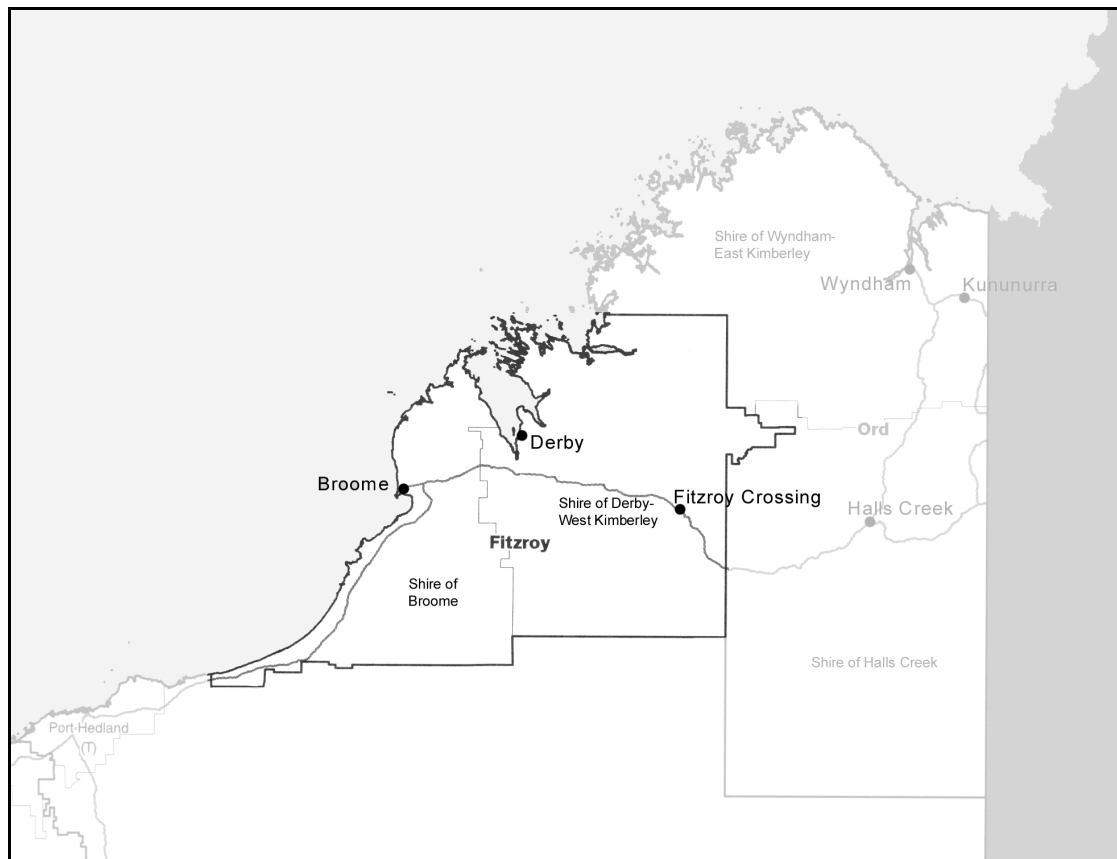




## The State of Housing in the West Kimberley



Final report on community forums undertaken by Shelter WA in Broome and Derby to identify issues affecting housing consumers.

**December 2001**

**Prepared by:**  
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# Introduction



**Picture:** Caravan of Houseboat (Broome)?

## West Kimberley Housing Forums

Shelter WA is Western Australia's peak non-government housing research and policy organisation. We aim to improve housing access, affordability, appropriateness, safety and security for people on low incomes or who face disadvantage in the housing system.

A key role of Shelter WA is to facilitate community input to the development of housing policy. Conducting regular housing forums in regional Western Australia is central to this work.

This is the Final Report on two housing forums Shelter WA conducted in the West Kimberley. The first of these was held in Derby on Tuesday 19 June and the second in Broome on Wednesday 20 June.

Shelter WA previously conducted a housing forum in the Kimberley in March 1995. At that forum issues were identified around:

- ▶ Aboriginal housing;
- ▶ supported accommodation and
- ▶ maintenance.

In the months leading up to the current West Kimberley Forums an investigation was conducted into the extent to which issues identified at the 1995 forum had been addressed. This included a meeting with the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit, at the Department of Housing and Works.

In addition, as part of the development of the West Kimberley Housing Forum Discussion Paper Shelter WA conducted interviews with:

- ▶ Regional Representative on the Rental Sector Standing Committee of the Housing Advisory Committee; and
- ▶ Tenants Advice Service. The TAS in conjunction with the Kimberley Community Legal Service, conducted accredited Tenancy Law Training and forums on housing issues in the West Kimberley during May 2001.

In combination with a literature review and investigation of ABS data, these discussions led to the development of a discussion paper, which was used as the basis of two West Kimberley Housing Forums. The issues identified within the Discussion paper and at the forums have been used to develop an action plan, which Shelter WA will use to inform its advocacy and policy on the future of housing in WA.

In addition to identifying housing issues affecting the West Kimberley, the forums were used as an opportunity to facilitate regional input to the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), which is currently in the process of re-negotiation in preparation for the establishment of a new agreement in 2003. The results of the CSHA forums have been written up in a separate report (available at: [www.shelterwa.org.au](http://www.shelterwa.org.au)).

This report is presented in four parts:

- ▶ Part 1 gives a brief overview of the issues identified at the 1995 Shelter WA Kimberley Housing Forum, and the changes that have occurred since that time.
- ▶ Part 2 lists the issues identified by participants at the two 2001 forums, as well as the results of the interviews conducted prior to the forums.
- ▶ Part 3 gives an analysis of the West Kimberley housing system. It focuses on quantitative issues and includes a brief household profile, stock numbers and an affordability analysis.
- ▶ The issues are summarised and prioritised in Part 4. This part also contains an Action Plan summarising strategies to resolve some key issues around housing in the West Kimberley.

## Part 1: What's Changed Since March 1995?



**Picture:** Homeswest rental housing displaying the “Broome style”.

Shelter WA last conducted a housing forum in the Kimberley in March 1995. At that forum issues were identified around:

- ▶ Aboriginal housing;
- ▶ supported accommodation and
- ▶ maintenance.

Prior to conducting the West Kimberley Forums an investigation was conducted into the extent to which identified issues had been addressed. This included a meeting with the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit, at the Department of Housing and Works.

