‘That’s old Barunga house’: Experiences of transitional housing within an Aboriginal community in a remote area

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Completed: 20 March 2023

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Archaeology and Heritage Management.
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This thesis was reviewed and approved by Nell Brown and Jocelyn McCartney of Barunga, on 11 November 2022.

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: 

Date: 16 November 2022.

Abstract

Conducted in collaboration with the community of Barunga on Jawoyn Country in Australia's Northern Territory, this research project records Aboriginal experiences and memories surrounding the use and impacts of transitional housing. A qualitative archaeological study, the experiential aspects of early government housing at Barunga are investigated through the recording and analysis of yarns conducted with participating community members. Coding and analysis of the conversations held within a decolonising and heart-centred framework, reveal memories of transitional housing are most frequently associated with positive experiences of the socio-cultural landscape of Barunga during the 1960s and 1970s, and the persistence of Aboriginal culture through the assimilationist policies implemented within government settlements in the 1950s. Additional findings reveal the continued significance of engendered households within Aboriginal culture at Barunga, and the ongoing need for greater community consultation in the design and implementation of government housing. Furthermore, the process and benefits of utilizing backcasting within community-based archaeology, as a method with which to shape research around community needs and wellbeing, is discussed. This study, situated within a global conversation around decolonising archaeological practice, demonstrates the benefits of investigating the experiential aspects of the material record through collaboration with Indigenous communities, and highlights the persistence of Aboriginal culture within the architecture of assimilation.

I would like to acknowledge that this research was conducted on the Bagala clan lands of Jawoyn Country, in collaboration with Jawoyn, Dalabon, Nalakan, Rembarrnga and Mielli peoples. Additionally, I acknowledge that Flinders University is situated upon Kaurna land. I pay my respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise that sovereignty of these lands was never ceded.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I must offer my endless thanks to the Traditional Owners, Custodians, and community members at Barunga who have shown me so much kindness, support, and patience in undertaking this project and without whom, this thesis simply would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my dear friend Jasmine Willika, for her friendship and for putting up with all my questions.

I would like to thank my supervisor Claire Smith for her ongoing support and patience, and for all the opportunities she has given me over the past two years, I do not think there is a kinder supervisor out there. My thanks also to Heather Burke, for her invaluable feedback on my proposal and literature review, and to Kellie Pollard for her support whilst undertaking the field work portion of this project. Thank you to Gary Jackson, for your insight and help, and for carrying my tent around. I would also like to thank my peers: Josephine, Cameron McVicar, Kylie Lower, Will Mussared, Gwen Ferguson, Emma Davey, Leonnie Baker, and Majella Hammesley whose feedback and friendship was the best part of every Thursday afternoon.

I must of course thank my dad Norman, mum Annabelle, and brother Will for always supporting me. Special thanks to my dad, who read all my drafts and sat down to discuss this project with me countless times; I could not have done it without you. Finally, thank you to my partner Glen, many people told us it was a terrible idea to both be writing theses at the same time in the same house, but I wouldn't have been able to do it with anyone else.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research question

Through a decolonising archaeological framework, this thesis will record Aboriginal experiences of transitional housing and explore the impacts of early government housing and assimilationist policies within the Barunga community from the 1950s to the present. Introduced under the Australian Federal Government's *Welfare Ordinance* of 1953, government housing designed to assist in the transition of Aboriginal peoples from ethno-architecture into European style domiciliary environments was implemented in communities in remote areas across the country; These assimilationist hut designs were termed 'transitionary housing' (Keys 2000:119). Today, household archaeology is a well-established field of study globally (Lloyd and Vasta 2017; Parker and Foster 2012; Roth 2010; Steere 2017; Yasur-Landau et al. 2011). Despite this, research into the archaeology of households within Aboriginal communities is lacking (Keys 2000; Lea 2020; Musharbash 2009; Panagopoulos 2022). The ontology of private and public spaces within Aboriginal societies is complex and multi-faceted, with the material culture of camps and households representing a key means of producing and maintaining social relationships and processes through time (Musharbash 2009:26).

Jawoyn Country is an area with a rich and ongoing history of Aboriginal occupation dating to more than 45,000 years cal BP (David et al. 2011:73). This project, centred on the community Barunga in Australia's Northern Territory, sheds light on experiences of early government housing as remembered by Aboriginal participants. The primary research question addressed within this thesis is:

- How do Aboriginal community members remember and experience transitional housing at Barunga?

Secondary aims of this project highlight:

- How community members altered or maintained gendered spaces in transitional housing.
- The ongoing impacts of transitional housing on Aboriginal culture at Barunga.
- The value of qualitative research in recording, interpreting and decolonising Indigenous household archaeology.

The research question and associated aims are addressed using qualitative data collected through yarning conducted with approximately 10% of the adult population at Barunga. Thematic analysis of the conversations held with community members reveal three overarching theoretical constructs encapsulating experiences and memories of transitional housing, these were experiences of government housing, the persistence of Aboriginal culture, and gendered experiences. These constructs are situated within the existing literature surrounding early government housing in remote regions of Australia and the employment of a decolonising and heart-centred theoretical framework as outlined by Supernant et al. (2020). Additionally, the use of community-based participatory research, as described by

archaeologists such as Atalay (2020), Pollard (2019), and Mizoguchi and Smith (2019) is outlined. The resulting qualitative data is transcribed and coded by the thesis candidate, with the resulting transcripts and thematic interpretations being handed back to the community.

1.2 Significance

This thesis research holds significance at a community, national and international level. For the community at Barunga, the project provides both a history of housing before and following the implementation of government infrastructure, as well as the individual household histories of participating Elders and community members. Additionally, the use of backcasting, a planning methodology within which research is developed around a community's ideal future (Holmberg and Robert 2000; Robinson 1990), provides Barunga with a statement of desired improvements to the township and the wellbeing of community members for future researchers to incorporate into their own research on Jawoyn Country. The study of household material culture at Barunga within an archaeological context serves to highlight both historical and ongoing deficits in the implementation of appropriate government housing within Aboriginal communities in remote areas.

At both the national and international level, household archaeology has seen little investigation into the impacts of government housing on isolated Indigenous communities. Indeed, much of the existing Australian research on the subject has been undertaken within the disciplines of architecture, politics, and health sciences (Bailie and Wayte 2006; Heppell 1979; Memmott 1988, 2002, and 2004; Saini 1967; Tatz 1964). Furthermore, an ongoing lack of appropriate housing within both urban and regional Aboriginal communities remains a widely acknowledged issue (Bailie and Wayte 2006; Fien and Charlesworth 2012; Heppell 1977; Lea 2020; Pholeros et al. 1993). This study addresses this gap in the existing literature through the recording of both past and present experiences of government housing at Barunga to inform the impacts of government intervention on Aboriginal household material culture and highlight community requirements for appropriate housing in the future.

Households within Aboriginal communities in remote areas are chronically overcrowded, further exacerbating a lack of amenities, and directly impacting both mental and physical wellbeing (Bailie and Wayte 2006:178); this became an issue of particular import during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both insufficient community consultation and culturally inappropriate design have been identified as causes of this ongoing crisis (Fien and Charlesworth 2012:20; Lowell et al. 2018; Milligan et al. 2011; Silbert 2021). These are both issues which may begin to be addressed through archaeological research focused on household systems and structures within Aboriginal communities.

The significance of adopting household archaeological theory and practice within townships in remote areas, particularly Indigenous communities, is twofold:

- To create a more humanized archaeology representative of the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples (Parker and Foster 2012:1).

- To better address the ongoing deficit in appropriate housing within Indigenous communities and lack of consultation with, and involvement of, Indigenous peoples in social housing policy development (Silbert 2021:25).

Furthermore, the inclusion of backcasting as a methodology within this project is of significance to the wider archaeological community, particularly within Indigenous archaeologies. Employed primarily within resource management and socio-economic development research (Holmberg and Robert 2000; Robinson 1990), the use of backcasting as a planning methodology within this thesis was directly inspired by the heart-driven, community archaeology of Armstrong and Anderson (2020:38) in America's Pacific Northwest. Shaping archaeological research within Indigenous communities around an ideal future, as envisioned by the Indigenous group, is an internationally transferrable methodology and one which actively works towards better serving the communities that archaeologists work within as well as facilitating deeper relationships between archaeologists, Indigenous cultural groups, and the wider research community.

1.3 Study Area

This research is situated on Jawoyn Country, in the community of Barunga. Located within the Northern Territory of Australia, Barunga lies approximately 400 km southeast of the city of Darwin on the Bagala clan lands of the Jawoyn people (Figure 1.1). Barunga is home to multiple language groups besides Jawoyn, including Dalabon, Nalakan, Mielli, and Rembarrnga (Smith et al. 2021:105). Despite this, the main language spoken in the region today is Kriol (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). Barunga (Bamyili) was established in 1951 as Beswick Creek Native Settlement (Smith 2004:59), also referred to as Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement. At the time of the 2021 census, the community had a permanent population of 337 individuals across eighty families, with 94.7% of community members identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021).

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Figure 1.1 Map showing the location of Barunga, Northern Territory, Australia. Reproduced from Smith et al. 2021:106.

Though this project centres on the township at Barunga, the wider Jawoyn community extends into the neighbouring towns of Manyallaluk and Beswick. Indeed, this research recognised the extent of the Barunga community as being defined by a cultural landscape with fluid boundaries and populations (Smith 2004:vii). Here, community is as much about kinship as it is about geographic location; individuals with kinship ties to Barunga may live in Katherine, Darwin or Adelaide and extend those community boundaries with them (Smith 2004:vii).

1.4 Housing at Barunga

As of the 2021 census, housing at Barunga consisted of 80 occupied private dwellings and 16 unoccupied dwellings (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). Most dwellings are separate houses, with 57.5% of homes having three bedrooms and only 3.8% having four or more bedrooms (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). Though the national 2021 Australian census reports the average number of household occupants in Barunga as 4.1 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021), this number also includes non-Aboriginal workers living alone in homes with multiple bedrooms, thus hiding the reality of overcrowding in the community. None of the 80 occupied dwellings at the 2021 census were owned outright by community members. Additionally, most households were classed as family units, with the median weekly household income being $949 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021).

At the establishment of Beswick Creek Native Settlement in 1951, the community saw construction of a communal kitchen and dining room, produce garden, visitors' quarters, and a pump house (Smith 2004:59). Most crucially to this research project, transitional housing in the form of aluminium Econo Huts, Sidney Williams Huts and Kingstrand Houses were erected for the 200 permanent Aboriginal residents (Smith 2004:59). Huts were grouped into eight with a shared, gender-segregated shower block and pit toilets provided for each group (Keen 1980 in Smith 2004:59). Each Econo Hut featured a six-foot-wide cantilevered veranda sheltering a single room measuring approximately 4.5 x 3m (Keen 1980 in Smith 2004:59). Between 1962 and 1963, cement flooring was added to the remaining 21 Econo Huts, in addition to the construction of three blocks of Kingstrand Houses and six NACO aluminium housing units (The Northern Territory Report for 1962–1963).

Figure 1.2 Image of Southern aspect of Econo Hut 3 located in situ at Bottom Camp, Barunga (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins 23/04/2022).

Today, only four transitional housing units remain, located at Barunga's Bottom Camp (Figure 1.3). Three of the remaining Econo Huts are in a state of significant disrepair and are not used as dwellings on a regular basis. One Econo Hut with cement flooring on Bagala Road, in the southwestern corner of the community, has been renovated. The hut is located approximately 50 metres south of a block of communal, gender segregated toilets (Figure 4.10). Since 2006, Professor Claire Smith has been leasing the hut to be used as a food and supply storage unit during field work and the annual community archaeology field school, which has been run in collaboration with Flinders University since 1998 (Smith et al. 2021). The hut has since been wired with electricity, air-conditioning and an internet connection to make work for Smith and visiting students easier. Inside the hut, there are signs indicating the presence of asbestos within the structure; not surprising given the widespread use of the insulating material in Australia during the post-war era and its presence within older housing across the community (Houston and Ruming 2014:400).

Figure 1.3 Map of Barunga's Bottom camp with locations of the four remaining Econo Huts indicated (map produced using Google Earth images within QGIS 3.26.3).

1.5 Ethics

Research for this thesis was approved under the Flinders University project entitled: 'Aboriginal society and culture in the Barunga region, Northern Territory: Past and present' project: SBREC6390. This project was approved by Flinders University ResearchNow Ethics and Biosafety under Chief Investigator (CI) Professor Claire Smith (*ResearchNow Ethics and Biosafety ID "2301"*). Consent was obtained from participants verbally prior to recording conversations. The use of verbal consent was deemed appropriate due to the longstanding relationship between the community at Barunga, Professor Claire Smith and Flinders University. Final drafts of this thesis were provided to Traditional Owners, Custodians, and participants at Barunga for their approval prior to submission. All data and quotations included within this thesis have been anonymised.

Professor Smith conducted her doctoral thesis in the Burunga-Wugularr region and has continued to work with the community for the last 30 years, the ethical and theoretical framework utilised within this research project has been shaped around Smith's work within the community (Smith 2004; Smith and Jackson 2005). Firstly, permission to conduct archaeological work was negotiated directly with Traditional Owners and Custodians at Barunga (Smith and Jackson 2005:317). Secondly, only community researchers consenting and deemed appropriate to the social position of the outside researcher were consulted; this was determined primarily by participants' desire to take part in the project and secondly,

through consideration of factors which may limit access to certain knowledge or sites (Smith and Jackson 2005:317).

Finally, it was ensured that Traditional Owners, Traditional Custodians, and participants retained ongoing control of information included in this thesis and were involved with any further dissemination of results (Smith and Jackson 2005:321). Archival images were only included with the consent of Traditional Owners and Custodians at Barunga. Additionally, the final manuscript was reviewed and approved by Traditional Owners, Custodians, and senior community members, with community feedback and comments on the resulting data included within chapters four and five of this thesis.

1.5.1. Terminology

Using correct terminology when referring to Aboriginal peoples within this manuscript was a key ethical consideration. The term 'Indigenous' is only employed when referring to Indigenous peoples within a global context. Within a mainland Australian context, and more specifically, when referring to community members at Barunga, the term 'Aboriginal peoples' is used (Smith and Burke 2007:xxiv). As is reflected in the Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) terminology guidelines, 'Indigenous Australians' is used only in reference to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Likewise, the term Aboriginal is used with the knowledge that many different Aboriginal cultures and peoples are present within the community at Barunga and on Jawoyn Country, and the term 'Aboriginal' is only a generalised term describing a vast landscape of diverse communities and cultural groups.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Study area background

Jawoyn Country has a rich history of occupation and complex social systems dating back some 45,000 years cal BP (David et al. 2011:73). It is home to a myriad of archaeological sites, from rock art and Dreaming sites to some of the oldest reliably dated ground-edge axes found globally (Chaloupka 1993; Geneste et al. 2010; Gunn and Whear 2007). Though the rapid colonisation of Australia by Europeans from 1788 saw significant change to the lives of Aboriginal peoples across the continent, the adaptable and dynamic nature of Aboriginal social systems allowed cultural communities on Jawoyn Country to endure European invasion, and the resulting attempts at assimilation made by the federal government throughout the twentieth century (Smith 2004:2).

Following the construction of the Overland telegraph line in 1872 and the first pastoral lease claim in the area in 1876, mining and pastoral activities intensified, rapidly driving away wild game and damaging waterholes on Jawoyn Country (Kearney 1987:2). Aboriginal communities in the region were often forced to become dependent on rations provided in exchange for labour on cattle stations (Kearney 1987:3). Indeed, Kearney (1987:4) reports that during the early decades of the twentieth century, cattle stations on Jawoyn land were run almost exclusively by Aboriginal workers.

