The Women’s Refuge and The Crowded House: Aboriginal homelessness hidden in Tennant Creek

Paul Memmott, Daphne Nash, Bernard Baffour and Kelly Greenop

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Institute for Social Science Research
The University of Queensland

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHL</td>
<td>Aboriginal Hostels Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHURI</td>
<td>Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.B.</td>
<td>Chris Burns, Minister for Housing, Northern Territory Government (early 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERP</td>
<td>Council of Elders and Respected Persons, Tennant Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Community Living Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNOS</td>
<td>Canadian National Occupancy Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRADAAG</td>
<td>Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAG</td>
<td>Barkly Region Accommodation Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FaHCSIA</td>
<td>Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Aboriginal Affairs (Australian Government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV</td>
<td>Family Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.B.</td>
<td>Georgina Bracken, Manager of the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRPA</td>
<td>Homelessness Research Partnership Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>Indigenous Coordination Council, Australian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSR</td>
<td>Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCAC</td>
<td>Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.P.</td>
<td>Night Patroller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pc</td>
<td>personal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Paul Memmott (principal author)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TCWR  Tennant Creek Women's Refuge
UQ    University of Queensland
Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Recent homelessness research for FaHCSIA in Indigenous Australia has focussed on regional centres where in many cases Indigenous homelessness problems have been steadily growing through the last decades. This study provides a report on Tennant Creek, the centre for the Barkly Region in the Northern Territory. To understand more of the dynamic nexus between Indigenous homelessness in Tennant Creek and service delivery practice and its problems, the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge was selected as a case study. The power of the case study lies in its description of a good practice service which taps into the social connectedness of the Aboriginal community and other associated issues.

The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge provides services to Aboriginal women from throughout the very large Barkly Region which is characterized by regular circular mobility patterns into and out of its regional centre of Tennant Creek. There are about 3780 Aboriginal people in the region of whom about 1700 are in Tennant Creek.

The Refuge is run on a daily basis by a Manager guided by a Management Committee of about ten women, including about five Aboriginal women. The staff of ten (full-time, part-time and shift workers) are predominately Aboriginal and provide the following key functions: crisis accommodation (eight beds), counselling, outreach support for women and their families and children, and domestic violence education for the region.

Women use the Refuge services for a variety of reasons. The primary one is as victims of domestic or family violence, either as actual victims or at risk of violence. Other common reasons are: the lack of transport to return home (i.e. dysfunctionally mobile women); the need for respite from crowded households and very stressful domestic environments; and, the need for survival help within non-functional houses (e.g. disabled women). These causal categories are often co-existing and represent four types of secondary homelessness according to the homelessness classification system of Memmott et al. (2012b). Due to the relatively small population of the Barkly region and the social dynamics of Aboriginal peoples, it is not readily possible for women victims to simply avoid or evade their families and husbands. Therefore the clients often return to their problematic circumstances resulting in a cyclic pattern of return visits to the Refuge.

The extent of this problem was investigated through a sample survey of actual household sizes (n = 80) and rough sleepers (n=48). The survey findings and
statistical analyses indicated that for the 80 households sampled, the average number of people per household was 9.91 with a standard deviation of 4.77 (see Table 4). The average number of people per bedroom per household was 3.14 with a standard deviation of 1.52. It is argued that this is a representative sample of all Indigenous households in Tennant Creek due to internal consistency of results using the non-parametric statistical techniques of ‘bootstrap’ and ‘jack-knife’ to analyse the sample.

The most critical finding of our analysis is that the mean size of Indigenous households in Tennant Creek was 9.91 at the time of the survey in early November (not a peak period of visitation), whereas the 2011 Census of Tennant Creek gives household size as 2.9 (see Table 1). How can this gross difference be explained, given that population growth since the Census could only add on approximately 0.5 persons to make a 3.4 average household size in the one-year interval. There are clearly two explanations, (i) the practice of the Census not to count visitors, and (ii) possible undercount in the Census.

With the knowledge that there can be an average of around ten Aboriginal people per house with a range of three to 25 during an off-peak time of the year in terms of bush visitations, the understanding of why there are high stress levels amongst many households and relatively high frequencies of family violence becomes much clearer. And consequently why between 13 and 39 adult women arrive per month at the Refuge.

At peak demand periods, turnover rate must increase to accommodate incoming women who are at high risk and/or victims of DV. As a result some women may have less than optimal length-of-stays. These factors create a dynamic of demand which is difficult and challenging to address with a consistent and even service delivery. Management problems include changing regimes of government funding (or even shifting policy environment), burn-out of staff who experience their own family trauma, and subsequent continuity of staff. Although lump-sum grants of government funds are provided for a set of specific staff roles, the staff find that they have to multi-task as a team in response to complex ever-changing client needs. There is therefore a basic misfit between the idealistic operational model as funded and the actual day-to-day demands within the physically small Women’s Refuge. Nevertheless, the authors found that the Refuge is performing very well within the social and economic parameters. On the other hand, the stressors on the Refuge are
high and show no signs of diminishing, especially while the level of crowding in Tennant Creek Aboriginal households remains as it is today.

Most recent (2011) ABS Census figures are misleading and do not reveal the full extent of this complex and multifaceted problem. Most remarkably, the figures do not suggest that there is a problem in Tennant Creek. Until the policy and funding bodies understand more fully the details of Aboriginal crowding and homelessness in the region, the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge will remain under-resourced and oversubscribed.

The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge has become an organisation that Aboriginal women can trust and so, in the way that people respond to other trusted organisations, they come to it with any problem. It requires an understanding of the trust relationship to reveal the interconnectedness of all of the social problems in Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region. The power of the case study therefore is the description of a good practice service which taps effectively into the Aboriginal social connectedness and associated social problems.

The findings in this paper raised the issue of whether there is room for an improvement in how the Census records visitors in general (by usual residence definition), and in particular for Indigenous households. For by masking or discounting the number and presence of visitors in regions of high circular mobility, the Census fails to capture the information that is salient to understanding the underlying reasons why social problems (including FV and DV) and personal psychological health problems (including stress) are prevalent and increasing in particular regional cities of Australia.
1. Introduction

As part of the FaHCSIA contracted research program titled ‘Developing Effective Service responses to homeless and public dwelling Indigenous people’, a research team led by Paul Memmott from the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre (AERC) selected Tennant Creek for a case study.

Memmott had worked in Tennant Creek in various projects since 1975, but most recently carried out a major study of family violence in the Barkly Region for Anyinginyi Health (PMA 2007, Memmott 2010), which raised the issues of the dynamic inter-relationships of family violence and homelessness in an Aboriginal population.

Individuals displaced by family violence fall into the category of secondary homelessness unless they take up rough sleeping in public or semi-public space in which case they fall into the homelessness category according to the recently revised ABS definitions (ABS 2012c). It will be shown later that homelessness in Tennant Creek appears to be best characterized as predominantly secondary (or hidden) homelessness in a broad sense. There is a particular set of problems focusing around the following sub-categories employed by Memmott, Birdsall-Jones and Greenop (2012b) in their classification of Indigenous homelessness, as set out in an earlier research report for FaHCSIA:

(i) At risk of homelessness: insecurely housed people (including those under threat of family violence).
(ii) At risk of homelessness: experiencing crowded housing.
(iii) At risk of homelessness: dysfunctionally mobile persons.

Definitions of these and other categories of homelessness are set out in the table in Appendix A. In terms of homelessness, it will be shown that Tennant Creek can be broadly characterized by an inter-related complex (or ‘field’) of problems revolving around housing shortage, large household formation, frequent household crowding, alcohol abuse and multiple family violence forms, regional circular mobility with seasonal fluctuations; and also some sub-standard (tin shed) dwelling and open camping, that extends into the primary homelessness category (‘rough sleeping’).
In shaping a case study in this regional town context, two salient aspects were selected for focus, in order to capture the character and dynamic of this multifaceted problem:

(1) The service delivery and client needs within the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge; and

(2) The extent of crowding (and housing need) in the public housing system given the always-transforming pattern of regional population movement and household dynamics.

An initial research question guided the project: ‘How can an eight-bed Women’s Refuge provide a good practice service in a town with a reported widespread Indigenous crowding problem?’. Following on from this question, three inter-linked research aims were identified: (i) to profile the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge and identify its good practice; (ii) to identify and model the extent of public place dwelling and crowding in Tennant Creek, and (iii) to understand the relationship between (i) and (ii). The research set out to explore these aims in the field although the extent of work was necessarily constrained by the modest budget and short time-line for the project.

The following section contextualizes the study site of Tennant Creek within the wider Barkly Region.
2. Profile of Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region

The Barkly Region of the central-east Northern Territory consists mostly of semi-arid red-sand plains of marginal pastoral value, punctuated by low mountains with intermittently flowing streams that flood into uninhabited desert areas. In the north and east is a different land system, that of the Barkly Tableland consisting of grey cracking soils and open grassland downs that combine with artesian bores to support world-class cattle grazing properties. The region is criss-crossed by two bitumen highways, the Stuart and Barkly Highways (see map in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Barkly Region showing main centres of Aboriginal population in larger font (smaller outstations not shown). (Note: Black outline is old ATSIC boundary; red boundary is new ABS boundary)
Despite its vast size, over 283,000kms\(^2\), the Barkly Region has a relatively small population. At the 2011 census, the population was measured at 5,722 with a high proportion of Aboriginal people, numbering 3,684 or about 84.4\% out of the total. (ABS 2012b).

Constraints to service delivery are typical of remote Australian regions and reflect the significant levels of socioeconomic disadvantage across the Barkly Region. Factors that impact on service delivery include the dispersed and sparsely populated settlement pattern, a considerable number of distinct decentralised Aboriginal language groups, and a wide range of demands on the limited number of service delivery staff with a high turnover.

In 2011, some 3,061 people (a little over half of the regional population) resided in the regional centre of Tennant Creek, of whom 1,592 were Indigenous (a little over half at 52\%) including a population of about 550 in the seven Community Living Areas (CLAs, formerly known as ‘Town Camps’). Each CLA comprised an Aboriginal corporation holding a lease over Crown land, mostly on peripheral areas of the town. In the north of the region, 505 people resided in the town of Elliott and its two town camps, pastoral stations and outstations, of whom 351 people (70\%) were Indigenous. Other sizeable Aboriginal settlements in the desert region were (1) Wutungurra to the east of Tennant Creek (near Epenarra Station) with 199 Aboriginal people; (2) Canteen Creek or Awurratila (Owairtilla) further east again, with 197 Aboriginal people; (3) Ali Curung (some 150kms to the south of Tennant Creek) with 485 Aboriginal people; and (4) Alpurrurulam in the far south-east of the region with 401 Aboriginal people. Some further 449 Aboriginal people were decentralised, mostly distributed on 38 outstations or homeland villages, often only seasonally occupied due to the mobile population (see Dreaver 2006).