Issues and updates from the 1995 Forum include:

- ▶ **Restructure of the Aboriginal Housing Board:** The Aboriginal Housing Directorate was established in 1994 as part of the Aboriginal Housing Bi-lateral Agreement. The new board has been operation for 6 years (details of their roles and achievement are detailed in the report, “Aboriginal Infrastructure Unit: Strategic Plan 1999-2002”);
- ▶ **Need for improved coordination of sewerage and infrastructure:** Since January 1999, the Department of Housing has had responsibility for the Aboriginal Communities Strategic Investment Program and the Remote Areas Essential Services Program, which were formerly under the Aboriginal Affairs Department;
- ▶ **Need for stronger links with ATSIC regional councils:** a Bilateral Agreement between the State and Commonwealth governments was signed in December 1997. This agreement coordinates the pooling and expenditure in WA of capital worth \$30.86 million per annum

- ▶ **Need for an Aboriginal employment strategy within Homeswest:** the target of 10% has now been achieved. However, the representation of Aboriginal staff within the Department may decline as a result of the restructure of government departments;
- ▶ **80% of Homeswest's clients in the Kimberley are Aboriginal. A significant proportion of Aboriginal staff should be employed within the Department of Housing:** currently about 28% of the Ministries staff in the Kimberley are Aboriginal and these staff now have career paths;
- ▶ **Town Planning regulations in urban areas limit flexibility in housing design and there is a need for more consultation:** the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit now part funds a Town Planner, who is employed by the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley to assist with design and planning issues.
- ▶ **Need for a Special Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) agency in Broome to act as a liaison between Homeswest and the tenant:** the Mamabulanjin Resource Centre have been funded to provide SHAP services.
- ▶ **Need for Review of Homeswest's Domestic Violence Policy:** The Housing Advisory Committee's Rental Sector Standing Committee has formed a Domestic Violence working group. Under consideration are policy and programme responses to recommendations of the Office of Status of Women Report "*Home Safe Home: The link between domestic & family violence and women's homelessness*". Recommendations for the review of the Homeswest DV policy will be developed in light of the report. The working group will meet monthly until November 2001.

Overall, the issues that were identified at the 1995 forum have all been addressed to a greater or lesser extent. However, with demographic and economic changes along with the impact of new policy directions, a new set of issues around housing has emerged in the West Kimberley.

## Part 2: Issues Identified by Participants in Forums and Consultations



**Picture:** The Broome Town Planning Scheme No.4 encourages residential development on large blocks, like this Homeswest grouped housing development.

### 2.1 The Consultation Process 2001

As part of the development of the West Kimberley Housing Forum Discussion Paper interviews were conducted with:

- ▶ Regional Representative on the Rental Sector Standing Committee of the Housing Advisory Committee; and
- ▶ Tenants Advice Service. The TAS in conjunction with Kimberley Community Legal Service, conducted accredited Tenancy Law Training and housing issues forums in the West Kimberley during May 2001.

Sections 2.2 and 2.3 summarise the issues identified in these interviews. Section 2.3 details the housing issues identified by participants at the Shelter WA Housing Forums in Derby (Tuesday 19 June) and Broome (Wednesday 20 June). The issues have also been used to provide guidance for the quantitative research outlined in Part 3.

### 2.2 Issues Identified by Regional Representative on RSSC:

The RSSC Regional Representative highlighted a range of issues around housing in the Kimberley. These are presented in no particular order.

- ▶ The need for additional Aboriginal Staff to be employed by the Department of Housing and Works.
- ▶ DHW only visits Wyndham and Halls Creek on a weekly basis. This limits access to the DHW in these towns.
- ▶ Negotiating the Native Title process is difficult.
- ▶ There is a lack of tenancy advocates in the Kimberley.

- ▶ Many tenants of the DHW have problems with literacy and understanding the importance of responding to DHW correspondence.
- ▶ Much of the housing in the Kimberley is not appropriate to the climate e.g. no insulation.
- ▶ Living and rental costs are very high. The minimum private rent is \$200 per week. Commonwealth Rent Assistance does not recognise regional difference and does little to improve affordability.
- ▶ Homeswest market rents are also high.
- ▶ Much of Homeswest's stock is old and does not have enough bedrooms for many Aboriginal families. In addition, the housing is constructed on large sites which require a lot of maintenance and contribute to high water consumption and bills.
- ▶ Community workers report that whole Aboriginal families are living in a single bedroom.
- ▶ High level of homelessness.

### **2.3 Issues Identified by the Tenants Advice Service and the Kimberley Community Legal Service**

The Tenants Advice Service Inc in conjunction with Kimberley CLS conducted Tenancy Law Issues for Community Workers training sessions between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2001.

The following information provides a brief overview of issues raised by community workers during the training sessions in Broome, Derby and Fitzroy. These have been grouped together and are presented in no particular order.

#### **Housing issues identified by participants in training included:**

- ▶ Rent increases (seasonal).
- ▶ High rent levels starting at – private \$250 / 3 bedrooms; \$180/2brm; \$100/caravan (caravan park rents jump to a \$1,000 per week at Easter).
- ▶ Lack of available accommodation for clients of the Men's Outreach Service in Broome (45% of their clients need accommodation).
- ▶ Lack of hostel accommodation for single men.
- ▶ Homeswest has a long waiting list with up to a 3 year wait.
- ▶ Homeswest priority list is inaccessible.
- ▶ Debts – Homeswest demanding well above 30% eg one instance cited of \$250 of \$300 income
- ▶ Applicants for private rental experience frequent knock-backs.
- ▶ Overcrowding due to lack of accommodation.
- ▶ Lack of large Homeswest accommodation – there are only 2 x 5 bedroom properties available.
- ▶ Issue of debts to Homeswest.
- ▶ Lack of access to home purchase (small 3 bedroom starting at \$170,000 means low income people are denied access on the basis of affordability).

- ▶ Lack of access to the Special Housing Assistance Program (SHAP), Aboriginal Tenant Support Service (ATSS) and Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Unit (AHIU).
- ▶ Domestic violence issues relating to lack of security and tenant liability for damage by perpetrator.
- ▶ Homeswest refusal to do maintenance and repairs (eg. gas leak; cyclone damage) because tenant has a debt.
- ▶ Neighbourhood disputes – lack of mediation or support services.
- ▶ Homelessness & consequent overcrowding and lack of crisis; short-term; singles accommodation.
- ▶ Discrimination in the private rental market.
- ▶ Caravan park issues – seasonal rent increases, unlawful termination processes.
- ▶ Private rentals – too expensive.
- ▶ Not enough housing leading to overcrowding and social problems.