This period of European settlement on Jawoyn Country saw a dramatic shift in the daily lives and movements of Aboriginal communities in the area. Where Jawoyn families would traditionally camp along the Katherine River in the dry season and move to higher tablelands between Katherine and Edith falls in the wet season, camps became largely permanent and were situated farther away due to the lease of pastoral lands on the riverbanks (Kearney 1987:4). Indeed, the Jawoyn Land Claim made in 1987, acknowledged that the introduction of pastoral and mining activities significantly undermined the socio-economic basis of a mobile Jawoyn lifestyle and drastically reduced the freedom of movement for Aboriginal people in the area (Kearney 1987:4).

In August of 1942, Aboriginal peoples north of Katherine were relocated and restricted from moving north beyond the Edith River (Kearney 1987:4). As a result, culturally and linguistically distinct Aboriginal groups from across the Northern Territory (NT) were unprecedently contained together for the remainder of World War II. Following this period, referred to by Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory as ‘stockman time,’ ‘government time’ saw the beginning of the assimilation policies rooted in the 1937 conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities (Smith 2004:55). Initially, assimilation focused heavily on ‘Westernising’ Aboriginal people of mixed descent. The later phase of government times and the assimilation era came about under the *Welfare Ordinance* of 1953, enacting a paternal level of control over the movements and lives of those deemed by the government as being unable to care for themselves (Smith 2004:56).

Writing in 1977, Kenneth Maddock (1977:16–17) observed of conditions at Barunga, then Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement:

> North of this road [which bisects the settlement] houses of suburban type occupied by Welfare Branch staff and their families are set pleasantly amid gardens and trees. These buildings have two or three bedrooms and are supplied with electricity, generated on the settlement, and running water, pumped from a nearby spring. Two houses answering to this description recently were built just south of the road. The Aboriginal 'village', as the local whites call it, is south of the road and presents a dreary contrast to the residential quarters on the other side. Here the dwellings stand close together in rows laid out on level ground which by now is largely devoid of trees and grass. Most have one room, a concrete floor and unlined walls and roof of corrugated metal. A few three -roomed houses are enlargements of the one-roomed variety. At any time there are likely also to be a few humpies occupied by people for whom there are no permanent dwellings. None of the Aboriginal houses has electricity and only the expanded ones have running water or washing and toilet facilities. The occupants of all the rest must use communal taps, laundries, and latrines. During most of the year domestic life is conducted in the small yards of the dwellings, often around a fire, for people are disinclined to move indoors unless it is cold or rainy. Except for the few who own beds, people sleep on the ground in their 'swags' (ground sheet and blankets). They rarely cook for themselves as meals are provided from a communal kitchen, though sometimes game is caught and cooked and often a billy is [b]oiled for tea.

Between 1972 and 1975 only one new housing unit was constructed at both Beswick and Barunga despite the communities having received $246,230 and $500,230 in grant funding respectively through the Northern Territory Housing Association Scheme (Northern Territory regional office of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Heppell 1979:27).

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Figure 2.1 Staff cottage at Barunga, formerly 'Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement', 1958 (Photograph: Australian News and Information Bureau, John Tanner) [National Archives of Australia, item ID: 11658424].

In recent years, the *Northern Territory Emergency Response Act 2007* (NTER) and *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* has seen a continuation of race-based legislation impacting Barunga and neighboring Aboriginal communities (Ralph and Smith 2014:75). The policies of the NTER, or 'Intervention', were introduced as a Commonwealth response to a supposed epidemic of violence against Aboriginal women and children within communities across the Northern Territory (Watson 2011:147). Imposed only upon Aboriginal people, the Intervention introduced blanket bans on alcohol and pornography, the implementation of income management and welfare quarantining for individuals classified as vulnerable, as well as the abolition of the Community Development Employment Projects Program (CDPE), the largest Indigenous employment program at the time (Watson 2011:151). It should be noted that as of 17 July 2022, the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012 (Cth) (Stronger Futures Act)* has expired. As a result, alcohol bans no longer apply in some formerly restricted communities across the Northern Territory. Barunga however, remains listed as a general restricted area (GRA) under the *Liquor Act 2019,* continuing restrictions on the possession and consumption of alcohol within the community.

2.1.1. Archaeology on Jawoyn Country

Jawoyn Country has been a source of continued archaeological research since the 1940s. Much of this research has centred on the recording of rock art, beginning with Macintosh and Elkin's survey of cultural markings at Tandandjal Cave and Beswick Creek Caves in the early 1950s (Elkin 1952; Macintosh 1951, 1952 and 1977). In 1993, Chaloupka identified Jawoyn Country as having the longest running tradition and densest concentration of rock art in Australia (Chaloupka 1993).

Research in recent years has also centred on the discovery of some of the oldest securely dated ground-edge axes globally (Geneste et al. 2010). The axes, found at *Nawarla Gabarnmang* rock shelter, have been dated to 35,400±410 cal BP (Geneste et al. 2010:66). Also, at *Nawarla Gabarnmang*, David et al. (2013:2493) have identified the first Pleistocene dates for a pictograph in Arnhem Land and the oldest in Australia, dating between 26,913–28,348 cal BP (David et al. 2013:2500). Furthermore, recent ethnographic investigations of rock art and stone arrangements at *Nawarla Gabarnmang* by Jawoyn Elders in collaboration with Gunn et al. (2021:32), have shown the benefits of incorporating qualitative methodologies into archaeological practice by revealing non-physical aspects of the site, and their importance within a Jawoyn cultural context.

2.1.2. Community archaeology at Barunga

For the past 30 years Claire Smith and Gary Jackson have been working in collaboration with the communities at Barunga, Beswick and Manyallaluk to conduct archaeological research relevant to community and global discussions around the decolonisation of archaeology and community-based best practice. Smith's early research focused heavily on Aboriginal art systems within Jawoyn culture (Smith 1992 and 1994). In recent years however, Smith's work alongside Gary Jackson has been community-led and focused on anti-racism within archaeology (Smith et al. 2021).

Since 1998, Smith has convened the Barunga community archaeology field school, the longest running archaeological field school in Australia, as a means of allowing students to learn Aboriginal archaeology from Aboriginal community members (Smith et al. 2021:105). The field school provides students both nationally, and internationally, with the opportunity to gain experience conducting research within Indigenous communities in a respectful and ethical manner, and allows both community members and students to form professional relationships with one another (May et al. 2018). The field school provided the inspiration and basis for this thesis project. Additionally, both the Honours and PhD theses of Jordan Ralph were a product of the field school (Ralph and Smith 2014; Ralph 2012).

Of further relevance to this thesis, Andrew Coe and Ben Dwyer (2018) undertook surveys of several remaining transitional huts at Barunga as students on the 2018 Barunga community archaeology field school. Additionally, Coe and Dwyer (2018) conducted initial ethnographic research surrounding the history of transitional housing in the community. Floorplans of the huts and single men's quarters produced by Coe and Dwyer (2018) have been reproduced within this thesis (Appendix 2). Though unpublished, the surveys undertaken by Coe and Dwyer were of particular significance to both the community and this project, as many of the huts at Bottom Camp were removed to make room for new housing shortly after completion of the 2018 field school.

2.2 Government housing within Aboriginal communities in remote areas

2.2.1. Transitional housing

Within the Northern Territory, assimilation policies heavily implemented following the 1937 conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, utilised transitional housing as a means of 'domesticating' Aboriginal communities (Smith 2004:55). Transitional huts were designed primarily to be easily constructed and transportable, and to somewhat resemble a European style house (Keys 2000:120). Initially, the huts were intended to be short term housing as Aboriginal community members were assimilated into Western urbanism (Tatz 1964:142). However, lack of funding in many settlements led to huts remaining in place, and being used in various forms, over decades.

Paul Memmott has written extensively on the implementation of transitional housing within Aboriginal communities (Memmott 1988, 2002 and 2004). Though transitional housing was widespread across the Northern Territory throughout the 1950s (Panagopoulos 2022), Memmott identifies the housing issue becoming one of national concern following the 1967 referendum on 'Commonwealth responsibility for Aborigines' (Memmott 1988:34). Transitional houses were designed to be implemented sequentially in stages of increasingly Eurocentric housing design. Memmott (1984:34) identifies the most basic huts as stage one housing, moving through stage two, with stage three huts (and in the Northern Territory stage four huts) being the most comparable to European suburban housing. Beginning with the removal of Aboriginal people from traditional, often transient, ethno-architecture through the three or four stages of transitional huts before moving into 'conventional' European style houses (Memmott 1988:34).

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Figure 2.2 Econo Hut floor plan. Dimensions of veranda area: Length 8.8 metres, width 5.7 metres. Dimensions of elevated enclosed section: Length 3.8 metres, width 3.2 metres (Image reproduced from Coe and Dwyer 2018).

At Barunga, the remaining Econo Huts at Bottom Camp (Figure 2.2), along with early Sidney Williams Huts (NACO units or 'Green houses') and Kingstrand Houses that have since been removed, all represent stage one housing (Figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4). Later additions such as concrete floors, additional rooms, and services (Figure 2.3) elevated the existing transitionary huts to stage two and three housing (Go-Sam 2014:442). The introduction of 'conventional' brick homes at Barunga reflected stage four housing, equivalent to State Housing Commission homes across the Northern Territory (Go-Sam 2014:442).

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Figure 2.3 Kingstrand House floorplan. Dimensions: Length 8.6 metres, width 7 metres (Image reproduced from Coe and Dwyer 2018).

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Figure 2.4 Stage one transitional housing at Barunga, formerly 'Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement', 1960. [National Archives of Australia, item ID: 11658420].

Memmott suggests the development of the transitionary housing model was based in the racist belief that Indigenous Australians were incapable of adjusting readily to living in houses and the assumption that they should want to do so (Memmott 1988:35). As Heppell has noted, neither the design and positioning of transitional huts allow for occupants to engage in European nor Aboriginal sets of living patterns, or for a compromise between the two to be achieved (Heppell 1979:15).

Although the stages of transitional huts were designed to be implemented sequentially, many communities lacked sufficient funding, providing only stage one housing to community members (Memmott 1988:35). Memmott describes stage one huts as consisting of a single skin metal room with earthen floors (Figures 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6), sometimes a veranda, and little to no amenities (Memmott 1988:35). Stage two and three huts would subsequently see the inclusion of cement flooring, insulation, additional rooms, and some basic services (Memmott 1988:35).

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Figure 2.5 Stage one huts at Barunga, formerly 'Beswick Creek Government Settlement', 1958. [National Archives of Australia, item ID: 11418418].

Writing in 1967, Professor of Architecture at the University of Queensland Balwant Saini, observed that the transitional huts provided in Aboriginal communities would not be

considered suitable for European residents, with a general lack of appropriate accommodation for community members and no supply of basic services (Saini 1967:21). Saini also observed the huts suffered from overcrowding, little ventilation or light, and insufficient insulation (Saini 1967:21). Crucially, on visiting communities in the Northern Territory, Saini observed that Aboriginal community members did not use the huts for anything more than shelter from cold winds at night (Saini 1967:22). Saini suggested that the goal of transitionary housing could not truly be assimilation, as the lack of basic services provided to Aboriginal community members afforded no real opportunity for transition (Saini 1967:23).

Similarly, on temporarily residing in a Kingstrand House, a larger stage three design with multiple rooms (Figure 2.3), Colin Tatz concluded the structure was uninhabitable (Tatz 1964:142). Tatz described the concreted floor as being hot even late at night, with a community member describing the hut as a 'bloody fire box' (Tatz 1964:142). Tatz recorded the night-time internal temperature of the hut as being 10°C higher than outside temperatures and 18°C higher than temperatures within traditional ethno-architecture (Tatz 1964:142).

In 1972, anthropologist and architect Peter Hamilton published on his observations of the sensory and spatial behaviour of Aboriginal people in communities and settlements in remote areas. Hamilton noted that traditional Kinship relationships and households remained seemingly unchanged by the introduction of transitional housing, often resulting in overcrowding of huts and further stress on the minimal services provided (Hamilton 1972:2).

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Figure 2.6 Stage one transitional huts at Barunga, formerly 'Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement,' other side of Beswick Creek, 1960. [National Archives of Australia, item ID: 11658418].

Memmott has noted that suggestions to involve Aboriginal community representatives in the housing design process were first made in the 1972 Royal Australian Institute of Architects seminar, two decades after the implementation of transitional housing in the Northern Territory (Memmott 1988:37). Additionally, it was conceded that most Aboriginal communities were retaining traditional household culture despite transitional housing and its associated assimilation policies (Memmott 1988:37). Despite the use of transitional housing as a tool of assimilation, with no real goal at achieving any level of equality, only 21% of the Aboriginal population within the Northern Territory were provided stage one transitional housing or above at the time of the 1971 census (Heppell 1979:14).

Recent historiographical and ethnographic research conducted by Maria Panagopoulos (2022), has drawn attention to the silence surrounding Aboriginal experiences of transitional housing in communities in remote areas and the use of early government housing as a primary tool of assimilation (Panagopoulos 2022:67). Collaborating with the community at Ronbinvale, Victoria, a former Aboriginal Welfare settlement, Panagopoulos collected oral histories pertaining to community experiences of transitional housing. Panagopoulos identified a silencing of the transitional housing and assimilation years in the community, with the only published records of the period identified being local newspaper articles and unpublished welfare reports (Panagopoulos 2022:67). Of inspiration for this project,

Panagopoulos described the importance of oral histories as a means of highlighting Aboriginal experiences of colonialism and producing a record for community, but also as a healing experience for participants (Panagopoulos 2022:78).

2.2.2. Defining the household

Hendon (2010:261), has suggested that the concept of the household, as defined by the material remains of dwellings where people slept, ate and performed tasks, may be too confined within the study of gender in past societies. Hendon (2010:261), argues a household as defined broadly by economic interdependence, residential proximity, and responsibility for domestic tasks amongst its members, is only largely illustrative of a theoretical ideal over the daily reality of social engagement. Indeed, Hendon argues that households should be viewed as neither units nor monoliths (Hendon 2010:262). As an alternative to the household, Hendon suggests identifying these social groups as coresident communities of practice (2010:262). Each community of practice negotiates actions, relationships and interactions as defined by their occupancy together within a space (Hendon 2010:262).

More specifically to Aboriginal communities, Musharbash (2017:72) draws on Heidegger's notion of being-dwelling-thinking (Heidegger 1927), as a means of understanding Warlpiri constructions of the home and household. Musharbash has been conducting anthropological research at Yuendumu since 1994, connecting Warlpiri ways of being with Heidegger's construction of the home through material structures and objects, the social practices surrounding them, and the act of dwelling in that space (Musharbash 2017:72). Musharbash examines Warlpiri experiences of 'home' across time within the community at Yuendumu. Employing oral histories and ethnographies, Musharbash has identified changes to the Warlpiri home from a semi-mobile lifestyle, through the assimilation era, to today's period of intense policy intervention (Musharbash 2017:73). Indeed, Musharbash highlights the importance of mobile camps within Warlpiri culture as the embodiment of relationships to, and movement through Country during the 1990s (Musharbash 2017:77). Camps created and surrounded themselves with Kinship and intimacy (Musharbash 2017:77). Conversely, Musharbash suggests Western-style housing enforces privacy both from the outside world as well as from other members within the household (Musharbash 2017:78).

Additionally, Musharbash observed that although Warlpiri ethno-architecture had been replaced with both transitional housing and bungalow-style houses at Yuendumu, the concept of the *camp* remained and occupied the space in and around the house structure, whatever form that may take (Musharbash 2017:79). The traditional separation of married couples and single men and women continued to occur in Western housing. However, due to the large population of the community, this separation was no longer spatially oriented and instead allowed for the occupation of separate houses anywhere available in the community or simply separate rooms within a house (Musharbash 2017:79). Musharbash also noted a 'yardorientedness' at Yuendumu, with households sleeping and performing daily activities in the outside area of a house, with the inside being used mostly for storage (Musharbash

2017:79). Though the yard was more open to visitors, only those sleeping within the camp or extremely close visiting family members could enter the house itself (Musharbash 2017:80).