In considering the potential clientele of the Women’s Refuge, there were some 1,168 women residing in Tennant Creek as recorded in 2011 Census over the age of 15 years, of whom it is estimated from ABS tables that some 607 of these were Aboriginal women.

We estimate that there were another 1146 Aboriginal adult women (over 15) recorded in the Barkly region in the 2011 Census, who could also comprise potential
likely clients. The total potential Aboriginal female adult clientele is thus in the order of 1753.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Indigenous No. (%)</th>
<th>Non Indigenous No.</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Average No. Bedrooms</th>
<th>No. Dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5722</td>
<td>3684 (64.4%)</td>
<td>2038</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>Tennant Creek Total</td>
<td>3061</td>
<td>1592 (52%)</td>
<td>1469</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td>Collector Districts</td>
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<td>7105601</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>61 (21.7%)</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7105602</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>226 (48.6%)</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>127</td>
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<td>7105603</td>
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<td>309 (50.1%)</td>
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<td>7105604</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>186 (34.9%)</td>
<td>346</td>
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<tr>
<td>7105605 NE Town Camp</td>
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<td>389 (98.5%)</td>
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<td>7105606</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>126 (56.5%)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>127</td>
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<td>7105607 SE Town Camp</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7105608 SW Town Camp</td>
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<td>7105609</td>
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<td>47 (42%)</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>7105610</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>98 (34.9%)</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>287 (82.5%)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>Elliot Outstations</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barkly Tablelands</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>109 (38.7%)</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julalkari</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>197 (61.9%)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpurruvalu</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>401 (93.9%)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen Creek</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>197 (91.2%)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wutsunguura</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>199 (96.6%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imangaro</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90 (94.7%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ali Curung</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>485 (90.3%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53 (94.6%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Populations, household size and average number of bedrooms for locations in the Barkly Region as reported in the 2011 census. (Source: ABS 2012) (Read in conjunction with Figure 2.)

---

1 These figures are subject to minor revision once ABS provides detailed age breakdowns for the Indigenous population.
Figure 2: Tennant Creek showing Statistical Area Level 1 and Statistical area 2 zones and their corresponding Collector Districts. Map adapted from Australian Standard Geographical Classification map of Tennant Creek (ASGC 2013).

The regional centre, Tennant Creek, is on Warumungu tribal land and contains residents from at least 11 of the 17 Aboriginal language or tribal groups in the region as well as other Australian, European and Asian families. Like other small regional centres Tennant Creek has many amenities including two hotels as well as several clubs with liquor licenses.

Tennant Creek may be described as two communities occupying the same space. While the division is not strictly along racial lines, there is essentially a traditional Aboriginal community living in the same location as a non-Aboriginal community with the expectations of living in an ‘ordinary’ Australian rural town. The two sets of expectations do not always coincide. Tennant Creek is really at the cutting edge of communities learning to live together (Tregenza & Tregenza 2004 p.14).

Most CLAs (formerly town camps) were of mixed tribal origins at the time of the study, however some territorialisation of groups remained evident from earlier decades. For example, northern Alyawarr people (from Epenarra, Canteen Creek) gravitated to Karguru CLA. Southern Alyawarr, Kaytej and Warlpiri people (from Ali
Curung) gravitated to the south-west CLAs (Dump Camp, Village Camp). Northern Warlpiri, northern Warumungu and Warlmanpa were in Tingkkarli CLA. Warumungu individuals resided in many of the CLAs. Each CLA had its own elders and leaders. Some CLAs had a reputation as visitor ‘partying camps’ characterized by heavy drinking, while some CLAs were relatively quiet; yet others had an even mix of alcohol drinkers and non-drinkers. Traditional cultural practices were maintained to some extent. There was a retention of male initiation ceremonies, which were conducted from restricted-access performance grounds near certain CLAs, resulting in a social bonding between the network of initiands (Memmott 2010).

Except for the township of Elliott, all other communities in the region were ‘dry’ (i.e. alcohol-free) being distanced from alcohol outlets in such remote locations. Leaders in such communities reported that in the absence of ‘grog and gunja’, everyone was ‘happy and loving’. However, regional mobility was high, with frequent visitation to Tennant Creek, and people often returned to their communities with alcohol or in an intoxicated state, despite local rules or by-laws often forbidding these activities. Leaders in these remote communities reported that due to the normally low incidence of family violence, they were often not well prepared when violence did happen. People would phone the nearest police station in the region, but the police usually could not respond quickly. Invariably the involved families had to sort out the problem themselves, which was potentially empowering if it worked, but traumatic if it did not (Memmott 2010).

Aboriginal mobility patterns have brought and continue to bring socio-economic pressure on households in Tennant Creek. Regional mobility peaks during the Australian Rules football season, which becomes a key situational factor underlying family violence in Tennant Creek. Not only is there alcohol-induced violence at games and on the streets afterwards, but problems also arise with visitors from other communities who stay-on in town camps after the game, drinking and partying for up to two weeks, and who later recycle into town for the next game (Memmott 2010).

Table 2 compares population change during the ten years between the 2001 and 2011 Census. It indicates that the population of Tennant Creek has grown modestly overall, but with a marked increase of about 50% in its Aboriginal population. The Aboriginal townships of Awurratila and Wutungurra have grown substantially by about a third as well, whereas the townships of Alpurrurulum and Ali Curung have had more modest increases. The population of the Elliott area has shrunk a little in that time. Also we note the increased non-Aboriginal population in Awurratila and
Alpurrurulum, indicating an injection of government money into services at those centres; the outstanding contrast is Wutungurra, which although having a commensurately-sized population has a comparatively small non-Aboriginal population, indicating a very low level of externally-funded servicing. It seems that the increase in non-Aboriginal population in some locations has resulted in an uneven distribution of services and funding across the Barkly region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Tennant Creek and Town Camps</td>
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<td>1469</td>
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<td>3061</td>
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<td>351</td>
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<td>505</td>
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<td>Alpurrurulam township</td>
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<td>Ali Curung</td>
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<td>499</td>
<td>535</td>
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<td>197</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>449</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>961</td>
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<td>3684</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>2038</td>
<td>5442</td>
<td>5722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Population comparison in the Barkly Region between 2001 and 2011 Census.

This table also indicates that the Tennant Creek Aboriginal population has increased by 1002 people in ten years or approximately 100 people per year. An estimate then of this population at the time of our survey in early November 2012 was 1700.

² There were 432 people whose Indigenous status was reported as unknown in the 2001 Census, but nil in this category in 2011.
³ ‘Remainder’ in 2011 includes the small Aboriginal settlements of Imangara (95 people), Tara (56 people), Julalikari serviced outstations (318 people) and Barkly Tableland pastoral stations and outstations (282 people).
3. The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge

Introduction
The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge was selected as a case study to explore the dynamic nexus between Indigenous homelessness in Tennant Creek and service delivery practice and its problems. A number of Aboriginal leaders recommended the Refuge for study as it was providing an essential and relatively effective service in response to homelessness issues.

The ‘Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge Incorporated’ was founded in 1989, but in its 23 year life has been reviewed and restructured twice, accompanied by shifts in management style. Services are provided to Aboriginal women from throughout the Barkly Region, which is characterized by regular circular mobility patterns into and out of its regional centre of Tennant Creek. The Centre is run on a daily basis by a Manager (G.B.) who operates within a constitution and is guided by a Management Committee of about 10 women, of whom about half are Aboriginal and mostly local. The staff of ten (a mixture of full-time, part-time and shift workers) provide the following key functions: crisis accommodation (eight beds), counselling, outreach support for women and their families, and domestic violence education for the region.

The Mission Statement of the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge is captured in the following:

“The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge provides support, accommodation and protection for women and children who are effected by violence or are in crisis. We network with other organisations to provide education and advocacy on the effects of violence on families and individuals. All services are designed to encourage the empowerment of women and children in the Barkly region.” (TCWR n.d.)

The Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge services women and children who come from all communities within the Barkly Region (see map in Figure 3). Note that whereas its clients come from throughout the Barkly Region (as per its Constitution), it has never received funding to actively travel and perform outreach work throughout the Region in a systematic manner. Its operations are predominantly constrained to Tennant Creek, the regional centre. (Memmott 2013 p. 2)

The Refuge comprises two premises rented from Territory Housing which are enclosed on one large site (see Figure 2). One house is the crisis accommodation house which contains eight beds for the clients, whilst the second house contains the
Refuge offices. There is a high security fence around this complex with a controlled entry gate. Over a number of years other facilities have been added inside the Refuge, including walkways, a children’s activity room, a large rotunda, a separate Counsellor’s Office and a storeroom.

**Services Provided by the Women’s Refuge**

Services are provided with a mix of Commonwealth and State funds. A primary function of the Refuge is supporting, accommodating and protecting women and children who are victims of domestic violence or in crisis (e.g. homeless). The Refuge is equipped to provide crisis accommodation for up to eight adult women and their children for up to three months duration, as well as providing a Domestic Violence (DV) service. Clients can self-refer or be referred by other community organisations. The Refuge provides food and shelter (it has eight beds) and a range of other services including information, advocacy, referral to support services including legal/court support, and practical support, such as access to transport, assistance with the removal of furniture and personal belongings. The service is open for 365 days per year and for 24 hours per day (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse 2001 p. 2, TCWR n.d., Memmott 2013).

Core services at the time of writing can be summarized as:

- Crisis accommodation and support for clients when inside the Refuge,
- Referral Service,
- Outreach support,
- Provision of domestic violence counselling,
- Educating the community about domestic and family violence and its effect on children (TCWR nd), and

Clients typically have economic, health, social and other problems including poverty, multiple health issues, social and personal conflicts, dysfunctional children and other family members, as well as substance abuse problems. The referral service thus links women clients to a range of networks and agencies.

Despite the Refuge having many service functions and goals, there is a practical and finite limit to the services that can be delivered at any one time, dependant on the staff capacity and other limitations of space and funding. According to the Manager,
the Refuge operates on an informal philosophy: “We can’t solve the whole world; so we do what we can do best, rather than try to do too much” (G.B. 18/07/12). In this context, the Manager must limit the extent of possible services at any one time. (Memmott 2013 p. 6)
Figure 3: Plan Layout of Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge, July 2012.
Refuge Governance and Management

On a day-to-day basis, the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge operates in a very measured and professional manner. This performance is founded upon a number of good-practice structural governance and administration elements, including its constitution, a management committee, strong membership support, developed policies and procedures, strategic plans and case notes documentation, together with a group of committed staff.

Six of the Association’s constitutional objectives pertain directly to domestic violence and family violence (ranging broadly from being aware of, response to, and elimination of family violence), and to specific service responses including crisis accommodation, counselling, referrals and children’s needs. Further service objectives cover network coordination, data maintenance, cultural appropriateness and achieving service standards. Other constitutional objectives pertain generally to women’s rights to self determine, self manage and develop their potential.

