indigenous households were lone-person household compared with 24% for all Western Australia households. Some 8% of Indigenous households are multiple-family households in contrast to 1% of all households. These figures do not take into account the transient and homeless extended family members that may come to live with relatives for an indefinite period.

The different family structure, age distribution (40% of the Indigenous population is under the age of 15 compared to 21.4% of the total population) (ABS, 1998b) and social and geographic location offers a challenge for policy makers in many of its services especially housing. Particularly when linked to complex whole of government and capacity building policies. Subsequently there needs to be appropriate evaluation tools and indicators that are able to assess the different needs of the expanding Indigenous population in relation to housing and other quality of life variables.

Housing Variables and Indigenous Disadvantage or Wellbeing

The interrelationship between poor housing conditions and lack of access to services and benefits enjoyed by the wider community and the poorer health, mental health and economic status of the Indigenous community is well documented—their complex and interrelated nature is undeniable (Shelter WA, 2000). Recent research findings (Jones, 1999) show that Indigenous people living in rural and remote areas continue to experience a disproportionate disadvantage in housing which further compounds the lack of access to education, employment and health. Some 32 per cent of Indigenous people in rural and remote areas are homeless or living in overcrowded conditions compared with seven per cent in urban areas. This situation is exacerbated by the high cost of living, decreased ability to pay rent, inappropriate housing design, high maintenance costs, unsuitable materials for the harder environmental conditions and a subsequent lack of funds for repairs and maintenance (Aboriginal Housing Infrastructure Unit, 1999:93).

Despite the ambiguities and inadequacies of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) socioeconomic index as identified and discussed by Gray and Auld (2000) in Section Four, the ABS data confirm Indigenous disadvantage in comparison to the wider population on all existing indicators.

Housing variables which contribute to Indigenous disadvantage or wellbeing include location, habitability, affordability, cultural adequacy, accessibility and type of tenure. Interestingly, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* defines these same variables as rights along with cultural adequacy.

Location

Locational disadvantage is generally identified as a key issue affecting many Indigenous people. In Western Australia the population distribution of Indigenous people differs greatly to the population as a whole. Some 70% of Indigenous people live outside major centres as opposed to 36% of the Western Australian population as a whole. Approximately 26.6% of the total Indigenous population live in the North West of Australia.

Table 1: Largest Indigenous populations in the statistical local areas (ABS, 1998c)

	Indigenous persons no	Prop of statistical local area population %	Proportion of total WA Indigenous population %
Derby-West Kimberley	3 995	62.7	7.9
Broom	3 328	35.0	6.6
Wyndham-East Kimberley	2 150	33.9	4.2
Halls Creek	2 005	70.0	4.0
Swan	1 934	2.8	3.8
Port Hedland	1 831	15.3	3.6
Stirling-Central	1 693	1.8	3.3
Gosnells	1 668	2.2	3.3
Kalgoorlie/Boulder	1 640	5.7	3.2
Geraldton	1 554	7.9	3.1

As Table 1 shows Indigenous populations are high in the Perth metro outer suburbs of Stirling-Central and Gosnells. Indigenous populations are also relatively high (well over 1000) in other outer suburbs of Swan, Armadale and Cockburn. The inner city suburbs around Fremantle and Perth city have very low numbers of Indigenous people, with the exception of Belmont, which has an Indigenous population of 788. Fremantle inner city has only four Indigenous people listed and Perth inner city has zero Indigenous population listed (ABS, 1998c) although there is a large percentage of homeless population publicly acknowledged in the press. This data highlights that the Indigenous population tends to be located on the outer fringes of the Perth metropolitan area, which raises questions about access to services, resources and employment when looking at the links between housing and health, education and wellbeing.

Habitability

Habitability as used by the ABS refers to the liveability of a dwelling. This takes into account *Housing standards* and *Overcrowding*:

Housing standards

Housing standards are a critical aspect that contributes to poor health and levels of disadvantage. Indigenous people were more likely to report a need for repairs to their home than non-Indigenous people. According to the ABS '[a] major difference between Indigenous and all households relates to the occupation of impoverished dwellings. Among Indigenous households living in the rural balance of the State,

almost 12% occupied impoverished dwellings, compared with 1% of all households.' (ABS, 1998c:18)

Overcrowding

The ABS survey found that some 35% of Indigenous households consisted of five or more persons as compared to 12% of all households. Based on the criteria that there should be no more than two people to one bedroom 11% of Indigenous households (where the number of bedrooms was stated) were overcrowded (ABS, 1998c:19). Given differences in family compositions the ratio of numbers of people to number of bedrooms could be indicative of either or both cultural differences and social disadvantage. However, the Australian Housing Survey Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results in 1999 showed that at least 13% of Indigenous households require more bedrooms as compared to 4% of the non-Indigenous population (ABS, 1999:10).

It also showed that 88% of the Indigenous households needing additional bedrooms were renting homes and 43% had a weekly income of less than $525. In contrast, 52% of the non-Indigenous households requiring extra bedrooms were owners and only 27% had an income less than $525 per week (ABS, 1999:9). These statistics suggest a strong link between overcrowding and affordability. They also suggest there is a lack of affordable rental properties for people on low income and that Indigenous people are disproportionately represented at that level (ABS, 1999:9).

Overcrowding is also likely to occur in urban areas as 34% of Indigenous households rent from a government agency (ABS, 1998c:19). The major government agency in Western Australia is the Ministry of Housing (previously Homeswest). The Ministry of Housing has only 326 of five-bedroom stock throughout the whole of Western Australia (Walsh, 2001). Therefore, it is unlikely that the Ministry of Housing can meet the need of large Indigenous families in urban and regional areas.

Affordability

Although there are problems with using aggregated data they do highlight persistent levels of socio-economic disadvantage within the Indigenous community. Indigenous Australians invariably receive less income and pay higher rents than the remainder of the population.

According to the ABS (1998c) in Western Australia the median weekly income of Indigenous people in aged 15 and over was $211 compared with $307 for the state population aged 15 and over. 'The median income of the [employed] Indigenous population was less than two-thirds (64%) of the median income of the total [employed] population ($319 compared with $496).' By way of contrast the 1999 ABS publication *Australian Housing Survey: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Results* showed that Indigenous people on average pay $10 more per week for rent than non-Indigenous people. This inequity is further highlighted by the fact that 23% Indigenous people pay more than a quarter of their income on housing costs as compared to 18% non-Indigenous people. Unfortunately state and territory data was not available.

Accessibility

Homelessness has a direct link to accessibility of housing. Homelessness has become a key issue in Western Australia in recent months (Shelter WA: 2001) and is a high priority area nationally. Homelessness is linked to every other social indicator.

At the other end of the continuum to homelessness is security of tenure. Housing is pivotal to all other social outcomes.

There were 12,250 homeless in Western Australia on the night of the last census in 1996. Of these some 2,341 people were reported to be living in improvised dwellings, tents and sleeping out of which 54% were Aboriginal (Chamberlain, 1999:22). While this report does not identify how many Indigenous people were located in boarding houses, SAAP accommodation or staying with friends/relatives, the number of homeless Indigenous people is highly disproportionate to the wider population, highlighting the social marginalisation experienced by many Indigenous people.

Cultural Adequacy

Cultural adequacy can sometimes be linked to other housing variables, such as dwellings being too small for large Indigenous families (Walsh, 2001, WA ASERP Working Party, 2000). However, cultural adequacy also includes the ability to maintain cultural practices within a lived environment. The above authors recognise that dwellings also need to be large enough to accommodate Indigenous cultural obligations towards extended families who may visit for long periods of time. Other examples of cultural adequacy are highlighted by Alcorn (1994) who states that some Indigenous groups abandon their houses for 'sorry business' after a person dies and that European style houses are inappropriate for Indigenous groups who spend most of their time outside (WA ASERP Working Party, 2000). Since not all of these cultural practices are relevant to all Indigenous groups, cultural adequacy remains relative and specific to each cultural group—highlighting the need for indicators that can accommodate cultural/local specificity.

Indigenous Control

Many reports and oral histories, including *The Bringing Them Home Report*, show that Indigenous Australians have long understood the connection between housing and cultural survival and argued for the recognition of Indigenous rights in this regard. There has been, and still is, an ongoing struggle over who is to have control over Indigenous housing. As Penny Tripcony (cited in Read) states 'The underlying principle for Aboriginal management of Aboriginal rental housing is the maintenance of Aboriginal lifestyles and values.' (Read, 2000:ix)

In recent years Indigenous stakeholders have begun to establish the collective political forces and structures to lobby and more openly challenge governments over the right to appropriate and affordable housing and the right to develop Indigenous solutions and maintain Indigenous control. This is highlighted in the *Community Organisations Report on Housing in Western Australia, 2000* which was combined with a national report and presented to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The ATSIC Chairperson, Mr Geoff Clark, has emphasised the importance for Indigenous people to be providers as well as users of services (Aboriginal Housing Infrastructure Unit, 1999:3); signalling the need for greater Indigenous community involvement in determining housing programs and other interrelated interventions.

For this reason the extent to which Indigenous people have control over housing is included as an important variable to be taken into account in housing evaluations in the frameworks we have developed. There are obviously different forms and degrees of control ranging from Indigenous Housing Boards and Indigenous Units in government departments through to Indigenous controlled organizations.