Interestingly, Musharbash notes that today the impacts of the NTER and its associated replacement of old government housing with airconditioned suburban homes has led to younger Warlpiri community members sleeping and living inside houses (Musharbash 2017:82). Although older generations remain outside-oriented, younger community members have notably more furniture and married couples with children will occupy a single room together as a camp (Musharbash 2017:82). However, there remains no single person camp, family members will move outside or into a camp with other relatives to avoid sleeping alone if members of their own camp are away.

Another consequence of the NTER was the forced hand over of the lease of Yuendumu to the government. Residents now must pay rent to the Northern Territory Department of Housing and find themselves subject to regular (sometimes unannounced) house inspections, mandatory cleaning courses, and restrictions on household behaviour and resident numbers (Musharbash 2017:83). This is also reflected in housing at Barunga, with restrictions on the number of visitors allowed to stay in a home and length of stay being outlined within the Northern Territory government's 'Remote community and town camp visitor management' policy (2022). Musharbash notes that following the implementation of these restrictions, many Warlpiri people at Yuendumu no longer feel at home and live in constant fear of eviction (Musharbash 2017:83).

Also considering outdoor domestic spaces, O'Rourke and Nash (2019) have identified the use and modification of yards in regional Aboriginal communities as effective means of maintaining social and cultural practices as well as negating the impacts of poor housing conditions, particularly within a warming climate (O'Rourke and Nash 2019:124). Investigation into the ways in which material culture is utilised, ordered, and related to within the household is also key; with a focus placed upon how material objects and structures are used to maintain social relationships and interactions, and to denote spatial areas (Long et al. 2007:20).

Additionally, Ellinghaus and Healy (2018) have raised the importance of micro mobility within Aboriginal missions and settlements in the context of housing in mid-twentieth century Australia. Ellinghaus and Healy, define micro mobility as small-scale movements, within and between buildings and around a township (2018:44). The notion underpinning settler colonialism is that to be settled is to be civilised, thus equating mobility with savagery (Ellinghaus and Healy 2018:45). Recent scholarship has focused on the importance of understanding Indigenous mobility as it worked for and against settler colonialism and impacted the use of government housing within Aboriginal communities (Banivanua Mar 2015; Carey and Lydon 2014; Ellinghaus and Healy 2018; Nettelback 2018). The findings of Musharbash (2017), O'Rourke and Nash (2019), and Ellinghaus and Healy (2018) provide context for experiences of transitional housing within Aboriginal communities across Australia and their conclusions were considered in the analysis of conversations held within this project. However, it should be noted that conversations within this thesis were not

directed to specifically address the questions answered within the literature discussed here. Indeed, participants were encouraged to direct conversations and elaborate on knowledge they felt was pertinent to their own experiences of transitional housing.

2.2.3. Engendered Households

As Tringham (1991) has identified, without envisioning gender within the archaeological record we cannot create an accurate image of the past. Indeed, applying a gendered lens to the implementation of transitional housing within Aboriginal communities, works to illuminate the impacts of altered architecture on social interactions and relationships. Rappoport (1969) argues that architecture provides the physical space within which social interaction occurs whilst reinforcing and maintaining social relationships (Rappoport 1969 in Roth 2010:3). Indeed, households are organised to maintain and facilitate the social relationships and activities relevant to the customs of the occupant (Oswald 1987). As such, enforcing the household architecture of coloniser over colonised groups is a key tool of assimilation.

Cathy Keys, in observing housing allocation at Yuendumu on Warlpiri Country, noted the retention of distinct, traditional domiciliary units despite the introduction of transitional housing (Keys 2000:118). Warlpiri communities remained divided into three groups; the *Yupukarra,* being the unit of husband, wife or wives, children and visiting relatives, became the primary residents of houses and transitional huts (Keys 2000:119). Conversely, single women (*jilimi*), and single men (*jangkayi*), continued to dwell in Walpiri ethno-architecture (Keys 2000:119). Despite the continuation of this tradition into the 1990s, Keys notes that it was not until 1994 that two houses were constructed at Yuendumu for use by single women (Keys 2000:119). Indeed, Keys has more recently identified the ongoing construction of housing at Yuendumu designed solely for the Western nuclear family as a continuation of the assimilation policies of the 1950s (Keys 2000:119).

Drawing on the work of Roth (2010:4), this research project addresses genders within the context of their relationships to one another, not as separate entities. Genders are viewed as complementary to one another, not hierarchical, and their impacts on household spaces are understood as having the potential to shift over time as gender roles may alter (Roth 2010:7). Key means by which gender may be identified within the material record are the division of household space and the tools and materials manufactured to perform daily tasks (Roth 2010:6). However, to focus on the presence of gender within the household is not to focus solely on women where women have historically been absent within the archaeological record. Though this project employs more oral histories given by women within the Barunga community, this is due to a majority of senior community members identifying as women, not simply an attempt to ‘add women and stir’ as was criticised of early attempts to engender the past (Conkey and Spector 1984:1).

As Hendon (2010:260) has noted, gendered archaeology and household archaeology form often overlapping fields of research. Both investigate the remnants and impacts of past daily life and produce significant insights into the formation of communities, their histories, and

economies (Hendon 2010:260). It is also of note that within their commonality, both these fields of archaeology deal with the same perennial issue of identifying a cross-culturally valid definition of the household and of gender (Hendon 2010:261). This thesis does not seek to answer this problem. However, as much as the definition and evolution of the household is considered, so too must it consider concepts of gender. Indeed, gender is not viewed as an elective concern within this thesis, but one which directly impacts on the formation and maintenance of households and the division of space and labour within them.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Archaeology has focused heavily in recent decades on acknowledging the inherently Western and colonial perspectives upon which the discipline was founded and continues to operate (Atalay 2006; Mizoguchi and Smith 2019; Pollard et al. 2020; Supernant et al. 2020). Additionally, recent theorizing by Everill and Burnell (2022), and Smith et al. (2022) on the role of archaeology and heritage management in contributing to community wellbeing, particularly within Indigenous contexts, has become a part of ongoing conversations around decolonising practice. These discussions served as a theoretical framework for the research conducted within this thesis.

2.3.1. Towards a decolonised archaeology

As Atalay (2006:280) has observed, the privileging of the Western worldview is apparent in a respect for the observable and scientific over the spiritual and experiential elements of archaeological sites and material culture. The foundation of archaeology as a colonial practice is steeped in a Western fascination with the exotic 'other' (Mizoguchi and Smith 2019:146). Both Mizoguchi and Smith (2019) and Atalay (2006), posit that the role of heritage steward assumed by colonisers is employed as a symbol of superiority and control over Indigenous cultures.

Atalay (2006:281) suggests that to argue the paternal actions of antiquarians and early anthropologists as being a 'product of their time' is unproductive in understanding the colonial roots of our discipline as archaeologists today. Indeed, to categorize these early archaeologists as entirely distinct from modern archaeology ignores the inherent power imbalance between researcher and participant in Indigenous archaeology and the ongoing question of who owns the archaeological record (Atalay 2006:282).

Within the context of the Northern Territory of Australia, Kellie Pollard has become a key voice in recent years in identifying the effects of colonialism on Indigenous Australians through the archaeological record (Pollard 2019; Pollard et al. 2020). Pollards' PhD research investigated the impacts of European colonisation on Aboriginal peoples and their survivance and resistance to colonialism, as evidenced through the material culture of fringe camps around Darwin (Pollard 2019). Pollard highlights the importance of all archaeology being

practiced in a manner which ceases to see Western knowledge and philosophy as superior to Indigenous ways of knowing (Pollard et al. 2020:42). This research project drew upon both Pollard and Atalay's decolonising narrative using a community-based participatory research theoretical model and participant-led ethnographic field work.

Also key to the theoretical framework of this project, Claire Smith has published extensively, in collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, on the inherently political and colonial nature of doing archaeology (Mizoguchi and Smith 2019; Smith and Jackson 2005; Smith and Ward 2000; Smith et al. 2022). Within an Australian context, recognizing the ongoing impacts of European colonisation is highlighted by Smith and Jackson (2005:309) as the first step towards decolonising archaeological practice. Beyond this, a decolonised framework must address the asymmetrical relationship between Indigenous stakeholders and researchers and in doing so, create the space for Indigenous communities to exercise power, self-determination, and partake in genuine negotiation with archaeologists and associated parties (Smith and Jackson 2005:315; Smith et al. 2022:134).

Mizoguchi and Smith (2019:146), highlight the publication of Isobel McBryde's 1985 work 'Who Owns the Past?' as sparking a greater discussion in archaeology around the autonomy of Indigenous communities and their relationship to archaeology. The process of actively working towards a decolonised archaeological practice involves acknowledging and respecting Indigenous knowledge systems and seeking to understand how Western and Indigenous knowledge can engage collaboratively, enriching our understanding of the material record and benefiting the Indigenous communities that researchers work within (Mizoguchi and Smith 2019:148). Indeed, as Ngadjuri Elder Vince Copley senior has expressed, recognition of the need for Aboriginal self-determination, a centering of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, as well as recognition of the traumatic impacts of colonisation and assimilation policies within heritage research, serves to improve wellbeing within Aboriginal communities (Smith et al. 2022:131).

2.3.2. Heart-centered practice

In outlining a theoretical framework for this research project, recent theorizing on the practice of a heart-centered archaeology was a significant consideration (Diaz-Andreu and Benito 2015; Lydon 2019; Supernant et al. 2020). A heart-centered practice posits that the utilization of emotion and affectual experiences alongside rigor can produce a sustainable and healing archaeology for both Indigenous communities and archaeologists (Supernant et al. 2020:5). A heart-centered practice focuses on the importance of acknowledging Indigenous knowledge and feminist theory as central facets of archaeology, not elective concerns (Conkey 2020:271). Particularly within community-based research, developing and maintaining functional relationships between Indigenous communities, researchers, and archaeologists can rely heavily on our humility, tolerance, and interconnectedness (Hoffman 2020:60).

For the purposes of this thesis, heart-centered archaeology is utilised as a guiding framework in the employment of "strong objectivity" as outlined by Harding (1995) and adopted by Supernant et al (2020:6). All aspects of this project, from consultation to data analysis, assumed the existence of social inequalities in communities in remote areas, and between the thesis candidate and community participants, and considered how these inequalities had the potential to result in the prioritisation of Western knowledge systems over Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Indeed, as described by Graesch et al (2020:156), acknowledging emotional responses to doing archaeology, on the part of both the participant and researcher, can assist in identifying potential biases and improving the value of the resulting research product to the community.

Within this research project, the consultation and data collection process was democratised through the use of a community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodological model, and the use of yarning as the primary recording technique. Additionally, inspired by the work of Chelsea Armstrong and Eugene Anderson, backcasting has been employed as a planning method with which to identify key sites of interest and themes to explore within the oral histories collated herein (Armstrong and Anderson 2020). The process of yarning and implementation of backcasting are discussed further within the methods chapter of this thesis.

2.3.3. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Atalay (2010:418), identifies Community-Based Participatory research (CBPR) as a method employed within archaeology facilitating collaboration between researchers and communities. Community stakeholders are engaged in all aspects of the study with researchers actively providing opportunities for capacity building and discourse between community members and outside stakeholders (Atalay 2010:418).

The importance of adopting an action based methodological framework like CBPR in archaeology is heightened where Indigenous communities are primary stakeholders (Atalay 2010:419). Indeed, Indigenous communities are generally most affected by the implications of archaeological research and cultural tourism within their communities without having been consistently consulted or heard throughout the conduct of research (Atalay 2010:419). Atalay describes the product of archaeology undertaken within a CBPR framework as being 'with and by' Indigenous communities, in opposition to a traditional 'on and for' modality (Atalay 2010:419). CBPR emphasizes a democratisation of research, focusing on communitydriven, knowledge-sharing practices enacted between stakeholders (Atalay 2010:420). Of relevance to this thesis project is Atalay's (2010:420) observation that the increased adoption of CBPR primarily within Indigenous community-based archaeology is likely a result of the endemic disenfranchisement of Indigenous communities from their own cultural heritage.

Atalay (2010:427) acknowledges the theoretical efficacy of adopting CBPR in archaeological practice may differ as a theoretical paradigm versus a methodology implemented in the field.

A definition of the physical, social, cultural, and political boundaries of the community is a central aspect of employing CBPR. Attempting to define these, often transient boundaries, provides an example of the complexities and inherent problems in attempting to create concrete distinctions between community identities. Often, these identities overlap with relationships between communities and members, as well as physical boundaries, maintaining a somewhat fluid state (Atalay 2010:421). Though CBPR may not be a smooth, friction-free methodological framework, it is sustainable and continues to provide positive outcomes for communities and their cultural heritage (Atalay 2006, Freire 1972; Loring 2001; Smith and Wobst 2005).

Hollowell and Nicholas (2009:141), highlight a significant flaw within current cultural heritage management practices as being the privileging and imposition of Western value systems in the protection and maintenance of Indigenous cultural heritage. Whether power is removed from communities to manage and relate to their own material record intentionally or unintentionally does not alter the impacts of erasing Indigenous connections to their own heritage through a traditional 'stewardship' model (Hollowell and Nicholas 2009:142). Additionally, a Western unilateral research style, disconnected from the Indigenous communities they work within, may not manage heritage sites or materials in a culturally appropriate manner (Hollowell and Nicholas 2009:143).

This is, as Hollowell and Nicholas have described it, scientific colonialism (2009:143). As such, a key achievement of CBPR is to work towards a decolonisation of archaeology through both a democratic research relationship between Indigenous communities and researchers, as well as a willingness to acknowledge and report alternative interpretations of the past and material culture (Hollowell and Nicholas 2009:143). Finally, Kiddey (2020:24) argues for an 'open archaeology' in which participatory, community research is conducted within a feminist theoretical paradigm. This, Kiddey suggests, allows for the voices of women, particularly women of Colour, to be highlighted and their interpretations and interactions with material culture to be recorded (Kiddey 2020:24).

2.4 Discussion

This literature review has outlined the social and cultural background of Barunga, and the community's past and ongoing relationship with archaeological research. The body of literature outlining the implementation and implications of transitional housing across Australia situates this thesis within a narrow but widening effort to record Aboriginal experiences of early government housing and assimilation policies. A decolonising and heartcentered theoretical framework has been employed using community-based participatory research in the collection of ethnographic data at Barunga as well as ongoing consultation with the community. Decolonising practice within archaeology remains a key concern, and considerations of these conversations situates this project within these discussions both nationally and internationally.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter outlines the methods used in data collection and analysis within this study, as well as considerations made regarding COVID-19 safe field work practices and limitations of the project. Yarning was employed as the primary method of data collection, with the resulting audio recordings of conversations being transcribed by the thesis candidate and subsequently coded in NVivo (Appendix 4). Additionally, the use of backcasting as a research tool within this study is outlined.

3.1 Selection of research location

Barunga was chosen as the site of this research project due to the remaining presence of transitional housing at Bottom Camp as well as the established relationship between community members, Claire Smith and Gary Jackson, and Flinders University. Additionally, having attended the community archaeology field school at Barunga in 2019, the thesis candidate was already known to many of the participants involved in this project. Furthermore, Barunga has long been a community of significance in the fight for Treaty and Aboriginal self-determination, as is evidenced through the creation of the Barunga Statement in 1988, and the signing of the Barunga Agreement in 2018 which outlined a commitment to work towards Treaty between Traditional Owners and Land Councils across the Northern Territory (Brennan 1992; Jennett 1988; Vivian et al. 2017).