At the time of writing, the Association had over 60 members. Members did not pay any membership fees and membership was life-long. The members were predominantly Aboriginal people. An annual membership drive (with a barbecue) occurs on a Refuge Open Day which aims to encourage people to help, sponsor, and get involved with the work of the Refuge. Refuge staff also do community work to engage interest and raise awareness. This all helps to maintain and expand the membership (Memmott 2013 p.6).

The Refuge is run by a Management Committee elected by the membership as required by the Constitution, with an average of ten Committee meetings per year. The Constitution specifies that two of the Committee must be Aboriginal people. The Management Committee provides a set of community perspectives about the work of the Refuge, an exchange of professional information and a checking mechanism for managerial decisions. In the current Manager’s time, there has been an active, harmonious and mutually supportive working relationship between the Management Committee, the Manager and the staff of the refuge; all participate together in strategic planning workshops from time to time. Clearly this set of circumstances contributes greatly to the ability of the Refuge to achieve its outcomes (Memmott 2013 p.7).

The Refuge Policies and Procedures cover governance, organisation, operations, occupational health and welfare, and personnel. A Strategic Plan is maintained by
the Refuge Manager with input from both the Committee and the staff, and is regularly reviewed and updated. At the time of writing this profile, the goals of the Strategic Plan were (i) high quality client services, (ii) addressing community needs, (iii) an active and capable Board of Directors, (iv) well-respected and valued staff, (v) sufficient town housing for those at risk, and (vi) acquiring stable long-term funding for the Refuge services.

The staff of the Women’s Refuge keep case notes on clients in manual files; they then insert data from the files into the AIHW (Australian Government) database. The AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) designed pro-forma is long and complex, requiring maximum information on clients to be inserted. Due to client sensitivity upon admission, the Refuge staff record very minimal information at first, then later, when victims gradually tell their story, the forms are completed more fully. The web-based AIHW database (called ‘Ship to Shore’) was established by government on July 1st 2011 (Memmott 2013 p. 8).

Refuge Client Profile and Statistics

Although the Refuge is non-discriminatory in accepting women clients from any race or creed, 98% of the clients of the Refuge are Indigenous women. Prior to the establishment of the new national database, statistics were kept manually. Figures 4 and 5 indicate summary monthly records taken from the manual data records for the 29 month period from February 2009 to June 2011 (Jan 2009 not available). Figure 4 shows a fairly consistent pattern of Refuge usage with one exceptional spike in March 2011. In the manual entry for this month, there is a written note which states “very rainy weather; lots mosquitoes; big mob visitors”. Total admissions for this month (March 2011) were 102 women and children. For the other 28 months, the monthly range of total admissions was from 26 to 68; the range of numbers of adult women admitted was 13 to 39; and the range of children admitted was 8 to 41. The average monthly total (excluding the ‘spiked’ month) was 42.25 persons admitted (Memmott 2013 p. 8).
Figure 4: Monthly record of clients, both those admitted and people turned away, February 2009 to June 2011.

The graphs in Figure 4 also clearly show peak periods of admissions in Feb 2009, Nov 2009 to March 2010, and Oct 2010 to April 2011, which correlate with hot periods in the wet season when people from outstations and bush communities are likely to move seasonally into Tennant Creek to avoid the isolation that can arise from roads being rendered impassable by wet weather. Such client peaks are therefore predictable with the onset of the seasonal rains when people fear getting stranded ‘out bush’ with no food and fuel supplies. Client numbers generally fluctuate at other times depending on community situations and events, but these can be difficult to predict. If money is in the community (e.g. royalty payments), the Refuge is full to over-flowing. The Refuge receives many clients from remote communities, especially when families come to town for football, shopping or other services. In a worse-case scenario, there is a lot of high risk for clients. A maximum number of clients at one time in the recent past has been 17 people (women and children). An issue is how to accommodate them during such peak workloads with only eight beds. The strategy is as follows. If there are urgent DV victims requiring safe accommodation, every effort is made to fit them in. Mattresses are put on the floor
overnight and the Children’s Activity Room (see Figure 3) may also be used to accommodate further clients overnight. Young children share a bed with their mother so that more people can be accommodated. It is mostly the babies and younger children that come to the Refuge with their mother; older ones usually prefer to stay with extended family (Memmott 2013 p.13).

In addition to the data on admissions, there are data for those people turned away. Figure 4 clearly indicates a spike of people turned away for Feb 2011 and March 2011, of 58 and 43 persons respectively, corresponding with the admissions spike for March 2011. Putting those two months aside, the range is 0 to 31 persons who were turned away per month (Memmott 2013 p. 9).

Many clients have a drug and alcohol problem, but clients have to be sober to visit or stay in the Refuge. They are rejected if intoxicated, and referred to the Sobering Up Shelter run by BRADAAG (open five nights a week, but not open Monday and Sunday). If the person agrees to go to the Shelter, Night Patrol will transport them; if not, then the police may lock them up, or they may go off and drink some more or find some family to stay with. The combination of alcohol, drugs and mental health is the most challenging set of problems to service and treat. Clients tend to use alcohol as a self-medication technique but by doing so, invariably place themselves at risk again (Memmott 2013 p.15).

The Refuge statistics for the financial year July 2011 to June 2012, as provided from the new AIHW database contained a wealth of data which reinforce the above findings from the earlier period. Despite teething problems with the system which resulted in some data gaps, the following selective facts summarize admissions. There were 412 clients recorded for the year of whom 399 were Aboriginal, two Torres Strait Islander and 11 non ATSI (AIHW 2012: Report 2.4).

The permanent addresses were recorded for less than a half of these clients, but of those people, most were from Tennant Creek with small categories from Ali Curung, Alice Springs, Darwin and Queensland (AIHW 2012: 3.2.2, 3.2.4; Memmott 2013: 10). This indicates that the clientele are not restricted to the Barkly Region but are coming from wider afield along the two main highway systems crossing in Tennant Creek and connecting to opposite ends of the continent.
Figure 5: Age Profile of the 412 clients serviced during the period July 2011 to June 2012.

Figure 5 indicates the age profiles of 412 clients who were provided with Refuge services during 2011-12. It clearly shows five adult groups (ranging from 20 to 44 years of age), each representing about 10% of the clients (total 52.18%) as well as a children’s under 10 group representing 22.82% of the clients. Those who fall in the 10 to 19 year group and the over 45 year group constitute smaller categories of users. Over half the clients are therefore women in the 20 to 45 year old range.
Figure 6: Length of 603 accommodation periods at the Tennant Creek Women's Refuge during 2011-12 year.

Figure 6 (and its accompanying table in AIHW 2012) indicates that out of 603 presentations at the Refuge during 2011-12, 187 (31%) did not result in accommodation, 183 resulted in one day’s accommodation (30.35%), 184 resulted in 2 to 7 days accommodation (30.51%) and 49 resulted in longer periods of accommodation (8.14%). The high proportion of clients staying up to one week reflects a management practice of having to move clients on in order to make way for more needy presentations.

Of 603 support periods during 2011-12, some 571 were ‘initial closed periods’ including 133 for one day (23.29%), 262 for 2 to 7 days (45.88%) and 176 for over 8 days (30.83%). Another 32 ‘ongoing support periods’ occurred (Aust., AIHW 2012: Report 4.1.). Of the 603 presentations during 2011-12, only 19 (3.15%) were classified as ‘employee income’ indicating the low level of Aboriginal employment in Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region (Aust., AIHW 2012: Report 5.3.2.).

For those 331 persons who presented but were not assisted during 2011-12, some 89 (36.63%) were not provided with a service due to lack of accommodation, 74 (30.45%) were refused service who did not meet the entry criteria, 62 (25.51%)
rejected the offered service, and for 22 (9.05%) the agency was inappropriate for the service required by the client. Clearly the physical space limitation of the Refuge limits entry in certain cases. Failure to meet the entry criteria was most often due to intoxication, as indicated previously.

**Reasons for women coming to Refuge**

In general, two sorts of clients use the Refuge. One category are those seeking respite from difficult living conditions, and the other category are victims of DV or FV. A more detailed set of reasons why women come to the Refuge (Memmott 2013 p.13) articulated with categories of homelessness according to the Memmott et al. (2012b) and ABS (2012c) classifications are set out in the following Table.3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's Refuge Client Categories</th>
<th>Homelessness Categories of Memmott et al.</th>
<th>New ABS homelessness categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim of DV or FV (primary reason)</td>
<td>At risk of homelessness: Dysfunctionally mobile category</td>
<td>Homeless (lack of 1. security of tenure in the dwelling and 2. control of, and access to social relations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightened of potential DV/FV</td>
<td>At risk of homelessness: Dysfunctionally mobile category</td>
<td>Not homeless, instead unstable and at risk of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled elderly women with coping difficulty in houses</td>
<td>At risk of homelessness, insecurely housed</td>
<td>Not homeless, instead unstable and at risk of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough sleeper women in need of services</td>
<td>Public Place Dwellers (all categories)</td>
<td>Homeless (lack of 1. security of tenure in the dwelling; 2. control of, and access to social relations and 3. Adequacy of the dwelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient women needing support (eg. stranded bush women)</td>
<td>At risk of homelessness: Dysfunctionally mobile category</td>
<td>Not homeless, instead unstable and at risk of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women needs ‘time out’ from stressful households</td>
<td>At risk of homelessness: experiencing crowded housing category</td>
<td>If crowding is severe, then homeless; if not then instead unstable and at risk of homelessness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source for ABS Categories ABS (2012c) (Refer to Appendix A for full list of Memmott et al (2012b) categories).

Table 3: Reasons why women come to Tennant Creek Women's Refuge and how they relate to categories of homelessness and public place dwelling.)
It can be seen then that a large cross-section of the Women’s refuge clients are technically homeless in one sense or another according to these classifications.

Most clients for 2011-12 were self-referred (39.47%) with other dominant sources of referral being the police (14.26%), hospital (33%), family and/or friends (28%) and ‘other’ agencies (35%). The combination of self-referral and family/friends categories (67.47%) suggests that most clients rely on word-of-mouth information and advice from other Aboriginal community members. Unfortunately there is a large component (23.22%) who were recorded as ‘don’t know’ reducing the potency of the data (Aust., AIHW 2012).

Some data are available on the reasons underlying the 603 client presentations who were seeking assistance during the 2011-12 year, and although there is a large ‘don’t know’ component (24%), the stated dominant reasons are DV and FV (25.37%) and financial difficulties (21.72%), followed by time-out from family or other situation (7.63%), lack of family/community support (6.8%), itinerancy (3.48%), inadequate or inappropriate dwelling (3.32%) and other small categories. Unfortunately there were no data for 147 entries (24.38%) with ‘don’t know’ recorded (Aust., AIHW 2012).