3. REVIEW OF EVALUATION APPROACHES

An Overview of Evaluation Approaches

Evaluation approaches range from positivist, managerial traditions to interactionist, developmental, empowerment and participatory traditions. Methodologies for carrying out evaluations vary depending on the purpose. The purpose of evaluations range from ensuring government/public accountability of services to 'taxpayers' (often incorrectly differentiated from consumers) by measuring effectiveness and efficiency; to gauging consumer satisfaction; or less often, facilitating organisational learning and user empowerment.

Given the existing social policy emphasis on strengthening communities and families and the contemporary socio-economic situation of Indigenous people this Positioning Paper focuses primarily on empowering, participatory approaches. Many writers (Everitt & Hardiker, 1996, Wadsworth, 1993) claim that identifying the client/consumer or critical reference group is a fundamental starting point in public service provider and program evaluation. Wadsworth (1993) defines the critical reference group (CRG) as the group intended to benefit from a program or service and argues that the critical reference group should be given primacy in the evaluation. Even corporatist and new right proponents have advocated for the inclusion of client or user groups in evaluation, although this is usually justified as 'good for business' rather than motivated by notions of consumer rights, justice or the sharing of power.

In *Dogs, Kids and Homeswest*, John Scougall and Ricky Osborne (1997) highlight the importance of involving community in evaluations. They put forward a model of participatory action research based on their work with Tkalka Borda Aboriginal Community and Mallingbar Community in North West Australia. They argue that it is important to include all stakeholders including the critical reference group in the research and to ensure their voices are heard in the conduct of the evaluation and the presentation of findings.

The model of evaluation developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997) in *Realistic Evaluation* is highly useful and appropriate to our position, it suggests a model of teaching and learning which informs evaluation, program, policy, practitioners and participants. They posit a particular way of designing evaluations in order to develop theories about how things work to produce particular outcomes in specific contexts, especially with regard to bringing about and sustaining a desired change for individuals, group or communities. Their work is particularly relevant because they recognise that 'all social programs involve the interplay of individuals and institutions, and of structure and agency', as well as 'disagreement and power play' (Pawson and Tilley 1997:xiii). They also recognise that all evaluations need to encompass methods, measurement and theory although they need to differentiate between purposes for different circumstances.

Pawson and Tilley argue that evaluation needs to encompass a causal component as well as make judgements on the worth of a program or intervention. An evaluation needs to be able to answer not just whether a program (or component) works or does not work, but why it works, for whom, and in what circumstances or context. They suggest that there are three elements to evaluation — mechanism + context = outcome — which together can be used to design appropriate measures and provide 'an initial explanatory fix in any social program.' (Pawson & Tilley 1997:xv). They also suggest that the admix of these elements helps to inform the 'research relationship' between evaluator and stakeholders and how to use the knowledge of the participants and practitioners in the conduct of the evaluation.

The adoption of a realistic, theory driven approach to evaluation also informs the data collection process. It requires an understanding of the theoretical assumptions underpinning social policy and their relationship to expected social outcomes (Pawson and Tilley). It also requires a recognition of the fact that 'political and structural contexts of social welfare organisations often set the boundaries to problem solving approaches' for program implementation and evaluation (Everitt & Hadiker 1996:72). In *Evaluating for Good Practice* they emphasise the need to:

> *identify the purpose of the service; the need to use a comparative approach; the importance of taking into account of external factors; including the work of other agencies; the need to measure the impact of effectiveness. (1996:69)*

Further, Everitt and Hadiker also point out that 'whatever the approach to generating evidence of practice and its achievements, in social welfare it should be informed by an analysis of power (1996:72). Wadsworth (1993:11) too argues both the need for an effective theory which acknowledges existing power relations and the adoption of a critical reference group perspective.

Data collection

The type of data collected and the approach to data collection are of particular importance in Indigenous contexts. Data needs to be related to program objectives, seen as useful by program staff, and capable of registering changes in a situation, need or outcomes. The collection of data which enable comparisons over time, or between groups or services, can be useful in identifying and evaluating outcomes. Data related to age, ethnicity, social need or levels of individual or group disadvantage in relation the broader population are also crucial to an analyses of power in constructing performance measures. The evaluation framework should be useful for identifying the type of data to answer specific evaluation questions.

The research currently being undertaken by Moore, Russell, Beed and Phibbs (2001), *Comparative Assessment of Housing Evaluation Methods: Evaluating Economic, Health and Social Impacts of Housing* provides a comprehensive list of data collection methods. They provide a detailed discussion of: official demographic and census statistical data; observational methods; sample survey-based collections; in-depth qualitative interviews; and, focus groups. Moore et al point out that ABS surveys cover a range of areas which are useful to government social and economic programs and policies. Observational methods are highly useful and appropriate to collect context specific data necessary for program level evaluations. Other approaches such as in-depth qualitative interviews are particularly relevant in terms of both the process and nature of data collected for evaluations in Indigenous contexts. An informal, face-to-face interview not only provides a more relaxed and personable approach but the data collected 'are typically information rich', (Moore et al 2001:13). However, they also point out that this type of data also requires 'more specialist analytical techniques (loc.cit).

This literature review has focused on evaluation approaches considered relevant to the aims of this research and its potential to contribute to theoretical understandings about the various factors influencing community transformation and sustainability. The evaluation approaches discussed are compatible with the ideas put forward by Indigenous Australian writers such as Veronica Arbon and Lester Rigney regarding the principles and processes necessary to develop and support an Indigenous research agenda and methodologies which are relevant to evaluation. The evaluation approaches discussed here also fit with the ideas presented by Maori academic and intellectual Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People.* Smith also identifies principles and processes which she believes reflect an Indigenous research agenda and contribute to positive social change and Indigenous futures.

An Overview of Indigenous Research & Evaluation Principles

This section includes work by Indigenous writers, researchers and academics together with key findings of inquiries informed by Indigenous perspectives as a basis for deriving a set of principles relevant to the conduct of evaluation in Indigenous contexts. Many of the issues raised and principles proposed by Indigenous people and their protagonists have developed against a backdrop of concern regarding inappropriate research by non-Indigenous researchers on Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999, Williams & Stuart, 1992, Scougall & Osborne, 1998).

Rights and Recommendations

Some of the most important of these principles are identified in key reports including the *Findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (1991*)*, *Taskforce on Aboriginal Social Justice Report* (1994) and the *Bringing them Home Report* (HREOC, 1997).

Importantly, as discussed earlier, the principles identified in these reports are also echoed and derived from rights outlined in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (HREOC, 1999). In particular Article 23 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 programmes affecting them and as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.*

Such rights are consistent with principles underpinning research, evaluation and the collection and dissemination of information regarding Indigenous people and contexts. Recommendation 51 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (endorsed by all Australian Governments) states:

> *That research funding bodies reviewing proposals for further research on programs and policies affecting Aboriginal people adopt as principles criteria for the funding of those programs:*
>
> - *The extent to which the problem or process being investigated has been defined by Aboriginal people of the relevant community or group;*
> - *The extent to which Aboriginal people from the relevant community or group have substantial control over the conduct of the research;*
> - *The requirement that Aboriginal people from the relevant community or group receive the results of the research delivered in a form which can be understood by them; and*
> - *The requirement that the research include the formulation of proposals for further action by the Aboriginal community and local Aboriginal organisations.'* (RCIADIC 1991:167)

In addition State and Federal Governments and key Indigenous organisations have also endorsed a set of principles relating to the recognition of Indigenous knowledge and an ethical approach to the dissemination and publication of Indigenous Australian knowledge. A case in point is the operating principles identified in *A Review of Institutional Use of Commonwealth Higher Education Funding for Indigenous Australian Students* which have relevance here. These principles state that:

> *The body of Indigenous Australians knowledge is afforded the same respect as other areas of study within the university, and specific policies on Indigenous Australian research are developed acknowledging its contribution to empowerment of Indigenous Australians and positive social change…* (NBEET, 1997)

Cultural Democracy

The recognition of rights outlined in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the Australia Act (1986) provide the basis for cultural democracy as indicated in Articles 31 and 32 which spell out the right of Indigenous peoples to determine matters relating to internal affairs and social welfare including housing without foregoing their rights to the same opportunities as all other citizens.

