From Crisis to Crime: the escalation of civil and family law issues to criminal matters in Aboriginal communities in NSW

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provide only limited services in other jurisdictions. And while a growing demand for

Only 17 per cent of those in the focus groups who reported being a victim of discrimination sought legal advice. In ocp{"ecugu"kv"ku"xkgygf" oqtg"cu"c"÷hcev"qh"nkhgø"vjcp" as an unlawful act that attracts a right of legal redress. Participants in the focus groups eq ornckpgf"vjcv"vjgtg" ygtg"pq"cxgpwgu"cxckncdng"vq"uggm"ngicn"cfxkeg"gxgp"qp"õu ocnn" vjkpiuö"nkmg"dgkpi"ugtxgd last when in a shop. Several expressed feelings of rqygtnguupguu"*õvjgtgø"u"pqvjkpi"{qw"ecp"fqö+"kp"vjg"hceg"qh"eqpuvcpv"fkuetkokpcvkqp0"

The capacity for ongoing, racist discrimination to provoke a response that can lead to criminal law issues is cleat<"offkuetkokpcvkqp"ku"qpg"qh"vjqug"vjkpiu"vjcv"becomes criminal uvwhh."dgecwug" y g"tgcevö"*Cboriginal legal support workers Dubbo). Participants rctvkewnctn{"pqvgf"vjcv"dgkpi"vqnf"opqv"vq" y qtt{"cdqwv"kvö" y jgp"eq o rnckpvu"qh"tcekcn" discrimination were made exacerbated the problem for some people.

Access to stable housing of an acceptable standard is not only a human right, but lack of it is a factor that can lead to criminal justice issues. Apart from anger directed at housing authorities (but possibly projected elsewhere), over-crowding in housing is a risk factor for sexual assault and domestic violence⁷. Over-crowding is worse in remote communities where the average number of people per house is highest ó for example in Wadeye in the NT there were an average of 16 people per house. 8

There is also a direct correlation between poor access to housing and criminal offending. A 1999 study by the National Crime Prevention initiative found that 72% of young homeless people were on a corrective order and 44% had been in a penal facility or institution at some time⁹. There is consistent evidence that homeless young people break the law more than other young people, for example stealing for food or breaking into premises for somewhere to sleep¹⁰.

Further, lack of suitable accommodation for people coming out of prison has been found to be a significant factor in likelihood of reoffending ¹¹. Conversely, stable housing can help releasees bely, eat a peo wh3se