**Government Employees Housing Authority (GEHA) housing issues:**

- ▶ GEHA houses get different services.
- ▶ GEHA houses – sold to private purchasers with guaranteed rent (higher rental rate than for other houses)

**Mental illness issues including:**

- ▶ Lack of housing options for people with mental illness contributing to homelessness and people being sent all the way to Graylands Hospital in Perth.
- ▶ Several mentally ill people sharing the same house leading to more problems.
- ▶ Lack of supports available for people with mental illness, particularly with supported accommodation.

**Other Issues:**

- ▶ People from different communities being housed together leading to clashes and anti-social behaviour.
- ▶ Growing fringe-dweller communities – locals not knowing who these people are – some may be coming from South West or possibly remote communities such as Balgo.
- ▶ People locked out of home purchase schemes due to market values and access.

**The group identified what was needed to address the overcrowding issue:**

- ▶ More houses for families.
- ▶ Communal facilities (basic cover and ablution blocks) for people coming in from communities.
- ▶ Crisis accommodation for people with issues such as domestic violence, mental illness, alcohol abuse, and, violence.

- ▶ Research to quantify the number of people and their needs; funding for a research project – it was noted now is a good time to link a project into the work of the forthcoming census (as a dual project).
- ▶ People from different places like One Arm Point and Lombadina may clash and therefore a variety of locations need to be available as opposed to currently all being housed together.
- ▶ Homeswest houses need security doors/windows as a safety issue. Because Homeswest won't provide security for mainstream public housing stock when tenants are living in unsafe circumstances, the tenants are then required to lock up thus denying any cool air flow in extremely hot conditions. This is a health issue.

## **2.4 Outcomes From Shelter WA Forums**

This section details issues identified by participants at the two West Kimberley Housing Forums. The first forum was held in Derby on Tuesday 19 June and the second in Broome on Wednesday 20 June. The Derby Forum also included representation from Fitzroy Crossing. While some issues were shared between the two towns, a short section on issues specific to Fitzroy Crossing has been included below.

### ***Issues in Derby***

The issues in Derby focussed around shortages of affordable housing stock and high prices of private rental due to high construction costs. Issues included:

- ▶ Housing design is still an issue.
- ▶ SHAP: provided in Broome. Funding available in Fitzroy but no community group available to take it on.
- ▶ Not just low income households experiencing affordability problems.
- ▶ The working poor is an issues in Derby.
- ▶ No-one can build.
- ▶ Old GEHA housing may be available.
- ▶ Limited housing available.
- ▶ Hospital has land (Crown).
- ▶ Need for higher density housing.
- ▶ Lack of short-term housing during the wet season
- ▶ Maintenance: contractors over-bidding on jobs; and not providing services to communities outside town centres.
- ▶ Department of Housing closely manages maintenance contractors.
- ▶ Shire of Derby West Kimberley is assisting communities with construction and maintenance
- ▶ Private owners also experience problems with getting maintenance work done.
- ▶ Role of Department of Fair Trading in the registration and monitoring of maintenance contractors.
- ▶ Stock is aging but DHW providing ongoing maintenance.

- ▶ Shortage of Caravans: not good as alternative housing.
- ▶ Land is available in Derby but not in Fitzroy, other issues occur in both places.
- ▶ Lack of stock an issue in all three towns.
- ▶ Caravans: 3 substandard caravan parks have been closed down on health and safety grounds.
- ▶ Access to DHW priority waiting list a problem in Broome, Derby not as affected because of turnover in stock.
- ▶ In Derby DHW has a good building program and high turnover. Housing stock is an issue in the private sector.
- ▶ Lack of housing stock. Potential solutions include:
  - Increased construction of Homeswest rental housing and community housing.
  - Redirect to private rent through Homeswest e.g. REIWA/Homeswest Scheme.
  - Homeswest lease from private sector.
- ▶ Land:
  - Not an issues in Derby.
  - Some prospects for DHW in Broome.
  - Aboriginal people will release land for building if the cost of infrastructure can be covered.
  - Better negotiation system needed.
  - Potential for joint venture type arrangement between DOLA and Aboriginal communities.
  - Potential for Derby lies in developing work opportunities and industry: improved stability and housing market and building activity.
  - DOLA need to look at formulas used to value to value land: high value of land in Broome affecting valuation in Derby.
  - Need to look at the development of medium density housing.
- ▶ Housing in Ten Years Time.
  - Cost of living more affordable.
  - More housing.
  - Shorter waiting times for Homeswest.
  - Population growth: more prosperity; and more services.
  - Sewer infill (Derby).
  - Cheaper housing.
  - Good quality housing.

### ***Issues in Fitzroy Crossing***

The issues brought up by representatives from Fitzroy Crossing at the Derby Forum focussed around a severe shortage of available land around the townsite in connection with issues around native title.

- ▶ Fitzroy stock is much newer than in Derby
- ▶ Lack of short-term housing during the wet season
- ▶ Shortage of available land due to native title restrictions; need for negotiation with Aboriginal organisations.
- ▶ Sub-standard caravan park accommodation.
- ▶ Lack of housing for workers.

### ***Issues in Broome***

The main issues identified at the Broome forum were the high cost of private rental, with rents increasing further during the holiday season. This was also relevant for caravan parks, which were becoming more significant as a proportion of home ownership.

- ▶ Lack of housing stock related to shortage of land.
- ▶ Need for more short-term housing.
- ▶ Homeswest priority list difficult to access: households often referred to Derby; Halls Creek; and Wyndham to access stock.
- ▶ Roebuck Estate have made it clear they don't want the DHW to have housing on the estate.
- ▶ The DHW have land which they are about to develop that took years to get through the Native Title Process.
- ▶ Private rent high all year and higher during peak holiday periods.
- ▶ There is growing reliance on caravan parks as a more affordable alternative to the high cost of rental and house prices.
- ▶ Social Issues.
  - Domestic violence.
  - Racism: near impossible for Aboriginal women to access private rental.
  - Overcrowding.
  - Broome Community Group: have a lot of unhoused members; and have been unable to access the Right to Buy Scheme.
  - Tourist Season/Non-Tourist Season.
  - Influx of tourists.
  - Young retirees
  - Insufficient medical services for older retirees.
  - Refuges in Perth referring people up to Broome.