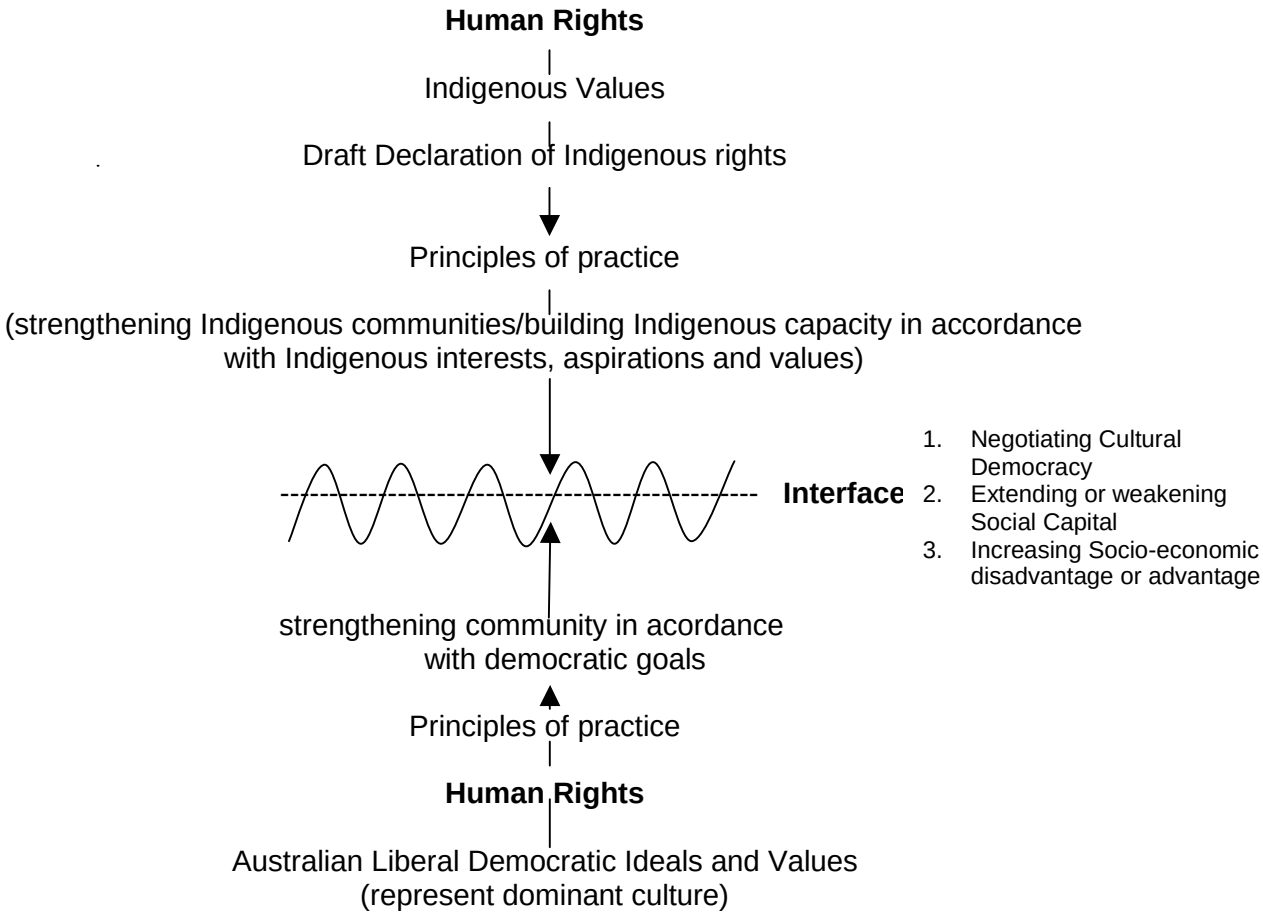
These rights have obvious implications for government and agencies and how they negotiate their relationships and develop and deliver programs with, or for, Indigenous Australians. They also inform the principles and goals for actions specified in the framework below to operationalise Indigenous research.

Strengthening Community

It is suggested that notions regarding strengthening Indigenous community are closely related to the goals of cultural democracy. (They are also linked to principles of research regarding strengthening Indigenous research capacity and ensuring that the outcomes of research and evaluation benefits and strengthens the community).

Although the diagram (Figure 2) below somewhat over simplifies what happens at the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations its does suggest a site or space where cultural democracy can exist in accordance with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous values and ideals. Or put another way the rights asserted by Indigenous Australians are consonant with and reflected within the ideals, values and rights of social democracy which underpin notions of community building in broader community contexts.

Figure 2: The interface between Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations



What the diagram above fails to convey is the complex negotiations, competing discourses and interactions which occur at the interface in Indigenous attempts to achieve equity and self-determination on Indigenous terms. It also fails to show how the outcomes of such negotiations can either weaken or strengthen Indigenous social capital and overcome or exacerbate Indigenous disadvantage. However, this diagram does show how democratic ideals, values and human rights ought to inform principles of practice, programs, policies and processes employed by governments and relevant industry sector.

Drawing on both the literature and discussions with Indigenous stakeholders this Positioning Paper argues that evaluations which are attempting to assess the extent to which programs, policies and practices contribute to strengthening community (in both Indigenous and broader societal contexts) need to take into account the extent to which Indigenous goals, terms of reference, equitable processes and outcomes are achieved. An evaluation of such scope requires particular process oriented research approaches, including models based around participatory action research or community education. It also requires moving beyond purely efficiency and effectiveness measures. The framework in Appendix 3, which is informed by Indigenous principles, values, rights and cultural democracy attempts to encompass and operationalise this proposition.

Indigenous Research Principles

Discussions by Indigenous academics and community concerning appropriate ways of doing research in Indigenous contexts are consistent with and further develop the principles outlined above. We suggest that these Indigenous methodologies are also consistent with the goals of research identified by Indigenous people who have argued for the right to have control and ownership over research and research outcomes. They also want research to lead to positive outcomes that support self-determination and self-management and therefore provide greater control over their own lives. Other goals such as meaningful partnerships between researchers and participants, and between government funding bodies and Indigenous agencies, are also essential for community empowerment. Drawing on the literature discussed above there appear to be a number of elements which arguably constitute research principles which should be taken into account in order to achieve Indigenous self-determination and empowerment and control. These are:

Working in an Indigenous Cultural/Political Framework

Indigenous academic, Martin Nakata (1997) explores the politics and processes of working at the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous domains. His work highlights the importance of adopting an Indigenous standpoint and at the same time looking for points of common ground to maximise Indigenous interests. Lester Rigney suggests that while only Indigenous people can adopt an Indigenous standpoint in research non-Indigenous people need to adopt a critical standpoint when carrying out research in Indigenous contexts (Rigney 1997).

Other writers emphasise the politics the cultural differences. Oxenham (2000) for example, argues the importance of establishing Indigenous terms of reference. Her argument is underpinned by the notion that Indigenous people experiences and ways of viewing the world differ from those of the dominant culture (Oxenham, 2000). Hence they have different political and cultural structures that grow out of this worldview. Researchers entering into an Indigenous community or organisation need to work within these frameworks in order not to offend or disrupt the community. As Scougall and Osborne (1998:18) claim '[t]heir [Indigenous participants] values, not ours, ought to guide the direction of research in their community'.

Furthermore, research needs to emphasise and acknowledge the positives of Indigenous cultural/political frameworks to show how they contribute to the wellbeing of the community. The uniqueness and diversity of communities also need to be recognised along with the acknowledgement that the processes belong to the specific community. An example of this type of research is evident in *Dogs, Kids & Homeswest* (Scougall & Osborne, 1998:2) which shows how the community of Tkalka Boorda in Western Australia has struggled against the odds to develop a 'safe and secure living environment' for their children.

Identifying Power Difference

In order to understand power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people the research needs to be placed in a social, political and historical context. The context needs to frame the relationship between all stakeholders, including service providers, the participants and the levels of disadvantage to which they have been subjected. The research by Scougall & Osborne, (1998) in *Dogs, Kids and Homeswest* highlights the importance of acknowledging where previous research with participants has failed to shift power differences between community participants and other stakeholders and work to overcome this situation.

Gendering Research

Colonisation has impacted significantly on the relationships between men and women in Indigenous communities. This has negatively affected the position of women. Many women claim that this is incongruent with Indigenous belief systems (Smith, 1999:151). Indigenous writers such as Linda Smith advocate that Indigenous women's voices need to be heard in Indigenous research and more projects need to focus on Indigenous women's needs.

Visualising/developing an agenda for a better future

Indigenous people are constantly rising out of oppressive situations and fighting for better futures (Smith, 1999:152). Evaluation must be a tool that actively assists in developing a pathway to a better future that has been identified by the organisation/community.

Indigenous Benefits from Research

Similar to visualising a better future, research must have the intent of benefiting Indigenous people. The benefits need to be negotiated with the participants and clearly defined in the evaluation agenda (Scougall & Osborne, 1998:17).

Research has all too often started off from the premise of an 'Indigenous problem'. The focus of such research becomes Indigenous peoples need to change without looking at social and structural issues that may impede better life styles for Indigenous people. This type of research is often of no benefit to Indigenous peoples and has caused much distrust of researchers within the Indigenous community (Smith, 1999:90).

Indigenous Participation

Indigenous people need to have control over the direction and the development of the research to ensure and maximise Indigenous participation. Ideally the participants will become co-researchers from the inception of the research through to the end, being resourced appropriately along the way. However, due to community, family and work commitments and busy life styles participants need to have the option to participate in some or all stages of the research. Participation by residents in the research project, whilst encouraged, is entirely voluntary.' (Scougall & Osborne, 1998:10)

Prioritising Indigenous Knowledge and Experience

There are a couple of issues regarding Indigenous knowledge and experience which are worth noting. 'A research process has ideological implications. Knowledge is power' (Howitt et al., 1990:3). Privileging Indigenous voices has been identified as being a crucial function of Indigenous research (Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999; Scougall & Osborne, 1998). This allows for Indigenous worldviews and experiences to be delivered through the text.