3.1.1. Consultation with community

Traditional Owners, Custodians (Junggayi), and senior community members at Barunga were consulted by Claire Smith (Supervisor) and Elspbeth Hodgins (thesis candidate) prior to the initiation of this project. In undertaking the ethnographic research portion of this thesis, the historical and ongoing production of research within Indigenous communities through a Western lens and within Western epistemologies was considered (Tuhiwai Smith 2021:239). Subsequently, the primary research question and aims addressed within this investigation of transitional housing shifted and evolved through the conversations held with participants at Barunga.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 3.1 Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen and Junggayi Guy Rankin reviewing the results of this thesis at Barunga with Claire Smith and Gary Jackson (Photograph: Claire Smith, 13/10/2022).

As outlined by Smith et al. (2019:558), this project centered social justice outcomes using community-based participatory research, yarning, and backcasting, to direct the archaeological research and resulting records of transitional housing and associated material culture. Furthermore, the employment of a heart-centered archaeological framework functioned to recognize differences in ontologies and epistemologies between the thesis candidate and participants and utilise these multiple perspectives to achieve a strong objectivity in the theoretical constructs resulting from the data collected (Harding 1995:347–348 in Supernant et al. 2020:7).

Figure 3.2 Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen and Junggayi Nell Brown reviewing the results and discussion chapters of this thesis (Photograph: Claire Smith, 12/10/2022).

On the thesis candidate's arrival at Barunga, Jawoyn Traditional Owners and Custodians (Junggayi) were consulted on the proposed fieldwork and qualitative research to be conducted, and permission was granted to proceed. On completion of data collection and analysis, Traditional Owners and Traditional Custodians at Barunga were provided with a drafted copy of the results and discussion chapters of this manuscript to be reviewed, approved, and commented upon (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2). Traditional Owners and Junggayi consulted by Claire Smith and Gary Jackson were paid for their time and expertise, as well as for the inclusion of images of the consultation process (Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). Additionally, comments made by Traditional Owners and Junggayi on reading the drafted manuscript, have been included throughout the results chapter, highlighting senior community responses to the themes emerging from this project and the significance of experiences and memories shared by participants. Furthermore, a final draft of this thesis was reviewed by Traditional Owners and Junggayi at Barunga prior to submission.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 3.3 Junggayi Guy Rankin and Gary Jackson reading the results and discussion chapters of this thesis at Barunga (Photograph: Claire Smith, 13/10/2022).

3.2 Material Data

3.2.1. Recording techniques

Decisions regarding the most effective and ethical means by which the remaining transitional huts at Barunga, associated structures, and material culture would be recorded considered several factors. Though a simple baseline offset, or dumpy level survey was initially considered as a method of recording the huts, discussions upon travelling to Barunga highlighted the invasive nature of surveying a structure still in use by the community through traditional methods. Drawing on the experiences of Zimmerman and Welch (2011) in documenting the material culture of homelessness, photography was identified as the least invasive and simplest method of recording the remaining transitional huts (Appendix 1).

Additionally, observations by Zimmerman and Welch (2011:73) regarding the constant alteration of sites associated with homelessness made traditional surveying techniques beyond photography redundant. Though the remaining huts at bottom camp are not commonly utilized as housing for homeless community members, they are used as social gathering spaces and the resulting deposition of materials is in a constant state of alteration (Figure 4.7). Permission was obtained from Jawoyn Traditional Owners and Custodians at

Barunga to take photographs of the huts and buildings around the community. Photographs were taken, with the inclusion of a north arrow and scale card, of the exteriors, interiors, and decorative details of each of the four remaining Econo Huts, as well as material culture associated with use of the huts both within and surrounding each building (Appendix 1). Additionally, exterior photographs were taken of associated structures at Barunga's Bottom Camp including the concrete slabs belonging to transitional housing which has since been removed, the public toilet block, and Barunga store (Figure 1.3). It should be noted that no photos of people were taken or included within this thesis without their consent and remuneration for the use of their image.

3.2.2. Yarning

Though not used widely across the Northern Territory, the term 'yarning' describes a conversation and can be used to discuss large or small matters, transfer knowledge and history, and to participate in meaning making (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:39; Christensen 2022; Dean 2010; Marnee 2021). Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010), describe yarning as a semistructured conversation embarked upon by both the researcher and participant. Drawing upon lived experiences, knowledge and feelings on relevant topics, yarning relies on the development of a relationship between the two parties and an equal exchange of ideas (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:38).

Within this project, yarning was conducted as largely unstructured conversations with the aim of developing a holistic understanding of the participants' own experiences (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:38). Following the process of yarning as outlined by Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010:38), conversations began with a social chat, followed by a primary research yarn. The research yarn took the form of a discussion on topics relevant to the research area. Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010:40) describe the primary research yarn as a conversation with a purpose and a defined beginning and end. Transcription of yarns within this project only incorporated the research yarn, not social yarning that occurred before or following the primary conversation. Within the research yarn, collaborative yarning in which the research topic is discussed and workshopped between participants in an individual or group setting, was undertaken.

The last form of yarn considered within this study was therapeutic yarning (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:41). This method of conducting ethical qualitative research was utilised if the participant shared traumatic or upsetting information. In this situation the research yarn was paused, and the focus was shifted to actively listening and providing support to the participant (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:41). Therapeutic yarning played an important role in decolonising the research conducted for this thesis as it provided space for the participant to understand and re-frame traumatic experiences, empowering participants to engage in meaning making through the research process (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:41).

The importance of providing participating community members with space to question and discuss the research topic during the session was of key consideration. A relationship of reciprocity between the researcher and participant allowed for a more equal power balance within the conversation, as well as the opportunity for meaning making. As Galletta and Cross (2013:88) identify, meaning making describes the opportunity for research participants to generate new meaning from experiences and discuss and develop these openly within the conversation. This form of exchange not only resulted in invaluable insight for the project, but also provided the participant with the opportunity to interact with and discuss their own experiences in unique ways (Galleta and Cross 2013:88; Smith and Burke 2007:184). Each step within the process of collecting data within this thesis prioritized transparency with the participants and wider community at Barunga. Within yarns, the researcher was understood as an instrument adjusting to the relationship between themselves and the participant, and the context within which the conversations were held (Galletta and Cross 2013:75).

Key to a Participatory Action Research methodology, focus was given to the subject meaning as it was interpreted by the participant (Galletta and Cross 2013:77). Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010:41) highlight the danger of remaining too strictly focused on the research topic during conversations, as a participant may take a meandering route to divulge information relevant to the project. As such, collaborative yarns called for trust and patience between the involved parties. The use of yarning allowed participants to direct the conversation and discuss experiences and topics which may not have appeared directly related to the research aims. This fluid approach provided participants with an opportunity to explore the connections of their experiences of transitional housing and household culture to broader aspects of their lives and community. Furthermore, this flexibility worked to develop a relationship of reciprocity between the participant and researcher (Galleta and Cross 2013:79).

3.2.3. Yarning settings

Yarning was conducted over three days. The primary setting for data collection was a picnic table under the verandah of the Barunga general store (Figure 3.4). There was no restriction on the gender, or cultural group of participants; community members who wished to participate were invited to sit and chat. All individuals who participated through yarning were reimbursed with a $30 credit at the general store. Funding for the store credit was provided through the Flinders University research project 'Aboriginal society and culture in the Barunga region, Northern Territory: Past and present' (ref: SBREC6390). The reimbursement amount of $30 was paid to each participant through store credit as a higher amount could not feasibly be proposed in the case of a high uptake of participants. This working relationship with the general store benefitted all parties: community participants, as they were able to purchase necessary items such as food or phone credit; the store, as participants provided business; and the thesis candidate, as permission was given by the store manager to utilise their veranda space to conduct conversations.

Figure 3.4 Bench underneath the front veranda of Barunga Store where yarning was conducted (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins 21/04/2022).

As some participants were not able to meet at the general store, two yarns were conducted at the participants' homes. All yarning undertaken on a participant's property was done outside in their yard space. In both instances, these yarns quickly became communal as interested family members came and sat, joining the conversation. Additionally, one yarn was conducted at the Econo Hut leased by Claire Smith and Gary Jackson during a community barbecue, hence it was a significantly longer conversation than others, as it was a relaxed social setting.

3.2.4. COVID-19 safe practices

Due to the ongoing nature of the current COVID-19 global pandemic, consideration was given to ensure the safety of all community members and researchers at Barunga. At the time of travel, no border restrictions were in place limiting travel between South Australia and the Northern Territory. In accordance with Flinders University policy a 'Coronavirus (COVID19) full vaccination declaration for field trips' form was completed by all attending researchers prior to entering Barunga, and a rapid antigen test (RAT) was undertaken before leaving South Australia and upon arrival to the Northern Territory. Additionally, a RAT was performed by the thesis candidate, and a negative result obtained, each morning whilst in the community. Fieldwork was conducted in line with the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc (AACAI) COVID-19: Safe Working for Cultural Heritage Fieldwork Policy (2020). Additionally, efforts were made to maintain social distancing where possible, both within yarning settings and across all interactions within the community.

3.3 Backcasting

Backcasting is a planning methodology used primarily in environmental management and socio-economic development, the primary aim of which is to develop community research projects around an ideal future as envisioned by the community. As the name suggests, backcasting works backwards, beginning with community consultation to determine the key themes of an ideal future and utilising these themes to identify the short, medium, and long term research outcomes required to move towards the ideal future identified (Armstrong and Anderson 2020:48). Backcasting provides an alternative to predictive forecasts which serve only to indicate likely future outcomes based on past and present behaviour (Robinson 1990:823).

Holmberg and Robert, highlight the use of backcasting as a helpful method where present trends are a part of the research problem (2000:291). Holmberg and Robert suggest that by allowing past trends to shape future planning we risk transferring problematic factors within the present into the future (2000:293). Within community archaeology, these detrimental factors may include a continued lack of Indigenous rights to intellectual property or a maintenance of top-down approaches to cultural heritage management valuing government and commercial stakeholders over Indigenous communities (Armstrong and Anderson 2020:40).

Armstrong and Anderson (2020:48) have employed backcasts in their archaeological work within Gitxsan communities in Northwestern British Columbia. Their community archaeology approach began with consulting Gitxsan Elders on what their ideal future looked like, subsequently identifying the key themes of language, land, and youth (Armstrong and Anderson 2020:48). Once these themes were identified, researchers were able to implement steps towards an ideal future for the community by involving Gitxsan youth in assessing cultural heritage sites, utilising Gitxsan language where possible within their research, and establishing a cultural camp which integrated Gitxsan knowledge sharing and archaeology

(Armstrong and Anderson 2020:49). This case study demonstrates the immediate and long term positive effects backcasting can provide when employed within community archaeology. Within this project backcasting was undertaken through the inclusion of several questions towards the natural end of yarns, centering on what the participant believed Barunga needs for a better future. These answers were coded into repeated ideas, sub-themes, and themes within the final NVivo coding process.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1. Transcription

All audio recordings of conversations held within this project were transcribed by the thesis candidate. The decision was made to transcribe each yarn in partial verbatim as opposed to strict verbatim. A partial verbatim approach allowed for discrete editing to the transcript with the intention of allowing for an easier read, free of background noise, interruptions, and any heavily repeated stutters or crutch words employed by both interviewer and participant (Bergen 2020:82). Not only do these omissions and edits allow for a more engaging read, but they also seek to limit any harm done to the participant's story and memories through the transcription process (Lowenstein 1992:40). Indeed, oral historian Lorina Barker has written extensively on her use of free verse in transcribing Indigenous Australian oral histories, as a means of capturing the rhythm and tone of the participants voice and, in doing so, making the participant's experience and identity more visible within the transcript (Barker 2010:190).

Using a partial verbatim transcription style and drawing on the work of Barker (2010) and Lowenstein (1992), presents the yarning data collected in a format which centres the participants as the primary audience and does so in a style most accessible to that audience (Barker 2010:186). Furthermore, a full-verbatim approach often stems from the desire to recreate the interview setting and content as accurately as possible. However, Barker (2010) and Lowenstein (1992) argue for the use of light editing as a means of highlighting the true voice of the participant, reflecting the interview scene as it was experienced by the researcher and narrator (Barker 2010:186).

Although conversations were conducted in English, inclusions of speech in Kriol or Aboriginal languages spoken by participants were written phonetically, within parentheses, with a timestamp where the thesis candidate had knowledge of the phrase or words used. Where the thesis candidate could not be sure of what was said, the text was marked as 'unsure' with a corresponding timestamp. Interruptions within the audio recordings caused by volume were marked as 'inaudible.' Alternatively, where speech could not be recorded accurately for other reasons the text was labelled 'unclear' (Bergen 2020:90). Additionally, three consecutive en-dashes were used to denote the unfinished sentences common in conversation (Robertson 2000 in Bergen 2020:86). Of final note, crutch words and phrases were left within the transcript where they were deemed important to illustrating the voice of the participant being transcribed. Where the thesis candidate felt the repeated use of crutch words may be upsetting to the participant they were removed. This was done as a means of

making the transcription nonthreatening whilst still producing rigorous qualitative data (Barker 2010:186).

3.4.2. Data coding

Initial coding of qualitative data within this project drew upon the procedure outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003:45). Following transcription, each conversation was coded manually line by line, with each code summarising the key memory, experience, or opinion expressed by the participant within each section of the text. Of importance when coding the data collected, was the acknowledgment and inclusion of concerns, memories, and insights provided by the participants that did not directly align with the primary research questions. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003:37) highlight the importance of allowing the subjective experiences of the participants to be reflected within the research product, not simply the data deemed relevant by the researcher. Care was taken to code every response from the participant, regardless of its initial relevance to the primary research question and aims.

Following primary coding, each transcript underwent secondary coding using NVivo software (Maher et al. 2018:12). Transcripts were analysed by the thesis candidate with each sequential section of text and its corresponding initial code being highlighted and coded into a 'child node' or sub-theme within the program (Appendix 4). Once each section of the transcripts had been ascribed to a sub-theme within NVivo, these sub-themes were assessed based on the quantity of codes within them and their relationships to one another, and subsequently aggregated into 'parent-nodes' or themes. The final level of coding was the aggregation of resulting themes into overarching theoretical constructs which were reflective of the project's theoretical framework and primary research question and aims (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003:46). The three theoretical constructs identified within the NVivo coding process were experiences of government housing, the persistence of Aboriginal culture, and gendered experiences (Figure 4.1).

3.5 Limitations of the data

Cultural limitations to the data collection process were inevitable. These centred around the identity of the thesis candidate, Elspbeth Hodgins; as a non-Aboriginal person, there were immediate limitations on the nature and quantity of information accessible to the project. Within Aboriginal culture at Barunga, knowledge is not freely accessible to all members of society. Access to knowledge is dependent upon the gender, status (Traditional Owner, Junggayi etc.) and Skin of the individual, as well as their own participation within society. As adult community members of varying ages were invited to participate, the respective age of each participant further influenced the relational dynamic between themselves and the thesis candidate and subsequently, the knowledge provided within yarns.

Additional barriers were presented by gendered restrictions on knowledge, as well as the nature of interactions with participants. As the thesis candidate identifies as a woman,

conversations with female community members participating in the study were more easily instigated and developed than those with men. Gendered limitations were somewhat negated by access to knowledge of the single men's transitional housing camp at Barunga, collected by Andrew Coe and Ben Dwyer. Coe and Dwyer consented to the qualitative and material data collected as part of their assessment for the 2018 Flinders University community archaeology field school at Barunga (ARCH8810), being used within this project.

