

Housing for Health Incubator 2020 Wrap-up and the Year Ahead

For many of us, 2020 dragged and rushed by simultaneously, and before it seems possible, the Housing for Health Incubator is coming to the end of its original funding from the Henry Halloran Trust. It's hard to believe we've been going for almost three years, but rest assured the work will continue. What follows is a brief overview of 2020 and a look at what's ahead.



Dingo on the APY Lands

Our chief focus in 2020 was the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) funded project, "Modelling Sustainable Regional and Remote Housing and Maintenance". This project is a collaboration with Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation, Housing SA, Healthabitat, and Nganampa Health Council, together with researchers at the University of Tasmania, University of Adelaide, and the University of Sydney. Despite many COVID-19 related disruptions we eventually managed to undertake fieldwork on the APY Lands in South Australia with Nganampa Health Council, in Alice Springs with Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation, and in Gunnedah in NSW with Gunida Gunyah. We conducted site visits and many interviews, via Zoom and in person, with housing managers, contractors, tenancy officers, environmental health officers, tenants, and others, focused on housing repair and maintenance programs, regional mobility, and the thermal performance of housing. We are aiming to finalise our report in the first months of 2021.



Fieldwork at Gunnedah

In 2020 we continued our work pushing for protections for safe drinking water in the Northern Territory. We were excited to see the [call from all four NT land councils](#) for a [safe drinking water act](#), in the lead-up to the NT election. The [Central Land Council submission](#) to the Productivity Commission's National Water Reform process outlines the failures of the Northern Territory Government to meet the requirements of the National Water Initiative, and guiding principles for drinking water reforms going forward.

Coming toward the end of this grant funding, 2020 was a big year for publications, including Chief Investigator Tess Lea's monograph [*Wild Policy: Indigeneity and the Unruly Logics of Intervention*](#), published by Stanford University Press. Featuring key analyses of how hard it is to make Indigenous housing and health policies work, this book was launched virtually in September, and Tess would like to thank Elspeth Probyn, Heidi Norman, David Ritter, Jakelin Troy, and Ghassan Hage for their thoughtful responses, which can be viewed [here](#). The final report, [*Climate Change, Housing, and Health: A Scoping Study on Intersections between Vulnerability, Housing Tenure, and Potential Adaptation Responses*](#), authored by Christen Cornell, Nicole Gurran, and Lea was published in October. Other notable academic publications include an article in [*Policy Sciences*](#), co-authored by Allan McConnell, Grealy, and Lea on a framework for assessing policy success for various parties; an article in [*Australian Geographer*](#), by Grealy and Kirsty Howey, on water contamination at Borroloola, NT; and a chapter by Grealy and Lea in the edited collection, [*The Temporalities of Waste: Out of Sight, Out of Time*](#), on housing waste and litigation at Santa Teresa, NT. The co-authored nature of these publications signals a key Incubator principle and method: that smart insights and actionable recommendations require diverse expertise and collaborations across fields. Look out for publications in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *Housing Studies*, *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, and the *Australasian Journal of Water Resources* this year.



Football oval at Kalka

As much as we can, we supplement our academic publications in public fora. We have written on water contamination at Laramba for [Right Now](#), the Northern Territory Home Improvement Scheme for [Policy Forum](#), and eco-design and legal protections for safe drinking water for the [Sydney Environment Institute blog](#). Grealy and Howey worked with their research collaborator, Miriam Charlie, on her essay “That Waiting Business: Housing at Borroloola”, for [Overland](#). And we have given talks at the Festival of Urbanism 7, the Central Land Council, Protect Country, the Common Infrastructure Workshop, and elsewhere.

We were thrilled in October at the announcement of our success in funding for an Australian Research Council Special Research Initiative Linkage grant. This grant is for the project, “Staying on Country: Infrastructural Needs for Remote Community Viability”, which involves partnerships with Nganampa Health Council, Aboriginal Housing NT, the Fulcrum Agency, and the Central Land Council. It provides funding for our research to continue over the next couple of years.

Looking ahead to 2021, we are excited about the publication of the second Infrastructural Inequalities journal issue, on the topic “Policing, Crisis, Abolition”. See our first issue [here](#). We will publish our AHURI report, and hope to produce related journal articles. We’ll begin our recently funded ARC project. And we will curate an exhibition at Tin Sheds Gallery in Sydney in October – details to come.

Stay in touch throughout 2021! All the best,
Tess Lea and Liam Grealy

The Housing for Health Incubator is located in the University of Sydney, which sits on the country of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We acknowledge and pay respect to leaders past, present, and emerging of the lands where we work. Sovereignty was never ceded and the struggles for justice continue on multiple fronts, including access to safe and functional housing.

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