This raises issues about ownership, publication and dissemination of the information gathered. Again *Dogs, Kids and Homeswest* provides a good example of research where each of these aspects has been negotiated with the community. In this instance while Scougall and Osborne are researchers and authors of the text '[t]he community "owns" the research findings and has the right to veto publication of what may be regarded as sensitive matters.' (Scougall & Osborne, 1998:10). Scougall and Osborne also acknowledged their responsibility disseminate the findings in an easily accessible manner and a reasonable time frame negotiated, so that the community is able to critique the findings adequately.

Research in Indigenous Contexts Should be Guided by Indigenous People

Indigenous people should guide the gathering of information and knowledge from Indigenous people (Scougall & Osborne, 1998; Oxenham, 2000). Oxenham discusses the use of an Indigenous reference group that assists the researcher or research team to understand, respect and work in accordance with the community/organisation's protocols. The reference group needs to have a strong affiliation with the community/organisation in order for this process to work satisfactorily.

Indigenous Capacity Building

Ideally research with Indigenous peoples should be by Indigenous peoples (Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999; Williams & Stuart, 1992). However, writers such as Smith state that in the many cases where non-Indigenous people undertake research with Indigenous people they have a responsibility to employ participants to assist in the research. This assists in bringing economic resources into the community as well as research skills to the participants and enhancing the Indigenous research capacity.

Many Indigenous researchers also advocate that research should support Indigenous self-determination (Arbon, 1992; Brady 1992; Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999; Williams & Stuart, 1992). It therefore becomes imperative that research with Indigenous communities or organisations contributes in some way to building the capacity of that community/organisation towards autonomous decision making and other aspects of self-governance that may be relevant to and extend beyond the research.

Although only preliminary, these principles illuminate a particular set of values and processes which are fundamental to undertaking research and evaluation in Indigenous contexts. We suggest that in addition to identifying a set of processes for engaging in the research these principles also help to inform the framework and standpoint for the analysis and interpretation of the research. For example a recurrent theme among Indigenous writers is the need to both situate the research (including evaluative research) and interpret findings within a broader social, political and historical context.

Developing an evaluation framework for Indigenous program/contexts

This section discusses the development of a framework similar to a matrix developed by Wadsworth (1993) in *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*. The framework attempts to hold both the underpinning values and principles identified by various Indigenous writers as essential to Indigenous research together with the broader intrinsic goals fundamental to Australia social democracy as the two axis and levels of criteria against which various practices, processes, strategies at program level need to be developed and ultimately judged.

We suggest that it is necessary for evaluations of programs and services in Indigenous contexts to assess whether the *outcome* contributes to Aboriginal self-determination, and whether the *process* is participatory and empowering for the individuals and communities involved.[1] Although as Wadsworth (1993) points out this does not mean that the fit of each specific objective has to be judged against these broader principles and goals.

Such a comprehensive framework encompasses a group or organisation's *vision and goals, and* the *strategies* and objectives, policies and processes to achieve these, which, in the final analysis, are evaluated on the extent to which these instrumental elements contribute to Aboriginal self-determination (individually or collectively) and

[1] This position draws on an evaluation approach and standpoint which was established/advocated in the Aboriginal Community Management and Development Program in the early 1990's.

the achievement of equality and social justice. This approach requires collecting data or establishing processes to enable organisational/program staff to consider whether their own ways of working in the provision of services are respectful, participatory, culturally appropriate and facilitate (or inhibit) client empowerment.

Such a framework assumes that instrumental program goals—which inform program implementation strategies and processes—are based upon or derived from fundamental intrinsic goals which are generally encapsulated in an organisations broader mission or purpose. Patton (1987:184) claims that there is

> *... a critical distinction between two kinds of program goals. Some program goals symbolise the very values and principles of a society. Such goals are ideals to strive for because they represent basic notions of what is good and right. These goals are ends in themselves. The second category of goals is more instrumental in nature. These represent a means of attaining more basic ideals. Instrumental goals represent the methods by which higher level ideals are to be achieved.*

Patton (1987:184) goes on to say:

> *In evaluation research and policy analysis this distinction between intrinsically valued goals and instrumental goals can be critical. Goals that express intrinsic values imply evaluations that focus on program implementation questions.*

The particular program evaluation questions asked are dependent on theories about the policy process. The preconditions for successful program implementation identified by Gunn (1978), and cited in Everitt and Hardiker (1996:74) require clear policy goals, simple implementation structure and clear chains of responsibility, minimal external influences and control of front-line workers. The same preconditions are clearly necessary to obtain unambiguous evaluations findings.

Social reality of course defies the preconditions outlined above—the policy and social program context is often complex, contradictory and at times highly contested. A range of dynamic external factors, including competing or contradictory policy changes, can influence program outcomes in unforeseen ways. The interrelationship between social variables and the government's increasing tendency to attempt to map out 'whole of government' or interagency links makes it increasingly difficult to unequivocally link specific social, economic or health outcomes to single programs or services.

4. REVIEW OF SOCIAL INDICATORS

Establishing Social Indicators in Indigenous Contexts

This section addresses the second question: *What qualitative and quantitative indicators are most useful and effective in measuring the impact of housing on non-shelter outcomes?* In order to address this question it is necessary to examine some of the issues surrounding performance measures and performance indicators.

We suggest that most evaluations tend to emphasise program effectiveness and efficiency based on economic rationalist terms. Generally they do not attempt to measure outcomes pertaining to 'strengthening community' and 'building community capacity' or 'wellbeing-ness'. However, there is growing recognition by governments and other agencies of the interrelationship between social and economic wellbeing and the need for whole of government and interagency approaches to address health, employment and housing issues. This has resulted in some major research projects in Tasmania and Victoria being conducted to establish social benchmarks and indicators. Even so, these current projects are attempting to measure broader social outcomes which are informed by dominant cultural values which do not necessarily take account of Indigenous goals and aspirations. There are examples in areas such as education where existing indicators designed to measure Indigenous academic outcomes by comparison to non-Indigenous outcomes do not adequately reflect the range of Indigenous achievements that occur in spite of existing socio-economic disadvantage, persistent power differentials and historical legacy. This research highlights the need for and proposes a framework by which to establish appropriate indicators to measure and make judgements about these more complex linkages in Indigenous contexts.

The analytical framework discussed in Section Two attempts to encompass the interrelationship between context and outcomes. At the same time the operational framework developed in Section Three attempts to hold the interrelationship between the broad intrinsic rights and goals of Indigenous self-determination and self-management, and broader action principles and program level goals and strategies. Both set of considerations are important in establishing social indicators.

The Victorian project, *Victorian Social Benchmarks and Indicators Consultants' Report,* states that, at their most general level, indicators can tell us about the wellbeing of a whole nation, or the status of a particular social, economic or environmental situation, issue or system. At their most specific level indicators are used to determine whether a particular project, program goal has been achieved. (Institute for Social Research, 2000:38)

With respect to developing indicators in Indigenous contexts Walker and Lewis (1992) suggest that 'intrinsic goals are the higher order or fundamental criteria against which all other criteria need to be judged.' They write:

> *In reality most evaluations focus on whether the program is effectively meeting instrumental goals. When conducting an evaluation of any program designed to improve the human condition, provide a specific service, or promote social change, it is important to be clear about the fundamental rationale for the program's existence in determining the criteria against which to evaluate the program.* (Walker & Lewis, 1992)

The need to be clear about the overarching vision, goals and intrinsic purpose is also evident in the planning pathway proposed in the Victorian benchmarks and indicators project (2000:47) and adapted from *Tasmania Together Benchmarking Community Progress* (2000b). This planning pathway incorporates both what we want to achieve (Ends) and how we want to achieve it (Means). As such it encompasses a Vision which includes the highest ideals such as 'a prosperous, just, healthy democratic society' with policies, tactics, processes, structures, programs and sub-programs

(such as housing or education) to achieve it. The pathway also incorporates targets and indicators to measure and evaluate progress towards achievements ranging from broad goals through to sub programs. There are two types of indicators that are important here: statistical measures which are generally bundled together to measure a specified status or condition of the whole population; and, performance indicators used to measure whether a program or project has achieved its intended goals and objectives.

While it is important to acknowledge the intrinsic goals and the links with both outcomes and measures there are a couple of points worth mentioning. As Wadsworth (1993:46) states while it is appropriate to make sure that 'highly specific actions are consistent with the highest level of purposes' it is ineffective and inappropriate to try to seek evidence to measure all of them. While some actions and expectations are the stuff of performance indicators others will 'fall into the realm of the achievable, but not yet taken for granted' (op.cit:33).