Serious DV clients are referred by the Police or the Hospital. Elliott or Ali Curung Police also bring DV or FV victims into the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge. Serious DV clients are also referred back from Alice Springs; they have often been evacuated from the Barkly Region and hospitalized in the Alice Springs Hospital (with injuries too serious for treatment at the Tennant Creek Hospital). On a busy night, there may be two or three clients in the ‘serious’ category. They are given highest priority of entry into the Refuge. Certain families in Tennant Creek have a strong history of FV, but FV is not specific to any particular town camp or category of women. Another geographic category of serious DV clients are those travelling long distances from Queensland Alice Springs and Darwin, to escape high risk perpetrators (Memmott 2013 p.15).

According to the Refuge Manager, there are many women recycling through the Refuge, but there are no readily available statistics on this phenomenon. Women tend to keep coming back until they get securely housed. The staff are aware that it takes people a long time to change their situation, so there is a policy to “keep the door open to come back”. There is a need to provide support over a long period of time to plan an effective response for a violent partner. Women who leave the Refuge may well choose a life-path that leads them straight back into conflict with their violent partner. For example, clients may say that “my man will kill himself if I
leave him and I’ll get blamed”, or “my family want me to stay with that man; he was promised husband”. Another typical response is “this is my country; why should I have to get away from this man?”. For these reasons, the staff have to work differently in the Tennant Creek Refuge compared to a metropolitan refuge. Local victims usually do not wish to be sent away to hide as one might do in a large city; they often do not have family in distant towns and wish to remain in or near their homelands and continue to stay with their relatives. Nor is there the wide range of multiple complementary services to which clients can be referred, and to which one would typically have access in a large city (Memmott 2013 p.16).

Profile of the Refuge Staff

In 2012 the Refuge had five key staff including the Manager as well as another four staff each of whom were in charge of one key service being funded at that time. Although each has a principal role; all staff were multi-tasking. The organisational chart appears below in Figure 7. In August 2012 the Refuge staff included:

1. Women’s Refuge Crisis Accommodation and Services Manager
2. Assistant Manager and Child and Family Support (mainly outreach into the community),
3. Outreach Support Worker (into the community)
4. Domestic Violence Educator, and
5. Counsellor who provides services both internally and outreaches into the community.

The roles and positions of staff are always changing, partly due to changing government funding policies and partly because of changing client demands and needs. Most staff are multi-tasking within a non-hierarchical structure. Thus there is a need for multidisciplinary skilled staff to move between roles, especially roles (2), (3) and (4) above. There are usually three or four staff on duty during the day, but only one staff at night and one staff at the weekend. The part-time/full-time configuration is another variable. Most of the staff are Aboriginal women. An exception is the Counsellor, who was nevertheless highly-skilled at working in cross-cultural contexts, supporting many Indigenous clients and also some non-indigenous clients living in town. During 2009 to 2011, the Refuge outreach client numbers ranged from 3 to 35 per month (except for a spike of 51, again for March 2011) as indicated in Figure 4. The Counsellor also worked with Aboriginal men including prisoners and men at BRADAAG. One new full-time position had been funded,
starting in 2012-2013, to support parents and children who were at the Refuge with their mothers in the past (Memmott 2013 p.17).

![Organisational Structure Diagram]

**Figure 7: Organisational Structure, Tennant Creek Women's Refuge, according to funded positions.**

There has been a recurring managerial problem of staff continuity. Indigenous staff or Committee members form the majority of the interview panel so as to better select a candidate who can work well with the core client group. It is also important to attract younger staff as half of the current staff are over 50 years of age but this has proven difficult. There is a dominance of youth in the Barkly Shire with some 25% of population being under 17 (Memmott 2013 p.17).

The Manager and the Committee ensure a very flexible work environment, with sensitivity to understanding staff pressures (G.B. 23/05/2012). Nevertheless, through regular contact with Refuge clients, second-hand trauma is inevitable. Refuge staff may have experienced first-hand trauma themselves but also experience second-hand trauma from their dealing with the trauma from both the client contexts and their own family contexts. Tennant Creek Aboriginal employees have often never dealt
with their own forms of various second-hand and inter-generational trauma (Memmott 2013 p.9).

The difficulty of planning for the dynamics of demand – a critical managerial skill

Peak demand times for the Refuge are generally unpredictable. Except for the wet season, there are no predictable recurring patterns of usage because welfare and salary money can be received by families on any day of the week or month, triggering substance abuse in particular families, also on Mining Royalty distribution days. In a busy week, most of the eight beds in the Refuge are full for at least several nights. Receiving three or four hospital referrals in one night generates a busy workload (Memmott 2013 p.18).

Occupation of the Refuge might drop to three beds on some nights, and rise to six beds on other nights. Lengths of stay vary from only one night only up to one month for some clients. Others may stay on-and-off over long periods. The term ‘distinct stayer’ refers to a client who has had recurring stays usually due to recurring problem(s). A high-risk recurring client will always be admitted, irrespective of whether the Refuge is full or not. Even if “full” there must always be a proportion of spare beds kept for police and hospital referred clients. Sometimes when such clients are referred to the Refuge, they in fact do not want to stay there, so leave later on.

The dynamics of clients in need is captured by the following words of the Manager:-

“We are not full every day. But we never know when they’re going to come. We try to keep beds for urgent clients. Hard to balance who to let in and when to move clients out whose risk levels are reducing (even if they don’t have a house to go to).” (G.B. 18/07/12.)

Management of high-risk clients requires a sensitive understanding of the current social environment in the local communities. Every nightshift at staff handover, a review is carried out of the number of spare beds and the context and risk conditions of all clients’ admissions, e.g. whether a woman’s husband was drunk, or the woman just needs a rest. There is a need to weigh up the number of available beds with the risk potential of the night. For example, if a woman who is at high risk from her spouse leaves the Refuge and goes to the hospital and does not come back within a reasonable time, should her bed be kept? Or should it be given to another incoming client? (Memmott 2013 p.18).
4. Housing and Homelessness in Tennant Creek – Early Findings

Rough Sleeping in Tennant Creek

The author carried out an interview with Tennant Creek Night Patrol staff in July 2012 on Aboriginal people ‘sleeping rough’ in the town. Some 20 places in and around town were located where individuals were regularly or intermittently sleeping out. These places included abandoned or semi-demolished houses, camping sites in scrubby areas where bush materials are available to make windbreaks and warming fires, including near the town’s open stormwater drains, and adjacent to or in various tin sheds or unoccupied public buildings around the town and its Community Living Areas. It was said that none of these places could be predicted to be in use on any particular night, as individuals moved from one location to the next. The exception was an abandoned house on the north side of town where there were 8 to 10 people every night. It was estimated that at least four or five of these places were in use every night with a total of about 30 people sleeping rough, and that this could swell to 60 people at key times when larger numbers of bush community people came to town (e.g. football weekends). This primary homelessness estimate is in addition to those households experiencing forms of secondary homelessness (inc. crowding).

Evidence of high household numbers in Tennant Creek

In mid 2012, the public rental housing stock in Tennant Creek numbered 127 dwellings in the town proper and 78 in the town camps with official occupation averages of 2.7 in the former houses and 6 in the latter houses. However these ‘official’ household numbers were largely based on tenancy agreements and were believed to be an under-estimate by many service providers with whom the problem was discussed by the author, as outlined below. Nevertheless with these official tenancy figures, public servants in Tennant Creek remained challenged as to how an objective picture of local housing need could be presented most persuasively to more senior officials in Darwin and Canberra. No figures were available on private rental house occupation.

Additional institutional accommodation (see Table 3) comprised aged care facilities (19 beds), the Women’s Refuge (8 beds), alcohol rehab facility (36 beds), youth crisis accommodation (12 beds), student accommodation (34 beds), and acute hospital
care (20 beds), as well as 13 dwelling units for transitional rehab accommodation, providing a total institutional accommodation of 129 beds, 25 units and two houses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Beds/units available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pulkapuika Kari Frontier Services</td>
<td>Residential Aged Care</td>
<td>17 beds plus 2 respite beds (= 19 beds total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge (TCWR)</td>
<td>Women’s Refuge with Crisis accommodation for women &amp; their children</td>
<td>8 beds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG)</td>
<td>Alcohol rehabilitation</td>
<td>16 beds Sobering Up shelter; 20 beds rehabilitation; 13 Units* at Blain Street for transitional housing; 1 Family House – rehab; 1 Prisoners’ Transitional house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julalikari Council</td>
<td>(a)Transition Living Areas (Currently being used to rehouse families from camps while houses renovated) (b) Indigenous residents with severe disabilities</td>
<td>10 Units * at Blain Street (Supposed to be supported accommodation - caretaker on site - for Indigenous disability/aged clients) 2 houses with 24 hour support - supported accommodation for people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julalikari Council’s Youth Development Unit (YDU)</td>
<td>Youth Crisis Accommodation in Tennant Creek</td>
<td>12 residential beds for young people aged between 12 and 24. (Distributed between a Girls House and a Boys House in Mulga Camp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Outback Fellowship</td>
<td>Crisis Accommodation</td>
<td>2 Units at Blain Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangkana Kari Hostel (AHL)</td>
<td>Student Accommodation</td>
<td>Accommodation for 34 secondary students (34 beds) from remote areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennant Creek Hospital</td>
<td>Acute hospital care</td>
<td>20 beds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Updated from Frontier Services report by Georgina Bracken, 18/7/12.)

Table 3: Institutional accommodation available in Tennant Creek.

Housing need in Tennant Creek according to the views of service providers

In March 2012, a senior Commonwealth public servant in Tennant Creek said that the waiting list for public housing was two to five years, with 100-125 families waiting to be housed on average. She said 25% of the Tennant Creek population was under 17, and 50% of the Tennant Creek population was under 25; and that in both age brackets, there were many young women having babies who could not move out. Households experienced intense sharing (J.B., I.C.C., 8/3/12). Note that the 2011 Census indicates that approx. 24% were under 15, but only about 39% were under 25 (compared to about 19% and 33% respectively for Australia as a whole) (ABS 2013b).

* The ‘units’ in Blain Street were single story, self-contained, attached housing, mostly with two bedrooms, kitchenette, toilet and shower.
A Manager from the Council of Elders and Respected Persons (CERP) in Tennant Creek indicated the Tennant Creek waiting list for housing was 5-8 years. She said the Department removes the names of applicants who were not replying to letters, and that people with debts to the Department of Housing were not allowed back on the waiting list. These debts often arose from visiting drunks who smashed houses (p.c. 22/5/12).

The Minister for Housing, Chris Burns told the author that the big waiting lists in the NT were 6-7 years waiting time (p.c. 8/6/12). An employee of the local Member of Parliament’s office in Tennant Creek said that there was a 3-year waiting period for normal housing and a long wait on priority housing. She said there were no facilities for old people and cited the case of an old woman who was sent to a Darwin nursing home for lack of suitable accommodation with care in Tennant Creek (p.c. 17/7/12).

