

**To the
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Department of the Senate
Inquiry into Stolen Wages**

**Submission from Theresa Creed and John Tracey
on behalf of kalkadoon.org**

We support the present terms of reference of the Senate enquiry. It is important that the facts of the matter be established. However we would urge the senators to also seek solutions to the problem as well as simply analysing it. With this in mind we refer specifically to recommendation “I”

“whether there is a need to 'set the record straight' through a national forum to publicly air the complexity and the consequences of mandatory controls over Indigenous labour and finances during most of the 20th century”

We suggest that any future action by the senate or federal government be directed to finding realistic solutions to the problems identified by the enquiry, not simply public acknowledgements of the problem.

Our legal advice is that Baganan Kurityityin Theresa Creed, one of the writers of this submission, and her family are descendents of the victims of crime who have passed away have no claim in the courts to the stolen wages, nor a right to claim from the present Qld. Compensation offer. Yet it is these descendents such as Baganan who bear the burden and carry the consequences of the systematic impoverishment of Aboriginal people through the “protection” era.

A simply legalistic response from governments at all levels will not address the real issues of Aboriginal disadvantage or more importantly strategies of rebuilding aboriginal prosperity and health.

We suggest that solutions, including realistic compensation for stolen wages lie in good willed negotiation and creative planning by all range of government and Aboriginal authorities. The process of inquisition, blame, prosecution, defence and lawyer-created outcomes will simply be a waste of everyone’s time and the taxpayer’s money and not advance policy goals such as the advancement of Aboriginal society or of reconciliation and resolution in the hearts and minds of the victims and their families.

We acknowledge that state governments are not able to pay proper compensation in cash terms and we encourage all governments to look to “out of the box” ways to settle justice for stole wages.

We advocate a compensation package based on a joint venture of federal, state and local governments.

We suggest that public housing budgets and stolen wages compensation funds be used to engage in real estate developments that supply private house and land packages to Aboriginal families as compensation for stolen wages and other tragedies of history.

We suggest that an “average Australian family” would have used money such as that stolen from Aboriginal people to secure a family home if they had the opportunity to do so. We see the provision of family homes as being a realistic compensation to all Aboriginal people who are today living with the consequences of stolen wages and other systematic obstacles to prosperity.

We refer the senate enquiry to a model of real estate development framework identified in the attached “Out of the Box” report.

Please find following

“Out of the Box”

Architecture and town planning to facilitate prosperity in remote Aboriginal communities.

A discussion paper produced by kalkadoon.org

For The “Gunya 21 Link Tank”

July 2006

John Tracey

Baganan Kurityityin Theresa Creed

On behalf of

kalkadoon.org

contact

kurityityin@yahoo.com

p.o. box 3001

South Brisbane B.C.

Qld. 4101

Out of the Box

Housing as a lifestyle, not a building.

**A vision of architecture and town planning to
facilitate prosperity in remote Aboriginal
communities.**

Produced by kalkadoon.org

For The “Gunya 21 Link Tank”

July 2006

In short,

In this report we have deliberately not focused on the problems, preferring to explore for solutions instead.

We have identified contemporary Aboriginal culture, in particular the nature of extended families as social capital and a reference point for housing design and town planning as well as a range of social programs.

We recommend low cost, owner or community built, eco-friendly housing developments based on the realities of extended families as a cost-effective and relevant mode for future Aboriginal housing, economic development, health, family violence, substance abuse and cultural education programs.

We recommend private home ownership on communally held land title as appropriate to housing on Aboriginal communities as well as the mainstream real estate market.

We recommend that issues of housing, town planning, economic development, community development, recreation, health and education be approached as a single process and all elements should be designed accordingly.

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1/Introduction

This paper is written, hopefully, as a catalyst to innovation, it is a painting of broad brush strokes, not a manifesto or a blue print. It has many big details missing and cannot be considered comprehensive, although a properly resourced, comprehensive plan for a particular place is the obvious next step.

This report does not represent the opinion of anyone except kalkadoon.org however the opinion is based on discussions with residents and authorities on Palm Island and Boulia, two remote Queensland communities. Palm Island is an Aboriginal community of over 3000 people that is a former government reserve. Boulia is a township whose population of approximately three hundred is approximately half Aboriginal, many descendents of those who lived in the Boulia Aboriginal reserve.