- People often lob at Homeswest for assistance.
- ▶ Three most pressing issues:
  - Shortage of housing stock.
  - Shortage of land.
  - Affordability.

### ***Aspirations for the Future of Housing in the West Kimberley***

- ▶ More affordable land.
- ▶ More stock.
- ▶ More support.
- ▶ No homelessness.
- ▶ More community housing: for different target groups; and sense of ownership.
- ▶ Accommodation for young people.
- ▶ More transitional supported housing.
- ▶ Safe housing for young people.
- ▶ Cost of living more affordable.
- ▶ More housing.
- ▶ Shorter waiting times for Homeswest.
- ▶ Population growth: more prosperity; and more services.
- ▶ Sewer infill (Derby).
- ▶ Cheaper housing.
- ▶ Good quality housing

## Part 3: The West Kimberley Housing System and Quantitative Issues



**Picture:** There is a growing reliance on caravans as a long term housing option.

### 3.1 The Australian Housing System

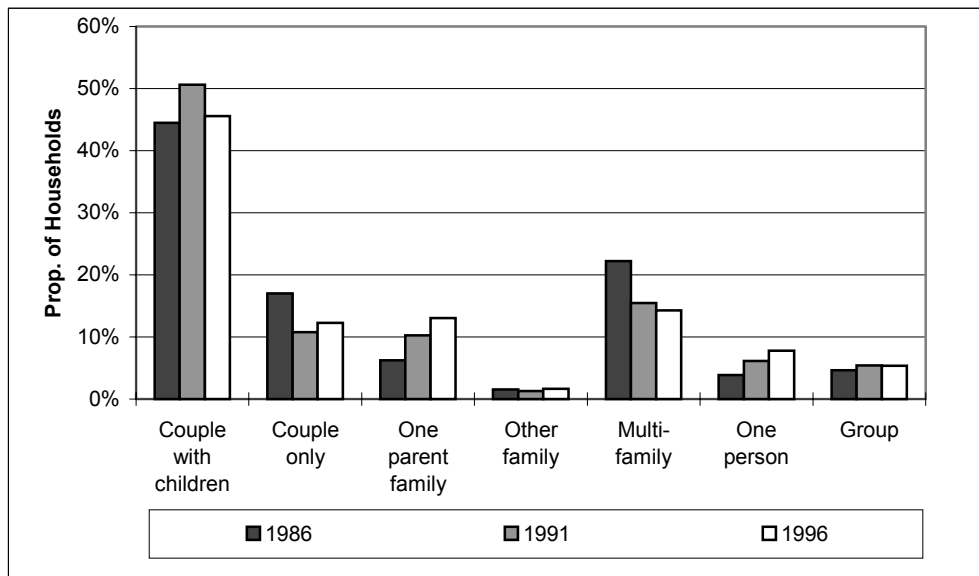
The Australian housing system is made up of three primary tenures; fully owned housing, housing which is being purchased and rental housing both private and public. The profile of dwellings by tenure for Western Australia in 1999 was owner/purchaser 69%; private rental 21.4%; public rental 4.5% and other 6.2% (ABS 1999).

### 3.2 Household Profile West Kimberley

The household formation rate is an important determinant of housing demand. The 1996 Census reported that the number of households in the West Kimberley grew by 14% between 1986 and 1996 from 12,969 to 14,830, this is in stark contrast to the East Kimberley which declined by 13% over the same period.

Figure 3.1 outlines changes in household type in the West Kimberley between 1986 and 1996 and demonstrates that there has been continued growth in growth in one person and one parent families. Multi family households have reduced in proportion from 22% of all households in the West Kimberley in 1986 to 14% in 1996. However, the proportion is still 14 times the State average of 1% in 1996 and strongly supports concerns about over-crowding highlighted during the community consultations.

**Figure 3.1: Household Type Time Series West Kimberley 1986 to 1996**

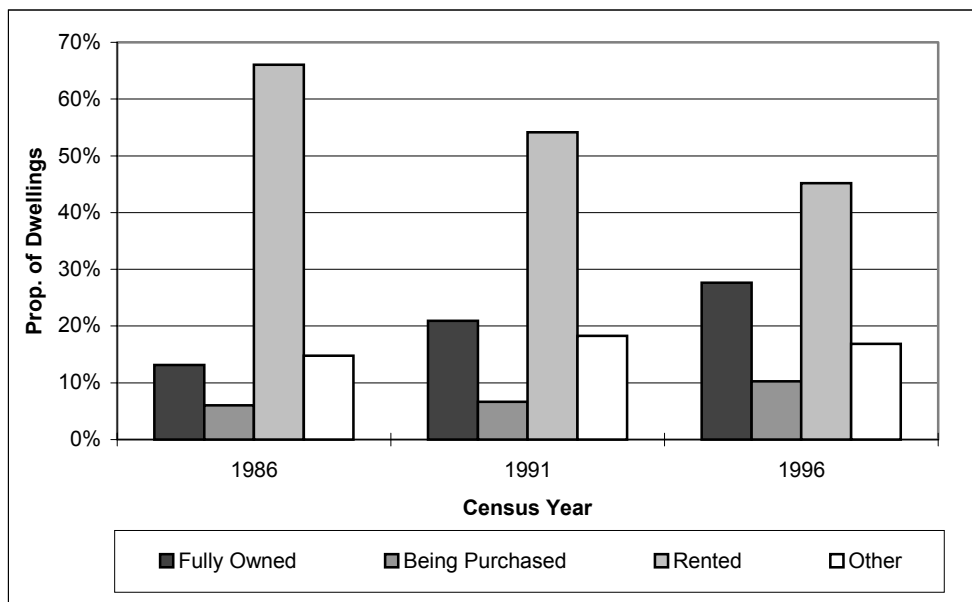


Source: ABS, Census 1996, T17.

