AHURI Research Service

Indigenous Housing and Education Inquiry

Discussion Paper

authored by

Dr Nicola Brackertz
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AHURI
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The AHURI Research Service team brings experience and expertise to projects and skills in research synthesis and evaluation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Nicola Brackertz, Research Consultancy Manager, AHURI

Nicola is a research specialist with over 15 years' experience in a wide range of areas related to public policy, social justice and disadvantage. Nicola has expertise in the design, implementation and analysis of research in both academic and applied contexts, and has worked with a variety of stakeholders in the not-for-profit, government and community services sectors.

Prior to working at AHURI, Nicola was a Research Fellow at the Swinburne Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University, where she was a chief investigator on projects investigating the benefits of financial counselling and case management for people in financial stress; social innovation in the housing market; and housing security for older women.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
DSS	Department of Social Services
ICHO	Indigenous Community Housing Organisation
LSAC	The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
LSIC	The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NPAH	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
NPARIH	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

Executive summary

This discussion paper represents the first part of an Inquiry into housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children funded under the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy and conducted by AHURI.

The housing circumstances for many Indigenous Australians differ to those of most non-Indigenous Australians. They are characterised largely by poor housing affordability, high levels of homelessness, high prevalence of crowding, high mobility, neighbourhood effects, remoteness and low quality housing in poor repair.

The extent to which these housing characteristics impact education outcomes for Indigenous children is largely unknown with anecdotal evidence and studies in aligned areas suggesting that it is likely that housing circumstance will positively or negatively influence child development and wellbeing and, by extrapolation, subsequent education, employment and lifecourse trajectories.

This Inquiry aims to provide an evidence-based understanding of the relationship between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children and practical approaches to overcoming identified challenges.

The Inquiry includes:

1. a discussion paper on Indigenous housing and education informed by a review of research studies, reports and papers in relevant areas (this paper)
2. a Roundtable discussion with key Indigenous and government stakeholders concerned with Indigenous housing and education
3. the development of a research proposal for a large-scale Inquiry into Indigenous housing and education drawing on parts 1 and 2 of this Inquiry (subject to a further funding agreement).

Research aim

This discussion paper interrogates the existing national and international evidence base on the characteristics of Indigenous housing and the impacts of housing circumstances on educational participation and engagement in order to address the research question:

What do we know about the impacts of housing on Indigenous children's education outcomes?

This discussion paper constitutes Part 1 of this Inquiry.

In Part 2 of the Inquiry the Roundtable discussion will:

→ review the evidence provided in this discussion paper and work towards identifying a viable research agenda around housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia with a view to identifying key practical approaches and evidence-based recommendations for policy development.

Part 3 of this Inquiry will see the development of a research proposal for a large-scale Inquiry to interrogate issues identified in this report and the Roundtable discussion (subject of a future funding agreement).

Key findings

There is a significant evidence gap in the current knowledge base on the relationship between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children.

The relationship between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children is poorly described. The dearth of evidence-based research and data in this area impacts policy and places limitations on our understanding of the interventions and supports most likely to realise the Closing the Gap targets and achieve education and lifecourse outcomes at parity with other Australians.

There are substantial separate bodies of research on Indigenous housing and Indigenous education, but very limited Australian research investigating the links between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children and youth.

The international literature demonstrates that housing can affect education outcomes. While these international findings may not be transferrable directly to Indigenous Australians, it stands to reason that the housing circumstances of Indigenous children and their families will impact to greater or lesser extent the children's engagement with educational systems, rates of attrition (including periodic absences) and educational achievement.

In the absence of a solid evidence base linking Indigenous housing and education outcomes, this discussion paper uses the available research on Indigenous housing and the separate evidence base on Indigenous education as a proxy to demonstrate connections (made more robustly in the international space) between housing circumstance and education outcomes.

Mainstream social housing in Australia is poorly adapted to Indigenous social needs and cultural ways of living.

The evidence suggests that social exclusion, poverty, high mobility, fluctuating household sizes, racism and housing form have a bearing on children's engagement with learning and subsequent educational achievement.

This discussion paper argues that while the locus of most interventions aimed at improving Indigenous education outcomes has been within schools (e.g. better quality teaching, higher standards, more parental engagement, etc.), a more holistic view of contextual factors shaping children's lives, such as housing, must be acknowledged and addressed in interventions to maximise their success.

Social housing appropriate to the social and cultural needs of Indigenous families, including larger household structures, and housing tenure are viewed as critical enablers.

Indigenous education and housing is a multi-facetted challenge that requires a suite of responses that are locally tailored, flexible, and recognise the many interdependencies.

Indigenous students have lower levels of educational participation, attainment, and completion than their non-Indigenous peers.

Factors influencing education outcomes are geophysical (e.g. remoteness, access to schools and employment opportunities for families), cultural (e.g. ways of learning, discrimination), economic (i.e. poverty, access to resources) and informational.

Absenteeism is a key factor in the lower educational attainment of Indigenous students, and is due to factors including overcrowding, poor health, disability, discrimination (including feelings of 'belonging' or 'alienation') and family or household attitudes to education.

Indigenous children have significantly worse housing experiences than other Australian children, which have impacts for education outcomes.

While the conditions of housing, including risk of homelessness, will have education and lifecourse impacts for a range of Australian families, the housing experiences of Indigenous Australian children, on average, are worse than for other Australian children. Are range of factors are implicated.

- **Housing affordability and insecure housing.** Social housing and precarious housing tenure are associated with poorer education outcomes and reductions in school attendance. Home ownership is associated with better education outcomes. Indigenous households are more likely than the general population to live in precarious housing and have poor housing affordability. Indigenous households are underrepresented among home owners and overrepresented among social housing tenants and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) recipients, pointing to high levels of housing affordability stress. Indigenous renters are more likely to be evicted than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- **Homelessness.** Secure and stable housing is a pre-condition for engagement in education, training and employment. Homelessness is associated with numerous negative effects on children's school performance. Indigenous children are overrepresented among homeless children across all age groups and are more likely to experience intergenerational homelessness. Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness for Indigenous women and children.
- **Mobility.** Indigenous households are highly mobile (sometimes due to forced moves). Indigenous mobility is associated with kinship patterns, cultural practices and autonomy, but also with housing stress, overcrowding, homelessness and family violence. Frequent residential moves impact negatively on education outcomes and behaviours and can reduce social connectedness. However, the international findings on the impact of high residential mobility on children's education performance may not be transferrable to Australian Indigenous households due to cultural differences and differences in kinship structures.
- **Overcrowding.** Indigenous households tend to be larger and experience overcrowding at far higher rates than the general population, especially in remote locations. While living at high density can have both positive and negative health and wellbeing outcomes for Indigenous children, overcrowding affects education outcomes in terms of reduced school attendance, negative physical and mental health impacts, and lack of quiet space to do homework.
- **Impacts of low-quality housing on children's health.** Health is a key factor in school attendance and housing is a key social determinant of health. There are clear links between the quality and location of housing and health outcomes. Indigenous households, especially in remote areas, tend to live in dwellings that are in poor repair and inadequate for their needs. Indigenous children have higher rates of illness than non-Indigenous Australians, in large part due to poor housing

conditions and overcrowding, especially in remote areas, leading to higher rates of absenteeism.

- **Neighbourhood effects.** Children living in neighbourhoods with greater socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to experience adverse outcomes than children living in more advantaged areas. Indigenous households tend to have worse socio-economic indicators and often live in areas of greater disadvantage than their non-Indigenous counterparts—especially in remote areas. The characteristics of the area in which children live and the characteristics of the people who live there are likely to have an association with school attendance, attainment and completion.
- **Remoteness.** The housing factors identified above as impacting on Indigenous housing and children's educational outcomes are amplified in remote locations. A high proportion of remote and very remote households live in social housing and/or poor quality housing. This contributes to poor child health outcomes, high degrees of overcrowding, homelessness events (and risk of homelessness) and neighbourhood disadvantage. These factors collectively and individually affect school attendance rates and the ability of children to participate fully in education.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

Housing is a key challenge for many Indigenous families in Australia and has implications for broader life outcomes, including education outcomes.

We know that, statistically, Indigenous children have worse housing circumstances compared to the general Australian population and poorer education outcomes than their non-Indigenous peers. We also know that Indigenous children have poorer health and wellbeing outcomes than children in the general Australian population.

However, the link between housing and Indigenous education outcomes is not well researched and understood. This AHURI Inquiry into Indigenous housing and education asks:

What do we know about the impacts of housing on education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia?

In answering the question, the project takes a holistic view of Indigenous housing and living environments—whereby economic, socio-cultural and environmental concerns are considered in an integrated manner. Indigenous housing encompasses all aspects of the production, management, maintenance and occupation of Indigenous living arrangements, including housing and tenancy management, home ownership, Indigenous housing performance; and housing and well-being (shelter and non-shelter outcomes, including health).

Education outcomes are influenced by socio-cultural, geographic and economic contexts of child rearing and school education. The ongoing disparities in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are continuing to have very significant consequences for the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. The high percentage of Indigenous children who leave school early or who are functionally illiterate has substantial costs to individuals, communities, government and society. Consequently, it is necessary that policies, programs and services are built on a knowledge base informed by reliable evidence that describes accurately and acknowledges the complex interplay between the individual, cultural, environmental, economic and structural forces that shape the lives of Indigenous children.