In both Palm Island and Boulia there was a clear articulation of the problem, which, in general terms is identical in both communities.

- 1/Not enough houses
- 2/Inappropriate houses

Both communities identified the need for more housing but also housing that reflected the social mix of Aboriginal communities from single people to large families to people in need of health care. Both also identified a need for flexible housing solutions to accommodate ever changing housing needs in Aboriginal communities.

It is clear that the specific housing needs of a tropical Island community such as Palm Island will be different to an arid inland community such as Boulia. These differences are in such things as housing style preference as well as the affordability and availability of materials and modes of transport. However the two communities share the essential problem of extended families trying to fit into nuclear family model public housing and associated welfare programs.

We advocate, in both circumstances, the following planning framework as very relevant to new housing planning.

2/Conceptual frameworks

The starting point and basic assumption of this paper is that current policies and strategies of government indigenous policies are failing miserably. The universally accepted goal of bringing indigenous living standards to equality with mainstream Australia is a fine ideal but it has not been reflected in the outcomes of present approaches.

The essential points at which our explorations depart from present public housing options and policies for Aboriginal people are....

1/ We have identified contemporary Aboriginal culture, in particular the nature of extended families as social capital and a reference point for housing design and town planning as well as a range of social programs. It would appear that at present all “official” housing options are designed for nuclear families that tends to encourage large families to become dysfunctional and in need of some sort of welfare support.

2/We see the issues of housing, town planing, economic development, health and education as a single process and all elements should be designed accordingly.

3/Our Aboriginal housing program is driven by a positive vision and not as a response to crises such as emergency housing.

4/Unlike the notion of “public housing” our vision is antithetical to welfare notions in housing policy. By facilitating the growth of social capital such as extended family business and Aboriginal culture, the family units may become 100% capable of supporting themselves eliminating the drain on welfare budget. We advocate the reallocation of Aboriginal welfare housing budgets into self managed home ownership programs within frameworks of collective land title incorporating native title considerations.

5/Remote communities are faced with a range of challenges in economic development and education opportunities because of their remoteness. In economic terms, such isolation may reduce business profits through increased transport costs. However such economic costs must be weighed up against the value of family and lifestyle. A remote community that is productive, whatever it produces, is able to engage in the global marketplace as well as get basic sustenance from their land through traditional bush tucker or the development of vegetable gardens and self-sufficient agricultural systems. In terms of material considerations such as secure housing, a healthy diet and job satisfaction, remote communities offer many advantages over big cities.

6/The Internet provides a wide and rapidly expanding range of education programs from preschool to PhD. that can be accessed by remote communities to coordinate mainstream education programs, reducing the need to leave communities to pursue basic education and career paths.

3/Sustainable family clusters.

Some Aboriginal housing programs have responded to the obvious reality of extended families and made bigger and stronger houses to accommodate large families but this still puts too many people in the common spaces and in each others personal space, continuing the home tensions of over crowding. We suggest that the solution is to have many, small, flexible housing units appropriately spaced from each other to allow private space as well as secure connectedness.

There are many modular kit homes on the market at present that can provide relatively cheap owner-builder options from small cabins to mansions. Similarly mud brick, recycled materials or corrugated iron structures, local brick or locally cut timber etc. offers possibilities with relatively little capital. Even just a caravan on a block of land can provide a secure home and the solution to many social problems. Whether a caravan or a mansion, the home is going to require water, energy and a

toilet system. The essence of a family cluster is flexibility of housing options on secure land.

A hypothetical template for a family cluster housing development.

All details are for the purpose of example only.

Cluster housing is a system of several buildings sharing common electricity, water collection, recycling systems, sewage system and land management. Such clusters allow for small-scale decentralised systems that can be maintained by residents and minimise construction costs and ongoing maintenance requirements.

We propose as one of many options for Aboriginal housing development, a model for housing on communally owned Aboriginal land.