The Women’s Refuge Manager in Tennant Creek, who was also on the BRAG (Barkly Regional Accommodation Group) Committee, reported there were up to 30 or 40 people in some houses. Many moved from house to house, and may have up to five addresses. She stated, “My clients have four or five addresses. They are not permanently at one house. I took a client out yesterday to collect their gear and we went to three houses. This is really common. You must know all the family connections [to work in the Women’s Refuge]” (G.B 23/5/12) (Memmott 2013 p.8).

The Manager outlined the social problems of the town’s crowding: “A huge humbug cycle; people are unable to say ‘no’; eventually, they get suicidal. Women come here [to the Refuge] in tears; they’ve been threatened, they’ve given away what they’ve got, they are in constant stress. Everyone is stressed in Tennant Creek.” This manager asked, “Can you do washing for 48 people?” implying households with a working washing machine may take on this role. She summed up the hopelessness of the situation:

“For people in Tennant Creek, their whole lives have been homeless. In the city, DV is the main cause of homeless, but in Tennant Creek, overcrowding is causing some of the DV. There is no exiting homelessness here. No accommodation in the ‘village’ [Communal Living Areas], no hostel, nothing. There are very limited special support services. A lot of people are in a state of despair. They have never had a home, and will never get one. About 25% of the population are under 17 in the Barkly Shire – they won’t get allocated a house, even if they have kids. We have to have a youth education programme to change the kids by addressing the issues of alcohol, dope, and money. A floating population have brought petrol sniffing in. The children at the crèche are hitting, biting – they are learning this at home. We need a whole-of-community effort to focus on the children. People here think violence equals love! Parenting
skills are negative; a parent will say “I'll hit you if you do that.” (G.B. 23/5/12.)

She added that most clients have a drug and alcohol problem, and “these kids are found out all over the place – left to grow themselves up” (G.B. 23/5/12). This Manager summarized the different Aboriginal groups with housing needs who were not well serviced in Tennant Creek as:-

- Children, many of whom are neglected to varying degrees and mobile between homes;
- Dialysis patients;
- Women at risk (including once leaving the Refuge); and
- Bush visitors from throughout the Barkly Region (G.B. 23/5/12).

A Red Cross welfare worker acknowledged that petrol sniffing was getting bad amongst young girls and boys in Tennant Creek, effecting dozens, even an 8 year old boy (L.T. 22/5/12).

A senior manager at Julalikari Council, an Indigenous housing agency and service provider, stated that there were no other housing options for Aboriginal clients in Tennant Creek – little emergency, no transitional or affordable private rental; and that private rental housing went to government department personnel. This senior Housing officer noted that Tennant Creek’s Aboriginal tenants were either semi- or non-literate. They underwent a day-to-day grind to get food, deal with grog and pay bills. She asserted that the way of judging housing demand in Tennant Creek needs to be different from the east coast. She noted that centralized government asks: ‘Where is the demand in Tennant Creek?’, suggesting that demand is not exceptionally high compared to the worst hot-spots in eastern Australia. She lamented that until more Aboriginal people were put on the waiting list, the demand figures do not accurately reflect the real level of demand (M.M. 23/5/12).

The accommodation problem was summarized by the President of the Barkly Shire, who wrote to the Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Health in May 2012:

Council’s concerns were primarily that, since the commencement of the NT Emergency Response in 2007, there has been no new housing erected at any Barkly community, including Tennant Creek. Further, as the Barkly Region does not have any Remote Service Delivery (RSD) sites, it is unlikely that any new community housing will be erected in the foreseeable future.

Your government is to be congratulated on the housing development that has been provided to the larger RSD communities such as Maningrida and Galwim’ku. Anecdotal reports from these areas are that housing congestion has been dramatically reduced with, hopefully, ensuing public
health improvement. However, the reverse has occurred in the Barkly, where community housing congestion rates continue to rise.

It is accepted that housing is an integral factor towards improvement of public health, yet it is the understanding of this Council that there has not been any government survey, Commonwealth or NT, targeting household congestion and overcrowding in Tennant Creek and/or the Barkly region for over twenty years. It is also known the present waiting time for community housing in Tennant Creek is between five to six years with similar delays in neighbouring communities. I am advised that present waiting periods are:

- 1 bedroom unit: 78 months,
- 2 bedroom units: 67 months,
- Pensioner units: 42 months.

Council believes that this situation is deplorable and should be addressed. (Shaw 2012)

One of the authors (PM) sought the views of the Tennant Creek Aboriginal Night Patrollers on how people dealt with house crowding in Tennant Creek when visitors arrived. One Night Patroller said:

“In Tennant Creek some [like me] have a rule that children keep their rooms when visitors come – and others move in. Have a daughter at Ali Curung, she and her husband sleep outside; they make a windbreak on the back veranda. But their kids sleep inside. If there are teenage girls, they stay with [Jane] and her teenage daughter. Single men can go elsewhere, to other families, they spread around.” (N.P.1, 17/7/12.)

A second Night Patroller said:

“Mother gives beds at the back. Got a baby inside the house. So she prefers them to bring swags, and stay out the back. But then there’s a problem with all night drinking and arguing and being abusive – the neighbours complain. The neighbours have beautiful kids and don’t want to hear swearing. So mother now lets quiet visitors stay. Now she is encouraging people to get their own place but this is very hard [wait lists]. But she kicked others out recently due to them stressing the baby. She sent them to her other son’s house. He has sleeping space in front and at the back of his house.” (N.P.2, 17/7/12.)

The third said:

“Too much crowding in my house, it's disgusting. Can't keep it clean. Not only my house. [But] All places [Tennant Creek]... Got a sick mother, sick niece and a baby – that stresses me. I try to explain the rules to visitors. Rules in house – no alcohol, must clean up, no drunks. I must consider safety of my grandkids and my mother. I tell visitors they must have respect for you or we'll call Police. 'We love you but you don’t show it [back]'... Others [without strong rules] let anyone stay... I love him for who he is...but...visitors come and won’t go back [to their bush communities]. There’s a 24 months wait for a house here. Lots of people are giving up on putting in applications for a house. We need more one bedroom flats for singles and normal couples [with no kids]. Only a few live in private rentals, and only a few live in private owner house [IBA funding].” (N.P.3, 17/7/12.)
These reflections on visitors coming to Tennant Creek emphasize the stress incurred by households, and raise further issues about the definition of crowding.

**Further data from AIHW**

The following statistics (see Table 4) indicate that of 627 presentation records at the Women’s Refuge for 2011-12, 46 (7.63%) reported to be sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation in the month before their support, and 187 (31.01%) were in short-term or emergency accommodation due to lack of other options during the month before support. This verifies that a significant proportion of presentations fall in the homeless category (7.63+31.01=38.64%); but the full extent is unclear since 43.45% of respondents are recorded as ‘don’t know’.

(Source: Aust., AIHW 2012: Report 5.1)

**Table 4: Data on rough sleepers and short-term/emergency accommodated (both homeless categories) at the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge during 2011-2012.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Type</th>
<th>Month before support</th>
<th>12 months before support</th>
<th>Closed SP - during last month of support</th>
<th>Ongoing SP - in last collection month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term or emergency accommodation, due to a lack of other options</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>31.01</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>19.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not homeless</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>21.89</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>43.45</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>67.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Clients can have more than one episode of homelessness per support period, so figures do not add to total support periods in the year.

**Summary of early findings**

The anecdotal evidence together with the statistical data presented so far provides a qualitative description of the social problems surrounding homelessness and crowding in Tennant Creek today. Local agencies and service providers as well as local and state government representatives raised many issues surrounding household crowding, limited public housing, women and children at risk of DV and FV, drug and alcohol problems, chronic illness and disabilities, rough sleeping and lack of support for families. The data on clients from the Women’s Refuge and the data on rough sleeping demonstrate the pressure on local services which aim to assist local Aboriginal people including visitors from the Barkly region when they visit the regional centre.
In terms of the anecdotal understandings of household crowding in Tennant Creek there is strong evidence that people’s housing needs are not being met and that the Aboriginal community is experiencing considerable stress which impacts negatively on their health and well-being. Furthermore, our findings suggest a clear link between the reasons why Aboriginal women access the Women’s Refuge and the interconnected and complex set of social problems.

The following model of crowding frames the discussion of these issues in relation to our household survey and highlights the need for understanding the social and cultural factors described above.
5. Current social sciences models of crowding

Elsewhere, we have recently reviewed the social science literature on crowding (Memmott et al. 2011). We drew liberally on a comprehensive literature review of crowding carried out by environmental psychologist Robert Gifford (2007), which is 40 pages long and cites some 288 references (most written in the post 1990 period, but some as early as 1903), as well as drawing on selected references upon which he bases his analysis. We also utilise an earlier review of the Australian Indigenous crowding literature by Memmott (1991) and a recent audit of the Aboriginal housing literature by Long, Memmott and Seelig (2007).

The social sciences have employed a stress model of ‘crowding’ for at least 40 years. This model holds that states of crowding involve high-density settings that generate certain stimuli, which induce stress amongst setting participants according to their values of the environmental acceptability and non-acceptability of these stimuli. However, not all high-density settings are experienced as being crowded for particular groups. Gifford (2007 pp.191,192,194) provides a model of crowding which is experiential, based on stress rather than density:

Density is a measure of the number of individuals per unit area... Crowding...refers to the person’s experience of the number of other people around. Rather than a physical ratio, crowding is a personally defined, subjective feeling that too many others are around...Crowding is a function of many personal, situational, and cultural factors...Crowding and density are not always strongly correlated with one another.

In the case of Aboriginal groups, the stimulus that induces stress is often the presence of inappropriate categories of kin in too close a proximity (Fantin 2003). A second stimulus is often the inappropriate behaviour of such persons as a result of substance abuse (Memmott et al. 2011 p. 37).

In his comprehensive review of crowding theories, Gifford (2007 p. 217) attempts to synthesise the various dominant paradigms of crowding into a single integrative theory of crowding which he summarises as follows:

Certain personal, social, and physical antecedents lead to the experience of crowding. Among these are a variety of individual differences, resource shortages .... the number of other people nearby.... who those others are, and what they are doing. Sensory overload and a lack of personal control are psychological processes central to the experience of crowding. The consequences of crowding include physiological, behavioural, and cognitive effects, including health problems, learned helplessness, and reactance. (Gifford 2007 p. 217)
Figure 8: An integrative model of crowding.

We have adapted Gifford’s diagrammatic theoretical model to crowding (Figure 8), to include the salient cultural factors in his discussion. We note that Gifford incorporates culture into his crowding model in two places: (i) cultural factors are implicit as part of the antecedent factors (e.g. physical and social settings character, past personal and group history); and (ii) cultural factors are also implicit as part of the mediating factors shaping response to stress (Memmott et al. 2011 p.17).