Most policies which aim to improve education outcomes for Indigenous children have focused on within school initiatives (‘better’ teaching, more parental engagement, setting high expectations etc.) (see Appendix 3 for an outline of relevant policies). We argue that, in order to address the gap in education outcomes for Indigenous children successfully, it will be necessary to take a holistic view of the contextual factors shaping their lives. Appropriate and secure housing is viewed here as a critical enabler for educational success.

While there is ample international literature connecting housing and education outcomes, there is very little substantive research on the link between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia. By way of proxy, this discussion paper draws on the extensive national and international literature on Indigenous housing, and the separate body of work on Indigenous education, and combines these with a review of the literature on housing and non-shelter outcomes to make inferences about those aspects of Indigenous housing which are most likely to impact education outcomes.

AHURI has undertaken an extensive program of research previously on Indigenous housing clustered around the themes of: housing pathways and preferences; Indigenous home ownership; sustaining tenancies and managing Indigenous housing; and Indigenous homelessness (see Appendices 4–6). This evidence base informs this discussion paper.

1.2 Key national policy context

The policy context for Indigenous housing and education is highly fragmented. It spans Indigenous policy, housing policy and education policy, each with considerable variations across the states and territories.

At a national level Indigenous housing policy is circumscribed by the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH), the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).[1] Education policy, conversely, is primarily the purview of the states and territories. There are, however, a number of national partnership agreements and strategies of importance to Indigenous education. These include:

- **National Indigenous Reform Agreement**, which frames the National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage
- **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy**, which specifies a set of principles and priorities to inform jurisdictional approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- **National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education** (2016–17), which supports universal access to and improved participation by children in quality early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling, with a focus on vulnerable children
- **Australian Curriculum**, which sets the curriculum expectations for all Australian students from Foundation – Year 10, irrespective of their background or where they live, and is Australia's first national school curriculum.[2]

1.3 Research methods

This discussion paper uses a research synthesis methodology, which is based on Ray Pawson's 'realist synthesis' approach developed at the UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice (Pawson 2006). The first step in the methodology for our Inquiry was an iterative search of AHURI, Australian and international evidence bases to identify studies for inclusion in the research synthesis. This included:

- a key-word search of academic journal databases in the housing, homelessness and related social science fields
- a general internet search to identify reports and studies available through online policy communities and information clearinghouses
- follow-up of bibliographic references of interest in identified reports or studies.

[1] See Appendix 2 for more detail.

[2] See Appendix 3 for more detail.

Abstracts and executive summaries were reviewed for an initial assessment of relevance to the research question and research quality. Where abstracts and executive summaries were deemed insufficient to determine a document's inclusion or exclusion in the review, the document was reviewed in full. A list of publications for inclusion in the research synthesis was subsequently prepared.

1.4 Structure of this discussion paper

This Indigenous Housing and Education Inquiry Discussion Paper provides an overview of the current research evidence base addressing key aspects of the relationship between Indigenous housing and education:

- Chapter 2 examines Indigenous children's education outcomes
- Chapter 3 examines the impact of housing on children's wellbeing and education outcomes
- Chapter 4 examines the impacts of housing on Indigenous children's education and wellbeing
- Chapter 5 reviews current research on Indigenous housing
- Chapter 6 outlines issues for consideration by the expert Roundtable in Part 2 of the Inquiry.

2 Indigenous children's education outcomes

- → *Indigenous Australian children have lower levels of educational participation, attainment and completion than their non-Indigenous peers.*
- → *Factors influencing education outcomes for Indigenous children are geophysical (e.g. remoteness, access to schools), cultural (e.g. discrimination, ways of learning), economic and informational.*
- → *Absenteeism is a key factor in the lower educational attainment of Indigenous children, and is due to factors including overcrowding and the poor health of many Indigenous children.*
- → *The connection between housing and Indigenous education outcomes is not well studied.*

The 2016 Closing the Gap report notes that a 'safe and healthy place to live is a prerequisite for children and adults to thrive and actively participate in society' (DPMC 2016: 56). Yet, Indigenous Australians continue to have poorer education outcomes and experience worse housing circumstances than their non-Indigenous peers (Biddle 2014; Dockery et al. 2013; Purdie and Buckley 2010).

Poor educational participation, attainment and completion are associated with a number of negative outcomes for Indigenous people, including low life expectancy, high morbidity across a number of highly treatable conditions, low labour force participation, lower incomes and high rates of poverty and deprivation (AHMAC 2015; Biddle 2010).

In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to six ambitious targets to address the disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians:

- → close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons by 2031
- → halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018
- → ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013
- → halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children by 2018
- → halve the gap in Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates for Indigenous students by 2020
- → halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and other Australians by 2018.

However, progress towards these goals has been varied and improvement in reaching education targets for Indigenous children has been slow.

The employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians with higher levels of education and other Australians with the same level of education are comparable (Biddle 2010; Karmel et al. 2014). If Indigenous and non-Indigenous students reach the same level of academic achievement by age 15, there is no significant difference in subsequent educational outcomes, such as completing Year 12 and participating in university or vocational education and training (Mahuteau et al. 2015).

However, Indigenous students overall are less likely to remain at school and complete Year 12 than the general population.

- → In 2012–13 nationally, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years who had achieved a Year 12 or equivalent level of education was 58.5 per cent, compared to 86.5 per cent of non-Indigenous people (DPMC 2016).
- → The retention rate from years 7/8 to Year 12 in 2009 was 45 per cent for Indigenous students compared with 77 per cent for non-Indigenous students (Purdie and Buckley 2010).
- → In 2009, school completion rates for Indigenous students were more than 30 percentage points below those of the general population (Long 2009 c.f.Helme and Lamb 2011:4).
- → The gap in completion rates is most pronounced for students in very remote areas (50 percentage points) (Helme and Lamb 2011).

Indigenous educational attainment as measured by literacy and numeracy using NAPLAN is below that of their non-Indigenous peers. In 2015, 78.7 per cent of Indigenous children in Year 3 met national minimum standards in reading and 78.2 per cent in numeracy, compared to 95.6 per cent and 95.5 per cent respectively of non-Indigenous children (ACARA 2015).

Educational attainment varied between geographical areas. Students in remote and very remote areas fared worse than those in metropolitan areas. In 2015, 82 per cent of Indigenous students in Year 5 in metropolitan areas reached National Minimum Standards, compared to 61 per cent in remote areas and just 38 per cent in very remote areas (DPMC 2016).

Absenteeism is a key driver of differences in education outcomes for Indigenous students. Students who do not attend school regularly are likely to fall behind their peers and have lower academic performance. They are less likely to complete school, with negative flow-on effects for employment (Purdie and Buckley 2010).

Approximately 20 per cent of the gap in performance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 15 year olds is due to poor school attendance among Indigenous students (Biddle 2014).

- → In 2015 the overall school attendance rate for Indigenous students was 83.7 per cent, compared to 93.1 per cent for non-Indigenous students (DPMC 2016).

Indigenous school attendance varies according to remoteness.

- → In 2015 attendance in very remote areas was 67.4 per cent, compared to 86.5 per cent per cent in metropolitan areas (DPMC 2016).

Reasons for Indigenous non-attendance relate to a lack of recognition by schools of Indigenous culture and history; failure to fully engage parents, carers and the community; and ongoing disadvantage in many areas of the daily lives of Indigenous Australians (Purdie and Buckley 2010; Reid 2008). Overcrowded housing negatively affects school attendance, as does a lack of access to economic resources, whether measured as home ownership or income (Biddle 2010; Silburn et al. 2014).

Poor health is a key factor in children missing school. There are clear links between the quality and location of housing and health outcomes (Ware 2013). Indigenous people

have higher rates of illness due to poor housing conditions and overcrowding than non-Indigenous Australians (Dockery et al. 2010). This leads to lower attendance rates at school (Biddle 2014).[3]

Remoteness has a significant negative impact on school attendance, achievement, retention and completion for Indigenous students (Silburn et al. 2014). However, national figures need to be treated with caution as many Indigenous young people are successfully engaged with education and much of the variation in school attainment figures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can be explained by the fact that Indigenous Australians are more likely to live in remote areas of Australia. In remote areas:

- → schools are more difficult to access and often lack basic services, infrastructure and adequately trained teachers or student amenities (Biddle 2010)
- → school attendance attracts higher economic costs (e.g. due to longer travel distances)
- → there is a higher prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage
- → Indigenous Australians experience poorer housing circumstances (poorly maintained housing, lower levels of home ownership, high levels of overcrowding).

Other factors that have been linked to lower Indigenous educational attainment are the percentage of adults in the community with a Year 12 or equivalent education, the percentage of adults who speak English as a first language, and the mother's childbearing age and level of education (Silburn et al. 2014).

The link between Indigenous housing and Indigenous educational outcomes has not yet been studied in depth. However, there is a large body of circumstantial evidence that points to the impacts of housing on Indigenous children's wellbeing and associated education outcomes. This is explored further in the following chapters of the discussion paper.

[3] See section 5.6 Housing and health for a detailed discussion on the links between housing and health outcomes.