In addition, Michael Patton (1987) in *Creative Evaluation* highlights the dangers of confounding intrinsic goals with instrumental measures or indicators. He claims that the problem lies in the fact 'that many policymakers want it both ways.' He makes the point well with respect to the policy of integration:

> *They [policymakers] value racial integration intrinsically, but they also want integration to raise black achievement. Suppose then that integration does not raise black achievement scores; is the policy of integration to be ended? That is the clear implication of an instrumental approach. On the other hand, if integration is simply right and good, then the evaluation of its effects on school achievement should not enter into decisions about continuation of the policy. Data about outcomes only becomes relevant as they permit implementation and process changes in the integration policy that might maintain the intrinsic commitment while also accomplishing instrumental objectives. But this game of trying to make both instrumental and intrinsic arguments in support of a policy at a single point in time can be quite dangerous. It is much harder to fall back on intrinsic worth when instrumental worth has failed than simply to refuse from the outset to even allow instrumental criteria (…school achievement) to enter the picture... (Patton, 1987:185)*

However, economic, social and political realities generally place pressure on policymakers and managers to play it both ways; to establish a range of measures of success together with a rhetorical commitment to fundamental ideals (Walker & Lewis, 1992). '[M]ost program or project evaluations focus on evaluating whether the program is *effective* in attaining desired outcomes (instrumental goals), rather than its intrinsic value (Walker & Lewis, 1992). Even though organisational visions and policies may be based on broad philosophical principles derived from intrinsic values/goals such as Indigenous self-determination, equal opportunity or social democracy, the policy guidelines tend to reflect instrumental goals, strategies and objectives to achieve these. The imperative to 'operationalise' such intrinsic values into instrumental goals is often forgotten along side the imperative to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of instrumental strategies.

According to Patton (1982) there is a great emphasis on performance indicators and data collection related to these strategies which at best is only partially useful, and at worst is considerably dangerous to the evaluation of programmatic, organisational and broader social values and goals. Different evaluation purposes require different types of measurement. Most organisations or groups have to generate or meet performance indicators to *prove* they have attained their instrumental goals; often the intrinsic values are lost within the 'day to day' efforts to achieve them.

Everitt and Hadiker (1996:72) suggest that 'many performance indicators are still too data-driven, providing simple measures of activity, input and output,' rather than encompassing 'a middle-range level of analysis and practice in the development of performance indicators'. They cite Hoyes, Means and Le Grand (1992) to suggest that there are a number of developmental processes which can provide 'common ground between rational-positivist and interactionist-interpretativist approaches to performance measurement.' (op.cit).

Although difficult it is nevertheless essential for program evaluators to reflect on the theoretical and philosophical issues surrounding such notions when establishing a standpoint for an evaluation and a framework of indicators for measuring program components. For example our operational framework suggests that respect for cultural differences in determining needs and service provision is an important principle to be enacted for the realisation of equality of opportunity for culturally different groups. We believe that funding bodies and program managers need to include performance indicators and measurable outcomes which simultaneously reflect and illustrate how respect/regard for cultural difference is enacted within a specific program or service. The need to take account of client or user perspectives in developing performance measurement in public services is widely supported (Salvaris, Burke, Pidgeon & Kelman 2000; Wadsworth 1993).

At the same time Everitt and Hardiker claim that there are 'limitations to user empowerment … in relation to performance measurement' (1996:71). They point out that the question of who is the client raises a range of 'political, theoretical, organisational and technical issues' (1996:72). In some cases it may be difficult to identify whether the beneficiary is a particular group or the public as a whole. Moreover, users may have a statutory right, be involuntary users or a member of low priority targets. As Everitt and Hardiker point out: 'vulnerable people and groups are not necessarily served well by market driven criteria'; and, 'consumers may be seen as citizens with expectations of equal opportunities, representation and participation in services. However, citizens have not exactly participated in the design and use of performance indicators.' (1996:72)

While key participants stakeholders or critical reference groups are usually not involved in establishing performance indicators for program level evaluation of public services this situation is changing as broader whole of government programs aimed at strengthening communities are being developed. There are several projects in Australia and overseas where citizen participation is being sought in developing social indicators to measure economic, social and environment wellbeing at individual and collective levels. The *Tasmanian Together* and *Victorian social benchmarks and indicators* are two examples of such initiatives. While it is difficult to quantify and measure intrinsic values such as equal opportunities, representation, meaningful participation and social justice — which are heralded as fundamental values of Australian society — these initiatives do provide some useful and appropriate examples which will be explored further in discussions with Indigenous stakeholder groups.

Everitt and Hardiker (1996:75) suggest that performance indicators can be useful 'as a tool for monitoring social welfare services' and for generating evidence of 'the practice through inputs and intended outputs and outcomes' and 'the processes of providing services in a principled, competent and caring manner'. They explore a critical approach that includes an analysis of power in developing performance measures and determining and interpreting data. They also state that data needs to be suggestive and exploratory rather than explanatory in situations where numbers are small or change has occurred. This situation is often the case with research in Indigenous contexts, highlighting the need for research outcomes to have local and context specific relevance rather than focus primarily on outcomes of national significance.

Performance measures for evaluating good practice need to collect data related to program practices, staff attitudes and processes in relation to equal opportunity, regard for Indigenous rights and cultural differences. Evaluations need to both promote and inform discussion about program effectiveness both in terms of program goals and objectives, and the values and ethics underlying the provision of social services such as housing, health and education within a democratic society.

Measures of Indigenous Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Maher (2001) describes social disadvantage as 'the outcome of some systematic unfairness in the distribution of resources and opportunities that inhibited the pursuit of a fulfilling life' (cited in National Shelter Inc. 2001:v). The ABS produces the majority of the data used by both Federal and State governments to measure and address policies on socioeconomic disadvantage for Indigenous peoples. The ABS has developed an index of socio-economic disadvantage to measure changes in social status of the whole Australian population as well as to make comparisons with the Indigenous population at regional, state, territory and national levels. The ABS uses a statistical technique known as Principle Component Analysis to produce indexes to measure socio-economic disadvantage/advantage. An index comprises two or more indicators which are found to correlate to give a combined weighting on some specific area. These indicators are selected or discarded on the basis of intuitive reasoning and conformity to face validity and local knowledge (McLennan, 1998). The ABS has developed a range of discrete indexes to measure rural and urban disadvantage and advantage. Variables of socioeconomic disadvantage generally include family income, unemployment, housing status, Aboriginality and ethnicity, educational attainment and access to services/resources.

Moore et al (2001:12) state that official ABS data 'represents one of the most powerful and robust sources of information to social researchers'. However, there are some limitations which need to be acknowledged. The selection of variables is to some extent subjective and restricted by statistical parameters to ensure validity. This tends to result in the under representation of some variables such as family structure and infrastructure and locational disadvantage (McLennan, 1998). Clearly these are variables which have relevance for research and evaluation in Indigenous contexts. It is important to note that the inclusion of different underlying variables would result in different indexes. The fact that the data are aggregated does not necessarily illuminate locational and culturally specific issues for research and evaluation purposes. Nevertheless ABS data can provide a powerful backdrop for evaluating broad areas of programmatic change over time. For example, research by Neutze, Sanders and Jones (2000), *Estimating Indigenous housing need for public funding allocation: a multi-measure approach* shows changes in affordability and overcrowding between the 1991 and 1996 census.

Gray and Auld claim that 'Many of the variables included in the ABS standard index of socioeconomic disadvantage for the total Australian population do not provide unambiguous and/or culturally appropriate measures of socioeconomic disadvantage for Indigenous Australians' (Gray & Auld 2000:v). In order to overcome some of the problems with the ABS analysis of data, Gray and Auld have developed a relative index of socioeconomic disadvantage based on the ABS data from both 1991 and 1996. Using a relative scale of comparison of Indigenous disadvantage between ATSIC regions, they show that the socioeconomic status of Indigenous people in the best ranked ATSIC regions is very low as compared to non-Indigenous Australians.' (Gray & Auld, 2000:10)

Gray and Auld use four main indicators for measuring socioeconomic disadvantage. These are:

1. Access to financial resources, which is measured in accordance with the Henderson Poverty line.
2. Housing adequacy, which is measured by calculating the bedroom requirement against the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with the ratio used to determine the degree of overcrowding.
3. Levels of education. This is measured by the amount of people over the age of 15 who do not have a post-secondary education qualification.
4. Employment is measured by people over the age of 15 who are unemployed (The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) is treated as unemployment). The aim of which is to give some indication of access to financial resources and social status as well as non-monetary outcomes such as a sense of purpose (Gray & Auld, 2000:v & vi).

Preliminary discussions with Indigenous stakeholders suggest that existing indicators are not really adequate. For example, the categorical treatment of CDEP as unemployment does not take account of those situations where Indigenous communities are utilising CDEP (notwithstanding its shortcomings) to harness their own internal resources and to determine future directions. Moreover, other indicators identified in the Framework of Analysis outlined in Section Two, such as frequency of incarceration and entanglement with the legal system, can equally affect Indigenous socio-economic status.

As Neutze, Sanders and Jones (2000) show there are also limitations with respect to using specific housing indicators to measure need for funding allocations for different types of housing programs. They discuss four housing variables or dimensions: adequacy; affordability; cultural appropriateness and security of tenure. For their research they disaggregate housing adequacy into overcrowding, homelessness, services in the housing and housing conditions, making a total of seven dimensions all of which were discussed earlier in the paper. Also using the ABS data from the 1991 and 1996 census they undertake a multi-measure analysis focusing on three of these housing dimensions, affordability, overcrowding and homelessness.

