

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

Schwartz Melanie, University of New South

Cunneen Chris, James Cook University

Citation

This article was published in (2009) Indigenous Law Bulletin, vol 7, no 15, pp.18/-pJ5.p.95BT1 0 0 1 211 45

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

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 reoffending¹¹. Conversely, stable housing can help releasees bely, eat a peo wh3se