3 Impacts of housing on children's education and wellbeing

Housing affects children's education outcomes via a range of shelter and non-shelter factors:

- → *toxins and environmental allergens*
- → *unsafe, unclean and low-quality housing*
- → *building height and limited opportunities for outdoor play*
- → *crowding*
- → *high mobility*
- → *homelessness (or risk of homelessness)*
- → *neighbourhood effects*
- → *poor housing affordability.*

There is a dearth of studies examining the relationship between housing and education outcomes in Australia and barely any research on housing and Indigenous education. The international literature, however, demonstrates that the housing in which children are raised has significant impacts on their development and wellbeing, including education outcomes, and may be an important mediating factor in the transmission of intergenerational and neighbourhood disadvantage (Dockery et al. 2013).

While this evidence may not be wholly transferrable to the Australian context, it does provide crucial foundational information for the identification of key links between housing, childhood development and education.

An extensive review of the Australian and international literature on the effects of housing on children's wellbeing by Dockery et al. (2010) concluded that the connection between housing circumstance and child development and wellbeing was well-recognised in the international literature.

The Dockery review found that housing factors impact on children differently depending on their developmental age. The factors shaping child development and wellbeing are complex, often interrelated and multiplied by coincident factors (Dockery et al. 2010). This means that housing can impact on children's wellbeing and development through both direct and indirect factors. Housing factors impact on children differently depending on their developmental age.

Home ownership was found in the review to positively affect academic performance and lifetime prospects, emotional and social wellbeing, behaviour and health; negative impacts for children's wellbeing and development were associated with the following factors (Dockery et al. 2010):

- → **Toxins** contribute to lower birth weights and lengths among infants, behavioural and social problems, impaired neurological development and growth, IQ reductions, poorer academic outcomes and juvenile delinquency among

adolescents. Toxicants affect all stages of child development and the effects tend to be irreversible and continue on into adulthood.

- **Environmental allergens** can lead to asthma and other respiratory illnesses, which in turn trigger future development of respiratory illnesses. They have the greatest impact in infancy and early childhood.
- **Unclean, unsafe and low-quality housing** can result in reduced cognitive development, falls or injuries and internalising behaviours due to parental restrictions on physical behaviour. This type of housing is most likely to affect young children who spend most of their time indoors.
- **Building height and limited opportunities for outdoor play** were found to contribute to behavioural and social problems, reduced independence, reduced motor skill competencies and ability to perform routine tasks and poorer education outcomes. This primarily affects young children due to parental restrictions.
- **Crowding** can contribute to a reduced sense of autonomy, social withdrawal, health and developmental problems, poorer school performance and behavioural adjustment at school, psychological distress, and psychological distress in adults, which led to increased conflict between children and parents. Crowding affects children at all stages of their development. Negative effects on mental development were noted at 18–24 months of age; reduced verbal and perceptual development at 30, 36 and 43 months; and poorer language development at 39 months. Crowding was correlated with reduced IQ scores at age 30 months; impaired semantic memory among toddlers; less persistence and vigour in solving complex and challenging puzzles in young children; and lower task-performing motivation in children aged 6–12 years. Crowding was found to be associated with poor cognitive development and poorer reading test performance among elementary school children and had a negative impact on learning in elementary and middle school.
- **High mobility and frequent residential moves** have a negative impact on education outcomes, behaviour and reduce social connectedness.
- **Homelessness** causes psychological distress including depression and anxiety, personal, social and language developmental difficulties, emotional developmental delays, health and hunger problems and poor academic performance.
- **Neighbourhood effects** associated with poor neighbourhoods have been linked to greater exposure to health risks, higher rates of crime, poverty and drug use, reduced access to quality education and health services, reduced opportunities for outdoor play and poorer education outcomes. Neighbourhood effects on infants and preschool children operate indirectly through impacts on parents and were associated with behavioural problems among 4–5 year olds. They were found to be strongest in adolescents due to the influence of peers.
- **Poor housing affordability** contributes to to poor health outcomes (due to lower-quality housing or reduced consumption of basic necessities) and increases stress among children (due to a higher likelihood of inconsistent or punitive parenting practices by caregivers bearing the burden of financial hardship). Detrimental effects were strongest in early childhood; health impacts strongest among 6–17 year olds; and behavioural impacts strongest among 12–17 year olds.

A study by Phibbs and Young (2005) examined the links between housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes. They found that improved housing circumstances resulting from the receipt of housing assistance in the form of public housing had positive effects on education. Study participants reported that better housing circumstances allowed

their children to access better schools, contributed to increased happiness of children, reduced parental stress and provided children with more space and fewer interruptions to do their homework.

The discussion paper now considers the ample evidence base on Indigenous housing and points towards the implications of this for Indigenous children's education and wellbeing.

4 Indigenous children—housing and education outcomes

Indigenous Australian children fare worse than other Australian children on a number of indices. These include:

- → *physical health*
- → *social and emotional wellbeing*
- → *learning outcomes*
- → *neighbourhood effects.*

The housing experiences of Indigenous children are significantly worse than those for other Australian children. Dockery et al. (2013: 52) note:

> *On average, Indigenous children live in starkly inferior housing circumstances than non-Indigenous children. This is apparent in terms of a low level of home ownership among Indigenous Australians, a high proportion living in public housing and in receipt of CRA, more frequent moves, more crowded homes and generally inferior neighbourhoods. Indigenous children are also much more likely to live in a sole-parent family, and are significantly worse on all outcomes measures.*

In Australia there is very limited research on the link between housing and Indigenous education outcomes. The study by Dockery et al. (2013) referenced above drew on data from two key longitudinal studies to provide empirical evidence for the association between housing and early childhood wellbeing and development: Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)[4]; and Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)[5].

While Dockery et al.'s study found highly statistically significant relationships between a range of housing variables and children's outcomes, in terms of magnitude, the authors noted that the effect of housing variables was quite modest and explained little of what could already be accounted for by family socio-demographic characteristics.

Associations between housing and child outcomes do not necessarily imply causal effects, but they seem to impact on various areas of child development.

- → **Physical health.** Housing has a small impact on physical health.
- → **Social and emotional outcomes.** Parenting styles and family dynamics are of greater importance than the physical aspects of the building.
- → **Learning outcomes.** Crowding has the largest negative impact on learning outcomes.

[4] LSAC followed 5107 infants for four years (from 0–1 to 4–5 years) and 4983 pre-schoolers for four years (from 4–5 to 8–9 years).

[5] LSIC is a longitudinal study of two groups of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who were aged 6 to 18 months and 3½ to 5 years when the study began in 2008.

- → **Neighbourhood effects.** Neighbourhood effects are more important than characteristics of individual dwellings in promoting the wellbeing of children, particularly once they pass toddlerhood.

The study also investigated the impacts of housing-related factors on Indigenous children. It found that Indigenous families scored similarly to the general population on indicators of parental warmth, but less well for other indicators (Dockery et al. 2013).

- → They scored far lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts on social and emotional wellbeing indexes. This was driven primarily by the higher incidence of Indigenous families living in public housing and the inferior condition of their dwellings.
- → They had poorer physical outcomes than the general population due, in part, to the lower liveability of their neighbourhoods and poorer condition of their dwellings.
- → They scored much lower than the general population on the learning outcomes index. This was driven by the degree of crowding and the high proportion of households living in public housing. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children seemed to widen with age.
- → They were particularly disadvantaged in terms of the socio-economic position of their family, low rates of home ownership and high levels of receipt of housing assistance (particularly public housing).
- → Disproportionately high numbers of children were living in sole-parent families.

5 Current research on Indigenous housing

The circumstances of their housing (housing characteristics, environment, tenure) will affect to greater or lesser extent the ability of children to engage with and succeed in formal education. For Indigenous children these circumstances include:

- *high numbers of children in insecure housing*
- *poor housing affordability*
- *high levels of homelessness*
- *high prevalence of crowding*
- *high mobility*
- *neighbourhood effects*
- *impact of low-quality housing on children's health*
- *remoteness.*

AHURI has undertaken an extensive programme of research related to Indigenous housing. This research has focused on providing an evidence base to inform the development of appropriate housing policy responses to Indigenous needs, inclusive of cultural considerations (see Appendices 4–6).

The key themes of AHURI's housing research is this space are:

- Indigenous housing pathways and preferences
- sustaining tenancies and managing Indigenous housing
- Indigenous home ownership
- Indigenous homelessness.

While this body of research is not directly related to Indigenous children's education, it goes towards establishing the housing circumstances in which Indigenous children live.

It is has been well established through this body of work and other studies in Australia and internationally that the home environment has significant impacts on the ability of children to attend, engage with and remain at school. Key housing factors identified in AHURI research which are relevant to children's educational performance are:

- high numbers of children in insecure housing
- poor housing affordability
- high levels of homelessness
- high prevalence of crowding
- high mobility
- neighbourhood effects
- impact of low-quality housing on children's health
- remoteness.

These will now be examined in turn.

5.1 Housing affordability and insecure tenure

Indigenous households are more likely than the general population to live in precarious housing and have poor housing affordability.

Indigenous households are under-represented among home owners and over-represented among social housing tenants, pointing to high levels of housing affordability stress.

Indigenous renters are more likely to be evicted than their non-Indigenous counterparts. These housing circumstances can negatively affect children's education outcomes.