### 3.3 West Kimberley Housing System

The profile of the West Kimberley housing system varies significantly from the state average in all tenures. Figure 3.2 demonstrates that owner/purchasing represented only 19% of dwellings in 1986, by 1996 this figure had grown to 38%. Rental housing provision is significantly higher than the State average but has declined from 66% of dwellings in 1986 to 45% in 1996. Other housing within the Census includes being occupied rent free, being occupied under a life tenure scheme and other/not stated, this category of tenure is 3 times the state average.

**Figure 3.2: Housing Provision Time Series by Tenure 1986 to 1996**



Source: ABS 1996

### 3.4 Growing Significance of Caravans

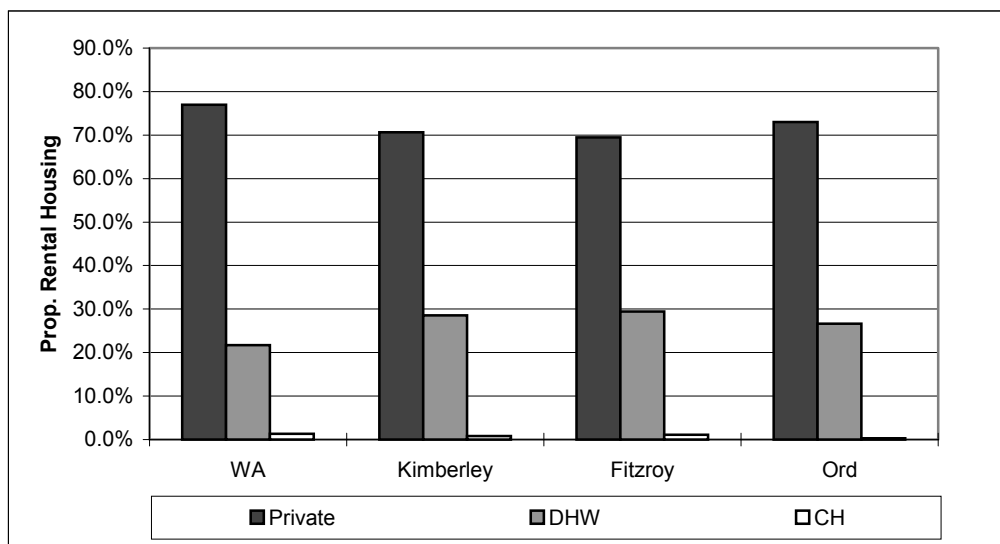
In 1986 only 406 people lived in privately occupied caravans in the West Kimberley, by 1996 this number had grown to 2,622 people occupying 1,330 caravans. In addition, 57% of fully owned dwellings were accounted for by caravans; this compares to the average for WA of 3%.

### 3.5 Rental Housing

The rental housing system can be looked at in terms of the proportion of housing provided by different landlord types. The 1996 Census of Population and Housing showed that in Western Australia rental housing accounted for 27% of all dwellings. Within the rental housing system 77% were provided by private landlords, 22% the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) and 1% by community housing providers.

Analysis of the Kimberley, West Kimberley (Fitzroy Statistical Subdivision) and East Kimberley (Ord SS) rental housing systems reveals some variation to WA. Figure 3.3 demonstrates the importance of the DHW, which accounts for 28.5% of rental housing in the Kimberley as a whole and 29.4% in the West Kimberley compared to 26.7% in the East Kimberley. Private rental presence varies between 70% in the West Kimberley and 73% in the East Kimberley. Community housing (CH) accounts for between 2% and 1% of rental housing.

**Figure 3.3:** Rental Housing Provision by Landlord Type 1996.



Source: ABS, Census 1996, T20 & DHW, Community Housing Data Base.

### 3.6 Department of Housing and Works: Homeswest

In addition to being the most significant provider of rental housing in the Kimberley, DHW is also one of the most significant providers of housing across all tenures accounting for 18% of all housing in the Kimberley.

#### ***Demand for DHW Rental Housing by Zone***

The DHW has experienced consistently strong demand for its rental housing as demonstrated by its waiting list, which between December 1999 and June 2001 ranged from 705 to 795 applicants. Table 3.1 demonstrates that Broome has experienced growing demand over the same period and accounted for 57% of demand in the Kimberley in June 2001. Derby and Kununurra also account for a significant proportion of the wait list: 20% and 12% respectively in June 2001.

**Table 3.1:** Demand for DHW Housing in the Kimberley by Zone 1999 to 2001.

Zone	Dec 1999	June 2000	Dec 2000	June 2001
Broome	54%	56%	59%	57%
Derby	18%	18%	20%	20%
Fitzroy Crossing	3%	4%	4%	4%
Halls Creek	4%	3%	3%	5%
Kununurra	19%	17%	11%	12%
Wyndham	2%	3%	2%	3%
<b>Total Kimberley (%)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No. Applicants Kimberley</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>795</b>

**Source:** Department of Housing and Works, Applicants Awaiting Accommodation/Zone: December 1999; June 2000; December 2000; & June 2001.

### ***Demand for DHW Housing in the Kimberley by Zone and Household Type***

Table 3.2 details demand for DHW rental housing from different households types and compares these to the State average. This reveals that the demand from:

- ▶ singles is consistently and significantly higher than the State average: 37% compared to 30% in June 2001;
- ▶ larger families is higher than the State average except in June 2000 when it was equal;
- ▶ families requiring 2 bedroom housing has grown from being below the State average (26% compared to 29%) in December 1999 to being above the average (32% compared to 30%) in June 2001; and,
- ▶ seniors is significantly below the State average: 2% compared to 14% in June 2001.

Some DHW Zones go against the trend, particular Derby has experienced growth in its proportion of seniors applicants (14% in June 2001) compared to the rest of the Kimberley.

**Table 3.2:** Demand for DHW Housing in the Kimberley by Zone and Household Type 1999 to 2001.

Zone	December 1999				June 2000				December 2000				June 2001			
	Sin	F2	F3+	Sen	Sin	F2	F3+	Sen	Sin	F2	F3+	Sen	Sin	F2	F3+	Sen
Broome	57%	58%	44%	87%	61%	57%	45%	87%	67%	58%	47%	83%	67%	58%	45%	61%
Derby	14%	17%	23%	9%	14%	22%	20%	9%	19%	21%	21%	13%	17%	19%	24%	28%
Fitzroy Crossing	3%	2%	4%	0%	2%	3%	8%	0%	3%	2%	8%	0%	2%	2%	8%	0%
Halls Creek	4%	4%	5%	0%	4%	3%	1%	0%	1%	5%	5%	0%	2%	4%	7%	11%
Kununurra	20%	17%	20%	4%	18%	13%	21%	4%	9%	10%	14%	4%	11%	11%	14%	0%
Wyndham	1%	1%	4%	0%	2%	2%	5%	0%	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	6%	2%	0%
<b>Kimberley</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total App's</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Total App's (%)</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Source:** Department of Housing and Works, Applicants Awaiting Accommodation/Zone: December 1999; June 2000; December 2000; & June 2001.