3.6 Discussion

This chapter has outlined the primary methods employed within this thesis. The decision to undertake this research project within Barunga is outlined, as is the process of the ongoing consultation with the Barunga community throughout this study. Yarning, as described by Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010), is utilized as the primary data collection method, with photographic recording of the remaining huts being conducted as a non-invasive, secondary form of data collection (Zimmerman and Welch 2011). Qualitative data analysis was undertaken through manual transcription and initial line-by-line coding, followed by secondary coding within NVivo. This chapter has also addressed limitations of the data, with the social identity of the thesis candidate being a primary barrier on access to knowledge and participants. The methods outlined within this section are employed within the following results chapter, and the resulting data is outlined.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter contains the results of research undertaken at Barunga concerning Aboriginal experiences and memories of transitional housing. Conversations with participating community members were recorded, transcribed, and subsequently coded using line-by-line coding, followed by secondary coding in NVivo. Oral histories were collected using yarning as method in place of structured interviews. The resulting conversations surrounding transitional housing produced three key theoretical constructs: experiences of government housing, the persistence of Aboriginal culture, and gendered experiences. Secondary aims addressed within this project centred on the ongoing impacts of transitional housing on culture, gendered spaces in transitional housing, and the value of qualitative research in decolonising household archaeology in an Australian context. Both Aboriginal men and women were invited to participate in yarning, with adults of varying ages included in the data. However, as is outlined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data below, results may be influenced by the greater presence of women within the data.

Yarning was undertaken across three days in April of 2022; all conversations with participating community members were held at Barunga. A total of nineteen adult community members participated in yarns, with significantly more women (13) than men (6) participating in the project. This imbalance may be due to a range of causes: environmental factors, as most yarns were held impromptu outside of the Barunga store during the day; social factors, as the primary investigator was a young woman, women more frequently approached to ask questions and chat; and cultural restrictions, because some men did not appear immediately comfortable sitting down with the primary investigator one on one.

Variance in age favoured older women in the community, with a total of nine female Elders and four younger women participating. This was followed by four young men, and only two male Elders. It should be noted that the median age of residents at Barunga was 25 as of the 2021 Australian census, with only 4.7% of residents being aged 55–64, and just 2.2% of community members aged over 65 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). This sits well below the national average of individuals over 65 at 5.9% (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). Additionally, the larger presence of older women in the data may be further reflective of barriers in social interaction caused by the primary investigator being a non-Indigenous woman, as well as the presence of less male Elders in the community.

The yarns undertaken for this project vary significantly in length, with the longest conversation lasting thirty-seven minutes and the shortest only two minutes. There was no expectation placed on participants to talk for a specified length of time or answer a set series of questions. Participants who spoke for a shorter period were often community members who were no longer permanently living at Barunga, or whose families were not from the community. All participants were remunerated for participating, regardless of the length of the conversation. Furthermore, a completed draft of this chapter was reviewed by Traditional Owners and Junggayi at Barunga, in consultation with Claire Smith and Gary Jackson. The

reviewers' own experiences and comments on the data have been included within text boxes throughout this chapter and should be understood as separate to the original dataset.

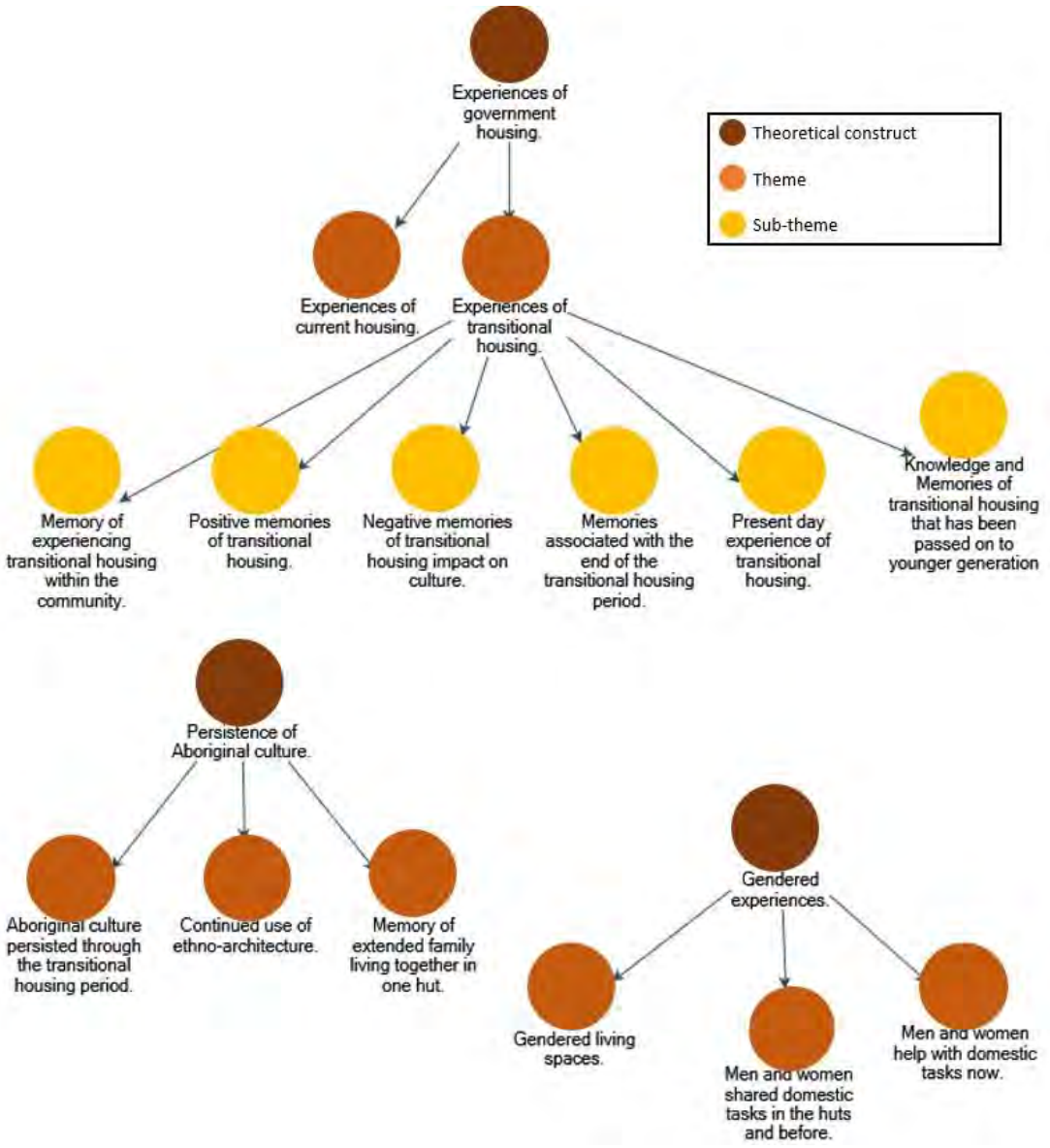

Figure 4.1 Map illustrating the major theoretical constructs, themes and subthemes pertaining to transitional housing emerging from the coding process within this research project.

4.1 Experiences of government housing

All community members participating in this research project had memories of living in, or having known community members who had lived in, transitional housing at Barunga during its time as Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement or Bamyili. All younger participants had knowledge of transitional housing, either associated with present day use of the remaining huts or stories passed onto them by older family members and teachers.

4.1.1. Memories of transitional housing at Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement

Figure 4.2 North aspect of Econo Hut 3 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins 23/04/2022).

Memories of experiencing the use of transitional housing in the community was the largest theme identified within the coded data. Many experiences related to the single-roomed Sidney Williams Huts (green houses) utilised within the community during the 1970s. One female Elder recalled rows of the green huts at bottom camp: 'I was only a little girl. Yeah, a lotta houses around Barunga, I've seen a lot of them green house ...' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Younger participants all held a general knowledge of old people living in single-roomed huts without electricity, water, or other basic amenities.

Memories of the presence of green huts throughout the community emerged as a repeated experience. Participants remembered the huts as being grouped into rows of four with two or three larger Kingstrand Houses at the end of each row. Kingstrands had multiple rooms and sometimes a sink and toilet (Figure 2.2), these were identified as family homes. The green Sidney Williams Huts were installed as a step up from the original Econo Huts, this was reflected in the experience of one Elder whose family moved from their original Econo Hut into a Sidney Williams Hut, before finally moving up to a Kingstrand House with their own toilet and cooking area (Appendix 2). None of the Sidney Williams huts remain within the community today. Additionally, older participants associated the presence of huts in the community with other memories of the settlement's landscape: 'Bamyili was, this was all just

bush all this mob, the main area was where Claire is now, it was just all the aluminium old huts were there.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Repeated ideas surrounding the experience of living in transitional housing centred on the lack of water and electricity, and the use of open fires made both inside and outside, for warmth and cooking. Older participants with experiences of growing up in the huts, repeatedly referenced the difficulties of sleeping inside a small aluminium room during hot weather. One Elder recalled the heat saying 'yes, it was always [hot]. There's no fan, no power.' (Male Elder, 21/04/2022), as well as the reliance on campfires to keep warm during colder months: '… it was cold! Like during the cold weather it was very cold. We used to make fire inside, or outside, or inside but on our iron.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Fires were also used for cooking, with most huts having an iron cooking plate installed (Figure 4.3). As one Elder described, it was '… like a little old stove thing where they used to put fire, make the fire underneath and just put it on that little, like little stove top.' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

Figure 4.3 Iron cooking plate located adjacent to the south wall of hut 2 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins 23/04/2022).

Broad experiences of living in transitional housing, identified within the coding process, focused on descriptions of Sidney Williams Huts and Kingstrand Houses in the community. Additionally, general childhood memories of Bamyili were recalled, from the greater presence of Elders and corroboree nights to fond memories of poinciana trees growing around the community. The association of transitional housing both with childhood and aspects of Barunga which have now been replaced or removed, was repeated across older participants.

4.1.2. Negative experiences of transitional housing

Although positive experiences of transitional housing were expressed more frequently, negative experiences were also identified as a notable theme to emerge from the data. Negative memories associated with impacts on culture during the transitional housing period was the largest sub-theme present. These experiences were most frequently associated with a lack of housing choice:

> During those days, well they had to just live like that because we never had any other thing about housing like this there is now. There wasn't anything like that before, you know? Until when land rights came, people going back to their land and now we got some government that we usually just ask for a house. (Male Elder, 21/04/2022).

Additionally, negative references to reliance on food provided by the communal kitchen were expressed. Participants confirmed the introduction of transitional housing and its associated assimilation policies interrupted traditional foodways, though some hunting and cooking continued to be done whilst living in the huts. These experiences of dependence on meals provided by the communal kitchen extended to memories of reliance on public amenities: 'Everyone was depending on the kitchen and the laundry … for like, water and wash and clean.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). However, not all references to the communal kitchen and foodways during government times were negative. Participants recalled that traditional foodways did continue in transitional housing; one Elder explained that '… we'd usually go hunting on our own, but we shared a house, with our own tents. But they'd help one another if they going out bush for food, we share one another, it's like that.' (Male Elder, 21/04/2022).

Although traditional foodways were impacted by the introduction of transitional housing, one participant recalled memories of Eva Valley (Manyallaluk) community members supplementing ration packs with hunting: 'They'd have enough. But some would just go and hunt, you know? If they didn't have enough, they ran out of food, they'd go back to the land.' (Female Elder 22/04/2022). Despite this, memories of passed Elders' dismay at the impact of the enforced sedentism government housing introduced was also expressed: 'They were nomadic that's why the huts changed their lives … to stay in the one spot. But it was so small …' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

A further negative experience voiced by older participants was disappointment over the impact of transitional housing and modern Western housing on young people and cultural continuity: 'It's a big difference now … when houses are being allocated, you know? Not like back in the days where families used to be together now you've got families individual in different, different houses nowadays, so it's all apart.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Older participants repeatedly expressed dismay at the preference of younger community members to live apart in their own houses. Indeed, one Elder said of young family members: 'They

sleep inside. They close doors.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Another participant in his thirties spoke of young community members, saying: 'These days they stay indoors now.

Yeah, but me myself I love pushing myself, going asking old people … for old stories…' (Male participant, 22/04/2022). These expressions of disappointment at the impact of Western housing culture on young Aboriginal people at Barunga were referenced in relation to shifts in culture caused by the transition from ethno-architecture to transitional housing.

Negative experiences of transitional housing conditions most frequently related to a lack of space, overcrowding, and poor temperature control, with little ventilation during hot weather and no insulation to provide warmth. This was primarily recalled in reference to the stage one Econo Huts and Sidney Williams Huts.

4.1.3. Positive experiences of transitional housing

Aboriginal Elders at Barunga today experienced transitional housing primarily as children. Though various iterations of the transitional huts continued to be used into the 1980s, it became apparent through the conversations held with older participants that memories surrounding transitional housing were those associated with childhood. Of these memories, a majority initially appeared surprisingly positive: 'No complaints, no anything. We just loved sleeping in those little huts ...' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

However, on further discussion with participants it became apparent that positive memories of living in transitional housing were not reflective of housing conditions, but the sociocultural landscape of Barunga during the 1960s and 70s. Of most repeated importance to positive memories of growing up in transitional housing was the presence of Elders:

> Yeah, good memories. It was a lot of fun, lots then, lots of Elders in our community … used to sit, they used to tell us story and all that, yeah. It was strong back in then … 60s I was born in, this area was just all sand, they used to have them Corroboree nights, used to go and sit and watch them, visit with old people. (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

Related to positive memories of transitional housing and the presence of Elders in the community, a further sub-theme to emerge amongst older participants was the experience of Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement, and then Bamyili, as a community where Aboriginal peoples from across the Northern Territory would come together to live and practice culture. As one Elder remembered, the settlement played a key role in the recent cultural history of the Northern Territory: 'Oh, there was a lot of tribes here, but they intermarried with other tribe, that's how a lot of the people they know where their family are and living at out station or anywhere in the Northern Territory.' (Female elder, 22/04/2022). Another female Elder explained that: 'They all came together to help with ceremonies and when marriages happen, and languages exchange …' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Indeed, repeated expressions of

pride at the community of Aboriginal peoples that lived together, and continue to live together at Barunga, was expressed: 'I think they were happy. I mean have all our Elders then. All the, lots of tribes … all in this one community.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Though these memories do not directly illustrate experiences of housing conditions at Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement, or Bamyili, it is reflective of the importance the presence of Elders and continuation of culture played during the transitional housing period, a time of objectively poor housing.

4.1.4. The end of the transitional housing period

Discussion of the end of the use of transitional housing was a minor theme identified within the data. Older participants remembered the transition into a brick house from the 1970s into the 1980s. New elevated homes and brick houses saw the abandonment of the huts with many being removed and discarded at Beswick dump and others simply falling to disuse and weathering.

Interestingly, the end of the transitional housing period and the introduction of new homes was repeatedly associated with people leaving Barunga to return to their own communities. Furthermore, the introduction of Land Rights in the Northern Territory in 1976 was associated within multiple conversations with the negative experience of community members leaving Barunga to return to their own Country. One Elder remembered of Barunga before land rights were introduced: 'This community was a hub, aye.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). This sentiment was not reflective of the idea that land rights were a negative step, simply that their introduction had an impact on the socio-cultural landscape of Barunga.

4.1.5. Knowledge passed on to younger generations.

As participants within this project spanned a range of age groups, a major theme identified across conversations was memories associated with transitional housing passed down to younger generations. Repeated ideas centred on the experiences of living in a transitional hut recalled by grandparents and Elders in the community. A senior community member, and culture teacher at Barunga School, was identified as a key source of knowledge, with another Elder explaining that '…she's our cultural leader at the school and does the culture teaching. You know, all those important stories she does, you know? She's got a lot of photos of the old tin houses as well.' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

Overwhelmingly, young participants did hold knowledge that Elders in Barunga used to sleep in tin huts, as well as expressing an understanding of housing conditions during the settlement period. All young participants whose families had been living in Barunga since the establishment of the settlement had been told of grandparents and great-grandparents living in a tin hut. An understanding of overcrowding in stage one huts was repeatedly expressed, with knowledge that many old people slept outside, some continuing to do so on occasion, particularly in tents permanently erected on front verandas and in yards (Figure 4.4).

Repeated ideas amongst younger participants centred on knowledge of the tin huts having no electricity, with kerosene lamps and open fires being used for light and heat.

