

Housing for Health Incubator 2018 Wrap-Up and the Year Ahead

Happy New Year from the Housing for Health Incubator! 2018 marked a significant beginning for us, and we'd like to thank everybody who has contributed their ideas and energy so far. We're ten months into the life of the Incubator and we're hitting the ground running in 2019.

Please note: This is the first in a series of six-monthly newsletters. To opt in to these and other occasional Incubator updates, sign up via our website [here](#). If you do not sign up you will not receive these newsletters in the future.

January 2019: "Living with Water: Questions for Policy and Action", a Policy Roundtable at The University of Sydney

First up, we're hoping you'll be able to join us at our inaugural Policy Roundtable "Living with Water: Questions for Policy and Action", a free event at the University of Sydney from 5:00 for 5:30-7:00pm on Thursday January 17th. The panel will feature the Incubator's Tess Lea, Lauren Walker (North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency), David Morris (Environmental Defenders Office NSW), Aron Chang (Urban designer, New Orleans), and Robert Griew (Nous Group). It is the first in an annual series of Policy Roundtables to be hosted by the Incubator in the coming years. Further venue, event, and [registration details are available here](#).

4S Open Panel Call for Papers: "Permeable Housing and Intersecting Infrastructures"

From September 4-7, 2019, the [4S conference](#) will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana. The HFH Incubator, partnered with The Blue House Civic Studio, New Orleans, is hosting the open panel "[103. Permeable Housing and Intersecting Infrastructures](#)". If this topic interests you, please consider [submitting a paper proposal](#) to 4S by February 1, 2019.

2018 in review

The year began with the announcement that the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (by then the National Remote Housing Strategy) would not be extended, replaced with bilateral funding agreements between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. In the Northern Territory, \$500m was negotiated, in addition to \$1.1b allocated to housing over ten years under the "Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes." package. As the central recommendation of the 2017 [NPARIH Review](#) made clear, we know how important it is that there is a plan for cyclical repairs and maintenance programs in this funding.

Writing

The significance of planned repairs and maintenance was outlined in the Incubator's first ["Issues Paper"](#), published in May 2018. The Issues Paper describes the need for research into the policy worlds that tend to Indigenous housing provision, the value of comparative policy research, the challenges that climate change provides for this policy field, and the program of upcoming Incubator research. We followed the Issues Paper with a ["Progress Report"](#), and various other publications. Liam Grealy considered why cultural studies is well placed to explore the politics and bureaucracies that manage repair and maintenance

regimes, in the [School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry magazine](#). Tess Lea, Kirsty Howey and Justin O'Brien published their article "[Waging Paperfare](#)" in Oceania, which focuses on the campaigns waged and administrative burdens managed by the Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) in Kakadu National Park, regarding existing and proposed mining. In [Crikey](#), Grealy described the current situation in Borroloola, where nine years after \$14.6m was allocated under NPARIH, new houses in the town camps have not been built.

Fieldwork

That article followed fieldwork by Kirsty Howey and Grealy in the [Northern Territory in October](#). In Darwin and Borroloola, interviews with peak organisations, Aboriginal corporations, and remote services managers discussed the impediments to instituting effective R&M, for the project "Housing Repair and Maintenance Policies in Indigenous Australia". In July and November, Tess Lea and Christen Cornell travelled to the [Northern Rivers region](#) and [Northwest NSW](#) to conduct fieldwork for the "Climate Change, Housing and Health" project funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. This fieldwork involved meeting with community service providers, tenancy lawyers, Aboriginal Land Council staff, and Aboriginal Elders and it examined the challenges for service providers and tenants in situations of affordable housing undersupply and flood risk. These concerns are also evident in [New Orleans](#), where Grealy began comparative fieldwork in the latter part of 2018. Where public provision for housing has largely shifted to a voucher system for use in the private market, this context tests how we might advocate for state-funded repairs and maintenance, where improved housing stock escapes into the market for short-term rentals.

Events

In October, the Incubator partnered with the artist collective [Snack Syndicate](#) and the Artspace gallery in Woolloomooloo to host the "[Infrastructural Inequalities](#)" public program. This two-day event featured lectures, panels, and film screenings focused on a range of contemporary infrastructural issues: housing, waste, bureaucracy, data surveillance, and so on. The public program was complemented by an exhibition in Artspace's Ideas Platform, featuring work by Jack Green, Dean Cross, and the Karrabing Film Collective. The collaboration built on our ongoing reading group by the same name, which began in May 2018. The monthly "[Infrastructural Inequalities](#)" reading group has thus far focused on infrastructure, architecture, water, and waste, and will resume in February 2019 focused on "Words". New members are very welcome to attend across 2019!

Talks

The Incubator team gave numerous talks and lectures across the year. In March, Tess Lea accepted an invitation from the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory to speak at their March 2018 *Housing Forum* in Darwin, on the topic "[Housing for health and community control](#)". In September, Lea presented at the [Festival of Urbanism V](#), and at the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies Seminar Series at the University of Sydney. Lea and Christen Cornell also presented a guest lecture on climate change and Indigenous health to students in the University of Sydney's Masters of Public Health program. In October, partner investigator Paul Torzillo attended the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Aboriginal Health Organisation's ([NACCHO](#)) [Annual Meeting](#) in Brisbane, providing an update on Healthabitat and Incubator work; and in late November,

Torzillo presented a co-authored paper with Lea, on “Housing for Health and Safe Water” at the [Safe Water Summit](#), convened by researchers at the University of Queensland. Also in November, Grealy and Lea presented their video paper "[Feral Policies for Repair and Maintenance](#)" at the Feral: A Nearly Carbon-Neutral conference, and Lea and Cornell spoke at the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage's annual climate adaptation forum, [AdaptNSW](#). In December, Grealy presented on the Northern Territory's secure tenure policy at [the Blue House in New Orleans](#), a civic studio and co-working space.

Workshops

Throughout the year, the Incubator has been collaborating closely with partner [Healthabitat](#), holding a series of planning meetings early in March and April, and its first [practitioner workshop](#) dedicated to updating the Housing for Health Guide in July. Also in July, the Incubator hosted a meeting on [water contamination](#) issues in remote Indigenous communities, bringing together Healthabitat, scientists from the Global Water Institute at UNSW, representatives from three Aboriginal Land Councils, and other housing and water researchers.

The Year Ahead

Our work so far has shown the importance of thinking housing and water infrastructure issues together, and the impossibility of thinking about these issues apart, which we aim to do at our [inaugural policy roundtable](#). This is followed by our "Working with Water" workshops for invited water researchers. A big 2019 proceeds with the continuation of the Infrastructural Inequalities reading group in February, focused on our next topic, [Words](#). We will be drafting an e-book on the key issues that thinking through housing and health generates; and concluding our project on climate change and housing precarity. Additional fieldwork is planned for the Northern Territory and Louisiana, extending the interviews and policy analysis undertaken in 2018. The Incubator has partnered with The Blue House Civic Studio for an open panel at the 4S conference in New Orleans in September. The panel is titled "[Permeable Housing and Intersecting Infrastructures](#)" and we encourage folks to submit a paper proposal before February 1st. A second policy roundtable will be scheduled for early 2020 – subscribe to this newsletter to receive occasional updates.

All the best for the year ahead,
The Housing for Health Incubator