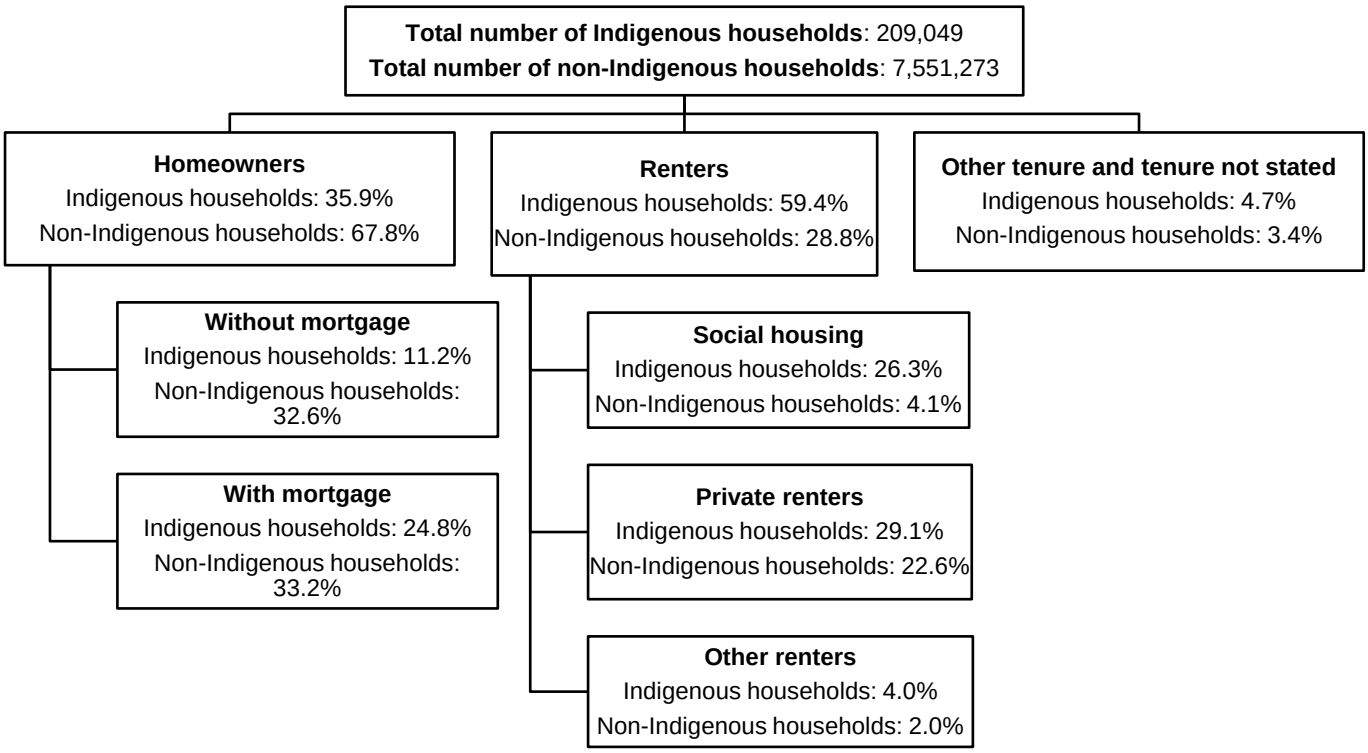
The housing in which many Indigenous Australians live is inadequate. Problems include the material condition of housing such as facilities, materials, services and infrastructure, and housing accessibility including affordability, security, cultural appropriateness and location (Habibis et al. forthcoming). Relevant factors include:

- housing disrepair
- overcrowding
- frequent (forced) residential moves
- homelessness
- insufficient funds to pay for basic necessities
- physical and mental health
- schooling
- parental stress
- living in low socio-economic areas (associated with neighbourhood effects).

Indigenous households are more likely to live in precarious housing and their tenure patterns differ substantially from those of the general population (AIHW 2014b; Foster et al. 2011) (see Figure 1). Relative to the Australian population as a whole there are far fewer Indigenous home owners and many more renters, meaning that Indigenous households are less likely to enjoy secure housing tenure than other Australians. They are also overrepresented among social housing tenants, pointing to high levels of housing affordability stress.

These housing circumstances can negatively affect child development and wellbeing, and children's education outcomes. Recent research demonstrates that home ownership is associated with better education outcomes, while social housing and/or precarious housing is associated with poorer education outcomes and reductions in school attendance (AIHW 2010; Dockery et al. 2010; Dockery et al. 2013; Foster et al. 2011; Mallett et al. 2011; Ware 2013).

Figure 1: Indigenous households and non-Indigenous households by tenure type 2011



Source: Based on data from AIHW 2014b

5.1.1 Indigenous home ownership

For a range of cultural, economic, structural and family reasons, Indigenous Australians have significantly lower levels of home ownership than do other Australians. Home ownership is considered to be a more secure form of housing than renting. It offers a greater level of control over one's environment than other forms of tenure and is a vehicle for the accumulation of wealth. Low levels of Indigenous home ownership mean that the majority of Indigenous households rely on the private rental market or social housing.

Indigenous home ownership is increasing slowly but steadily. Indigenous households represented 19 per cent of home owners in 1991 (Crabtree et al. 2012). In 2006, households with at least one Indigenous member had a homeownership rate of 34 per cent, which was approaching 50 per cent of homeownership rates for non-Indigenous households (69%) (ABS and AIHW 2008). In 2011, the rate of Indigenous home ownership had increased marginally to 36 per cent, with that for non-Indigenous households declining marginally to 68 per cent (AIHW 2014b).

Homeownership rates were lowest in remote and very remote areas, where only 18 per cent of Indigenous people owned their own home in 2011 and 57 per cent of Indigenous households lived in social housing (AIHW 2014b).

Low levels of home ownership are not due to a lack of interest in home ownership among Indigenous households (Crabtree et al. 2012; Crabtree et al. 2015; Memmott et

al. 2009). Where Indigenous families have a history of home ownership this shapes housing aspirations by creating the possibility of home ownership for younger generations (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008).

Indigenous people face unique challenges in entering home ownership and in obtaining and sustaining private rental tenancies. These challenges include:

- persistent low levels of income and high unemployment (Crabtree et al. 2012; Crabtree et al. 2015; Mowbray and Warren 2007)
- geographical factors (e.g. living in remote areas) (Mowbray and Warren 2007)
- land tenure, where the land occupied is classified as 'inalienable' freehold and cannot be put forward as security to lenders (Memmott et al. 2009; Mowbray and Warren 2007)
- unstable housing pathways (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008), including difficulty in sustaining housing situations following public housing exits (Wiesel et al. 2014)
- unsettled complex family dynamics, including family/domestic violence (Wiesel et al. 2014)
- mental and physical illness and disability (Wiesel et al. 2014)
- race-related discrimination and harassment in the private rental market (Wiesel et al. 2014).

5.1.2 Rental housing

The proportion of Indigenous households in social housing and in private rental is higher than that for the total Australian population (Figure 1). Mainstream housing policy settings and service delivery practices are not necessarily responsive to the needs and preferences of many Indigenous tenants (Flatau et al. 2004; Habibis et al. 2011). This puts them at risk of eviction from social housing and means that they experience lower housing security than others in the Australian housing community.

Social housing is delivered to Indigenous people via four funding streams: mainstream public housing; mainstream community housing; state owned/managed Indigenous housing; and Indigenous owned/managed housing. Recently there has been a strong trend towards undifferentiated mainstream responses to the provision of social housing to Indigenous people in both remote and non-remote locations (DSS 2013b; Habibis et al. 2014; Habibis et al. 2013).

The percentage of Indigenous occupancy has risen in both public housing and in community housing. Much of this growth has resulted from greater targeting to Indigenous households, and some has resulted from the takeover of Indigenous managed community housing (Milligan et al. 2011).

The policy rationale for the 'mainstreaming' of housing for Indigenous clients has been grounded in principles of equality, human rights and citizenship. A significant outcome of current policy settings is an increasing expectation that mainstream housing providers will cater to the needs of Indigenous people in urban contexts (Milligan et al. 2011). However, in practice this has meant that service provision and tenancy management often does not meet the needs of Indigenous tenants (Habibis et al. 2014; Habibis et al. 2015).

Indigenous tenants, both in private and public rental, are one of the demographic groups most vulnerable to eviction. Indigenous households in mainstream public housing, for example, are much more likely than non-Indigenous households to receive tenancy termination notices and to be evicted (Flatau et al. 2005).

Factors which place tenancies at risk of failure include: mental and physical health disabilities; drug and alcohol dependency; poor knowledge of tenancy responsibilities; housing stress due to low income or debt; relationship breakdown; family/domestic violence; difficult to manage tenant behaviours; and overcrowding (Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010; Cooper and Morris 2005; Flatau et al. 2009; Flatau et al. 2005). These factors are more prevalent for Indigenous tenancies than for other tenancy types.

Flatau et al. (2009) identified a number of drivers of tenancy instability specific to Indigenous households:

- discrimination by landlords and neighbours
- failure of landlords and housing agencies to appropriately address cultural behaviour and imperatives such as duties of hospitality, extended family responsibilities and demand sharing
- lack of understanding of Indigenous patterns of occupation and use of housing (domiciliary behaviour)
- Indigenous belief systems and mourning customs
- inability to meet unforeseen expenses such as funeral costs
- Indigenous patterns of mobility
- in some cases, a lack of urban 'life-skills'
- the high number of Indigenous people living in regional and remote areas with limited available support services.

These factors combine to create Indigenous housing circumstances that are more precarious and less stable and secure than those of the general population. The resultant housing stress negatively affects children's developmental and education outcomes.