Their research confirms differences in need based on geographic distribution and affordability of different types of tenure among Indigenous households and individuals in Australia. Neutze, Sanders & Jones (2000:16) suggest the need for further research and data collection related to other housing dimensions, including cultural inappropriateness, poor conditions, absence of services and insecurity of tenure to supplement their research. Their analysis highlights the limitations of using measures based solely on need. Importantly, they conclude that using these indicators to allocate funds may perversely penalise programs or organisations which are effectively addressing housing issues (Neutze, Sanders & Jones 2000:17). They suggest that such measures should only be used to inform policy debate and argue the need of a 'countervailing principle' on the basis of the 'capacity to deliver' to avoid such policy paradoxes.

In the remainder of the research we will discuss whether existing ABS indicators adequately take into account Indigenous perspectives and experiences in measuring socio-economic disadvantage.

Measures Of Indigenous Wellbeing

It is equally important in future discussions to determine Indigenous perceptions of indicators of individual and community wellbeing. The *Victorian Social Benchmarks and Indicators Consultants' Report* (Salvaris et al., 2000a:40) suggests that wellbeing 'can be assessed through a combination of objective and subjective measurements (i.e. in a person, both physical and mental health, and the development of skills and relationships).' Based on our discussion earlier in the Positioning Paper we suggest that indicators of wellbeing in Indigenous contexts will be strongly linked to notions of

the realisation of individual and collection self-determination, strengthening community capacity and access to resources as well as improvements in housing, health and mental health, education and economic parity on Indigenous terms. For this reason it is suggested that Indigenous perceptions of 'having control over the futures' will need to established together with more tangible indicators.

A list of example vision statements, goals and indicators (Indigenous, democratic, economic, and environmental) is currently being compiled for discussion with stakeholders along with the two frameworks presented here. It is suggested that these elements and the arguments developed this Positioning Paper fit well with the 'principal component areas for indicator framework' proposed within the Victorian project, (Appendix 4).

Conclusion

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, states that 'Compared to other Australians, Indigenous people experience poorer health, shorter life expectancy, limited employment and educational opportunities, and higher rates of imprisonment.' (2000). These social indicators defy the notion of Australia as 'the lucky country' for Indigenous people — instead they bear witness to the lasting effects of systematic oppression of Indigenous people through government policies and programs as fundamental, ubiquitous and seemingly benevolent as housing. The provision of housing is acknowledged as a most basic right of all citizens in democratic society. As mentioned at the beginning housing is also recognised under the International covenant of social, economic and cultural rights as fundamental to Indigenous self-determination.

This paper suggests that the overall measurement of the prevalence of disadvantage as reported in existing ABS survey data and the subsequent analysis based on the statistics may be misleading. It may underestimate the real level of disadvantage and therefore obfuscate the causes of disadvantage.

Given the limitations of existing data collection the actual extent of disadvantage illustrated by a range of indicators, particularly housing (and their subsequent analytical value) may be questionable. Do existing statistics derived from survey data represent the real picture of housing for Indigenous individuals, families and communities? Do they illuminate the links between housing and education, employment, health, emotional and social wellbeing, criminal or anti-social behaviour? While existing data may reveal changes in broad trends they do not readily show the interrelationship or causal links between housing need and poor health, domestic violence and unemployment, lower retention and academic achievement at all educational levels. Even so they show that inequalities in the provision of housing are persistent. What are the reasons for this? Are existing housing programs and interventions effective? If not, what changes need to occur in existing programs? Are other (external) factors impacting on program outcomes? Is it a question of greater allocation of resources or something else? These are just some of the questions that continue to beleaguer program managers and policy makers. The fact that these questions continue to defy easy answers highlights the need to establish more appropriate and comprehensive evaluation and research data collection approaches.

This paper has argued that contemporary national, state and local government housing policies, program and whole of government strategies and interventions to strengthen community need to be monitored and evaluated in accordance with the principles and Indigenous research framework proposed here. This framework encompasses principles, goals, evaluation methods/methodologies and social indicators that recognise the rights and interests of Indigenous people consistent with the goals of social democracy. In doing so it provides the means to actualise

principles such as ‘partnership’ and Indigenous self-determination through evaluation and research.

Embracing both critical and Indigenous standpoints this framework incorporates an analysis of power relations and takes into account and acknowledges the interrelationship of the historical, geographic and cultural factors impacting upon the social and economic position of Indigenous people.

5. STUDY METHODOLOGY

Phase One: Defining /assessing evaluation approaches and measures

The first phase of the research involves both identifying various evaluation approaches and measures and establishing a principles framework by which to consider appropriateness of evaluation approaches and methods used in Indigenous housing contexts. This research utilises a process of meta-evaluation in order to address the first question: *What qualitative and quantitative methodologies are required to provide a comprehensive assessment of housing programs and interventions?*

The term, meta-evaluation which was originally coined by Michael Scriven (1969) refers to the evaluation of evaluations or evaluators. As Smith (1981:267) writes the 'primary reason for conducting meta-evaluations is to understand and improve the practice of evaluation itself.' Meta-evaluation studies may be undertaken for several reasons including: to assess the quality, impact, or utilisation of existing or new evaluation approaches; to study the nature of the evaluation process; and/or to identify and control for bias, abuse or misuse in evaluation (Smith, 1981:267). Smith also outlines some of the different ways to conduct meta-evaluations which include: research on evaluation methods, methodological critique and performance audits, collective professional discussions, secondary data analysis, application of review of formal standards and formal criticism (op.cit.:268). All of these forms of meta-evaluation will be utilised throughout this project.

Meta-evaluations can focus on some or all aspects of an evaluation study including 'its design, management, instruments, data, results, impact, personnel, purpose, setting, reporting, or any combination of these' (Smith, 1981:268). Meta-evaluations can be described as a form of critical inquiry aimed at 'illuminating' the nature of an evaluation study' and 'rendering judgement' on its purpose, or 'quality' (loc.cit). Such critical inquiries have the potential to inform and improve evaluations, or as Smith states 'they have the power to sharpen methodological debate in evaluation while simultaneously increasing our appreciation of evaluation practice' (op.cit:268).

Meta-evaluations require the specification of criteria being used to judge the quality of an evaluation in advance. A number of standards already exist which have been endorsed by the Evaluation Associations as the basis upon which to assess the worth of an evaluation undertaken by Association members. Scriven and Roth (1977) (cited in Smith, 1981:309) have also identified a list of 13 checkpoints to be taken into account in the conduct of meta-evaluation including such criteria as utility, validity and feasibility.

However, this research encompasses a process to develop a set of criteria with Indigenous stakeholders to assess the appropriateness of existing evaluation approaches. This involves the discussion of principles identified by various Indigenous academics and researchers together with consideration of the criteria identified above.

Smith put forward two further points with respect to identifying criteria that have relevance to this research (1981:311). The first is that all evaluations are conducted under time, legal and economic constraints. From our perspective such constraints may limit or compromise the evaluation process and findings and should serve to caution against the uncritical utilisation of evaluation findings, achieved under such limitations, especially if they have the potential to further disadvantage user or clients groups intended to benefit from a program or service.

The second by Smith, that meta-evaluation should be part of every evaluation is equally important. Smith suggests evaluators need to critique their own efforts, and through documentation of their processes, make it possible for others to do the

same. We suggest that this is particularly critical when evaluating program and services in Indigenous contexts. One of the aims of this research is to attempt identify, through discussion with a range of Indigenous stakeholders, a list of appropriate principles and criteria for the conduct of meta-evaluation in Indigenous contexts as well as to inform program evaluation approaches.

Consistent with the point we made earlier regarding the need to specify criteria for a meta-evaluation we have agreed to work in accordance with the principles and framework for evaluation proposed in this Positioning Paper. In a sense we are engaging in a meta-meta evaluation process and reflexive praxis. This involves reflecting on whether our own processes fit the principles postulated so far, as well as evaluating approaches in accordance with the framework of analysis being proposed.

Positioning Paper

A Positioning Paper for discussion with relevant stakeholder groups has been completed on the basis of the literature review and preliminary discussions with some key Indigenous stakeholders.

Groups will be asked to consider the relevance and appropriateness of the research principles and processes, evaluation methods outlined in this paper and to consider social outcome measures for application in Indigenous housing contexts in Australia.

In addition Indigenous authors referred to in the literature review, and other people nominated by the user group, will be sent copies of the Positioning Paper and asked to comment on our representation of their views and the principles framework.

A copy of the Positioning Paper will be forwarded to members of National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee for comment.

Discussion and focus groups

Part of the methodology of this project is to consider evaluation approaches and measures with reference to existing programs, intervention and strategies. The Positioning Paper will be distributed to the User Group and various other stakeholders. It will provide them with an opportunity to contribute further ideas regarding evaluation approaches and measures based on the ideas presented in the Paper and their own experiences with their respective program areas.

A key benefit of undertaking discussion with these different groups is that it provides an opportunity to consider the efficacy of different evaluation models in assessing housing programs in Indigenous contexts across different sites, urban, rural and remote.

Discussions will be held with individuals and small groups to obtain their perspectives about the most appropriate and useful social indicators and methods to evaluate housing support programs and interventions. Discussions will be held with groups to determine what elements need to be measured, and how they need measured.

Stakeholders will be asked to consider the adequacy of an evaluation which seeks to answer the following questions:

- Which elements of the program are effective in achieving program objectives?
- In what ways, if any, do these various elements of programs contribute to social and/or economic wellbeing outcomes for individual, families and communities?
- What are the likely obstacles/constraints and benefits/opportunities of utilising this evaluation method in different contexts?