1/That blocks of land be made available to an Aboriginal families to have perpetual leasehold title to the land within a land agreement with traditional owners and all relevant government land departments and stakeholders. If native title has not been extinguished, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement is an immediate vehicle for such a land agreement. Otherwise a land covenants of some sort, along the lines of the developing conservation covenants and vegetation protection laws, but including cultural heritage into the covenant agreements.

These blocks of land should be big enough for themselves to accommodate a small housing cluster for a large family. Similarly these blocks can be planned and located in relation to each other as clusters, which can connect to share infrastructure systems.

However, these blocks might become the residence for just one elder who wants some peace and quiet, for example. It is up to the family to decide upon their own housing needs

The primary housing options will be the family homes on the land blocks, the nature of which should be a matter of owner choice from available options. A big house, two big houses, a network of interconnected cabins, kit homes, mud brick homes, owner builder or contract a builder. The choices for the homeowner are infinite.

2/ These land blocks should be positioned on the basis of family, cultural and lifestyle networks so that those people who want to live close to each other can do so and those who want to be “away from it all” can also do that. Traditional owners must have oversight over land allocation.

3/That these blocks exist within a framework of community title, as per land agreement, and some areas in between the land blocks be designated camping grounds, with hygienic facilities provided for campers, especially those visiting within native title and family cultural processes such as funerals and weddings. These camping grounds should also facilitate the managed and hygienic use of semi-permanent rental housing options such as caravans and cabins.

These “in between” common areas should include sports and community facilities, including the natural bush. Management and regeneration of bush areas is an

essential component to town planning. These “in between” areas can also maximise perceived space between family blocks to facilitate privacy.

We suggest that traditional owner oversight of the town planning process is essential to maximise the cultural integrity of the development and minimise negative impacts on culturally or ecologically sensitive areas.

4/All aspects of these clusters should be designed within ecological and sustainable frameworks including water use, electricity generation and sewage. These clusters will be viable units that do not need existing infrastructure such as mains electricity and water to be established. Positioning of such clusters are not limited by the extension of mains utilities as they are capable of being self sufficient in these areas. If developed in areas serviced by mains utilities, these clusters can significantly reduce the burden on central systems, reducing the upgrade cost of mains infrastructure for new housing developments. Grid connected solar panels and wind turbines can eliminate home power bills by selling electricity into the grid

5/These family clusters may have a range of buildings on them from small cabins through to mansions, whatever is relevant to that family. The size of the block of land must allow for the construction of other shelters as needed from time to time. The cluster will change and adapt as the needs of the family do.

Within the private family blocks and the neutral camping grounds and rental accommodation each community has the capacity to house itself in appropriate ways. The key aspect is clear and secure title to land for this to occur.

Appropriately designing these family clusters, especially as they connect to other clusters and existing housing, is a matter of clever town planning that must incorporate social values such as family (including the need to get away), and custodianship of sacred sights as well as engineering values such as drainage, water, sewage, transport and electricity.

4/Economic development and career training

To design housing around extended families and Aboriginal culture must also include economic development projects to bring prosperity into the families in an ongoing, sustainable way. To ignore realistic economic development agendas is a sure recipe for another welfare dependent generation of Aboriginal people, counterbalancing any potential success of any housing programs.

In the same way as housing needs to be designed along the lines of Aboriginal culture, so too must the systems of economic production, education and training into work skills. We identify “family business” as the model for economic development and look to many migrant families who have achieved prosperity from poverty through small family operated businesses, including training children to work in these businesses, developing work skills early in life as well as family members working to

reduce wage costs in order to build up the family business or get it through a hard time.

We suggest that family clusters are a good place to develop workshops and other enterprises, facilitating flexible labour requirements, childcare and family business modes.

We suggest a new indigenous training paradigm facilitating entrance to the workforce/marketplace at the highest possible level as quickly as possible instead of at the lowest rung, which is the current training paradigm in mainstream programs. Training programs should not just include training the student, but also re-training the employer or business partner into innovative processes drawing on the particular skills, assets and developing capacities of the student to maximise productive capacity of the whole enterprise. We emphasise a “whole of enterprise” and “whole of network” innovation education program as a principle of work training. Training for economic development must include entrepreneurial training and the development and management of joint ventures and partnerships as well as basic production skills training.