Conversely, increasing housing security and affordability can positively influence Indigenous education outcomes. A study examining the effects of housing assistance on non-shelter outcomes (Phibbs and Young 2005) found that, based on parental perceptions, children's educational performance improved following relocation into public housing. Parents attributed the positive effect to: access to better schooling, including quality teaching and more motivated peers; changes at home due to decreased parental stress and increased happiness of the child now living in a good quality dwelling; and the ability of children to do their homework without disturbance from, or fighting with, their siblings due to the availability of private separate living spaces.

5.2 Homelessness

- *Indigenous children are overrepresented among homeless children across all age groups.*
- *Indigenous children are more likely to experience intergenerational homelessness.*
- *Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness for Indigenous women and children.*

→ *Homelessness is associated with numerous negative effects on children's school performance*.

Secure and stable housing is a pre-condition for engagement in education, training and employment. Homelessness is associated with numerous negative effects on children's school performance. Homeless children are more likely to score poorly on achievement tests, repeat school grades and have lower future expectations in relation to educational attainment at secondary level compared to children who are in receipt of housing assistance (Rafferty et al. 2004).

Indigenous people are overrepresented among homeless Australians and Indigenous children are overrepresented among homeless children across all age groups (AIHW 2014a). In 2011, an estimated 26,743 Indigenous people were experiencing homelessness (25,950 in 2006) (AIHW 2014a). This constitutes about 25 per cent of all people experiencing homelessness (ABS 2012a). Taking into account the size of Australia's Indigenous population (approximately 3% of Australia's total population), this means that around one in 20 Indigenous people are homeless. This is 14 times the rate of non-Indigenous homelessness in Australia (AIHW 2014a).

Indigenous people are also overrepresented among those accessing homelessness services. In 2012–13, 22 per cent of clients receiving specialist homelessness services identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (AIHW 2013). Indigenous users of specialist homelessness services tended to be younger than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The largest age group for Indigenous clients was the 0–9 year age group (24%), followed by the 18–24 year age group (18%) (AIHW 2013). For non-Indigenous clients, these age groups comprised 14 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, with the largest age groups for non-Indigenous clients being 25–34 years (20%) and 35–44 years (19%) (AIHW 2013). Indigenous homeless persons are more likely to be female (51% in 2011 compared with 42% non-Indigenous homeless).

One in four Indigenous people who were homeless in 2011 were under 18 years of age and 28.2 per cent were children under 12 years. This compares, respectively, to 23 per cent of non-Indigenous people under 18 years and 13.2 per cent of non-Indigenous people under 12 years. A higher proportion of Indigenous homeless persons (51%) than non-Indigenous homeless persons (42%) overall were female (AIHW 2014a).

Homeless children are likely to have reduced reading achievement (Zima et al. 1996, cited in Dockery et al. 2010) and their achievement in spelling, mathematics and reading is poorer than their housed peers (Rubin et al. 1996, cited in Dockery 2010 et al.). Children without stable housing have been shown to have lower rates of school attendance, which contributes to poorer academic performance (Molnar et al. 1990, cited in Dockery 2010 et al.), have comparatively higher absentee rates and be likely to change schools more frequently (Dockery et al. 2010).

Homelessness can be a severe source of stress for children and can cause significant psychological distress. Homeless children are at greater risk of experiencing hunger and ill health (Dockery et al. 2010), with the circumstance of homelessness and associated wellbeing concerns leading to interventions by child welfare agencies (Dockery et al. 2010). Each and all of these factors negatively impact children's educational performance.

5.2.1 Definitions of homelessness

Definitions of 'home' and 'homelessness' differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Until recently, the most widely accepted definition of homelessness was the one developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008), which was based on cultural expectations of the degree to which housing needs were met within conventional expectations or community standards. In Australia this meant having, at a minimum, one room to sleep in, one room to live in, one's own bathroom and kitchen and security of tenure.

In 2012 the ABS developed a new definition of homelessness informed by an understanding that homelessness is not 'rooflessness' (ABS 2012e). A person is considered 'homeless' under this revised definition if their current living arrangement exhibits one of the following characteristics:

- → is in a dwelling that is inadequate
- → has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable
- → does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations, including a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space.

It is notable that the 2012 ABS definition includes people in severely overcrowded dwellings who are considered not to have control of, or access to, space for social relations.

Overcrowding is an indicator of Indigenous homelessness (Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010). The concept of crowding is based on a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex. A 'severely' crowded dwelling is one that needs four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) (ABS 2012b).[6]

Indigenous understandings and definitions of homelessness can differ from those described above and can include 'spiritual homelessness' (the state of being disconnected from one's homeland, separation from family or kinship networks or not being familiar with one's heritage) and 'public place dwelling' or 'itinerancy' (usually used to refer to Indigenous people from remote communities who are 'sleeping rough' in proximity to a major centre) (ABS 2014; AIHW 2014a; Memmott et al. 2003).

Indigenous homelessness is not necessarily defined as a lack of accommodation. It can be defined as losing one's sense of control over, or legitimacy in, the place where one lives (Memmott et al. 2003), or an inability to access appropriate housing that caters to an individual's particular social and cultural needs (Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010). Some public space dwellers who have chosen to live rough may not see themselves as homeless (Memmott et al. 2003).

Aboriginal people are often highly mobile, may be connected to multiple communities through complex social and cultural relationships (e.g. mother's and/or father's country or 'skin' group) and can have multiple 'usual residences' where they feel at home (ABS 2014). Statistical counting aside, Indigenous understandings of homelessness are important in terms of providing support services, as these understandings influence the types of response strategies required and implemented; some services required by Indigenous people who are homeless, for example, may be outside the scope of 'shelter' and entail broader personal or cultural supports (Memmott et al. 2003).

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[6] See Appendix 1.

5.2.2 Remoteness

Location has a profound impact on Indigenous homelessness rates. In 2011 around 12 per cent of Indigenous people who were homeless were living in major cities, with the remaining 17 per cent living in regional cities (AIHW 2014a).

Very remote areas and major cities have the highest rates of homelessness. Based on 2011 ABS Census of Population and Housing data, seven in 10 Indigenous people experiencing homelessness on Census night were in remote areas, of which 60 per cent were in very remote areas and 10 per cent in remote areas (AIHW 2014a). Severe crowding was a major factor in these statistics, with nearly all (97%) of the Indigenous people in very remote areas who were classified as 'homeless', and 71 per cent of those in remote areas, living in severely crowded dwellings (AIHW 2014a).

5.2.3 Intergenerational homelessness

AHURI research by Flatau et al. (2013) explored the prevalence and structure of intergenerational homelessness in Australia (homelessness repeated across generations of the same family). The research was based on the Intergenerational Homelessness Survey carried out in 2009–10 and included 647 respondents from 70 agencies.

The findings from the research with specific relevance to Indigenous respondents include that:

- → The rate of intergenerational homelessness for Indigenous respondents was significantly (69%) higher than for non-Indigenous respondents (43%).
- → Indigenous respondents were more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to have experienced primary homelessness before reaching 18 years of age, with around a quarter of Indigenous respondents reporting a spell of primary homelessness before the age of 12 (compared with an eighth of non-Indigenous respondents).
- → There was a strong association between the prevalence of intergenerational homelessness and high family risk factors in the parental home.
- → Indigenous adult clients of homelessness services were significantly more likely than other adult clients to have been placed in foster care or residential care before the age of 18 (30% of Indigenous adult clients reported that they had been placed in foster care at some point before the age of 18).
- → Seventy per cent of Indigenous respondents had lived with relatives prior to turning 18, compared to 42% of non-Indigenous respondents.

These findings indicate that among the population of people who experience homelessness, Indigenous people have often experienced longer and more traumatic early life experiences than their non-Indigenous counterparts. This finding highlights the fundamental importance of preventive and early intervention homelessness programs for children and young teenagers in relation to parental family/domestic violence, alcohol and drug use problems and entry into out-of-home care arrangements (Flatau et al. 2013).

5.2.4 Family violence and homelessness

Domestic or family violence was the most commonly reported primary reason for Indigenous clients (22%) and non-Indigenous clients (21%) seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services (AIHW 2014a).

Indigenous women and children face unique challenges. A qualitative study of Indigenous women's experience of homelessness in Queensland and the Northern Territory documented affordability constraints and perceived race-related discrimination (Cooper and Morris 2005) for Indigenous women seeking housing. The study also provides evidence of the effects of drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, family violence and debt on Indigenous women's housing choices and homelessness.

Indigenous women and children seeking to escape family violence are frequently disconnected from the life of their local community, moving house frequently. This high mobility means they are often hidden from the services which could assist them and have poor access both to mainstream and Indigenous-specific homelessness services.

Indigenous women also can be prevented from seeking help and accessing services and skills-based training which might lead to employment and financial independence by cultural perceptions of 'shame' and poor literacy (including information literacy) (Cooper and Morris 2005).

Women require support for themselves and their children through mechanisms that provide financial and housing stability where such supports are desired. Support to sustain tenancies might include assistance with housing transitions, tenancy skills in areas like budgeting, cooking and basic property maintenance, parenting and urban living skills for women from remote areas, material aid in establishing a household, strategies to deal with crowding, financial abuse or substance issues, and ongoing personal and social supports to overcome isolation and integrate into the local community (Cooper and Morris 2005). Support for women in the face of domestic violence and financial distress would and for those who have substance abuse, alcohol and violence problems can reduce stress and crowding (Memmot et al. 2012).