With respect to antecedent factors, it is argued that in different cultures, childhood conditioning and socialisation processes equip individuals to adapt to, and to deal with perceived high-density situations in different ways, according to different norms. Thus Rapoport (1976 p.18) and others have argued that being with like people will decrease stress frequency in potentially crowded circumstances. Kinship groups (e.g. extended families, multiple family units) and other culturally homogenous groups are
most likely to be socially well-structured. Similarly those individuals within the same culture will have common methods to mediate situations that are perceived to be stressful and crowded, and to maintain group sanctions over what is appropriate stress-avoidance behaviour. Of the propensity for cultural factors to act as mediating or moderating influences, Gifford (2007 p. 21) writes:

The consequences of crowding and high density depend in part on cultural background. Culture acts as a moderating influence on high density, sometimes providing its members with a shield against the negative effects of high density and sometimes failing to equip them with effective means of coping with high density.

Our literature analysis of crowding (Memmott et al. 2011) thus argues that states of crowding are characterised by the perception of high-density, displaying various stimuli, some of which induce stress in occupants. The determinations of whether these stimuli are stressful, or not, varies according to one's values of the environmental acceptability or non-acceptability of these stimuli. The experience of crowding is also accentuated by personal factors (personality, expectations, attitudes, gender), social factors (the number, type, and actions of others, the degree of attitude similarity) and physical factors (architectural features and spatial arrangements) (Gifford 2007 p. 220).

The result may be perceived loss of personal control and/or social and informational overload (comprising a perceptual/cognitive component of the crowding model). Alternatively, in response to such a situation, a coping mechanism may be utilised if one is available (a reactive behavioural component of the model). The values that are employed to evaluate the setting state (its stimuli), and to select an appropriate coping or mediating mechanism, and the nature of such mechanisms may vary cross-culturally (Memmott et al. 2011 pp. 20–21).

Three ongoing questions for research arise from the above social science model of crowding with respect to understanding crowding in the context of Indigenous Australia. What are relevant Australian Indigenous norms and situational factors of household life? How do these norms or situational factors become compromised by density changes, resulting in stress and a perceived state of crowding according to the above model? What are Australian Indigenous coping mechanisms for crowding?

We do not know all of the answers to these questions for Tennant Creek or the Barkly Region. When the above model is applied to this study of the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge (TCWR) and rough sleepers, however, a number of factors
resonate with respect to the cultural norms of crowding and the rules by which crowding is alleviated.

The cultural rules by which Aboriginal communities regulate their households and in particular the sleeping arrangements have been described for other remote, urban and metropolitan Aboriginal communities, e.g. Memmott et al. (2012a pp.154-158) describe the rules for appropriate sleeping arrangements in a community in north-west WA, revealing the problem of juggling the age, gender and family/partner relationships of the people within the household. The study found that if there was stress then it was likely to relate to the difficulty in achieving appropriate configurations of people or handling alcohol abuse, rather than the overall number of people. The number or density was not the primary consideration.

Such rules appear to also operate in the Barkly region. Some of these rules were indicated by the Night Patrollers, e.g. ‘... children keep their rooms when visitors come..’; ‘single men go elsewhere’.

Also, according to the Manager of the Refuge, women present in crisis at the Refuge when the Aboriginal norms or cultural rules for the accommodation of people within a household have not been able to be maintained. Typically this is when violence results. More investigation is needed in order to understand the critical combination of rules, available spaces and overall numbers in any given household and the precise circumstances surrounding crowding stress. Meanwhile it seems clear that perceptions of crowding in the town are culturally mediated and that culturally sanctioned rules and behaviours alleviate some of the adverse effects of crowding in households with a strong household-head.
6. The Homelessness Survey in Tennant Creek

The town population of Tennant Creek resides predominantly in two areas of (i) the town itself, and (ii) several adjacent Community Living Areas. The distribution of the Aboriginal population in Tennant Creek throughout the various precincts of town was established from 2001 and 2006 Census data and extrapolated for the present, as the 2011 data was not available at the time of planning the survey.

The survey sampling design was greatly assisted by the local office of Territory Housing who provided information on the extent of Indigenous tenancies in Tennant Creek. The sample of 80 interviews drew from 164 public rental and 32 agency rental units make a total of 196 rental units in the town at the time of the survey (private rental was not included and is very low for Indigenous people). This figure was a reduced figure compared to 205 units identified earlier in the year, probably due to the refurbishment of a significant number of houses in Karguru CLA as part of the SIHIP programme. Figure 9 shows the percentage of the population who are Aboriginal in different locations in Tennant Creek (shaded areas). The sampling was designed to select numbers of interviews in each sector of town in commensurate proportion with the relative numbers of Aboriginal households in these sectors (including CLAs). (See Appendix B for more detail on sampling calculations.)

Short interviews (20 minutes) were undertaken on the 12th and 13th November 2012 with 80 Aboriginal household heads (i.e. the person who paid the rent) in all areas of the town and the CLAs. The interviews were made by a team of seven who worked in pairs to include one person from the local community, all of whom were well-known to the Aboriginal residents of Tennant Creek. There were therefore three teams working at any one time which ensured a relatively synchronous survey over a 28hour period. The Interview Schedule is contained in Appendix C.

Sampling was assisted just prior to interviewing through the provision of further information from Territory Housing. Most Aboriginal people rent housing in Tennant Creek and so from the Department’s Aboriginal rental records it was possible to target specific addresses for surveying. In effect the interviewers accessed each street where there were Aboriginal people and knocked on the doors of known tenants. When approached, people without exception agreed to be interviewed – partly because they knew at least one of the interviewers and/or that housing was an
important issue to them. Once people understood the purpose of the interview, there was a high level of cooperation. Each participant was given a one-page explanation of the survey and was paid a $20.00 fee on completion. It is significant that the weather was fine and the timing of the survey occurred well before the advent of the wet season. Also football season had passed, and so it was not a predictably peak period of visitation to Tennant Creek.

The survey questions were categorised into (a) type and size of housing occupied, (b) number of people who slept overnight in the house, and (c) whether the householder felt crowded/stressed (see Appendix C for a full list of questions).

Household Survey Results

The survey found for the 80 households sampled, that the average number of people per household was 9.91 with a standard deviation of 4.77 (see Table 5). The average number of people per bedroom per household was 3.14 with a standard deviation of 1.52.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people in household</th>
<th>sample size</th>
<th>mean⁵</th>
<th>median⁶</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>minimum</th>
<th>maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9.91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 1 - Tennant Creek Town</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 2 - Community Living Areas</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Number of people per household (mean and median calculations) based on sample of 80 households in Tennant Creek, early November 2012.

Note that actual mean number of people per household is 9.91 according to our survey, whereas the mean household size in Tennant Creek was 2.9 according to the 2011 Census (see Table 1). We shall explain this difference later in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people per bedroom</th>
<th>sample size</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>median</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>minimum</th>
<th>maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 1 – Tennant Creek Town</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 2 – Community Living Areas</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Number of people per bedroom (mean and median calculations) for the sample of 80 households

⁵ The Mean finds the typical observation by summing all the data and then dividing this sum by the number of observations. The term ‘mean’ and ‘average’ are used interchangeably.
⁶ The Median orders the data and then locates the middle observation. The median has an equal number of observations above and below it.
The ABS measure crowding according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) using a measure based on the number of people per bedroom, with caveats on the age and gender appropriate to share bedrooms. This standard does not consider the possibility of culturally specific ways of inhabiting housing where different versions from the CNOS are appropriate, nor that sleeping in spaces other than bedrooms may be acceptable, or at least tolerated in some communities. It is a density measure only and does not consider the stress caused by other kinds of non-bedroom crowding. We discuss this at length in Memmott et al. (2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people per sleeping space</th>
<th>sample size</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>median</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>minimum</th>
<th>maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 1 - Tennant Creek Town</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location 2 - Community Living Areas</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Number of people per sleeping space (mean and median calculations) for the 80 households.

Whereas the ABS definition of crowding uses the number of bedrooms in a household, our new definition of sleeping spaces uses the number of bedrooms plus any other spaces inside or outside the house that are used for sleeping, including a lounge, dining room, store room, front verandah, back verandah, back yard space (see Table 7).

Our reasoning is as follows: in most cases people reported that they were using all of these spaces listed in the survey for accommodating household members and visitors. These findings are also in keeping with the findings from our AHURI crowding study (Memmott et al. 2012a). By applying this computation, we see that the maximum number of people per room drops from 8 to 5.75 in the town proper, and from 6.33 to 4.75 in CLAs. Also the mean drops from 3.24 per bedroom in both the town proper and CLAs, to 2.05 and 2.23 in the town proper and CLAs respectively. This provides a more realistic understanding of where people are actually sleeping at night in Aboriginal houses in which people-room sleeping configurations are designed to reduce the actual or potential state of crowding. It does not infer that there are less people in the house, only that the sleeping configurations are not confined to bedrooms but extend throughout all spaces in and around the house. It should be stressed that we do not suggest that this is an acceptable set of circumstances, but it indicates how large Aboriginal households
creatively organize their domiciliary spaces to achieve socially acceptable sleeping groups according to kinship rules, so as to minimize likelihood of stress.

**Rough Sleepers Survey**

In parallel with the household survey, the research leader (P.M) gained assistance from the Julalikari Council Night Patrol to carry out a systematic count of people ‘sleeping rough’, which commenced at 6pm on the 12th November 2012 and concluded at 1.00am on the 13th November 2012. The recorded numbers according to gender and broad age groups were as follows (Table 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 and over</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-totals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Rough sleepers in Tennant Creek on night of 12/11/12 divided by gender and age groups.

These people were distributed in small groups throughout the outer parts or the outskirts of Tennant Creek broadly across the following two locations: (i) camps in the vicinity of the junction of Warrego Rd and Stuart Highway to the north; (ii) camps in and around the south-eastern and south-western Community Living Areas (the old ‘Town Camps’).

**Crowding Analysis**

The number of the households that were officially crowded using the ABS definition of a maximum of 2 people per bedroom, was 68 out of the sample of 78, based on a best-case scenario of people sharing bedrooms that would align with the CNOS requirements. At times, less than two people per bedroom are permitted under these CNOS rules, used by ABS to define what constitutes crowding, if certain combinations of age and gender occur (see Memmott et al. 2012).

The frequency of the people who identified as being stressed (based on answering the question “are you stressed out from the people in your house”), was 41 out of 78 (52.6%) who responded. So surprisingly, there is an approximately equal number of
stressed and unstressed households despite the generally large household sizes.

Figure 9: Map of Tennant Creek showing the proportions of population that are Indigenous, based on Collector Districts, at the 2006 Census (ABS2007). Note that eight Town Camps now known as Community Living Areas (CLAs).

