

Submission to the Equal Opportunity Commission Investigation Into The Provision Of Public Housing To Aboriginal People In Western Australia

by Paul Pendergast

Shelter WA is a community organisation that represents the views of low-income housing consumers and community groups on housing issues. Shelter WA works together with these groups and individuals to promote appropriate, accessible, affordable and secure housing by:

- Representing the interests of low income housing consumers to government
Developing policy with input from housing consumers, organisations and advocates
- Providing information and training around housing
- Promoting alternative housing models

Shelter WA has operated since 1979 as an independent housing research and policy body for community and welfare groups and low-income housing consumers.

Shelter WA's submission to the Investigation consist of:

- The provision of a brief statistical overview of housing tenure in relation to Aboriginal people in Western Australia; and,
- A guide to eight recent reports produced by Shelter WA, each of which include some commentary on Aboriginal housing issues. These have are attached or electronic versions can be downloaded from the Shelter WA website located at: www.shelterwa.org.au.

Housing Tenure and Aboriginal People

Indigenous people in Western Australia have very limited access to home ownership and home purchase and are highly dependent on rental housing, when compared to non-Indigenous people. Table 1 below demonstrates that in 2001, 69% of dwellings that house Indigenous people were rented, three times the level for non-Indigenous people (23%).

One of the main benefits of home ownership is that it provides security of tenure and for Indigenous people this translate to control over their own housing. Shelter WA therefore supports strategies that viably increase Indigenous people's access to home purchase and ownership.

Table 1: Housing tenure by Indigenous status 2001.

ATSIC Region	Indigenous					non-Indigenous				
	Fully Owned	Being purchased	Being Rented	Other	Total	Fully Owned	Being purchased	Being Rented	Other	Total
Perth	472	1732	3279	105	5588	191013	174857	107734	8538	482142
Geraldton	122	221	1002	60	1405	6575	4765	4689	851	16880
Kalgoorlie	71	152	564	28	815	3942	4768	4882	622	14214
Derby	33	37	771	33	874	153	146	410	60	769
South Headland	53	118	912	51	1134	903	2764	4206	444	8317
Narrogin	232	384	1220	58	1894	36702	22637	18760	3332	81431
Warburton	6	10	364	72	452	122	461	546	141	1270
Kununurra	23	21	681	78	803	288	260	627	132	1307
Broome	78	68	692	43	881	572	660	1174	161	2567
Total WA	1090	2743	9485	528	13846	240270	211318	143028	14281	608897
ATSIC Region	Indigenous					non-Indigenous				
	Fully Owned	Being purchased	Being Rented	Other	Total	Fully Owned	Being purchased	Being Rented	Other	Total
Perth	8%	31%	59%	2%	100%	40%	36%	22%	2%	100%
Geraldton	9%	16%	71%	4%	100%	39%	28%	28%	5%	100%
Kalgoorlie	9%	19%	69%	3%	100%	28%	34%	34%	4%	100%
Derby	4%	4%	88%	4%	100%	20%	19%	53%	8%	100%
South Headland	5%	10%	80%	4%	100%	11%	33%	51%	5%	100%
Narrogin	12%	20%	64%	3%	100%	45%	28%	23%	4%	100%
Warburton	1%	2%	81%	16%	100%	10%	36%	43%	11%	100%
Kununurra	3%	3%	85%	10%	100%	22%	20%	48%	10%	100%
Broome	9%	8%	79%	5%	100%	22%	26%	46%	6%	100%
Total WA	8%	20%	69%	4%	100%	39%	35%	23%	2%	100%

Source: ABS Census 2001 Indigenous Profile by ATSIC Region.

Importance of Homeswest to Aboriginal People

No other housing providers comes close to the importance of Homeswest in terms of the provision of rental housing to Indigenous people in Western Australia. Table 2 below demonstrates that 46% of rental dwellings that house Aboriginal are provided by Homeswest and this increase to as high as 59% in Derby. Further, social housing (public housing and community housing) provides 68% of rental dwellings that house Indigenous people, this equates to over three times the rate for non-Indigenous people.

Clearly Indigenous people significantly lower access to private rental housing than non-Indigenous people. Shelter WA support Homeswest to appropriately house Indigenous people. In addition, it is clear that strategies to reduce Indigenous peoples reliance on Homeswest are required and to do this ways of increasing Indigenous peoples access to and viability within the community housing and private rental housing tenures need to be pursued.

Table 2: Provision of rental housing to Indigenous people by provider 2001.

Number of Rental Dwellings								
	Private Landlord	Real estate	Homeswest	Community Housing	Govt employer	Other Employer	Other landlord	Total
Perth	646	815	1603	90	23	6	45	3228
Geraldton	104	140	521	131	44	21	37	998
Kalgoorlie	64	89	226	128	32	11	9	559
Derby	10	3	159	552	20	10	0	754
South Headland	28	73	537	135	70	45	16	904
Narrogin	240	147	661	72	27	21	36	1204
Warburton	0	0	29	309	9	10	0	357
Kununurra	9	18	220	382	31	3	3	666
Broome	14	30	336	275	24	3	9	691
Total	1115	1315	4292	2074	280	130	155	9361
Proportion of Rental Dwellings								
Perth	20%	25%	50%	3%	1%	0%	1%	100%
Geraldton	10%	14%	52%	13%	4%	2%	4%	100%
Kalgoorlie	11%	16%	40%	23%	6%	2%	2%	100%
Derby	1%	0%	21%	73%	3%	1%	0%	100%
South Headland	3%	8%	59%	15%	8%	5%	2%	100%
Narrogin	20%	12%	55%	6%	2%	2%	3%	100%
Warburton	0%	0%	8%	87%	3%	3%	0%	100%
Kununurra	1%	3%	33%	57%	5%	0%	0%	100%
Broome	2%	4%	49%	40%	3%	0%	1%	100%
Total	12%	14%	46%	22%	3%	1%	2%	100%

Recent Shelter WA Reports

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

- [Midland – Boomtown For Whom? Final Report of the Midland Housing Forum](#) – A Shelter WA project supported by the Midland ACOP Group, Prepared by Paul Pendergast, July 2002.
 - See pages 5,6,12,19,27,28.
- [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, Prepared by: Paul Pendergast, December 2001.
 - See pages 4,5,8,11,17,20,23,24,25.
- [Housing Forum for the Albany Region, Final Report](#), Prepared by Shelter WA, August 2000.
 - see pages 5
- [Geraldton Housing Forum, A Report on Housing Need in the Mid-West Region](#), Prepared by Jennifer Valesini and Catriona Cameron, Shelter WA, June 1999.
 - See pages 5

- [The Kalgoorlie Housing Forum Report](#), Prepared by Camille Inifer for Shelter WA, October 1998.
 - see pages 3,4.
- [The Ministry of Housing Makes a Welcome Announcement of Strategies to Improve Access to Housing for Aboriginal Tenants.](#)
- Shelter WA, [Newsletter, November 2002](#)
- [A Profile of Households Experiencing Homelessness in Western Australia, The third report in a series of four](#), Prepared by Victor Crevatin & Paul Pendergast, October 2002.
 - Highlights the over representation of Indigenous people among the homeless