5.3 Crowding

Crowding affects children's health and wellbeing and can lead to reduced school engagement and poor education outcomes

Indigenous households tend to be larger and experience crowding at far higher rates than other Australian households.

Crowding is particularly pronounced in remote and very remote locations.

Indigenous households tend to be larger and experience crowding at far higher rates than the general population. Data from the 2011 ABS Census suggest that 24,700 Indigenous households were living in overcrowded homes in 2011 and 23 per cent of Indigenous households had five or more usual residents (compared to 10% of other households) (AIHW 2014b). The average size of Indigenous households was 3.3 people, compared with 2.6 people in other household types (AIHW 2014b).

Indigenous children, especially in remote communities, are much more likely to live in overcrowded dwellings than other children (AIHW 2014a). In 2008 more than half (58%) of all Indigenous children and youth lived in overcrowded housing; just under a third (92,700 or 31%) of all Indigenous children and youth lived in overcrowded housing in remote areas (ABS 2012c).

Living at high density can have positive and negative health and wellbeing effects for Indigenous people (Memmot et al. 2012). High numbers of people living in one house can be protective against child abuse and 'clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties' in children, where there is greater availability of adult supervision and care (Memmot et al. 2012). Conversely, the Northern Territory Government's Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse found that 'overcrowding in houses in Aboriginal communities … has a direct impact on family and sexual violence' (Anderson and Wild 2007) and creates the conditions in which child abuse can occur.

The larger size of Indigenous households may be due to a number of factors including:

- → the greater prevalence of multi-generational and multi-family households in Indigenous communities (AIFS 2011; AIHW 2014b)
- → lower income, higher rates of unemployment and housing supply and affordability issues leading to increased house-sharing arrangements (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008).

It is possible that crowding may not have the same impacts on outcomes for Indigenous children as it does for non-Indigenous children because of different cultural norms and expectations in respect to housing extended family and household size (Dockery et al. 2013). Biddle (2010) found that the number of people in the household did not have a significant effect on school attendance but the number of people per bedroom did, concluding that this implies that it is overcrowding that reduces educational participation rather than household size. The 2011 Census indicated that 12.9 per cent of Indigenous households required at least one additional bedroom, compared to 3.4 per cent of other households (AIHW 2014b).

The rate of overcrowding among Indigenous households varies according to tenure type. In 2011 Indigenous households were more than three times as likely as other households to be overcrowded. Social housing had the highest rate of overcrowding

(23% compared to 5% of non-Indigenous households) followed by private renters (11% compared to 7% of non-Indigenous households). Indigenous home owners with or without a mortgage had the lowest rates of overcrowding (each at 7%, compared to 2% of non-Indigenous home owners) (AIHW 2014b).

Rates of overcrowding increased with remoteness, affecting between 10–12 per cent of households in non-remote areas, 20 per cent in remote areas and 39 per cent in very remote areas(AIHW 2014b). Much of this difference is due to the high levels of overcrowding in social housing in remote areas. Forty-six per cent of Indigenous households in social housing in very remote areas, and 31 per cent in remote areas, are considered to be overcrowded (AIHW 2014b).

The concept of overcrowding can be subjective and is influenced by a number of factors including cultural and housing design considerations. The ABS and most other studies calculate crowding using the CNOS (Appendix 1) for housing appropriateness. However, questions have been raised about the cultural applicability of this standard to Indigenous Australian housing (Memmot et al. 2012). Thus while Indigenous people may be defined as living in overcrowded conditions under the CNOS, they may not themselves feel that their household is overcrowded (AIHW 2014b; Memmot et al. 2012).

A number of factors (referred to briefly above) influence household size and contribute to crowding. These include income and employment, housing affordability, low vacancy rates and visitors. Temporary and semi-permanent visitors each contribute to crowding. They include people who would otherwise be homeless; people needing to access services (e.g. health or shopping); and people wishing to access the social and cultural life and structural support services of a particular location (Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010; Memmot et al. 2012).

The housing affordability crisis and low vacancy rates also contribute to overcrowding, as individuals and families are forced to choose between homelessness and living with often large numbers of kinfolk (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). Seasonal and culturally motivated movements by family members and strong family obligations can also exacerbate overcrowding (Memmot et al. 2012).

While Indigenous households do not necessarily see overcrowding as problematic, crowding can contribute to loss of personal control and stress (Memmot et al. 2012) and affect residents in a number of ways:

- → put stress on household infrastructure (AIHW 2014b)
- → adversely affect the physical health of residents through increased risk of exposure to infectious diseases and exacerbation of chronic infections (AIHW 2014b; DPMC 2016)
- → be detrimental to the mental health of residents (AIHW 2014b) (Indigenous adults living in overcrowded housing are slightly more likely to experience high levels of psychological distress (33%) than other Indigenous adults (28%)) (ABS 2012d)
- → impact employment opportunities (AIHW 2014b)
- → affect children's attendance and attainment at school (AIHW 2014b; DPMC 2016)
- → contravene housing department regulations and lead to householder stress and eviction (Memmot et al. 2012).

5.4 Mobility

Indigenous households are highly mobile.

Frequent residential moves impact negatively on education outcomes.

International research demonstrates that high mobility and frequent residential moves negatively impact on education outcomes and behaviour and reduce social connectedness.

School-age children who move frequently are significantly more likely to fail a grade, have behavioural problems (Wood et al. 1992) and fall behind in their learning than their more stably housed peers (Kerbow 1996). When children change schools with a residential move they have to contend with new peers, teachers, curricula and other challenges, including the circumstance of their relocation, which may disrupt their educational progress and achievement (Dockery et al. 2010).

Repeated residential mobility has been associated in the literature with reduced social connectedness both for children and their families (Pribesh and Downey 1999; South and Haynie 2004). However, there is a dearth of research specifically examining the impact of high residential mobility on child development and educational performance for Indigenous children in Australia. Differences in kinship and social structures mean that such findings may not be transferrable to Indigenous households and should therefore be treated with caution.

The Australian Indigenous population is, however, highly mobile. Geographical mobility is fundamental to Indigenous self-identity (Habibis et al. 2010; Memmott et al. 2004; Peterson 2004) and associated with kinship patterns, cultural practices and autonomy. However, it is also associated with housing stress, overcrowding, homelessness and family violence (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008; Habibis et al. 2010; Memmott et al. 2006).

Mobility can take the form of permanent relocation but much Indigenous mobility is temporary and consists of short-term geographical movement. Temporary mobility is known to negatively impact housing access and tenancy sustainability for Indigenous people (Habibis et al. 2010).

Research on the motivations for Indigenous temporary mobility and migration reveal a complex interaction of factors derived internally from Indigenous culture and externally from non-Indigenous social forces (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008). AHURI research by Habibis et al. (2011) has identified seven key mobility groups among the Indigenous population: visitors; migrants; boarders; between place dwellers; transients; involuntary travellers; and the chronically homeless. As noted in the previous section, this has implications also for crowding. Children and women are particularly affected by forced mobility resulting from family violence and family breakdown (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008; Walker et al. 2003).

Although high mobility among Indigenous households is a well-established phenomenon, temporary mobility is an important area which influences housing demand and housing provision. It is often overlooked because it falls between the provision of permanent affordable housing and specialist homelessness service provision (Habibis et al. 2011).

5.5 Neighbourhood effects

Australian children living in neighbourhoods with greater socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to experience adverse outcomes than children living in more advantaged areas.

As Indigenous households tend to have worse socio-economic indicators and tend to live in areas of greater disadvantage than their non-Indigenous counterparts, especially in remote areas, the impact of area effects on Indigenous children's education outcomes cannot be underestimated.

The characteristics of the area in which children live, and the characteristics of the people who live in the area, are likely to have an association with school attendance, attainment and completion. This is referred to as neighbourhood effects.

Neighbourhood effects (or 'area effects') refer to the effect on an individual's life chances attributable to living in a particular neighbourhood (e.g. in relation to health, education, employment, crime, welfare dependency, self-esteem). It describes a situation whereby disadvantaged individuals are significantly harmed by the presence of high concentrations of disadvantaged groups, but are helped by the presence of advantaged groups in the area (Andersson 2004; Andersson et al. 2007; Atkinson 2008; Galster and Friedrichs 2015; Galster et al. 2004; Galster 2012; Kearns and Mason 2007).

There are only few studies on neighbourhood effects on children in Australia. Ben Edwards' examination of the role of neighbourhoods on children's conduct and development is a rare exception. Consistent with the international evidence, the study found that Australian children living in neighbourhoods with greater socio-economic disadvantage were more likely to experience adverse outcomes than children living in more advantaged areas (Edwards 2005). A later study by Edwards and Bromfield (2010) found that neighbourhood social processes (e.g. neighbourhood belonging) play a role in explaining the influence of neighbourhood disadvantage on children's behavioural and emotional problems. For example, perceptions of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood belonging can mediate the effect of neighbourhood socio-economic disadvantage on children's behavioural and emotional outcomes.

The causal linkage between areas of concentrated poverty and these outcomes is complex. Area effects include the quality and availability of local essential public services (such as health and education), the role-model effects generated by living in extensively poor areas and the spatial disadvantage of excluded neighbourhoods and stigmatisation (Atkinson 2008). The school attendance and completion rates of one's peers and role models are likely to include the relative social acceptance of attending or not attending high school (Biddle 2010).