Training should be designed to identify and develop core individual competencies within a market context. For example, an artist’s career path may well be better served by developing the technique and integrity of their art and engaging the services of a successful art entrepreneur as a business associate rather than to study art or small business management in a public education institution and compete with successful entrepreneurs. This is not to say that the trainee, or any self-managed producer should not have a business education. They must be fully educated in the process of instructing a manager and demanding accountability from their manager or any other business associates. Business training means setting up proper and appropriate systems and models to facilitate the business relationships. However on issues of, for example, promotions, marketing and distribution of artwork, as an example, we suggest that should be left to the experts, in the first instance, rather than trainee artist, new to the market or workforce beginning an introductory business course to develop their career. Once a trainee is working alongside a successful entrepreneur they are getting “hands on” workplace specific business training and this situation should be the starting point for any work-skills and long term career training. Training programs should be hand picked, or custom built, to suit the immediate needs of the trainee’s work and commercial relationships.

5/Family Business

The individual and family have an inherent motivation to build a solid base for their own family including future generations. An ideal that is both noble and inherently self interested at the same time. The collective desire for Aboriginal people to care for each other is the point at which family business, if properly resourced replaces welfare dependency, at a much lower cost to the taxpayer than the present dysfunctional public housing programs.

6/Beyond small business

What is prosperity? Within a secure and flexible self managed housing situation, resulting in low financial overheads instead of rent, and a productive fruit and vegetable garden, plus bush tucker as well, then such a lifestyle can subsidise low wages in family businesses. This is a security that can be generous to those in need, reducing burdens on welfare systems. This is a “safety net” that allows home to be a healing place for people to return to.

However, the integration of the small family production systems into a larger enterprises and networks allows for the development of entrepreneurial opportunities through value adding to the local product, becoming suppliers to a broader market or becoming joint venture partners in larger enterprises. This is obviously a major hurdle for remote communities as transport services for materials or goods are expensive and often infrequent. However we feel it is just a matter of creativity to find goods and services to produce relevant to each remote community. E.g. if tourism is the core industry then easy passenger transport is a key element to success. However if the core industry was manufacturing, then the smaller the product and the higher the value adding the better and a simple regular freight system is all that is necessary. Transport itself is a viable economic development opportunity in remote communities. The Palm Island council has articulated a desire to own it’s own ferry service rather than paying outside contractors for basic needs.

The Internet allows for many marketing opportunities in remote communities for products from the family business as well as retailing products from around the world from other suppliers.

Digital product such as music, video and Internet publishing can be easily produced in a family workshop and marketed internationally through contracted management or joint venture.

Cottage industries are perfect for family clusters as subsidiary income streams, especially if the core business is, for example tourism. However we advocate a larger scale of enterprise including manufacturing be facilitated to become profitable and expansive enterprises which will themselves generate subsidiary industries including cottage industries as suppliers and distributors or as labour contracted outside the family.

7/Education and childcare

Appropriate architecture including communal children’s space such as a home education centre or activity shed provides opportunities for systems of home based supervised child care providing support to parents in the workforce or studying. This system also provides the opportunity for properly designed systems of both discipline and protection for children, which can interface with mainstream education and community facilities and organizations as well as particular family members.

Within structured workplace health and safety guidelines, the model of workplace, child care centre and home all being close by and connected exposes children at an early age to role models of the family at work, giving incentives and visions to enter the mainstream school system. When they work at the family business after hours of

their formal schooling they are given real work skills training to prepare them for entry into the workforce, not just “child care”.

This family cluster based child care system, if properly resourced can provide the same services as public child care centres and even educational programs of pre-school education, as the young student is prepared for entry into systems outside the home environment. We do not propose this model as an alternative to structured schooling, though it could easily be in small remote communities. Such home based systems as we propose also give a viable, ongoing contact point between schools and families to co-operate towards providing the best educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

8/Cultural Heritage

Housing and economic development projects will fail without a solid community culture of pride and self identity. We see the involvement of traditional owners and Aboriginal cultural processes as being important, not just for town planning and land management issue but also for instilling a new Aboriginal consciousness based on family, prosperity and “home”.