Figure 4.4 Tent erected for visitors under the front veranda of Jocelyn McCartney's home at Barunga (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Additionally, knowledge of the separation of single men in designated transitional housing quarters was a sub-theme that emerged amongst younger participants, as were other memories associated with the continuation of Aboriginal culture in transitional housing. Indeed, one participant described positive childhood memories of visiting Elders living in transitional housing and sharing culture, saying:

> I came in here when it was Bamyili, with my grandfather … very different to now cause my grandfather was introducing me to my nannas and to my grandfathers ... But these young people wee bit shy now, we don't go talk, sit down in the camp you know talkin about old people …. (Male participant, 22/04/2022).

Although memories such as these were not indicative of experiences of housing, they are reflective of the experiences associated with government times and transitional housing remembered by young people at Barunga and passed on to the next generation.

4.1.6. Present day use of huts

Of the four remaining Econo Huts at Bottom camp all continue to be used. The Econo Hut leased and refurbished by Claire Smith and Gary Jackson (Figure 4.5), is used as a food storage and workspace during field work and field schools. As the hut now boasts an air conditioner and fridge, it provides welcome respite from the heat outside. The three remaining huts at Bottom Camp are used by community members as communal spaces to shade from the sun and rain and play cards (Figure 4.7). Here, it is important to recognise the cultural significance of playing cards, as it serves both as a socially regulated way for community members to bond and as a means of acquiring the capital required to purchase expensive goods (Fogarty 2013:127). Indeed, the presence of hearths surrounding the outside of the hut's concrete floor indicate these spaces are still popular communal areas to sit and socialise (Figure 4.6). Though the huts are no longer used as domestic or sleeping spaces, participants explained that the remaining huts are periodically used by visitors from other communities as camping sites during the annual Barunga festival.

Figure 4.5 North aspect of Econo Hut leased by Claire Smith and Gary Jackson (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

On speaking with participants about what should be done with the remaining huts in the community, a repeated idea emerged that the structures should stay in situ as a reminder of the community's history, with one Elder explaining that the huts 'brings back the history and you know, the memories along with how we used to live here before … I tell my kids our story, how the tin sheds used to be here, how we used to live here. Passing it onto our kids.'

(Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Despite a few younger participants suggesting the huts should be replaced with new housing, older participants agreed on the value of keeping some huts in situ, both for the community and the education of visitors to Barunga.

On reading the above comments, regarding what should be done with the remaining Econo Huts, Junggayi Guy Rankin suggested that a couple of the original huts should remain at Bottom Camp: 'Those buildings, save one or two. Two will do, for example. Two enough. You stay in one and another one. That makes two. Good to have as a memory. We used to have big mob.' (Guy Rankin speaking with Claire Smith and Gary Jackson, pers. comm. 13/10/2022).

Figure 4.6 Campfire northern aspect of Hut 1 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins 22/04/2022).

Figure 4.7 Assemblage of playing cards adjacent to the east aspect of hut 2 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

4.2 Persistence of Aboriginal culture

The persistence of Aboriginal culture was the second theoretical construct to emerge within the data (Figure 4.1). As one Elder expressed regarding the impact of transitional housing on culture: 'Yes, it did change. But that didn't stop that culture that lived the way they used to live, see? Now they been living in houses, then they used to go out or sleep outside whenever they want to.' (Female participant, 21/04/2022). Participants described the continued practice of sleeping outside, even amongst younger generations, as a positive example of cultural continuation and as a means of accommodating larger family groups and visitors within current housing.

The largest sub-theme to arise within this theoretical construct was the experience of Aboriginal peoples coming to stay in Barunga for ceremony, an Elder recalled that '…they all came together to help with ceremonies and when marriages happen, and languages exchange …' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Other participants expressed memories of growing up in neighbouring communities, such as Bulman, and travelling to Barunga for ceremonies:

> When we wanna come out here when there's ceremony and stuff like that, or people want to meet together, like all the Elderlies; so, we come back again and stay with them. And then our Elders just usually talk among themselves about a lot of things, you know? ceremonies things like that. (Male Elder, 21/04/2022).

In addition to the continuation of culture through ceremony and corroboree nights during government times, participants reflected on experiences of cultural continuity despite transitional housing and its assimilationist mission. One Elder and cultural teacher at Barunga school explained that traditional Bungul dancing is included in the curriculum, as is the history of ceremony in the community. Also of note is that the fluctuation of student numbers at the school was raised as a point of interest. Some individuals and families continue to move between communities and this practice has remained a normal aspect of the transient socio-cultural landscape of Barunga since government times. An Elder and schoolteacher spoke on this, saying: 'It's normal for us, they move to another community for four months, a couple of months, come back.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Though the introduction of brick houses and Native Title in the Northern Territory was repeatedly referenced as a period during which Barunga became a smaller community, participants also spoke of Barunga's continuing cultural diversity, with 15 languages still being spoken within the community and several taught at the school (Table 4.1). Additionally, the teaching of hunting skills was described by one Elder as an important example of cultural continuation: 'And still today we do that, we go out hunting and fishing out in bush, teaching our young ones, grandchildren still to have that thing, you know? To carry on for them.' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022). A similar reference to domestic cultural continuation was the ongoing practice of cooking outside on fires, particularly as a social event. One Elder spoke on her plans for a fireplace outside her new home: 'I'm trying to plan to have a little fireplace here, so we can sit and tell story and talk, cook outside.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Table 4.1 Language groups present at Barunga. Reproduced from Smith (2004:151).

Language Group	**Number of speakers**	**Percentage of population**
Jawoyn	7	1.5
Ngalkpon	79	17.5
Rembarrnga	108	23.8
Mielli	70	15.5
Mara	9	1.9
Rithangu	24	5.3
Mudbarra	7	1.5
Jingli	5	1.0
Woyali	2	0.5
Mangurai	1	0.3
Walpiri	1	0.3
Not known	138	31.0
Total	**451**	**100.0**

On reviewing this theme, Junggayi Nell Brown commented on the presence of culture during the transitional housing period, reflecting that: ‘In those days, there was nothing. Old people happy, go hunting. The younger ones would listen more before to the Elders. These days, it’s out of control. Ceremony was the strongest thing. Us girls, too. Even the Elders would tell us how to live, how to respect, how to work for our old people.’ (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Nell also commented on the persistence of culture amongst young community members today, saying: ‘If you don’t respect your culture, that is a different story. Sometimes, it’s hard for younger ones. They get that phone. That’s keeping them away from cultural things.’ (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

4.2.1. Continued use of ethno-architecture

The continued use of ethno-architecture was the second largest theme identified within this theoretical construct. Participants shared memories of the continued presence of ethnoarchitecture within, and adjacent to the settlement, as well as the use of new materials such as aluminium, iron sheets, and tarpaulins in constructing humpies following the introduction of transitional housing (Figure 4.8). Indeed, participants drew the distinction between bush humpies and humpies constructed from materials like aluminium. One Elder spoke on this, saying: ‘Humpy, way we used to live. That’s the only way we usually just live, you know? Even during the rain, you’d just put paper bark on top originally, then tarpaulin.’ (Male Elder, 21/04/2022).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 4.8 Ethno-architecture at Barunga's 'Bottom Camp' during its time as 'Beswick Creek Government Native Settlement,' 1958. [National Archives of Australia, item ID: 11298757].

One participant, in reflecting on the continued use of humpies throughout her childhood, suggested that ethno-architecture was a necessity due to a lack of huts within the settlement. Additionally, participants repeatedly remembered old people preferring to stay in humpystyle dwellings rather than transition to the huts: 'All the old people preferred the old humpy, aye. They didn't wanna move in those tin houses.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Reasons why older community members preferred to remain in ethno-architecture were not elaborated upon. However, participants expressed that most old people living in humpies remained on the other side of the creek, away from the settlement.

The theme of humpies being present across the creek was a common memory, with the consensus being that it was old people continuing to live away from the transitional huts. An Elder spoke on this, saying: 'Well, when they first came, white people came, they start building up all the new houses … But the old people used to live outside, out the back down the riverside. Yeah, they used to make their own humpy.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Despite the continued use of ethno-architecture being primarily associated with old people, participating Elders remembered the periodic use of humpies by the younger population during ceremony times: '… just only when we went to that ceremony, you know about

Prospect River. They built humpies and I used to see my mum, we used to go from school there.' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022). Memories of families living in humpies during ceremony were repeatedly positive experiences, often suggesting ethno-architecture provided a welcome break from the pressures of transitional housing:

> They had big ceremony, the men's ceremony and all the wives went down with the family, all the families went down. Some probably didn't wanna go back to the house so they'd stay there. So, I'm thinking like now, that's why we stayed down there for the whole ceremony week … and we just, just only when we went to that ceremony, you know about Prospect River. They built humpies and I used to see my mum, we used to go from school there. She'd boil our clothes on the fire, you know the drum. To wash and wash in that river, so we didn't worry about probably, that little house. (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

On reading these memories, Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen reflected that: 'People live in paperbark hut before then … And from that they went to the tin house.' (Elizabeth Moreen speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Likewise, Junggayi Nell Brown commented on the housing choices held by community members during the early transitional housing period: 'Sometimes they lived in a cave. They could choose hut or cave or tin house.' (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

4.2.2. A single hut for all the family

In discussions of the impact of transitional housing on culture, overcrowding was identified as another major theme. Participants remembered Aboriginal family structures and domestic arrangements continuing through the introduction of government housing and attempts at assimilation. Though transitional housing was designed for nuclear family units, participating Elders recollected cultural continuation, saying: '…Aboriginal people back then we used to live in groups, whole families would just live in that room, a husband and wife in the room and around the veranda would be extended families. So, it was shared, it was shared it wasn't specifically for immediate families back then.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

This experience of extended family sleeping surrounding the huts was a recurring idea across conversations. Elders shared memories of large numbers of community members, sometimes up to 10 people, sharing a single hut, as families 'never used to separate.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). However, overcrowding in the huts was not remembered as a positive experience, with one Elder voicing her shock on looking at the remaining Econo Hut concrete slabs at Bottom Camp, exclaiming: 'It's very small now that I look at that cement … I got surprised and I was shocked …' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022). Despite the difficulties of

overcrowding, the continuation of family staying together was repeatedly expressed as an important aspect of cultural continuation.

Figure 4.9 Eastern aspect of the remaining concrete slab of Econo Hut 5 at Bottom camp (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

4.3 Gendered experiences

Gendered experiences were the third theoretical construct to emerge through the analysis. Within this theoretical construct, themes centred on the gendered division of space from the transitional housing period up to the present, and gendered domestic tasks as experienced and negotiated in the huts and today (Figure 4.1).

4.3.1. Gendered living spaces

Questions surrounding gendered experiences of transitional housing focused on the expected and lived division of domestic space and how this may or may not have changed from ethnoarchitecture and traditional camps through government times. The most prevalent theme identified was the experience of gendered living spaces remaining relatively consistent through the transition into stage one and two huts. Memories and knowledge of single men's living quarters were repeatedly referenced in response to questions regarding which, and how many, family members shared a hut. One Elder recalled his experience of living in single men's transitional housing: 'Single men … you had two person, that's all … just like several

friends and partners, you know? They used to stay together, because they're not allowed to go out with their mother or sisters.' (Male Elder, 22/04/2022). Additionally, another elder remembered:

> '… we had those silver aluminium ones which were for single quarters; had three rooms this way and big area in the middle. Yeah, we had those silver aluminiums for single quarters, three rooms at the side and one in the middle was the big kitchen, dining area and another three at the bottom.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Community members described the single men's quarters as 'one big building and just one room, and one room…' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022) with between five and six individual rooms for single men to occupy (Appendix 2). Participants also shared memories of male Elders living alone in single quarters.

Participants also expressed a desire for a women's shelter to be opened within the community, with comments repeatedly made on the presence of a women's shelter in the neighbouring community of Beswick but not at Barunga. Older participants explained that during the transitional housing period newly married couples would be expected to move into their own hut. Participants described a continuation of the practice of parents, children and elderly family members residing together from ethno-architecture into transitional housing, with single men being the most repeatedly referenced and clearest segregation of gendered living areas.

Toilet blocks were publicly gendered spaces in transitional housing. Separate toilet and shower blocks for men and women were implemented alongside transitional huts (Figure 4.10). One female Elder described how this practice is continued in current housing: 'My house got two toilets, that's because of cultural reasons. The cultural reason, like the men use one toilet, the women use that other toilet.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Indeed, the introduction of gender-neutral public toilets in towns like Katherine served as a new experience for some community members, with one Elder recalling the first times she used a gender-neutral bathroom at Katherine: 'That's why I've asked somebody nearby "I can go inside here, this toilet or what?" they said "You can! Make sure the men not here".' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 4.10 Public toilet block at bottom camp with gender segregated toilets and showers for use during the transitional housing period.

Though sleeping arrangements in transitional housing were not discussed in detail, cultural continuation of gender segregation between young boys and girls within families was expressed. One female Elder recounted a positive memory of sleeping amongst other female family members as a child in transitional housing. Though the separation of boys and girls was made more difficult by the pressure placed on Aboriginal families to occupy huts as nuclear family units, it was recounted that children of the opposite sex would still only sleep in the same space with parents present.

4.3.2. Domestic tasks

The second theme identified within the theoretical construct of gendered experiences was that of men and women sharing domestic tasks. These tasks were broadly defined by participants as cooking, cleaning, and child rearing, and were consistently expressed as activities that were conducted by both men and women in transitional housing. One male Elder remembered his parents sharing domestic tasks in transitional housing saying: ‘That’s how they usually lived, just help one another to look after us, you know, the kids.’ (Male Elder, 21/04/2022).

Conversely, participants shared knowledge of certain domestic tasks being reserved solely for one gender, with these practices continuing into the transitional housing period. Hunting was

identified as a largely male activity, as was cooking meat, and collecting firewood. Though food was primarily prepared and dispensed at the communal kitchen during settlement times, older participants explained that hunting continued to be undertaken by men as a supplementary food source. A female Elder described the division of women making damper while men would hunt and cook meat:

> And then we just make damper, the women, if there's no bread they'd say "oh, cook damper" that's the only thing we cook. I was thinking maybe that's why they were hunters in those days, women did all the cookings and men did all the roasting of the kangaroo or the animals. (Female Elder, 21/04/2022).

Another female Elder described the gendered division of food sourcing and preparation in further detail:

> Men get the firewood, but the ladies would do the cooking and stuff but for kangaroo and bush tucker men would cook as well … the men's job was to take out the intestines, cut it out … I mean even when the huts were still ———all the corrugated iron houses were there they still used to do that! (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

The practice of sharing domestic tasks was described by participants as an ongoing occurrence. One young participant explained that 'I do everything now. My missus pitches in every now and then, whenever she can but she's mainly focused on the kids at the moment.' (Male participant, 21/04/2022). This experience was also voiced by older participants in memories of growing up in transitional housing: 'Yeah, a bit of both. Sometimes if the men wanna help their wives like that.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Another young participant described male partners who helped with domestic tasks as 'helpful husbands' saying: 'like helpful husbands if they would help their partner, wives to do the cleaning, cooking. Well, I make my partner do the cleaning, cooking when I'm bloody weak from working, you know? (laughs). Cook or no food!' (Female participant, 21/04/2022).

On reviewing these results, Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen agreed that men and women did share domestic tasks within transitional housing, commenting that: 'Men and women shared the work'. (Elizabeth Moreen speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Likewise, Junggayi Nell Brown reflected that men do assist with domestic tasks, particularly when women are occupied with caring for children, saying: 'Sometimes the man would cook when his wife breastfeeding.' (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Experiences of gender equity in completing domestic tasks was more frequently referenced than experiences of women undertaking all of the cooking, cleaning, and child rearing in transitional housing. However, participants also voiced knowledge of women being the primary caretakers of domestic spaces before and during government times. Two young participants described the women's workspace as being within and immediately surrounding the hut, with men conducting activities 'outside, at the yard' (Male participant, 21/04/2022). This division of space and work was not described with connotations of holding more or less power within relationships, simply functional separations of space that continued from ethnoarchitecture into transitional housing.