The research team has identified a User Group comprising key Indigenous stakeholders, including members of the Aboriginal Housing Board, representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Aboriginal organisations delivering housing assistance programs. Discussions will be held with relevant individuals and groups to obtain their perspectives about the most appropriate and useful social indicators and methods to evaluate housing support programs and interventions.

Phase Two: Data Gathering and cumulative analysis

Data Collection Methods

A range of data collection methods are being used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to this project. Workshops, small group discussions and interviews will provide a key form of data collection and participatory involvement with stakeholder groups. Several meetings have already taken place with Indigenous service providers involved in the Coalition of Aboriginal Agencies who have a stake in housing.

Quantitative data is being obtained through existing statistical data sources such as ABS, CHINS and FACS Research sheets. Statistical data is employed for both the purpose of comparative analysis and to provide an understanding of the current situation of Indigenous housing within the wider Australian context.

Qualitative data will be obtained using a range of different methods including questionnaires, activity records, participant feedback, notes from an Aboriginal Coalition workshop and Aboriginal Housing forum, focus groups, semi-structured or unstructured interviews, participant observation, policy analysis, a review of relevant literature and government reports, newspaper reports and departmental and organisation reports.

The project team will continue to undertake workshops and discussions with all stakeholders, including consumers and practitioners involved in programs and initiatives intended to strengthen communities. The aim of these discussions is to identify, from various stakeholder perspectives, the elements and factors which need to be taken into account in program evaluation and programs and initiatives which contribute to strengthening community. Providers will also be asked their views on who should be involved in evaluation processes; how much weight they give to tenants and other community stakeholders perspectives, and to consider existing processes to obtain community views of the impacts of housing initiatives.

Currently Derbarl Yerrigan are collating outcomes of the '*Noongar Housing Summit 2001'* which will be used to inform our final paper.

Literature Review

A literature review is being undertaken on an ongoing and iterative basis in order to provide an overview of different evaluation approaches and methodologies currently being used to evaluate housing programs and interventions. Particular attention is being paid to the strengths and limitations of these approaches in specific social, political and geographic contexts. This will allow housing providers to identify examples of best practice, possible areas for improvement and resourcing as at a programmatic level together with an understanding of the structural, political, social and cultural factors within the broader policy and decision making context.

We are also continuing to collect and review policy documents and research reports related to Indigenous housing programs which we identified in our initial search. In addition relevant AHURI research outcomes will be scanned. Discussions has taken place with other researchers currently undertaking AHURI projects on comparative evaluation models for assessing health, economic and social (Moore et al., 2001) to

assess whether the guidelines or evaluative models identified in their research have relevance for this project.

Our initial literature search of the Department of Family and Children Services (FACS) Research and Evaluation Digest has revealed that there are several research projects being undertaken which may have relevance to this research. We intend to follow-up on these to inform the final report. It is also intended to consider the relevance of methodologies identified in research being carried out by Australian National University to analyse the link between housing, social and economic wellbeing outcomes. This research project will consider the feasibility and worth of measuring changes of outcomes in retrospective and aggregate form, where the data may provide baseline data for longitudinal surveys for further study.

Phase Three: Final Analysis and reporting

The final report will be based on the final analysis of data gathered and analysed cumulatively from workshops, small discussion and individual interviews. It will provide an overview of existing programs and an assessment of these based on the criteria established and including all stakeholder perspectives. It will also provide a tentative set of social indicators which incorporate Indigenous terms of reference to measure programs and interventions directed towards building community capacity and strengthening community.

Dissemination

At least one seminar will be held with user groups and two papers including the Positioning Paper and a findings paper will be presented at state or national forums or conferences. Information will also be presented at a seminar for user groups and other interested groups, including policy groups. The reporting structure will provide government service providers and community organisations with information regarding the most effective and appropriate evaluation approaches and measures for housing program in Indigenous contexts.

The Project Team

Roz Walker, the Project leader, is employed by CIRC working under the directorship of Darlene Oxenham.

Cheryle Taylor and John Ballard are employed by CIRC as researchers. Both co-researchers will bring valuable expertise and experience to the project. They are postgraduate students with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies. Cheryle is an Indigenous researcher with direct links in the community and Indigenous housing arena.

John Scougall is a full time senior lecturer in the Indigenous Research and Development Postgraduate Program at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University. John provides mentorship and postgraduate supervision to both postgraduate researchers.

Curtin Indigenous Research Centre (CIRC)

CIRC was established in early 1997 with funding from the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). CIRC's purpose is to increase Indigenous research capacity, knowledge, leadership and access, especially in relation to issues of education, training and professional development. In addition an important part of CIRC's role is to assist Indigenous communities to:

- Gain greater access to the research resources and findings increasingly essential to community planning and representation; and
- Determine, participate in and own the outcomes of community research projects.

CIRC is committed to the principles of empowerment and ensuring Indigenous control and participation in all research as well as the capacity to shape Indigenous futures. CIRC operates to ensure that all research and development activities are responsive to Indigenous community needs and priorities and contribute to positive social change.

CIRC also sustains a publications program, with particular emphasis on dissemination strategies appropriate to Indigenous Australian circumstances and needs. It contributes at local, state and national levels to discussion and debate about alternative paradigms and processes as applied to Indigenous community needs. Indigenous housing is an important need in this regard.

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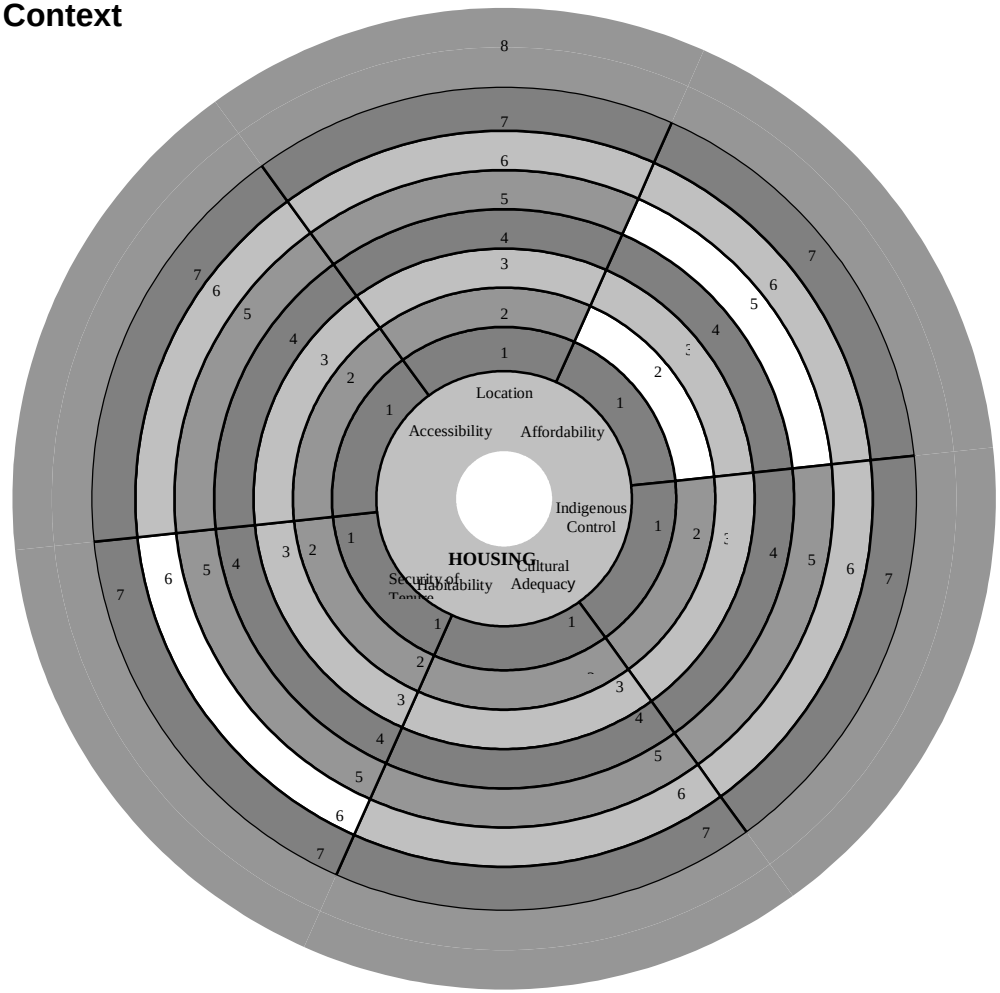
Appendix 1: List Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Stakeholders

Indigenous Stakeholders	Position
Manguri Corporation	Transitional Accommodation Program coordinator Housing Support worker Housing Support worker Child Community Care Manager
Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services	Community Health Nurse Primary Health Worker
Coalition of Agencies: • Manguri Corporation • Aboriginal Legal Service • Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services • Aboriginal Advancement council • Yorganup • Noongar Alcohol substance Abuse Services	 Director Director Director Director DirectorDirector
Individual	Community representative
Individual	Community representative
Individual	Community representative
Department of Aboriginal Housing	Executive Director
Indigenous Family Program	Coordinator