There is, however, some more recent dissention in regard to the claim that living in deprived neighbourhoods makes people poorer, with others suggesting that 'it is more likely that unemployed people moved to the deprived neighbourhoods because they could not afford to live elsewhere' (Manley et al. 2012: 157) (see also Arthurson 2002; Arthurson 2012).

As Indigenous households tend to have poorer socio-economic indicators and live in areas of greater disadvantage than other Australians (AIHW 2011), the impact of area

effects on Indigenous children's education outcomes, especially in remote areas, cannot be underestimated.

5.6 Housing and health

Housing is a key social determinant of health.

Health is a key determinant of school attendance.

Indigenous children experience poorer health outcomes than their non-Indigenous peers due, in part, to the poor condition of their housing and crowding.

Housing is a key social determinant of health (Bailie 2007; Phibbs and Thompson 2011). There are clear links between the quality and location of housing and health outcomes (Ware 2013). Indigenous people are known to have higher rates of illness due to poor housing conditions and overcrowding than non-Indigenous Australians (Dockery et al. 2010).

Affordable housing can indirectly affect physical health, particularly of children, in a number of ways. It affects the amount of money available to spend on 'basic necessities including food, clothing, healthcare, and heating' (AIHW 2010: 11) which, in turn, affects spending on basic health including dental treatment. The financial strain placed on parents by housing stress associated with the lack of affordable housing and cost of living pressures can also affect children 'via parental wellbeing' (AIHW 2010).

Biddle's (2014) analysis of data from LSIC found that health was a key determinant of school attendance. He suggests that the ongoing poor health profile of Indigenous children is part of the explanation for poor school attendance and that a focus on school retention for young Indigenous children, in particular, should be on health outcomes.

Housing can affect health and wellbeing directly and indirectly through physical, chemical, biological, economic and social factors (Bailie 2007; Dockery et al. 2010; Ware 2013). The effects of these factors may be felt at the time of exposure or may occur later in life (Dockery et al. 2010; Phibbs and Thompson 2011; Ware 2013).

Indigenous Australians, especially in remote and very remote areas, are around 18 times more likely than other households to live in housing that is of poor quality, in poor condition and in need of major repairs (Mallett et al. 2011). They also experience multiple interruptions to water and electricity supply, and sewerage system faults are not uncommon (ABS 2008).

The 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) found that 28 per cent of Indigenous people aged 15 and over lived in dwellings with major structural problems, such as cracks in walls or floors, plumbing problems and wood rot or termite damage. Almost four in 10 people living in remote areas lived in dwellings with structural problems (Ware 2013).

Primary reasons for the poor condition of Indigenous housing have been identified as: inappropriate design for local climate conditions or cultural practices; low-quality construction and materials; 'high levels of wear and tear' due to small houses being used to accommodate large households; and limited maintenance (Habibis et al. forthcoming; Lea and Pholeros 2010; Ware 2013).

Indigenous children in remote communities have a high incidence of infection induced by deficient essential housing infrastructure, crowding and poor hygiene practices (Bailie et al. 2005; McDonald et al. 2009). Lack of clean water for drinking, cooking and washing, and inadequate wastewater disposal, have been linked with increased prevalence of gastroenteritis, skin diseases and ear infections in young children (Bailie 2007).

In remote communities inadequate water supplies, sanitation and overcrowding have the greatest impact on Indigenous children, leading to diseases such as skin infections and infestations, respiratory, eye and ear infections, diarrhoeal diseases and rheumatic fever (Dockery et al. 2010).

In well-designed housing and neighbourhoods safe outdoor play areas contribute to greater social participation and connection, allow children to engage in creative play and improve a range of facets of physical health such as increased immunity and the reduction of mental stress (Bagot 2005).

Housing design is important. Problems arise where the size and layout of dwellings does not meet the cultural and living needs of residents including usage patterns (Biddle 2011). The dominant nuclear design of houses in urban spaces in Australia is not suited to complex multi-generational or multi-family household structures and does not translate well to the requirements of remote-area living. Remote Indigenous housing, in particular, tends to be too small and confined and not sympathetic either to climatic conditions or outdoor living.

The social stress associated with cramped living conditions has been associated also with increased family or other violence (Anderson and Wild 2007; Bailie 2007), inappropriate exposure of children to adult sexual acts (Anderson and Wild 2007; Bagot 2005) and increased sexual violence towards both adults and children (Bagot 2005). All of these factors have impacts for children's wellbeing and the ability of children to participate successfully in education. Lack of sleep and the ability to complete homework (Biddle 2007) are key factors in educational engagement and attainment for Indigenous children.

The design of housing for Indigenous households produces better outcomes if it takes into account social, cultural, health and environmental considerations and appropriately reflects household cultural norms and needs. This includes providing more bathrooms and larger kitchen facilities and outdoor living and sleeping spaces. It has been suggested that flexible internal spatial arrangements designed to accommodate fluctuations in household composition would produce a better fit (Memmot et al. 2012) and go some way towards reducing household stress and the wear and tear associated with inflexible living spaces modelled on non-Indigenous constructs of the family unit.

5.7 Remoteness

Most factors previously identified as impacting on Indigenous housing and children's education outcomes are more pronounced in remote locations:

→ *high levels of households in social housing*

→ *poor quality housing, which contributes to poor child health*

→ *high degrees of overcrowding and homelessness*

→ *disadvantaged neighbourhoods.*

→ *In combination, these factors affect children's school attendance and their ability to participate fully in education.*

Remoteness cuts across all housing factors identified in this discussion paper as impacting on Indigenous children's education outcomes. The high proportion of Indigenous households in social housing in remote settings, and associated issues of crowding, amenity and household function, has implications for children's wellbeing, active participation in schooling (including their ability to be supported at home and to complete homework) and educational attainment (Habibis et al. forthcoming).

Schools in remote areas may be more difficult and costly to access due to their geographic proximity and the quality of education may be lower (Biddle 2010). Children in remote Indigenous communities may experience more difficulty in accessing basic services and resources due to their isolation from large population centres (Dockery et al. 2010) and cost of living pressures associated with low parental or household income.

There are substantial social and cultural differences between remote and very remote Indigenous communities and regional and urban communities. Remote and very remote Indigenous communities are characterised by large, multi-family households with high levels of crowding, frequent population movement between houses and communities, low levels of formal skills and education and high levels of disability (Habibis et al. forthcoming). They are also characterised by language and cultural differences with many Indigenous Australians in remote areas fluent in a range of Aboriginal languages or dialects and speaking Aboriginal English or Kreol (also Kriol) as the dominant English language.

While remote areas are sparsely populated, the proportion of Indigenous Australians living in these areas is higher than in other areas of Australia. The remote and very remote Indigenous population of Australia comprises 142,900 people, or 21 per cent of the total Indigenous population of Australia (ABS 2011). Census data from 2011 shows that Indigenous people comprise about 3 per cent of the general population, but constitute 32 per cent of households in very remote areas and 12 per cent of households in remote areas (AIHW 2014b). The Indigenous population in remote areas comprises 15 per cent of the total remote population, rising to almost half of the very remote total population (Baxter, Gray & Hayes 2011 cited inHabibis et al. forthcoming).

Remoteness affects tenure type. In 2011 home ownership rates among Indigenous Australians in urbanised areas were lowest in remote areas (27%) and very remote areas (10%), and highest in inner regional areas (40%) and in major cities (39%) (AIHW 2014b). Overall, in remote and very remote areas combined, only 18 per cent of Indigenous households owned their own home (AIHW 2014b).

In 2011, social housing was the most prevalent tenure type for Indigenous households living in remote (40% social housing) and very remote (70% social housing) areas. Combined, 57 per cent of Indigenous households in remote and very remote areas lived in social housing, as compared to 20–24 per cent of Indigenous households in non-remote areas.

Social housing in remote and very remote areas tends to be characterised by high levels of overcrowding and poor condition and facilities inclusive of materials, maintenance, service delivery, security, infrastructure, housing accessibility, cultural appropriateness and location (Habibis et al. forthcoming). These problems stem partly

from the difficulties and cost of providing and maintaining housing in remote locations that can be difficult and costly to access, but also from the changeable policy trajectories for remote Indigenous housing and associated difficulties with policy implementation.

Over the past decade, the policy context for the management of Indigenous housing, and especially remote Indigenous housing, has been characterised by instability and frequent change. The consequences of this shifting policy environment on outcomes for Indigenous communities and the provision of housing should not be underestimated (Habibis et al. forthcoming). The lack of political stability since 2004 at the federal and state and territory levels, and changes to housing program and funding arrangements under successive governments, have contributed to this instability (Habibis et al. forthcoming).

Prior to the implementation of the NPARIH in 2008, housing was managed in most communities by Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs), which were frequently small, local, family based and poorly resourced (Habibis et al. forthcoming). Low rent collection and high maintenance needs often meant that there were low expectations of landlord responsibilities (Habibis et al. forthcoming).

The NPARIHaims to improve Indigenous housing in remote communities and to establish Indigenous housing management standards which are similar to public housing programs in comparable locations elsewhere. It involves a partnership between the Commonwealth, the states and the Northern Territory. Consistent with federal government policy preferences to restrict Commonwealth involvement in housing provision, the NPARIH provides dedicated funding for remote Indigenous housing to the states and territories. Consequently, Indigenous housing in non-remote areas has become the responsibility of mainstream social housing programs administered by the states and territories under the NAHA. No dedicated funding sources are available to the ICHOs (Habibis et al. forthcoming).