This finding was complemented by the frequency of the self-perceived (as opposed to the official) extent of crowding in households – based on answers to the question “is your house crowded today?”. Some 36 interviewees (50.7%) reported having crowded households as opposed to 35 who said they were not. Again, there is a smaller number of households identifying as being crowded than the official assessment: almost half of the households that are ‘officially’ crowded say that they are not crowded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Findings on Stress and Crowding</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Crowded households according to ABS definition</td>
<td>68 (87.2%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Self-reported stressed households due to actual crowding 41 (52.6%) 37
(c) Self-reported crowding on the day 36 (50.7%) 35
(d) Self-reported crowding in last year 58 (73.4%) 21

| Table 9: Survey findings on extent of official versus self-perceived crowding (a) and (c), (d), and self-perceived stress from crowded conditions (b) amongst 80 households in Tennant Creek. |

The question “have you had crowding in your home this year (since last Christmas)” led to our next finding which was about self-perceived long-term crowding in households. In response to this question, 58 (73.4%) said ‘yes’, while 21 said ‘no’ (and one ‘don’t know’). This is closer in agreement with the official crowding calculation and probably shows evidence of the highly mobile nature of the Aboriginal population. In essence, most households begin to identify as being crowded if there are regular intermittent visitors.

**Extrapolation of sample results to give an estimate of town Aboriginal population**

Although the household survey involved a sampling process based on the known distributions of Aboriginal people residing in the town, it could not be said to be a perfectly random sampling method. Owing to this degree of non-random sampling in the survey design, the standard statistical analysis procedures that normally rely on randomized selection can sometimes yield biased results. This is especially true when it comes to trying to generalize the results from the observed sample to the rest of the population of interest. In this instance, non-parametric procedures are the best way of producing statistics when the data has been collected using non-randomized sampling. The non-parametric procedure we used was the bootstrap (Efron 1979). Bootstrapping works by using the observed sample to approximate the population (through simulation, or repeated draws). It uses the observed distribution of the sample in place of the true (unobserved) distribution. The results under the bootstrap were similar to the results which assume that there is normality. The results, presented below for the official crowding using the ABS definition of the number of persons per household, show that the sampling distribution can be approximated to be roughly normal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bootstrap value</th>
<th>Bootstrap standard error</th>
<th>Sample value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>9.91</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>9.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: The bootstrap results (with 200 resamples) for the total number of people per household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bootstrap value</th>
<th>Bootstrap standard error</th>
<th>Sample value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: The bootstrap results (with 200 resamples) for the total number of people per bedroom in each household.

To cross-check our results, we also applied the jackknife technique (Quenouille 1949). This is another non-parametric method, similar to the bootstrap, but has the advantage that it is useful for searching for influential observations. In theory both approaches should give similar results, and this was found to be so in the sample.

These two statistical findings provide the basis to confidently assess that 9.91 can be extrapolated as a general finding for Aboriginal household density in Tennant Creek at the time of the survey.

If we assume an average of 9.91 across the 196 rental units with Aboriginal households, the total Aboriginal population would be 1942 persons. This does not include an unknown small number of Aboriginal people in private rental and home-owner housing. If the extrapolated Aboriginal population of Tennant Creek is 1700 (based on the 2011 Census), there is in the order of 250 or more people that need to be accounted for.

Discussion on Findings

The most critical finding of our analysis is that the mean size of Indigenous households in Tennant Creek is 9.91, whereas the 2011 Census of Tennant Creek gives household size as 2.9. How can this gross difference be explained, given that population growth since the Census could only add on approximately 0.5 persons to make a 3.4 average household size in the one-year interval. There are clearly two
explanations, (i) the practice of the Census not to count visitors, and (ii) undercount in the Census. Let us consider them in turn.

**The practice of the Census not to count visitors**

Current Census enumeration does not include the counting of visitors in residents within a household. "The technical definition of usual residence refers to the address at which a person lives or intends to live for six months or more" (ABS 2012a). As discussed by Memmott et al. (2012), this definition excludes highly mobile people who may tend to live in households for less than six months, despite having a potentially cyclic pattern of movement or a number of households within which they would be considered ‘at home’. Thus potentially significant numbers of Indigenous residents in particular, are not included in Census enumeration (Memmott et al. 2012; ABS 2011: 55) and equally are unlikely to consider themselves as having ‘no usual address’ (Horspool and Mowle 2011 p. 6.1; Morphy 2007 p. 42), which would place them into a category of homelessness. Alternatively an individual may consider that he/she lives at several places in a given time period.

This reason was emphasized by the Refuge Manager; highly stressed women (particularly DV victims) may be residing at two, three or four addresses in Tennant Creek simultaneously with possessions distributed between all locations, with the subsequent possibility that such persons are not counted in any particular household on Census night because they are discarded from each household count as a ‘visitor’. Note that this phenomenon of residing in multiple dwellings has not been fully described in the literature and is an important finding from this study which potentially has broader significance concerning the statistical basis for funding services in the region.

**Undercount in the Census**

Undercount of Indigenous populations (additional to that discussed above) is a well known problem within the census (ABS 2011a). Undercounting includes factors potentially applicable to any sector of the Australian population but in our view is far more likely to apply to the Indigenous population of Australia in the following scenarios:

- they were travelling and were difficult to contact;
- they mistakenly thought they were counted elsewhere;
- there was insufficient space on the Census form in the household where they were staying and they did not obtain additional forms to complete the full list of householders;
• the person completing the form thought that, for example, young babies, the elderly or visitors should not be included;
• they did not wish to be included due to concerns about the confidentiality of information or a more general reluctance to participate;
• the dwelling in which they were located was missed because it was difficult to find (e.g. in a remote or non-residential area); and
• the dwelling in which they were located was mistakenly classed as unoccupied. (ABS 2011a.)

The enumeration of large households using the standard census form which is limited to six persons is particularly problematic, as are well known issues of enumerating highly mobile people who are housed but do not have a ‘usual residence’.

Discussion now turns to the Refuge and these Census issues.
7. The inter-relation of homelessness and the Women’s Refuge

With a knowledge that there can be an average of around ten Aboriginal people per house with a range of three to 25 during an off-peak time of the year in terms of bush visitations, the understanding of why there are high stress levels amongst many households and relatively high frequencies of family violence becomes much clearer. And consequently why between 13 and 39 adult women arrive per month at the Refuge.

Women use the Refuge services for a variety of reasons. The primary one is because they are victims of domestic or family violence, either actual victims or at risk of violence. Other common reasons are the lack of transport to return home (i.e. dysfunctionally mobile women), the need for respite from crowded households and very stressful domestic environments, and the need for survival help within non-functional houses (e.g. disabled women). These causal categories are often co-existing and represent four types of secondary homelessness according to the homelessness classification system of Memmott et al. (2012b). Due to the relatively small population of the Barkly region and the social dynamics of Aboriginal peoples it is not readily possible for women victims to simply avoid or evade their families and husbands. Therefore the clients often return to their problematic circumstances resulting in a cyclical pattern of return visits to the Refuge.

At peak demand periods, ideal length-of-stay times are not possible as turnover rate must be increased to accommodate incoming women who are at high risk and/or battered. These factors create a dynamic of demand and response, which is difficult and challenging to address with a consistent evenness of service delivery. Additional management challenges include changing regimes of government funding (or even shifting policy environment), ‘burn-out’ of staff who experience their own family trauma, and subsequent continuity of staff. Although lump-sum grants of government funds are provided for a set of specific staff roles for diverse functions, the staff find that they have to multi-task as a team in response to complex and ever-changing client needs. There is therefore a basic misfit between the ideal operational model as funded and the actual day-to-day demands within the physically small Women’s Refuge of only eight beds.
Strengths of the Women’s Refuge Service

Despite these difficult challenges the inquiries of the principal author have identified the following outstanding strengths of the Refuge and its services:

• A primary strength is the staff, who are predominately stable and committed long-term. Recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff is thus critical.

• The Refuge and its staff have a good reputation in the Barkly Region communities; many clients are thus self-referred (as demonstrated earlier).

• The committed Management Committee is an essential part of the team, as valuable people have always volunteered.

• The maintenance of constructive relationships of the Refuge staff with other agencies in Tennant Creek and with funding bodies.

• The senior staff of the Refuge have a network of peers in other DV refuges in Central and Northern Australia with whom they interact at DV Conferences and share practice knowledge (specifically, shelters at Alice Springs, Katherine, Gove and Darwin; and Safe Houses at Elliott, Ali Curung, Borroloola, Utopia, Ti-Tree, and AP Lands).

• The social capital of the Refuge is embedded amongst all its past clients; this is a real strength that can be called upon to provide a wide network of support including advice or direct action to address community problems as they arise. (Memmott 2013 p.9.). This same social capital contributed to the successful response to our household survey.

Limitations and Problems of the Women’s Refuge Service

The inquiries of the principal author have identified the following problems and limitations of the service:

• At peak demand periods, ideal length-of-stay periods are not possible as turnover rate must increase to accommodate women who are at high risk and physically battered.

• Regular changes of government policy and funding which result in constrained short-term funding cycles. This ever-present circumstance makes it very difficult to plan forward.

• Insufficient numbers of beds to respond to peak periods of demand. There is a need for more accommodation as well as more office space for the staff. (There has recently been an attempt to obtain Ministerial support for another adjacent
house but unfortunately at the time of writing this profile, the attempt had been unsuccessful.)

- A suspected service gap for very young women who are suspected to be incurring DV and FV at rates higher than reflected in the client profile intake.
- The lack of younger Aboriginal women on staff and the difficulty of conscripting them (Memmott 2013 p. 9).

Despite these shortcomings, the Women’s Refuge in Tennant Creek, is performing well within the social and economic parameters which are operating today. The stressors on the Refuge are high and show no signs of diminishing, especially while the level of crowding in Tennant Creek Aboriginal households remains as it is today.

Most recent ABS Census figures are misleading and do not reveal the full extent of this complex and multifaceted problem. Most remarkably, the figures do not suggest that there is a problem in Tennant Creek. The Refuge case study however suggests otherwise. The Refuge has become an organisation that Aboriginal women can trust and so, in the way that people respond to other trusted organisations, they come to it with any problem. It requires an understanding of the trust relationship to reveal the interconnectedness of all social problems. The power of the Women’s Refuge case-study is the description of a good practice service which taps into the social connectedness and other associated issues.

The findings in this paper raised the issue of whether there is room for an improvement in how the Census records visitors in general (by usual residence definition), and in particular for Indigenous households. For by masking or discounting the number and presence of visitors in regions of high circular mobility, the Census fails to capture the information that is salient to understanding the underlying reasons why social problems (including FV and DV) and personal psychological health problems (including stress) are prevalent and increasing in particular regional cities of Australia.