Non-Indigenous Stakeholders	Positions
Tenants Advice Service	Representative
Shelter WA	Representative
Geraldton Resource Centre	Tenancy Advocate

Appendix 2

Indigenous Housing Program Evaluation Indexes and Context



Non-Housing Indexes and Context of Social Disadvantage/Advantage

1. Individual/family and community health and wellbeing
2. Access to family and social networks
3. Access to education and standard of education
4. Access to employment and type of employment
5. Access to financial resources
6. Access to services
7. Frequency of incarceration and legal entanglement
8. Economic /Social / Political / Legal / historical context

- Indigenous cultural practices and responses
- Non-Indigenous community perceptions and responses to Indigenous people
- Government policies effecting Indigenous people

Note:
This diagram shows the complex relationships between housing and non-housing indexes for measurements of social disadvantage/ advantage. Furthermore, it highlights that social disadvantage/ advantage occurs within a broader economic, social, political, legal and historical context. Evaluations of any one area need to take into account all other areas in order to assess the impact of intervention programs

Appendix 3: Operationalising Indigenous Research Principles and their Guiding Values

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development*

Values Underpinning Indigenous Research		**Generosity**	**Respect**	**Dignity**	**Tolerance**	**Equality**	**Freedom**	**Diversity**	**Reciprocity**	**Equity**
Human Rights / Cultural Democracy										
Principles guiding Indigenous research		**Context principles**				**Action Principles**				
		To work in an Indigenous cultural/ political framework	**To Identify Power Difference through:** ♦ **Gender relations** ♦ **Cultural knowledge** ♦ **Colonial domination, past and present**	**To acknowledge Diversity in:** ♦ **Culture** ♦ **Environment** ♦ **Language**	**To acknowledge variations of disadvantage**	**To assist Indigenous people with their search for a better future**	**To be guided by Indigenous people involved in the research**	**To benefit the Indigenous participants and Indigenous people in general**	**To prioritise Indigenous knowledge and experience**	**To involve Indigenous people**	**To assist Indigenous Capacity Building**
Goals of Indigenous Research	**Maximise Indigenous participation**	Use structures that are already in place to encourage participation.	Identify how power relations may prevent/assist participation of the community	Be aware and responsive to different cultural and family groups that may impact on the research	Minimise the stress of the research on the participants	Involve as many Indigenous participants as possible in identifying needs	Engage an Indigenous reference group that has strong links with the community	Discussions with the community about benefits of the research can assist in maximising participation	Ensure that the information shared by the researcher is in a language understandable by the community	Involve the Indigenous participants in as many aspects of the research as possible	
	Strengthening Community/ Capacity Building	Be responsive to the needs of the Indigenous participants	Identify how power relation hinder/contribute to the communities development. Also identify the strengths in the community have overcome any hindrances.	Identify difference as a strength	Research to build on the community strengths	Assist the community in Identifying options	Assist the community in fulfilling identified needs	Assist the community members in developing research skills	Facilitate the exchange of the participants knowledge within the community. Eg research of language programs		
	Effective & efficient	Identify a schedule that fits in with the community's time frame and allow for deviation due to unforeseen circumstances eg a funeral in the community	Identify how power relations hinder/contribute to Indigenous ways of working			Possible future outcomes need to be assessed within the capacity of the community	Use the reference group to assist in decisions on what is effective and efficient in the community	The Indigenous participants must benefit from decisions on effectiveness and efficiency	Indigenous understandings of effectiveness and efficiency needs to be prioritised over economically driven interpretations		Decisions on effectiveness and efficient must assist in building strengths in the community
	Indigenous Self-determination	Do not claim expertise on Indigenous issues	Identify how power relations hinder/ contribute to self-determination	Identify different views within the community		Listen and respond to the aspirations of the participants	Researcher to be guided by an Indigenous reference group	Ensure that the research serves the community's agenda	Express the Indigenous participants' strengths through the research	The greater the involvement of Indigenous participants the greater chance for community self-determination rather then fractional groups determination	The research needs to be assessed in its capacity to assist in self-management of the community

* Article 3 The Draft Declaration of Indigenous Rights

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development*

Values Underpinning Indigenous Research	**Generosity**	**Respect**	**Dignity**	**Tolerance**	**Equality**	**Freedom**	**Diversity**	**Reciprocity**	**Equity**
Human Rights / Cultural Democracy									

	Principles guiding Indigenous research	**Context Principles**				**Action Principles**					
		To work in an Indigenous cultural/ political framework	**To Identify Power Difference through:** ♦ **Gender relations** ♦ **Cultural knowledge** ♦ **Colonial domination, past and present**	**To acknowledge Diversity in:** ♦ **Culture** ♦ **Environment** ♦ **Language**	**Acknowledging variations of disadvantage**	**To assist Indigenous people with their search for a better future**	**To be guided by Indigenous people involved in the research**	**To benefit the Indigenous participants and Indigenous people in general**	**To prioritise Indigenous knowledge and experience**	**To involve Indigenous people**	**To assist Indigenous Capacity Building**
Goals of Indigenous research	**Empowerment (Individual and Collective)**	Legitimise Indigenous cultural and political structures through the research	Identify how power relations hinders/contributes to empowerment			Legitimise the Indigenous participants future goals through the research	Disempower oneself to varying degrees in order to empower the community's views (this is mainly applicable to non-Indigenous researchers)	Ensure that the research serves the community's agenda	Legitimise Indigenous knowledge through the research	The greater the involvement of Indigenous participants the greater chance of empowerment	The areas and extent to which the community gains research skills and other skills needs to be determined by the community
	Dual Accountability: Partnership	Guidelines that are both acceptable to the researcher and the community need to be discussed and adhered to	Identify how power relations hinder/contribute to dual accountability processes	Partnerships need to allow for different opinions		The researcher should not make promises that s/he can not guarantee	The researcher should discuss accountability processes with the reference group	Accountability processes must benefit the community	Accountability processes must be acceptable within the community's knowledge framework	Accountability processes must have input from the community	
	Appropriate representation	The research must reflect the community's cultural/political framework in a way that is acceptable to the community	Represent the community with an understanding of the power relationships	Acknowledge diversity of views within the community		The research must reflect the community's aspirations in a way that is acceptable to the community	Representations of the community must reflect the community's view of themselves	The representations of the community and the research matter must reflect the positives of the community	The research must reflect the community's knowledge system/s	The representations of the community must reflect the level of participation by the community	
	Indigenous Control and ownership	Identify political and cultural processes as belonging to the community	Identify how power relations hinder/contribute to Indigenous control and ownership	Be aware of factional differences within the community		Identify goals and aspirations as belonging to the community	Use the reference group to assist in identifying control and ownership issues	Ownership over processes and outcomes will lead to greater benefits for the community	Discuss issues of copyright of the research including Indigenous cultural knowledge captured in the research.		

This diagram shows the intersection of context and action principles with the goals of Indigenous research. Not all of these principles or goals may be helpful for all research/evaluation projects. However, the fundamental principle of Indigenous self-determination is non-negotiable as being the foundation to all research concerning Indigenous peoples.

* Article 3 The Draft Declaration of Indigenous Rights

APPENDIX 4: Principal component areas for indicator framework

[7]

Social and community wellbeing				Democracy and governance	Economic wellbeing	Environmental wellbeing
Individual wellbeing	Group wellbeing	Community wellbeing				
		Qualities	Infrastructure			
Health and wellbeing (physical and mental)	Children and families	Fairness, equal opportunity, social mobility	Public and civic institutions	Democracy	Viable and sustainable productivity	**Health and sustainability of ecological systems**
Education and training (whole of life)	People on low incomes	Social capital and trust	Planning and physical infrastructure	**Human rights**	Economic viability	Environmental quality (air, water, land)
Income, wealth and poverty	People with disabilities	**Health and viability of communities**	Community services	Justice and legal rights	Appropriate job creation	Environmental diversity (species etc)
Safety and security	Women	Citizenship and community participation	Transport	Good governance, effective management	**Healthy regional, local economies**	Sustainable use of natural resources
Personal development	Older persons	Creativity enterprise and innovation	Media and communications	Local government		
Housing	Ethnic and NESB groups	Crime and social dysfunction	Culture and the arts			
Employment and work life	**Indigenous people**		Recreation and sport			
	People in remote and rural communities					

This table C-5 is from the VSBI: Consultants Report (2000:51, emphasis added) which states:
Note: This table outlines a map of an overall model of community wellbeing. It shows the interrelationship between the key components, and the different layers (material/subjective, individual/collective, ethical, spatial etc) which together make up an integrated and comprehensive model of community wellbeing and development.
Sources: International Index of Social Health, National Citizenship Project (Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne); Key indicator categories(United Nations Development Program, 1991-98)

Note: This model of community wellbeing shares similar components to Appendix 2 which operationalise many of the above from within an Indigenous /human rights framework and Appendix 2 which reflects the same interrelationships while centring Indigenous people and housing.

AHURI Research Centres

Sydney Research Centre
UNSW-UWS Research Centre
RMIT Research Centre
Swinburne-Monash Research Centre
Queensland Research Centre
Western Australia Research Centre
Southern Research Centre
ANU Research Centre

Affiliates

Ecumenical Housing Inc
Northern Territory University
National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling

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and Urban Research Institute

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