4.4 Backcasting

4.4.1. Negative experiences of current housing at Barunga

In participants sharing their experiences of housing conditions within the community today, a significant theme to emerge was that of negative experiences of current housing, with the most frequently repeated idea being that of government expectations on reducing overcrowding. One Elder recounted a recent experience she had with housing authorities, saying:

> … they put up rules, them housing, they put up rules that if you have people coming over to stay at your house, at that time you [gonna] have to give them a month, or something, to stay there or they can't stay there and they have to move on. (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Participants voiced concern over housing regulations placed on visitors, as is outlined in the Northern Territory government's *Remote community and town camp visitor management policy 2022*, as well as the difficulties of reducing overcrowding within current housing. Participants expressed concerns over reducing housing occupant numbers; elderly participants expressed reliance on family for aged care, as well as cultural family structures placing less emphasis on the Western nuclear family unit:

> … before I said to one of my married couples, my other daughter and son-in-law, I told them "You better go, you gotta be independent, nah? Go and live somewhere else, go and get your own house, apply for your own house" so they did that, but I followed them, and they said ———— they bin asking me "why you said that us mob gotta be independent and you following us still?". It's family, I said, I can't live on my own. If something happen to me, you know? I sometimes leave the stove on, but they want us to only maybe nuclear family to stay in one house, another family stay at another house. (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

On reviewing participant concerns with the restrictions on visitors imposed by the Northern Territory government, Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen shared her own experiences: 'I don't do that with my granddaughter [only let her stay for a month]. She lives at Ngukurr. She comes here and stop with me. She can stay one week, one month, as long as she likes. I don't tell her she got to go … I think little grandkids, too, come. Living together. We live our way, but they try to make Aboriginal people live like a white man. That's not fair. Some family gone away for a long time. Then they come back. We say, 'You stop now'. (Elizabeth Moreen speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

A further sub-theme identified was that of living in the same house since childhood with little opportunity to receive new housing in the community. This experience was not always negative, as one Elder explained, they would not consider moving into a new house as their connection to family members who have passed on is tied to their current home: 'I never wanna move. Looking for a brand-new, to get a new house, I said no. Cause my connection's all there.' (Female Elder, 21/04/2022). However, other participants reported negative experiences of old housing being poorly renovated rather than replaced. Additionally, a lack of new housing was identified as proliferating issues of overcrowding as older two and threebedroom brick homes lack appropriate facilities for large families. As one Elder expressed: 'It is now a problem because you've got toilets and stuff being blocked because there's too many people using … (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Of additional concern to participants was the impact of modern housing, and the lasting impacts of transitional housing, on younger generations' relationships with Elders and culture. One male participant in his late thirties expressed concern that young people 'stay indoors now' rather than talking and learning with Elders: 'Most young people don't do that now; I think they're a bit shyer.' (Male participant, 22/04/2022). This sentiment was reflected by an Elder in showing her dismay at young people sleeping '… inside. They close doors.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Sleeping outside with Elders is a less customary practice now amongst young people: 'This generation, they want air conditioner (laughs).' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

4.4.2. Positive experiences of current housing at Barunga

Additionally, participants expressed positive experiences of current housing conditions in Barunga. A housing group has been established with chosen community members able to voice concerns and requests to housing authorities. Positive views of current homes however, described improvements to housing being made rather than ideal conditions having already been achieved. As described by a female participant, current housing is simply 'better now than back then.' (Female participant, 21/04/2022).

4.4.3. Overcrowding in current housing

The largest theme identified in discussions of an ideal future for Barunga was that of overcrowding. While it must be acknowledged that as this research project was focused on past experiences of housing in the community, it is unsurprising that future housing conditions were raised so frequently. However, overcrowding, and poor housing conditions in Aboriginal communities, remains a major concern throughout the Northern Territory (Harley 2015; McDonald 2011; Rodd et al. 2022) and as such, remains a justifiably significant theme.

Responses pertaining to improved housing expressed the need for more and larger homes. Participants of all ages and sexes shared their experiences of living in overcrowded houses. One participant shared the current living situation of an Elder in the community, saying '…three-bedroom house they got all right. So, like 16, 14 boys living. Yeah, it's just piled.' (Female participant, 21/04/2022).

In speaking on overcrowding, participants expressed the need for new houses to accommodate Aboriginal family structures, which may incorporate a larger number of individuals than the nuclear family unit. Three-bedroom homes with a single toilet are not culturally appropriate and rather than forcing smaller family units to live individually, family members resort to sleeping in communal living areas or outside. As one participant explained: 'If it's all crowded, but then if you've got sisters and brothers in the house then they have to stay outside of the house.' (Female participant, 21/04/2022). Another participant spoke on having to live in a communal space: '… you don't want to be living in the lounge, that's your kitchen, that's where you eat!' (Male participant, 21/04/2022). Additionally, younger participants suggested the need for new single men's quarters, to ease overcrowding and address homelessness amongst young men.

Repeatedly voiced solutions to overcrowding focused on larger homes, with more bedrooms and multiple bathrooms. Aside from calls for aged care facilities, solutions did not centre on reducing the number of family members in a single home but allowing space for Aboriginal families to thrive together, as one Elder explained: '… maybe they're four-bedroom, fivebedroom like that, that's for Indigenous families … Some families used to staying together, keeping their family together.' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022). Indeed, the importance of culturally sensitive housing in Aboriginal communities, which prioritises respecting Aboriginal family structures has been recognised as a key concern for future government housing designs (Milligan et al. 2011:106). Restrictions on visitors and permanent occupants in existing homes was not identified as a solution to overcrowding; larger homes, designed in consultation with the community are what participants identified for a better future for Barunga.

In response to reading these participant experiences of overcrowding in current housing and the failure of visitor restrictions to resolve this issue, Junggayi Nell Brown shared that: 'In Barunga if they want to stay, they can stay until they want to go back home. [speaking with the authority of a Junggayi]. You can't stop overcrowding. Family is family. We got to share with our loved ones first. Grandchildren.' (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

4.4.4. Barunga in five years

Additional sub-themes identified by participants when discussing Barunga's future included the introduction of aged care facilities, which would ease the burden of overcrowding on homes as well as provide jobs for young people in the community. Furthermore, participants suggested the need for a women's shelter to be established at Barunga. As one female participant explained: '… when most of the womens call the police they don't come down straight away. The police come down from Katherine … some of the womens just go into Katherine women's shelter. They have to leave and it's hard for them to go.' (Female participant, 21/04/2022). Indeed, the women's shelter in the neighbouring community of Beswick was referenced by participants as a model for the women's services that should be established at Barunga.

In reviewing this section of the text, Traditional Owner Elizabeth Moreen commented on her experience of visiting the former aged care facility in the neighbouring community of Beswick: 'I went to Beswick Aged Care, maybe one, two, three [people] there. Long house. Some people went back to their family.' (Elizabeth Moreen speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Additionally, Junggayi Nell Brown reflected on the lack of residential aged care services at Barunga, saying: 'I don't want to go to Aged Care in town. I want to sit down here. This is where I belong. Aged Care Katherine or Darwin. It's a bit hard for family to have a vehicle to visit them … I'm paying for aged care, but I get my meals here. I want to work for aged care. Working sheds, everything. Old people didn't go aged care in town.' (Nell Brown speaking with Claire Smith, pers. comm. 12/10/2022).

Finally, while not a recurring idea, one Elder expressed her desire to see Treaty happen, and for future generations to be able to remain in the community and to keep culture strong, saying: '… for the future, the young ones to learn their culture, not to lose it … young generations to rise up, you know. To still work in the community, to keep building the community. But with our two ways … two ways culture together, learning. (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

4.5 Discussion

This chapter has detailed the results of qualitative data collected at Barunga in April 2022. Transcription and coding of these yarns revealed three theoretical constructs highlighted by participants. Firstly, experiences of government housing in the community were the most frequently expressed memories, with experiences of transitional housing being consistently tied to positive memories of the socio-cultural landscape of Barunga during the 1960s and 1970s. Secondly, positive reflections on the persistence of Aboriginal culture through the transitional housing period and government times was a notable theoretical construct. Thirdly, gendered experiences related to housing illustrate the significance of engendered domestic spaces and tasks, as well as suggesting transitional housing did not significantly alter the gendering of households. Finally, overcrowding is identified by participants as the most significant issue to be addressed within the community today. Culturally appropriate housing, implemented in consultation with the community is expressed as a key step in moving towards Barunga's ideal future. The following discussion situates these results within the existing literature documenting Aboriginal experiences of transitional housing, the significance of engendered households, as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This research project has explored Aboriginal experiences and memories of transitional housing at Barunga through a decolonising archaeological framework. Early government housing at Barunga, and throughout Australia, was designed to facilitate the assimilationist policies established under the *Welfare Ordinance* of 1953. Investigation into the lived experiences and impacts of transitional housing designs on Aboriginal communities has thus far been primarily undertaken within the fields of architecture (Memmott 1988, 2002 and 2004), health sciences (Bailie and Wayte 2006) and, to a lesser extent anthropology (Keys 2000; Panagopoulos 2022). Australian household archaeology has seen little involvement in the recording of government housing in remote areas and associated ethnoarchaeological research (Ralph 2012). This project has used a qualitative approach to address the primary research question:

- How do Aboriginal community members remember and experience transitional housing at Barunga?

The secondary aims addressed within this project were:

- How community members altered or maintained gendered spaces in transitional housing.
- The ongoing impacts of transitional housing on Aboriginal culture at Barunga.
- The value of qualitative research in recording, interpreting and decolonising Indigenous household archaeology.

This research utilised community-based participatory research (CBPR) as outlined by Atalay (2010:418), as its primary methodological model. Steps towards the democratisation of the project were made in the use of yarning as a method (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010:38). This allowed participants the freedom to direct the conversation and include new participants in group yarns or make suggestions on what may be an important topic or to whom the primary investigator should speak. Furthermore, copies of transcripts, audio recordings, photographs, and this thesis were provided to Traditional Owner's, Custodians, and the community for their review and to retain as their intellectual property.

The overarching theoretical framework that has guided this research is that of working towards a decolonised and heart-centred archaeology. Drawing on the work of Atalay (2020), Pollard (2019), Mizoguchi and Smith (2019), and Supernant et al. (2020) to record the archaeology of transitional housing at Barunga primarily through the experiences and knowledge of Aboriginal community members. Decolonising archaeological practice also serves to highlight the impacts of assimilationist government housing designs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as described and identified by Indigenous Australians.

Through conducting yarning at Barunga, this project has identified the memories and experiences of Elders whose childhoods were spent in transitional housing, the knowledge and impacts of this period passed on to young people in the community today, as well as the emergent theoretical construct of culture persisting despite colonial pressures. Within this discussion, the implications of the three theoretical constructs to emerge from the data are considered in terms of their relationship to Australian Indigenous household archaeology more broadly.

5.1 Community memories of transitional housing at Barunga

This research project has addressed the question of how the Aboriginal community of Barunga remembers and experienced transitional housing. The recording of oral histories through yarning was used as a means of understanding the attitudes of current community members to early government housing and recording the experiences of Elders who had lived in transitional housing as young people. Negative experiences of life in stage one and two huts and Kingstrand Houses were an expected outcome of talking with Elders. The trials of living in transitional huts have been documented and explored (Panagopoulos 2022; Saini 1967; Tatz 1964). However, the major theme to emerge from conversations with older participants reflected positive memories associated with the transitional housing period.

This positive theme was initially surprising, though it must be acknowledged that participants may have felt it would be polite to recount happy memories of the settlement to an outside, non-Indigenous researcher. These experiences nonetheless stood in stark contrast to existing accounts of transitional housing conditions from communities around the country (Panagopoulos 2022:68). However, on transcribing and coding the resulting conversations, it became apparent that memories and experiences of the huts were repeatedly associated with positive aspects of the socio-cultural landscape of Barunga as it was during the 1960s, 70s and 80s (see section 4.1.3.).

Whilst it was reflected upon by participating Elders that their parents and families worked to shield them from the challenges of life in transitional housing, the happy childhood memories participants voiced in conversations around transitional housing repeatedly turned to experiences of busy ceremony times, corroboree nights and sitting with Elders, talking, and listening. Most importantly, older participants conveyed a sense of togetherness, this was not reflective of the quality of housing, it was reflective of the importance of families and communities being together. Indeed, the significance of connection to culture in improving wellbeing within Aboriginal communities has been documented (Bourke et al. 2018:11 in Smith et al. 2022:130).

These positive reflections on transitional housing are indicative of the importance of providing Aboriginal communities with the opportunity to narrate their own history and experiential relationship to material culture and engage in public archaeology (Pollard et al.

2020). Indeed, two key themes emerged within the data when investigating what knowledge of the huts has been passed to younger generations (as outlined in section 4.1.5.). Firstly, an understanding of the stresses placed on community members caused by poor housing conditions within the huts. Secondly, that Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement was a thriving hub, where Aboriginal peoples from across the Top End would come together and share culture:

> So, there was Mayali, Dalabon, Rembarrnga tribe was here, and the Jawoyn people, the main Traditional Owners of the land … And they all came together to help with ceremonies and when marriages happen, and languages exchange … Yeah, they lived in harmony… (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

Transitional housing, regardless of design-type or stage, was unliveable, and as expressed by Heppell (1979:15) and Saini (1967:23) did not accurately reflect Western styles of housing thus negating any attempt at assimilation by the occupants. However, when looking at the ongoing difficulties for families at Barunga caused by overcrowding, it is apparent that although government housing has improved since the days of Econo Huts, much more needs to be done. Continued attempts to reduce overcrowding by reducing the number of occupants in a dwelling fail to recognise Aboriginal kinship systems and familial relationships as equal to the Western nuclear family unit (Penfold et al. 2019:1581). Though Econo Huts and Sidney Williams Huts had no services and one room (Appendix 2), participants reflected that at least families were not forced to rely on a single toilet and bear the financial pressures of purchasing prepaid electricity cards as they are now. Restrictions on visitors in Aboriginal communities and the construction of new three-bedroom homes function as continued attempts at assimilation. For the experiences of transitional housing in Aboriginal communities to truly be relegated to history, Indigenous Australian housing must be designed with and for Indigenous Australian communities (Fien and Charlesworth 2012; Lowell et al. 2018; Memmott 1988; Milligan et al. 2011; Silbert 2021).

5.2 Gendered experiences of transitional housing

As was reflected in the early observations of Peter Hamilton (1972:2) and Paul Memmott (1988:37) in communities in remote areas, alterations to kinship relationships and household arrangements instigated by transitional housing were not notably apparent within the conversations held at Barunga. In discussing memories of gendered living spaces in transitional housing, repeated ideas focused on the presence of single men's quarters and the continued practice of extended family groups residing together outside of the Western family model.

The original stage one Econo Huts were installed in March 1961, along with four Kingstrand houses and five 'European-style' homes for staff (Figure 2.1). There is no record of separate single men's housing being erected in the early days of Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement. Unpublished reports made by the Welfare Branch in the late 1950s to early 1960s fail to

detail gendered living spaces, simply noting that community members continued to sleep outside (National Archives of Australia, Beswick Creek- [Welfare Branch- Beswick Aboriginal Reserve] item ID: 1387997). Single men's housing was certainly in place during the 1970s, as it is consistently referenced in the memories of older participants (see section 4.3.1.), a key difference to the experiences of government housing observed by Keys (2000:126) at Yuendumu in the 1990s. Though Warlpiri society also designates separate housing for single men, Keys noted that designated housing for single men had yet to be constructed at Yuendumu even into the late 1990s (Keys 2000:127).