Until the policy and funding bodies understand more fully the details of Aboriginal crowding and homelessness in the region, the Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge will remain under-resourced and oversubscribed. Similarly, until the full extent of household crowding is understood especially in relation to cultural factors, the resourcing of Aboriginal housing will continue to be considerably below requirements for people in the Barkly region, many of whom will continue to live in crisis conditions.
References


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Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012b, '2011 Census QuickStats', various locations as described in Table 1, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, available online:  


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Northern Territory Government (NT Gov't) 2009 *Land Tenure, Locality of Tennant Creek, Barkly Region, Barkly Shire* Darwin, N.T. [map]


Shaw, B. [Correspondence from Ms Barbara Shaw, President of Barkly Shire to Hon Warren Snowden, Minister for Indigenous Health, Canberra], Barkly Shire Council, Tennant Creek, 28/05/12.

Tennant Creek Women’s Refuge (TCWR) n.d. [Brief outline of history and services of the Refuge, 2pp.], Tennant Creek [e file].

### Appendices

### Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Sub-Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Public Place Dwellers (PPD)</td>
<td>Living in a mix of public or semi-public places (as well as some private places, which are entered illegally to gain overnight shelter, e.g. parks, churches, verandahs, car parks, car sale yards (under cars), beaches, drains, riverbanks, vacant lots and disused buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 PPD Voluntary, short-term intermittent</td>
<td>Often staying in conventional accommodation (e.g. a relative’s house), they may have their own residence in a rural or remote settlement. When socialising in public urban places, they may or may not decide to camp out overnight, usually with others, despite the availability of accommodation. These people are not actually homeless but may be co-resident with other public place dwellers in the following categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 PPD Voluntary, medium-term</td>
<td>Reside continually in public places (including overnight); acknowledge they have another place of residence in a home community but uncertain if or when they will return. These people are not actually homeless but may be co-resident with other public place dwellers in the following categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 PPD Long-term (or chronic homeless)</td>
<td>Reside continually in public places (including overnight); unclear whether it is possible for them to readily reconcile with their home community/family due to a range of emotional and behavioural barriers; they have come to regard a beat of public places as their ‘home’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 PPD Reluctant and by necessity</td>
<td>Residing continually in public places, and who (a) wish to return home but need to remain in urban area due to a service need (e.g. health, housing) or to support a hospitalised relative or similar; or (b) wish to return home but no funds for and/or capacity to organise travel (including substance abusers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 At risk of homelessness</td>
<td>At risk of losing one’s house or the amenity of one’s house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 At risk Insecurely housed people</td>
<td>Residing in adequate housing but under threat of loss of housing; lack of security of occupancy; possibly due to circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of poverty.

| 2.2 At risk people in sub-standard housing | People whose housing is of a sub-standard architectural quality; possibly unsafe or unhealthy housing. |
| 2.3 At risk – experiencing crowded housing | People whose house is crowded, resulting in considerable stress to occupants. Residents may be divided into (a) core householders; (b) visitors who have a home, elsewhere; (c) visitors who would otherwise be homeless. |
| 2.4 At risk – dysfunctionally mobile persons | In a state of continual or intermittent residential mobility, including temporary residence (e.g. crisis accommodation), that is a result of personal and/or social problems (e.g. violence, alcohol and substance abuse; lack of safety or security in a social sense; personality or ‘identity crisis’; lack of emotional support and security). These persons may be divided into: (a) Perpetrators of social problems where mobility arises from their social rejection; (b) Victims of a social problem whose mobility is aimed at escaping the source of their problem (often a perpetrator); (c) Individuals in complex state of both being a victim and a perpetrator. |

| 3. Spiritually homeless people | A state arising from either: (a) separation from traditional land; (b) forced removal from one’s communal places of attachment; (c) separation from family and kinship networks. This results in a crisis of personal identity wherein one’s understanding or knowledge of how one relates to country, family and Aboriginal identity systems is confused, or known but unable to be fulfilled. |

Table: Summary of Indigneous Public Place Dwelling and Homelessness Categories⁷. (From Memmott et al. 2012a)

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⁷ This is a revised version of this table adapted from earlier versions – e.g. see AHURI Final Report No. 49 (Memmott et al. 2003).
Appendix B

Tennant Creek Crowding Survey Sampling Calculations

Note: This sampling methodology was devised prior to the publication of the 2011 Census and had to draw on a set of earlier census findings and other data.

(1) Number of units in Public Housing Stock:
   (a) Town Balance: 127 dwellings (6 x 4 B/R, 69 x 3 B/R, 21 x 2 B/R, 31 x 1 B/R),
   (b) Town Camps: 78 dwellings,

Official densities provided of (a) 2.7 per house, and (b) 6 per house respectively (p.c. Hsg Office Territory Housing).

(2) Table: Division of Indigenous population by geographic areas in Tennant Creek and calculated estimate of Town Camp housing stock distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 Indig. pop’n</th>
<th>% of distribution of Indigenous pop’n</th>
<th>Total Indigenous Tenants (housing stock dist’n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Town Balance</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Northern Camps</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Western Camps</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. South-eastern Camp (Karguru)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78 (from #1b above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (31.5 ÷ 55) x 78 = 45. Other two calculations, similarly.

(3) Table: Estimate of extent of housing stock in Town Balance (Town Camps excluded) and calculation of distribution of Indigenous tenants based on Indigenous percentage of population in Collector Districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Est. total town stock +</th>
<th>Est. % of town stock</th>
<th>Est. public rental* stock (from total of 127)</th>
<th>Total with Indig tenants¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low density 0-35% zone</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium density 35-53% zone</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High density 52-59% zone</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>127 (from #1a above)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Based on a map count of lots.
*Assume public rental stock is distributed evenly in zones
¹ Using average percentages, i.e. 17, 44 & 55% for 0-35, 35-53, & 52-59 respectively.

(4) Dr Michelle Haynes’ (Methodology Leader, ISSR) advised from the above data: The best sized sample within the resource parameters is approx 30 in Town Camps, and 50 in Town Balance.
(5) Sample design:
80 interviews x 2 days x 4 teams = 10 per day per team.
Appendix C

FaHCSIA Crowding Survey – Interview Schedule for Aboriginal householders

Interviewer:
Location in Tennant Creek:
Name of Interviewee:
(verify Aboriginality if not self-evident)

1. Your house

1.1 Type of house
Detached dwelling (stand-alone house)
Duplex (two houses joined together)
Flat
Tin shed
Other

1.2 Rental or home owner?
Do you rent this house?  
or, do you own it?

1.3 If rented, who owns house?
NT government rental
Indigenous Community Housing Organization rental
Other Social Housing Co-op rental
Private owner rental
Other

1.4 Who is in charge of the people in this house here? (Boss of house)
1.
2.

1.5 Where did you grow up (for both if two people)?
What’s your home town or community?
1.
2.

2. Calculating number of people currently living in the house.

2.1 Write down names of people in house.
2.2  Draw and label a sketch plan of house (rooms) and yard camps

Next to each room, write down names of the people who sleep there.

2.3  How many bedrooms in the house? ☐

2.4  Which other rooms or outdoor spaces do people sleep in?

3  Total number of people living in this house today.

3.1 Total number:
   Of this total number, how many people…
   (a)  live here on a regular basis/all the time ☐
   (b)  live here on a regular basis but on and off,
        using other houses in town too ☐
   (c)  Are bush visitors living here for a week or more ☐
   (d)  Are short-term or overnight visitors (a few nights only) ☐
(e) Are only day-time visitors (do not stay over night) □

3.2 Are there more than 8 children living in this house? Y/N □

4 History of crowding

4.1 Is your house crowded today? Y/N □

4.2 Have you had crowding in your home this year (since last Xmas)?
   Yes □ No □ Don't know □

5 Stress

5.1 Are you stressed out from the people in your house?
   Yes □ No □ Don’t know □

   If yes, how stressed
   Very stressed □ Fair bit stressed □ Just a little □

6 Visitors

6.1 Where do visitors mainly come from (since last Christmas)? (List places)

Two indicators of homelessness are available from the TCWR statistics from 2011-12.
Appendix D

Further Crowding Analysis

By studying the correlation between the different crowding indicators, we are able to explore more closely the level of agreement and determine whether the perception of crowding and stress are similar to the objective measures of crowding. The questionnaire respondents were asked whether they were crowded today and during the last year (answers to Q4.1 and Q4.2). In addition they were asked whether they felt stressed (Q5.1). The responses to these question items give a measure of short-term 'perceived' crowding (i.e. crowding today) and long-term perceived crowding (crowded during last year). These perceived scores were contrasted to the official crowding. This was using the ABS standard to note whether the household is crowded depending on the number of people per bedroom in the household.

The correlation coefficients show the level of agreement and allows us to identify if households that are officially crowded are stressed and perceive themselves to be crowded.

Table 1: Correlation between the different measures of crowding and stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Crowded Official</th>
<th>Crowded today</th>
<th>Crowded_lastyr</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowded Official</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded today</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded lastyr</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that the strongest correlation is between households who identify themselves as being stressed and are experiencing crowding. This is an interesting point. Also, (un)surprisingly, the households that are perceived to be crowded today are likely to have experienced crowding during last year.

We decided to look more closely into the crowding and the number of bedrooms. We expect that households with more bedrooms are more likely to be (officially and perceived) crowded. In the first table below, Table 2, we looked at the official crowding.

Table 2: Investigation into the relationship between household official crowding and number of bedrooms
Out of the 80 households surveyed, 61 (more than three-quarters) were found to be officially crowded.

In line with the previous results, there are more crowded three-bedroom houses, but this might just be a facet of the building infrastructure. If there are more three bedroom houses available, then the likelihood is that people will tend to gravitate towards these houses when in need of (temporary and long-term) accommodation.

We then looked in further detail at the breakdown of the reported stress. We were interested in finding out if the reported stress varied with the number of bedrooms in the household.

Table 3: Investigation into the relationship between household stress and number of bedrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to Table 2 with the official crowding, Table 3 shows that roughly the same number of people report being stressed or not being stressed. This does probably support the previous results that the definition of ‘stress’ might be difficult to pinpoint and therefore households that would be thought of as being stressed due to their being (officially) crowded, may not deem themselves to be so.

Finally we looked at whether the crowding experience today and during the last year differed according to the number of bedrooms in the households, and the results are presented in Tables 4 and 5 below.
Table 4: Investigation of the number of bedrooms in household and perception of short-term crowding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crowding today</th>
<th>Number of Bedrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Investigation of the number of bedrooms in household and perception of long-term crowding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crowded last year</th>
<th>Number of Bedrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider the three-bedroomed households (in this table above) compared to the table showing the official crowding (Table 2). The most interesting point to realise is there is virtually no difference for the three-bedroom households – the number of officially and perceived crowded households are the same. This implies for three-bedroomed households there is broad agreement that they are crowded and the people who live in them consider themselves to live in crowded conditions.