**Key:** Sin = Singles; F2 = Family (requiring 2 bedrooms); F3 = Family (requiring 3 or more bedrooms); & Sen = Seniors (singles & couples).

## ***Demand for Public Housing and Aboriginal Housing Applicants by Zone December 1999 to June 2001***

DHW applicants who are Aboriginal can nominate for rental housing funded under the Aboriginal Housing Program (Fund 6). However, these applicants can be offered the next available property regardless of it being Fund 1 (Public Housing) or Fund 6.

Demand for Fund 6 housing in the Kimberley is significantly above the State average, around 42% in June 2001 compared to 7% for the State.

Table 3.3 demonstrates that while demand has remained relatively stable at around 40% of DHW applicants in the Kimberley, significant changes in demand have occurred within some zones. For example, demand for Fund 6 housing in Wyndham grew from 0% of applicants in December 1999 to 86% in June 2001 and Halls Creek grew from 4% to 64% over the same time period. In Broome demand for Fund 6 has fallen from 51% in December 1999 to 38% in June 2001.

**Table 3.3:** Demand by Public Housing and Aboriginal Housing Applicants by Zone December 1999 to June 2001.

	December 1999						
	Broome	Derby	Fitzroy Cr	Halls Ck	Kununurra	Wyndham	Kimberley
Fund 1: Public Hsg	49%	59%	70%	96%	80%	100%	60%
Fund 6: Aboriginal Hsg	51%	41%	30%	4%	20%	0%	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total No. App.s</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>675</b>
	June 2000						
	Broome	Derby	Fitzroy Cr	Halls Ck	Kununurra	Wyndham	Kimberley
Fund 1: Public Hsg	56%	86%	83%	53%	64%	60%	64%
Fund 6: Aboriginal Hsg	44%	14%	17%	47%	36%	40%	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total No. App.s</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>611</b>
	December 2000						
	Broome	Derby	Fitzroy Cr	Halls Ck	Kununurra	Wyndham	Kimberley
Fund 1: Public Hsg	60%	72%	70%	52%	37%	25%	59%
Fund 6: Public Hsg	40%	28%	30%	48%	63%	75%	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total No. App.s</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>700</b>
	June 2001						
	Broome	Derby	Fitzroy Cr	Halls Ck	Kununurra	Wyndham	Kimberley
Fund 1: Public Hsg	62%	57%	71%	36%	54%	14%	58%
Fund 6: Aboriginal Hsg	38%	43%	29%	64%	46%	86%	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total No. App.s</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>768</b>

**Source:** Department of Housing and Works, Applicants Awaiting Accommodation/Zone: December 1999; June 2000; December 2000; & June 2001.

### ***DHW Construction in the Kimberley***

In 2000/01 the DHW had a construction program of 24 new dwellings. Table 3.4 shows the location and type of construction broadly reflects demand as demonstrated by the DHW wait list (Table 3.3). However, the 6 units identified under the Aboriginal Housing Program only account for 25% of new construction, while Aboriginal applicants have consistently accounted for 40% of DHW applicants in the Kimberley.

**Table 3.4:** DHW Construction Program by Location and Dwelling Type 2000/01.

<b>General Rental Program</b>					
	<b>Single 1B/R</b>	<b>Family 2B/R</b>	<b>Family 3B/R</b>	<b>Family 4B/R</b>	<b>Total</b>
Broome	5	5	0	0	10
Derby	4	2	0	0	6
Kununurra	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Aboriginal Housing Program</b>					
Broome	0	3	0	1	4
Derby	0	0	1	0	1
Fitzroy Crossing	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Kimberley</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Total Dwelling Type (%)</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Department of Housing and Works, Capital Works Program 2000 to 2001.

### 3.7 Crisis Accommodation and the Support Accommodation Assistance Program

There are eleven agencies in the Kimberley funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. These agencies receive between them recurrent funding of \$2 million per annum for the provision of support services to homeless people. Table 3.5 provides an overview of SAAP services in the Kimberley.

**Table 3.5:** SAAP Funded Agencies by Provider, Service Type and Target Group.

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Target Group</b>
<b>Broome</b>		
Burdekin - Youth in Action	Other	Young People (ATSI)
Marnju Jarndu Mobile Outreach Service	Outreach Support	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
Marnju Jarndu Mobile Women's Refuge	Crisis/ Short Term	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
<b>Derby</b>		
Derby Domestic Violence Information	Outreach Support	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
Derby Family Healing Centre	Multiple	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
<b>Fitzroy Crossing</b>		
Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Refuge	Crisis/ Short Term	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
Fitzroy Crossing Youth	Other	Young People (ATSI)
<b>Halls Creek</b>		
Ngaringga Ngurra Aboriginal Corp	Crisis/ Short Term	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)
<b>Kununurra</b>		
Kununurra Youth Services	Other	Young People (ATSI)
<b>Wyndham</b>		
Jardamu Safe House	Crisis/ Short Term	Women Escaping DV (ATSI)

Source: Department of Health and Aged Care, Electorate Profile Kalgoorlie, June 2000.

### Usage of SAAP Services

Over a 12 month period between July 1999 and June 2000 data on the number of support periods provided by SAAP agencies on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month was recorded. Across the Kimberley, between 10 and 20 support periods per day were recorded.

During the 1999/00 financial year SAAP services in the Kimberley reported 854 support periods (contact with clients of longer than 1 hour). Forum participants expressed concern over the extent of domestic violence in the Kimberley. This is strongly supported by SAAP data, which shows that 96% of SAAP contacts were from women escaping domestic violence. Single women accounted for 42.4% and women with children 53.6%.