The family cluster town planning process should include an overlap of cultural infrastructure such as cemeteries and other sacred places into family based residential developments. This allows for culturally appropriate relationships with country and the memories of ancestors to be a permanent element in the physical nature of town planning and community development.

Private home ownership and inheritability can mean more than secure legal title. Relationships with places such as cemeteries and other sacred sites define “home” as country, not buildings. We advocate the facilitation of this association with home as a central pillar in rebuilding respect and responsibility in the context of Aboriginal culture and families.

In Bouliia and Palm Island, the majority of Aboriginal residents are not traditional owners; their families have settled there as a result of the confusion and shake ups of the protection era. Cultural healing means, we believe, developing a relationship with traditional homelands, the places that Aboriginal ancestors were removed from before being incarcerated in the reserve and protection system.

In many cases it is unrealistic to consider uprooting established families to relocate on traditional homelands. But there is scope to build holiday homes, emergency housing or investment properties on traditional lands to supplement the lifestyles of today’s residents of ex-government reserves or people who have moved into mainstream real estate options.

Such cultural activity being incorporated into town planning frameworks allows for cultural disciplines in other areas such as respect and responsibility in education pedagogies to grow naturally through community life in a holistic manner.

9/Land Title

There are more secure inheritable housing title models than just freehold.

We propose private housing developments on communal title to land because

1/I reduces the cost of a private home by removing the cost of buying the land

2/It is best able to manage cultural, heritage and ecological issues within communal title as it allows a level of control within cultural frameworks over land use and management.

3/It allows for communal facilities such as water, sewage and electricity systems to be accessible to private homes as well as camping and mobile homes with maximum flexibility through shared water, power and sewage systems without argument about ownership. The corporate landowner also owns and maintains infrastructure, which is serviced through rates and fees in the land agreement, again increasing regular costs to the homeowner but reducing the need for big bills to build, repair or maintain the systems.

The mainstream real estate market uses all sorts of legal models of land ownership including communal title when they design their real estate developments. Communal title is just as solid a base as private title in land development including private home investments. The key element, as far as the market place is concerned, is perpetual security of title and a very clear understanding of rights and responsibilities of titleholders. An example of what determines mainstream land prices is heard the real estate term “million dollar view”. Similarly “close to schools and shops” and “recently renovated”. These are the factors in profitable real estate developments and have nothing to do with the specifics of the title paper, as long as the title is secure and can’t be pulled out by some other party.

Issues of property development and zoning are the proper business of local government. It is their job to determine what kind of developments is desirable. The model we have devised is based on communal title and ILUA. It accommodates all forms of land use including camping, agriculture, private and public housing, industry, commercial developments like shops – everything – including playing the real estate market.

As more housing is developed the value of the properties will increase allowing the corporate ownership structure to sell off real estate as well as private owners, within collective title frameworks.

The local government can collect rates from private ownership. In communal title, the corporate owner can charge rates at a higher rate than freehold, as there is a leasehold component to it. The advantage to the homeowner is that they only need to raise enough money to build a home, as the land itself does not have to be bought. Within our cluster model, swage water and electricity can also be incorporated into the rates structure providing secure affordable management of these services for home

owners so they do not face the burden of individual maintenance costs, usually at unexpected times when systems break down.

10/Holistic Health

Some Aboriginal families are already living prosperous self-managed lives. Many families are ready and desperately willing to take on the responsibilities of prosperity. These groups need to be encouraged and facilitated to form a core of community leadership, not spokespeople but role models of prosperous Aborigines. Their efforts will be the backbone of a new Aboriginal economic base. These people need the support to fly rather than being captured on the ground by artificial notions of “community” and “welfare”.

However. There are many Aboriginal people whose immediate agenda is not in the area of housing and economic development but rather in transcending or surviving daily crises of mental health, substance addiction and inescapable violence in the home. These people need healing before being able to carry the weight of family responsibility again. A secure home is the first point of healing. In the area of mental health a secure home provides a clear healthy reference point on which to anchor in psychological turmoil, especially when home is family. Similarly physical ill health. Whatever the treatment, rest and a reduction of anxiety is central to the process of physical healing and only a secure home environment can provide this. We have heard many stories of Aboriginal people feeling very uncomfortable with public hospital systems, people on dialysis, cardiac patients who are frightened to go to hospital because of how health care regimes used to be as well as how they are today including the inherent nature of hospitals, unfortunately they are places where a lot of people pass away and these associations in the community do not always contribute to anxiety free rest.