The NPARIH aims to deliver 4200 new houses by June 2018 and to rebuild or refurbish approximately 6700 existing houses by the end of June 2014 (DSS 2013a). At June 2013, 2025 new houses and 5887 refurbishments were complete (ahead of schedule) (DSS 2013a). However, implementation success has varied between sites and there is uncertainty about the continued funding of the reforms introduced by the NPARIH (Habibis et al. forthcoming).

6 Developing the knowledge base—next steps

This discussion paper has presented the findings of an initial review of AHURI, Australian and international literature that informs an Inquiry into housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children funded under the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

It has identified a range of factors which impact, or are likely to impact, education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia, and outlined the importance of housing as an enabler for children's successful participation in education through the provision of living environments that are functionally and culturally safe and healthy and promote child development and learning.

While this paper acknowledges the body of international research in areas associated with housing and community and child wellbeing, it draws attention to the absence of research that specifically interrogates the interplay between housing and education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia. It concludes that while there is a high likelihood that housing affects Indigenous children's education outcomes, there is little research or data available to investigate the issue.

A key aim of this Inquiry into Indigenous housing and education is therefore to develop a knowledge base informed by the best available evidence on which policy makers and practitioners can draw to inform strategies and interventions that lead to improved school attendance, reduced attrition and better education outcomes for Indigenous children and, by extrapolation, better employment and lifecourse trajectories that more closely reflect those available to and experienced by most other Australians.

The next phase of this Inquiry will seek input by key Indigenous, research and government stakeholders concerned with Indigenous housing and education in an expert Roundtable designed to develop key questions to inform a comprehensive research Inquiry in this area. Questions for consideration by the Roundtable include the following.

1. Key issues in housing and education for Indigenous children

Q1: To what extent are education outcomes for Indigenous children in Australia influenced by housing circumstance?

Q2: How is the relationship between housing and education best characterised?

2. Data needs

Q3: What type and quality of data will be critical to this Inquiry?

Q4: What data sets are available currently to investigate the links between Indigenous housing and education outcomes?

Q5: Would an audit of existing data sources and linkage of identified datasets be warranted?

3. Conceptual framework

Q6: What would be the key elements of a conceptual framework to investigate housing and Indigenous education?

4. Policy considerations

Q7: What evidence will be required to inform policy recommendations and effect meaningful change?

5. Practical strategies

Q8: What practical strategies or approaches might be considered to address issues related to educational engagement arising from housing circumstance?

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Appendix 1: Canadian National Occupancy Standard

The Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) is a commonly used measure to determine levels of overcrowding. CNOS assesses the bedroom requirements of a household based on the following criteria:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom
- children younger than 5 years of age of different sexes can reasonably share a bedroom
- children aged 5 years and over of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms
- children under 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom
- single household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples.

Using this measure, households that require at least one additional bedroom are considered to experience some degree of overcrowding.

A ‘severely’ crowded dwelling is one that needs four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2012b).

Appendix 2: Policies to address Indigenous housing issues

The following policies intend to address identified Indigenous housing issues. Note that this list is not exhaustive.

Overcrowding and remote Indigenous housing

- **The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing** (NPARIH) is a housing strategy and funding agreement between the Commonwealth, the states and the Northern Territory that commits $5.5 billion over 10 years (2008–2018) to help address significant overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and severe housing shortages in remote Indigenous communities. It is not clear whether the NPARIH will be renewed after its expiration in 2018.
- A new **Remote Housing Strategy** is currently being negotiated to replace the last two-and-a-half years of NPARIH. The Strategy is intended to improve the focus on outcomes, including Indigenous employment and participation, business engagement and the sustainability of housing in remote communities through improved property and tenancy management. The Strategy will build on the NPARIH's local employment targets in capital works and property and tenancy management (DPMC 2016).

Housing affordability and homelessness

- The **National Affordable Housing Agreement** (NAHA) aims to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing which contributes to social and economic participation. This includes improving amenities and reducing overcrowding in remote areas (DPMC 2016). The NAHA is an agreement by COAG that commenced on 1 January 2009, initiating a whole-of-government approach in tackling the problem of housing affordability. The NAHA provides $6.2 billion worth of housing assistance to low- and middle-income Australians in the first five years. The NAHA is supported by the National Partnership Agreements on:
    - social housing
    - homelessness
    - Indigenous Australians living in remote areas.

  In 2015–2016 the Australian Government will provide state and territory governments with approximately $1.324 billion through the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (NAHSPP) (DPMC 2016).
- The **National Rental Affordability Scheme** (NRAS) commenced in 2008. The scheme aimed to promote the development of affordable housing by the provision of a refundable tax offset or cash payment for providers of housing leased at a rate of 20 per cent or more below market value rent. The scheme was also designed to allow for collective investment in relevant dwellings by the provision of tax offsets to investors in an investment consortium or trust. In 2014 the government announced that it would not proceed with round 5 of the NRAS. As at 30 April 2014, 1876 of 42 820 residents of NRAS dwellings identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (DPMC 2016).
- The **National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness** provides for $230 million over two years to 30 June 2017, to be matched by state and territory governments,

to fund frontline homelessness services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are identified as a key priority to receive assistance across Australia as is early intervention for children and their families at risk of homelessness (DPMC 2016).

- **Reconnect** is a community-based early intervention and prevention program for young people aged 12–18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and their families ($23 million per year). Nationally, there are more than 100 Reconnect services, including 10 specialist services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (DPMC 2016).

Appendix 3: Policies and strategies relevant to Indigenous children and education

Major recent policies relating to children include the following. Note, this list is not exhaustive.

Early childhood and education

- The **National Indigenous Reform Agreement** captures the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance measures and benchmarks that all states and territories have committed to achieving either through national agreements or national partnership agreements to achieve the six COAG Closing the Gap targets. These targets are:
  - to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation
  - to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade
  - to ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years
  - to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade
  - to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 equivalent attainment by 2020
  - to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.
- The **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy** was endorsed by education Ministers on 18 September 2015. It specifies a set of principles and priorities to inform jurisdictional approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The initial set of actions focus on:
  - attendance and engagement
  - transition points (including pathways to post-school options)
  - early childhood transitions
  - workforce
  - Australian curriculum.
- The **National Early Childhood Development Strategy, Investing in the Early Years** (2009–2020) seeks to achieve positive early childhood development outcomes and address concerns related to individual children early, in order to reduce and minimise the impact of risk factors. Specific outcomes for children relate to improved health and cognitive and social development leading to improved transition to school and education, employment, health and wellbeing outcomes. The aim is to guide investment in future reforms around:
  - providing access for all children to preschool
  - closing the gap on Indigenous early childhood development
  - better child care and early childhood education
  - keeping Australian children safe from harm.

  The strategy links with a number of other national reform initiatives that seek to improve early childhood outcomes including the following (AIHW 2012):

- The **National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education** (NP UAECE) (2016–2017), which supports universal access to and improved participation by children in quality early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling, with a focus on vulnerable children. NP UAECE provides $840 million in federal funding nationally for quality preschool programs and guarantees funding for 600 hours of quality preschool. It is anticipated that this will help to achieve performance benchmarks, particularly for Indigenous children and those from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The **National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development** (2009–2014), which supports the Closing the Gap targets and focuses on the establishment of Children and Family Centres, increasing access to antenatal care and child and family health services for Indigenous children and their families.
- **National Quality Framework** (NQF), which incorporates a new *National Quality Standard* to facilitate high quality and consistent care across Australia. The NQF is implemented via the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care*.
- The **National Education Agreement** (NEA), which encompasses the COAG objectives for Australia's school system. The NEA includes the objectives and outcomes for all schools and school systems, state and territory government roles and responsibilities and performance indicators.
- The **Australian Curriculum**, which is Australia's first national curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 and sets the expectations for what all Australian students should be taught, regardless of where they live or their background.[7]

Health

→ The **National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health** (NPAPH) was announced by COAG on 29 November 2008. The NPAPH will provide $872.1 million over six years from 2009–2010, with a variation in 2012 to extend it to 2018.

NPAPH focuses on addressing the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related chronic disease by laying the foundations for healthy behaviours in the daily lives of Australians through settings such as communities, early childhood education and care environments, schools and workplaces, supported by programs and campaigns across smoking, nutrition, alcohol and physical activity risk factors. NPAPH is committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage.

The objectives and outcomes of the Agreement will be achieved by the delivery of 11 initiatives, including one focused on Healthy Children. Funding for this initiative will be used to deliver programs for children from birth to 16 to increase levels of physical activity and improve the intake of fruit and vegetables in settings such as child care centres, preschools and schools.

[7] http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/ accessed 10 March 2016.

Child and family safety

- The **National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009–2020)** outlines a broad range of outcome measures with the long-term goal of 'a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect'. One of the six supporting outcomes is to ensure that Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities.
- The **National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children (2010–2022)** focuses on primary prevention, improving service delivery and building the evidence base with the goal of enabling women and children to live free from violence in safe communities and to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

Appendix 4: Indigenous housing pathways and preferences

Appendix 5: Indigenous home ownership

Appendix 6: Sustaining tenancies and managing Indigenous housing

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
Research Service

Level 1/114 Flinders Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 9660 2300

Email research@ahuri.edu.au

Web www.ahuri.edu.au