### ***Homelessness Helpline Statistics***

Within the community consultations homelessness was consistently raised as a major issue and the data provided by SAAP services supports this assertion. However, figures provided by the DHW's Homelessness Helpline (DHW June 2001) show that while 130 homeless households were housed by the DHW across the State to the end of June 2001, none of these households were located in the Kimberley, despite domestic and family violence being one of four grounds for priority assistance.

## **3.8 Housing Affordability in the West Kimberley**

The lack of affordability within the private rental and home purchase markets was consistently identified as a major issue during the consultation process. This section provides quantitative data that confirms that affordability is a major problem for housing consumers in the West Kimberley.

### ***Rental Housing Affordability***

Table 3.6 establishes an index to assess rental affordability in 3 different localities in Broome (other localities have not been included due to the difficulty in accessing data) and demonstrates that to affordably rent a typical dwelling in Broome and Broome Village (caravan park) requires a household income 1.7 times the average individual taxable for the Shire of Broome (ABS 1999) and Cable Beach is the least affordable with a ratio of 1.85.

**Table 3.6:** Rental Housing Affordability in Broome

Dwelling Location	Rental Value 1999		Ave ind. taxable income: Broome 1999		Required Income	Affordability Ratio
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual		
Broome	\$290	\$15,080	\$672	\$34,924	\$60,320	1.73
Broome Village	\$290	\$15,080	\$672	\$34,924	\$60,320	1.73
Cable Beach	\$310	\$16,120	\$672	\$34,924	\$64,480	1.85

**Source:** Broome & Cable Beach: Valuer General's Office, Value Watch, June 2001. Broome Village: Advertised rental prices Hutchenson Real Estate, June 2001. ABS, Regional Statistics – Data WA 1999 SLA.

**About this Measure:** Rental housing is the most important tenure to households on low incomes. Housing stress occurs when low income households spend more than 25% of their income on housing costs and as a result have insufficient income after housing costs to purchase the necessities of life.

The key ingredients of rental affordability are the cost of rent and level of income, the data from the VGO and ABS show:

**Cost:** rents in Broome increased at a rate of 8% per annum between June 1998 and June 2000; and

**Income:** the unemployment rate in Broome grew from 10.1% in June 1999 to 15.2% in June 2000 and in Derby unemployment grew from 5.8% to 16.5% over the same period.

Broome experienced growth in the proportion of the population in receipt of Centrelink payments from 24.7% in 1999 to 29.3% in 2000 and in Derby from 22.2% to 30.7% for the same period.

The growth in rental costs, combined with growing unemployment and dependence on Centrelink payments, indicates that affordability is likely to be a growing problem.

### **House Price Affordability**

Table 3.7 establishes an index to assess the affordability of house purchase in Broome and Derby, based on the VGO's assessment of the value of a typical house in each locality and its affordability to household with an income equivalent to the average individual taxable income for the local government area as reported by the ABS.

The index shows that to affordably purchase in Broome a household income 2.3 times the Average Annual Individual Taxable Earnings is required and provides a major insight to why there has been such a significant growth in Caravan purchase with a ratio of .5 to purchase at Park Homes. Derby is significantly more affordable than Broome with a ratio of 1.3.

**Table 3.7:** House Price Affordability in Broome and Derby June 1999

Location	Typical House Price	Less 20% Deposit	Annual Cost of Mortgage @ 7%	Weekly Loan Payment	Ave Weekly Ind. taxable Earnings	Ave Annual Ind. taxable Earnings	Required Weekly Income	Ratio
Broome	\$290,000	\$232,000	\$19,908	\$383	\$672	\$34,924	\$1,531	<b>2.28</b>
Cable Beach	\$300,000	\$240,000	\$20,595	\$396	\$672	\$34,924	\$1,584	<b>2.36</b>
Derby	\$164,500	\$131,600	\$11,293	\$217	\$654	\$34,003	\$869	<b>1.33</b>
Park Homes	\$63,500	\$50,800	\$4,359	\$84	\$672	\$34,924	\$335	<b>0.50</b>

**Source:** Broome & Cable Beach: Valuer General's Office, Value Watch, June 2001. ABS, Regional Statistics – Data WA 1999 SLA.

**About this Measure:** The annual mortgage repayment is based on the cost of purchasing a typical dwelling/vacant land, assuming a 20% deposit and using a standard 25 year mortgage at the current market rate. The required weekly income is the amount of income needed to ensure no more than 25% of income is spent on loan repayments. The affordability ratio divides the required income by the average weekly taxable individual income for the SLA. A ratio of less than 1 indicates increasing affordability and a ratio greater than 1 indicates declining affordability.

### **3.9 Land**

Within the consultation land was identified as a significant barrier to the development of affordable housing in the West Kimberley. Issues included:

#### **Native Title**

Since February 2001 the State Government's approach to the settlement of Native Title claims has shifted from use of litigation, which contributed to long delays in the resolution of claims under the Native Title Act 1993, to a commitment to working with the Western Australian Aboriginal Native Title Working Group on the development of a Framework Agreement. This approach includes increasing the resourcing of claimants and the use of the existing National Native Title Tribunal.

There have been some recent settlements in the Kimberley, including:

- ▶ the handing back of Noonkanbah Land to the Yungngora Community near Fitzroy Crossing; and
- ▶ the Kiwirrkurra Native Title Agreement covering land in the Western Desert.

### ***Broome Scheme***

The Broome Town Planning Scheme No.4 establishes acceptable land uses within designated zones. The residential zone is predominately low density R12.5 requiring an 800m<sup>2</sup> blocks for single house or an average of 700m<sup>2</sup> for grouped dwelling. The requirement for such low density development adds to the cost of constructing new housing and does not maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

### ***Access to Land***

While access to land in Broome is tight, especially for public and community housing, the proposed relocation of the Broome Airport and development of the existing site for residential development, presents a major opportunity for the development social housing in Broome. The airport site covers an area of 31.8 hectares of broadacre land and represents 48% of broadacre land identified in the Broome Land Release Plan.

### ***DOLA Land Release and Pricing***

During the consultation process, the high price of land released within the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) sub-divisions was raised as an issue and it was felt that Land Values in Broome was contributing to over pricing by DOLA's.

However, in January 2001, DOLA released 26 blocks in the Derby Townsite, all lots are serviced by kerbed and bitumen roads, water, underground power, sewer and telephone, and the median advertised price for a 830m<sup>2</sup> block \$29,500. An equivalent sized block in Broome would be worth \$56,440, almost twice the price of a block in the Derby land release.