In the same way as we suggest welfare housing budgets should be transferred to family home ownership schemes, we suggest a health budget investment home health care systems would generate significant savings in the long term by facilitating healthy and healing lifestyles.

Housing, economic and training programs, even with worlds best practise infrastructure and appropriate design, will collapse unless issues such as mental health, family violence, substance abuse and other psychological/spiritual imbalances are faced up to. At least for a generation or two, a serious healing program to deal with the intergenerational trauma of the present is necessary. The extended family is not just more relatives but also a system of authority, discipline and social organization often referred to as customary law or Aboriginal culture. Cultural programs including facilitating family history research and reconnection to country, as relevant to 21st century Aboriginal society need to be, and be seen to be, central to this whole process of development in order to direct the process of healing and collective recovery from release from the protection laws and reserve system.

In some areas family hospitality to visitors, especially family or visiting traditional owner's requires host homes to give up bedrooms or even whole houses to accommodate the visitors. These visitors may often stay for extended periods. This cultural practice of Aboriginal extended families causes chaos to public housing, especially emergency housing programs and is commonly seen as a symptom of “dysfunction”. We agree that the situation is dysfunctional, however we see the

cause of the dysfunction being inappropriate public housing and welfare service delivery to Aboriginal communities, not the cultural requirements of extended families. We suggest that these cultural processes, if they were resourced instead of the welfare system, hold the strongest possibility of providing short and long term accommodation as well as “built in” support structures that would provide a community dynamic of healing and “settling down” in a secure environment. This is a long-term solution to Aboriginal homelessness and over crowding, not just a bandaid, emergency response.

Contemporary Aboriginal culture is something to be identified, practiced and taught by each family unit in the way that is real and relevant to them in their own circumstance. Culture based healing programs need to be based on self discovery and knowledge of family and country today leading to real personal empowerment, not just learning about the old times. The hard reality is that many Aboriginal people will not have the opportunity to live, work or invest in their traditional country, though many will. The process of reconnection today is about self identity, family identity and spiritual healing to deal with in depth and integrity the causes of chronic grief and hopelessness suffered by many aboriginal people. These Aboriginal healing processes need to be properly supported by and connected to appropriate delivery of mental health, substance recovery and community education programs. These processes need to be developed in ongoing ways for the whole community to maintain social health, not just as crisis responses to individual ill health.

11/Work for the dole and Centrelink payments.

No change will occur rapidly and the starting point of this process is high unemployment, meaning a good supply of labour.

Welfare, right here right now and in the immediate future is a major source of income in remote communities that leaves the communities through commodity purchases as quickly as it comes in. By establishing, even small scale, local producers, welfare money, and any other money, is recirculated through the community with its flow on effects. Larger communities such as Palm Island have a solid market in the local community for producing any basic goods and services, especially food.

Work for the dole participants should be encouraged to develop work skills relevant to their family businesses, using them as a base for their labour. In terms of our cluster model, this would include the maintenance of common land areas such as camping grounds, cemeteries and heritage reserves as well as cluster infrastructure such as plumbing and electricity systems.

Present work for the dole opportunities should provide the opportunity for construction training programs to generalise building skills in the communities to maximise the capacity to create and renovate housing.

12/Recommendations

Our recommendations focus on identifying and facilitating the next step in the planning process, should any merit be found in our perspectives.

The first step

1/ Housing resource and research centre

We identify the establishment of a sustainable housing training campus on Palm Island as the first step in this process.

The campus will maintain links with mainstream academic and professional institutions to facilitate research projects as relevant to Aboriginal housing developments through the “Gunya 21 Link Tank”.

The centre will run education programs as well as facilitate local access to other education and training (e.g. on-line external courses)

2/ The first task of the campus would be to convene a land title, town planning and land management training process in order to facilitate housing business in an ongoing way and with integrity in Aboriginal cultural frameworks as well as proper town planning frameworks.