## Part 4: Summary and Action Plan



**Picture:** An example of medium density housing at the top end of the Broome housing market.

### 4.1 Overview of Regional Issues: West Kimberley Forum and Consultations

The main housing issues in the West Kimberley can be summarised as follows:

#### **Need for Increased Access to Affordable Housing Stock**

Access to affordable housing across all tenures is limited.

**Social Housing:** There are long waiting times for Homeswest housing, particularly in Broome; there has been little growth in the provision of community housing; and there is a significant shortage of Crisis Accommodation.

**Private Rental:** housing in the private rental market is limited; most dwellings are inappropriate for small households and affordability is major problem, with some singles paying as much as \$100 per week for a single room; and Aboriginal families have limited to no access.

**Owner/Purchaser:** While ABS figures show growth in the proportion of dwellings accounted for by owner/purchasers, most of the growth is accounted for by purchasing of on-site caravans. Shelter WA's research suggests rather than being a preferred choice, caravans may be the only affordable option for those wishing to own their dwelling.

**CSHA:** There is a strong need for additional capital funding under the CSHA to be directed the Region and this funding should include: mainstream; Aboriginal; Community; and Crisis Accommodation Programs housing.

The CSHA needs to co-ordinate with CRA and payments under CRA need to be adjusted to take regional differences into consideration.

**Access to Affordable Land:** Issues around access to land are major contributing factor to the high cost and shortages in the Regional Housing System. Some issues include:

- ▶ **Native Title:** while all of the consulted parties supported the principle of Native Title, drawn out and complex legal processes have often proven difficult for claimants to navigate. This has resulted in long delays in developing much of the available Crown land, even though there is otherwise no shortage of appropriately located land.
- ▶ **Sewer and Infrastructure:** the provision and funding of essential infrastructure has presented significant barriers to the development of land in both Derby and Fitzroy Crossing.
- ▶ **Land Valuation:** strong demand for and the high cost of land in Broome has impacted on Valuer General valuations in other West Kimberley towns. This has contributed to developed land in Derby being overpriced and consequently slow to sell.
- ▶ The development of an infrastructure funding program needs to be developed to assist in efficient and timely development of land in Regional areas. This program could be model on the Better Cities Program.

**Support Programs:** The increased provision of support services for people experiencing homelessness and those whose tenancies with Homeswest are at risk were identified as areas of need.

**Social Issues:** The forums highlighted are a range of social issues that impact on housing (and vice versa). The most important of these were domestic violence and racism.

## 4.2 Action Plan

Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Responsibility
<p>Increase affordable housing in the private, public and community housing sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote the need for additional capital expenditure for new housing including for singles and families and for community housing.</li> <li>▶ Promote the need for Kimberley Local Governments to develop affordable housing strategies. These would include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need for higher density housing to take advantage of existing infrastructure and</li> <li>• a requirement that affordable housing is provided in future land developments for example Broome Airport</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Promote the need for increased access to tenancy advice and advocacy in the Kimberley and encourage the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection to provide additional funding</li> <li>▶ Work cooperatively with the Real Estate Institute of WA to implement private rental access strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased capital expenditure on public and community housing within and outside the CSHA to achieve a target of 6% of total housing stock</li> <li>▶ Affordable Housing Strategies are developed and implemented</li> <li>▶ Town planning schemes are changed to allow more room for affordable housing</li>   <li>▶ Increased access to tenancy advice is provided</li>   <li>▶ Access strategies are implemented</li> </ul>	<p>Shelter WA / DHW / CHCWA</p> <p>Shelter WA / WAMA / Local Government Authorities</p> <p>Shelter WA / DCEP</p> <p>Shelter WA / REIWA</p>
<p>Support initiatives to improve the resolution of Native Title claims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Monitor and promote new initiatives implemented by the Govt. designed to facilitate quicker resolution of Native Title Claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ New initiatives identified and promoted</li> </ul>	<p>Shelter WA / State Government</p>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Department of Housing and Works to be more responsive to the needs of its customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Encourage DHW to implement recruitment and training strategy aimed toward increasing the proportion of Aboriginal staff employed within the Kimberley Offices of DHW</li> <li>▶ Distribute the outcomes from the Domestic Violence Policy Review and information forums</li> <li>▶ Review DHW policy to ensure appropriate ways of working with tenants who have literacy problems are addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase proportion of Aboriginal staff employed by DHW</li> <li>▶ Domestic Violence Policy Review and information is distributed widely</li> <li>▶ Appropriate ways of working with clients with literacy problems are identified and utilised</li> </ul>	Shelter WA / DHW / CHCWA
Improve the supply of affordable land and timely development of infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify the level of success of the Remote Areas Essentials Services Program and promote the development of a similar program to other areas</li> <li>▶ Encourage DOLA and other Government Agencies involved in land release to implement public information strategies to inform the local community of land releases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Good practice within the RAESP is identified and promoted</li> <li>▶ Information strategies are implemented by DOLA</li> </ul>	Shelter WA / AHIU Shelter WA / DOLA
Ensure appropriate standard of maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work cooperatively with the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders Association to develop strategies to ensure high quality of maintenance work supplied by contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Quality assurance strategies are developed</li> </ul>	Shelter WA / HIA/MBA

## Appendix I: List of Participants in Consultations

Name	Organisation
Jodie Broun	Department of Housing: Head Office
Geoff King	Department of Housing: Head Office
Jo Madingon	Women's Shelter: Fitzroy
Winifred Taylor	Ngunga Women's Group
Sharon Henderson	Ngunga Women's Group
Pat McKenzie	Department of Housing: Derby
Craig Hills	Department of Housing: Kimberley Regional Office
Steve Quin	Department of Housing: Kimberley Regional Office
Iris Prouse	Kimberley Public Health Unit
Nicole Barthomeuf	Shire of Derby
Lesley Morris	Tom Stephens Electorate Office
Nik Wevers	Marnja Jaundu Women's Refuge Inc.
Nola Nosow	Brome Circle House – Financial Counselling
Tom Harvey	Broome Community Housing Group
Robyn	Broome Community Housing Group
Bell	Broome Community Housing Group
David Waller	Shire of Broome
Camille Inifer	Tenants Advice Service
Astrid Chapman	Regional Representative

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