3/ The campus should facilitate sustainable housing projects on other Aboriginal communities to develop training and housing construction options for low cost innovative building techniques, especially for owner builders and renovators.

4/ Economic development

The campus should extend the current housing “Link Tank” process to economic development in order to construct innovative models of training and business support.

We advocate the extension of the Centrelink New Enterprise Initiative Scheme, or some similar business development program into Aboriginal communities within a family business model as an alternative to work for the dole and other welfare models.

We would encourage work for dole participants to learn small-scale construction skills in order to acquire the skills to build a cabin such as TAFE owner builder or shed construction courses. The centre may, if appropriate host such a work for the dole projects. Similarly the centre could host community correction programs for work training.

13/Research and consultation methodology

This report is not a commentary but a proposal for action that is relevant to Palm Island and North West Queensland alike and is therefore hopefully, worthy of discussion by Aboriginal people and housing authorities in other communities and circumstances as a springboard for ideas.

We have attempted to look for realistic triggers and catalysts to breaking the entrenched cycles of welfare dependency that seem to be perpetuated by present indigenous policies and programs.

We have not tried to conform to academic or bureaucratic research or policy development paradigms.

Kalkadoon.org specialises in research methodologies that access Aboriginal perspective. In this case we have not tried to represent such opinion, as there are democratically elected bodies other than us to do this. Rather, we have attempted to test our particular theories and hypotheses on grass roots Aboriginal common sense. We have not tried to break any new ground or propose any new theoretical frameworks. We have taken what is commonly known in terms of Aboriginal housing needs, from both professional and grass roots perspectives and looked at the situation with the cutting edge of the housing sustainability movement. This movement is now well established in Australia and offers a wide range of housing products very relevant to innovative housing design. Kalkadoon.org participated in the inaugural National Greenbuild and Eco-show, a sustainable housing trade show in Sydney while preparing this report and identified a range of goods, services and perspectives very relevant to sustainable housing programs in Aboriginal communities,

As tempting as it is, we have avoided identifying any particular housing model as a solution. The whole process of design and implementation of housing in any community should be through a process of consultation and joint planning between Federal, State and Local government authorities, the local community, native title holders and of course home residents.

Kalkadoon.org offers an opinion as endorsed by the principle researcher, Baganan Kurityityin Theresa Creed regarding the territories of the Kalkadoon and Pitta Pitta people, including Bouliia. As such we have taken licence to be bold enough to offer an opinion relevant to those areas.

Baganan's family were removed from North West Queensland and taken to Palm Island, she has much family on the Island and is presently working on sustainable housing project with the Palm Island council, and as such our considerations are also put to writing in this context.

These two communities were chosen as a focus for exploration as kalkadoon.org was in a position to go beyond bureaucratic and academic research methodologies and seek advice and opinion about housing from grass roots Aboriginal people, those living in houses in communities who understand better than most how housing programs are "hitting the ground" Similarly grass roots residents are those best suited to test and challenge or develop an idea from a practical, resident's point of view.

We thank the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, the Palm Island Men's' group, The Burke and Wills Aboriginal Co-Op (sic), The Pitta Pitta Elders, in particular Ms. Alice James and Mr. Alf Nathan for their considered opinions and for the time they spent with us.

We are grateful to Nunukul elder Bejam Jahlo Kabul Nunukul Denis Walker for his time and patience discussing with us at great length the meeting point of town planning and traditional custodianship as it applies to his country, Minjerribah Stradbroke Island. His “5 acre plan” for Stradbroke Island has been a significant inspiration for our vision. The house that the Nimbin hippies built for the late Oodgeroo Nunukul, custodian of the land Minjerribah, on her Moongalba bush estate, combined with Oodgeroo's own architecture and micro-town planning for that bush palace, stand unsurpassed as the highpoint of modern Australian architecture, in the humble opinion of kalkadoon.org.

We also thank Senator Andrew Bartlett for being curious enough to listen and motivated enough to do what he can.

Principle researcher and report director Baganan Kurityityin Theresa Creed
Research assistant John Tracey

Report written by John Tracey
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