The installation of single men's transitional quarters is remembered by participants as a positive addition to housing and appears to have made the transferral of traditional familial and gendered housing arrangements into the huts easier. In speaking with participants today, a lack of appropriate housing for single men in the community is a concern, with calls for the installation of single men's accommodation in addition to a women's shelter. Unlike, the community at Yuendumu, participants at Barunga explained that single women do not occupy separate domiciliary units.

As was the case with gendered living arrangements, participants at Barunga did not describe significant shifts in the gendered division of domestic tasks from ethno-architecture into transitional housing. As similarly noted by Musharbash (2017:79) and O'Rourke and Nash (2019:124), gendered domestic spaces could be identified through the tasks conducted within them. Male tasks, such as collecting firewood, hunting, and butchering were conducted outside or in the yard. Alternatively, tasks undertaken by women, such as caring for children, was done within or close to the hut or house. Despite the identification of this distinction between some gendered household activities, participants at Barunga repeatedly expressed that men and women share most domestic tasks as is practical.

Finally, a 'yard-orientedness' (Musharbash 2017:79) at Barunga was an emergent sub-theme observable within the data; Elders occasionally continue the practice of sleeping outside, though not regularly, using tents in the front yard (see section 4.1.5.). Despite transitional housing not having designated yard space, participants expressed that family members would sleep surrounding the hut, both as a means of negating overcrowding and maintaining culturally and socially appropriate sleeping arrangements, a practice observed within other Aboriginal communities (Habibis et al. 2012; Heppell 1979; Musharbash 2009 and 2017). Although, this project did not focus on spatial arrangements and material culture in yards at Barunga, as has been investigated by O'Rourke and Nash (2019), it is noted that participants identified the use of outdoor space surrounding dwellings as an extension of the household before, during, and following the use of transitional housing. Further investigation into the extension of domestic space into yards and their relationships within neighbourhoods is suggested as a key point of interest for further study in collaboration with Aboriginal communities.

5.3 Backcasting

This thesis demonstrates the benefits of incorporating backcasting as a method within archaeological practice, particularly qualitative research. Archaeology may not often be able to directly provide communities with their ideal future. However, as championed by Armstrong and Anderson (2020:39) and Anderson (2016 and 1996), archaeology can collaborate with Indigenous communities to design research around a collectively desired future. The most significant theme identified by participants for a better future at Barunga was a decrease in overcrowding (see section 4.4). This project has highlighted that Aboriginal communities in remote areas do not simply need more homes, but larger homes designed to prioritise Aboriginal kinship systems along with appropriately gendered domestic spaces, such as the inclusion of multiple toilets within dwellings and designated housing for single men within the community (Bailie and Wayte 2006; Lowell et al. 2018; Memmott et al. 2003). Additionally, a lack of aged care services at Barunga, whether it be residential care facilities or community services, is reported by participants as negatively impacting Elders' wellbeing and further compounding issues of overcrowding.

This research has used backcasting as a method within a heart-centred framework to weave together archaeological interests with community desires for the future (Atalay 2020:256). Reciprocity in research can no longer be a choice, it is a necessity (Kimmerer 2013:384). It is hoped that this project and its use of backcasting to look forward through the past, will inspire future research at Barunga, whatever discipline it may be in, to also work towards the ideal future envisaged by participants within this thesis. Indeed, as highlighted by Everill and Burnell (2022) and Smith et al. (2022:130), archaeology can, and must, focus on the improvement of Indigenous wellbeing. As one Elder at Barunga concluded 'we need two ways learning' (Female Elder, 22/04/2022).

5.3.1. Suggestions for future research

Household archaeological research within Aboriginal communities across Australia is scarce (Keys 2000; Musharbash 2009; Panagopoulos 2022; Ralph 2012; Smith and Ward 2000). This project has focused on recording experiences of transitional housing at Barunga, a timely undertaking as only four huts remain in situ at Bottom Camp. Sub-themes to emerge from the yarns analysed within this thesis included the use of yard space as an extension of the household. The topic of Aboriginal communities adapting yard space to improve poor housing conditions has been investigated by O'Rourke and Nash (2019). Additionally, neighbourhood archaeology has emerged as a branch of public archaeology exploring the dynamics of urban spatial relationships across time and place (Baram and Austin 2011; Gray 2020; Papoli-Yazdi 2021). However, investigation into the archaeology of neighbourhoods and households in contemporary Aboriginal communities is lacking. Research in this space, done in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, could inform and contribute to the provision of improvements to government housing policies that consider and value Indigenous Australian kinship systems and familial relationships (Silbert 2021:29).

5.4 Conclusions: Reflecting on a heart-centred practice

As addressed in section 2.3.1. of this thesis, archaeology is no longer a discipline in which the observable and quantifiable is central to all practice (Atalay 2006:280). The design, implementation and intended use of transitional housing is well recorded (Memmott 1988, 2002 and 2004; Saini 1967; Tatz 1964). What this thesis, and the employment of a heartcentred practice and decolonising framework has produced, is a record of the experiential aspects of the material culture of government housing at Barunga, and the ongoing consequences of an assimilationist approach to housing in Aboriginal communities in remote areas.

Through yarning with Elders and younger community members, the oral histories collected detail both the history of housing within the community as well as a record of the knowledge and memories of life at Barunga during its time as Beswick Creek Welfare Settlement, and Bamyili. Records of these conversations and the resulting themes are products which have been handed back to the community. The participant-led conversations herein reflect the struggles and injustices faced by Aboriginal community members at Barunga during the transitional housing period from the 1960s to 1980s, informed by the federal government's policies of assimilation. Additionally, positive memories of the socio-cultural landscape of Barunga during this period highlight the failings of current government housing in the community today, as well as the benefits of highlighting Aboriginal experiences and knowledge of material culture through a decolonising archaeology (Pollard et al. 2020).

Adopting a heart-centred framework for this research project was not a difficult decision to make or implement. Having travelled to Barunga once before in 2019 and recording oral histories relating to the impacts of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), participants had either met, knew of, or spoken with the primary investigator over the phone. Developing mutual trust and friendship with participants was made even easier given the years Claire Smith and Gary Jackson had been working in Barunga; the community trusts Claire and as such, the thesis candidate's requests to talk and record conversations were made upon a solid foundation of mutual trust, developed well before this project.

Regardless, as Tanja Hoffman (2020:59) expressed as a new researcher, nervousness led to more interjections and conversation direction than desired. Despite inexperience, going into these conversations with what Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2004:20) had been informed by Indigenous researchers were the key virtues archaeologists should embody: honesty, humility, and a primary aim to listen rather than direct, led to rich conversations and a theoretical construct based on the persistence of Aboriginal culture which would never have been otherwise considered. Additionally, some participants even sought out secondary conversations to share something with the thesis candidate that they had forgotten or to make introductions with fellow interested community members.

The future of the remaining Econo Huts at Barunga is uncertain, several huts were removed in 2018 to make space for new housing. Whether the huts remain in situ is a decision for the community, participants voiced their desire for the huts to remain as a piece of Barunga's history. However, new housing is a key concern, and the structures may justifiable be removed. Regardless, the role of transitional housing in Australia's colonial history is ongoing. And memories of the huts at Barunga will not be forgotten anytime soon:

> Good for history and good for memory, for us. For myself, for my son … good for us to see it, you know? Cause we know those old people was there and we can tell our kids "Aye, that one there from long time, that's old Barunga house." (Male participant, 21/04/2022).

5.5 New transitional housing at Barunga

Figure removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 5.1 'TRANSITIONAL HOUSING' sign recently installed at Barunga (Photograph: Gary Jackson 13/10/2022).

On a recent visit to Barunga, Gary Jackson captured the above photo of a newly installed banner reading ‘TRANSITIONAL HOUSING’ (Figure 5.1). The Northern Territory government’s ‘Our community. Our future. Our home’ program is linked to the roll out of the *Remote Housing Investment Package 2017–2018 to 2026–2027.* The package is set to invest $1.1 billion into improving housing within regional Aboriginal communities across the Territory over the next few years. As for the ‘transitional housing’ aspect, it appears that the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development is using the term ‘transitional housing’ to refer to temporary accommodation provided to community members awaiting the completion of repairs and renovations on their existing homes. The ‘Our community. Our future. Our home’ program promises to be a significant step forward for housing in Aboriginal communities in remote areas, with community consultation and decision making highlighted within the program outline. However, given the history of the term ‘transitional housing’ within communities like Barunga, it seems an odd choice of phrase in 2022.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Photos of transitional housing at Barunga

Econo Hut 1

Coordinates at NE corner: 0269861, 8393006.

Datum: WGS84.

Figure 1 Southern aspect of Econo Hut 1 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 2 Eastern aspect of Econo Hut 1 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 3 Northern aspect of Econo Hut 1 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Econo Hut 2

Coordinates at NE corner: 0269896, 8392984.

Datum: WGS84.

Figure 1 Western aspect of Econo Hut 2 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 2 Northern aspect of Econo Hut 2 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 4 Looking northeast at Bottom camp. Hut 2 on the left and hut 3 on the right (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Econo Hut 3

Coordinates at NE corner: 0269885, 8392960.

Datum: WGS84.

Figure 1 Northern aspect of Econo Hut 3 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 2 Western aspect of Econo Hut 3 (Photograph Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 3 Southern aspect of Econo Hut 3 (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Econo Hut leased by Claire Smith and Gary Jackson

Coordinates at NE corner: 0269788, 8392954.

Datum: WGS84.

Figure 1 Northern aspect of renovated Econo Hut (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

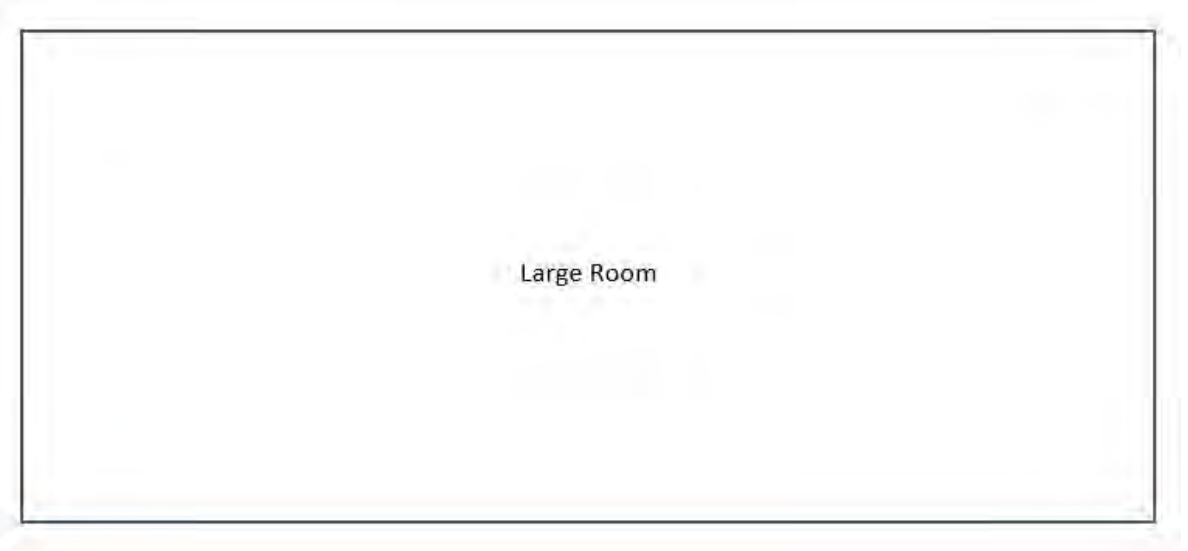
Figure 2 One of the two fridges inside the renovated Econo Hut (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Figure 3 Southeast aspect of the renovated Econo Hut (Photograph: Elspbeth Hodgins, 23/04/2022).

Appendix 2: Barunga transitional housing floorplans

Sidney Williams Hut

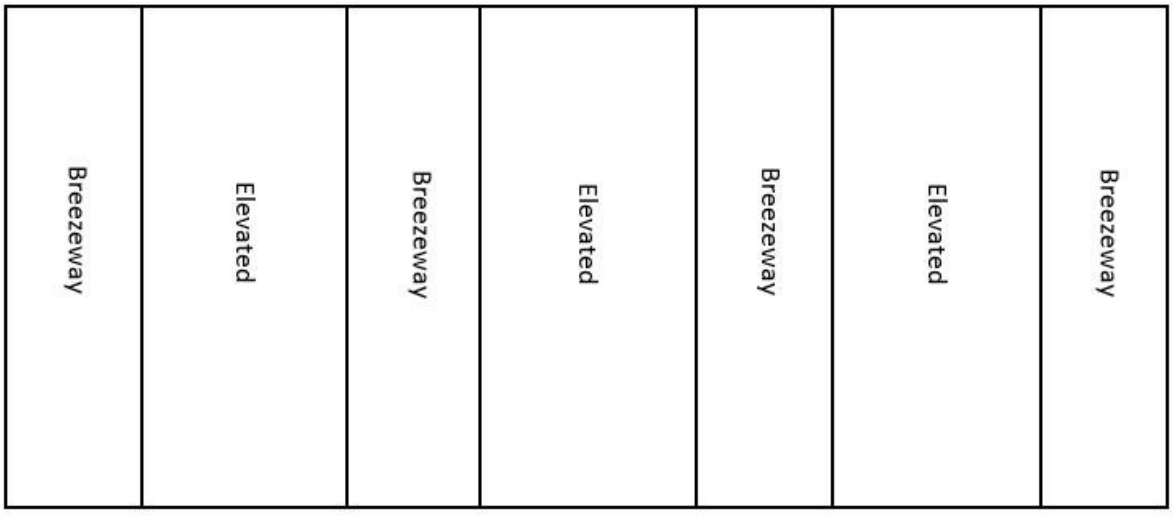
Dimensions: Length 4.7 metres, width 3.15 metres.



Floorplan reproduced with permission from Coe and Dwyer 2018.

Single men's quarters floorplan

Dimensions: Length 26 metres, width 5.8 metres**, w**idth of elevated living sections 3.2 metres.



Floorplan reproduced with permission from Coe and Dwyer 2018.

Appendix 3: Example of collaborative yarn transcript and initial coding

Participants: Female Elders (anonymized transcript).

Age: Participant 1: no age given. Participant 2: 55.

Interviewer: Elspbeth Hodgins.

Date: 22/04/2022

Location: Front yard of Participant 2.

Transcribed by: Elspbeth Hodgins.

Elspbeth Hodgins: Were you born in Barunga?

Participant 1 (P1): Born, bred, went to school here, lived here.

Elspbeth: Your whole life?

P1: Whole life. Had kids here.

Elspbeth: How many kids have you got?

P1: I got four. Three girls and a boy, they're all adults now.

Elspbeth: Wow, that's a lot of girls.

P1: Two of them working at school like me. Another one working as an Indigenous health worker. My son's at home.

Elspbeth: And do you remember the huts? People living in the huts?

P1: Oh, those old ones?

Elspbeth: Like, the little green ones.

P1: Oh, the little green ones, yeah. Well, when those little huts, we had corrugated iron huts back then. We had aluminium ones as well, and those green ones. I remember us living in the green ones. Yeah, the green one which was just a door and just a big square thing, that's it with two, three windows. That's it, no electricity. We lived in that green one yeah, simple one.

Elspbeth: How many of you?

P1: Myself, my mum ———

Participant 2 (P2): Remember I told you about that green one? That's the same green little one that we used to put our iron in the middle, make the fire **[unclear 01:39]** my mum was there.

P1: Cooking was done inside too, sometimes outside.

Elspbeth: And everyone in the community was living in them?

P2: Well, we had different, different tin houses back then. We had those aluminium ones, which were single ones they had a verandah right around the outside and just a room in the middle with three windows. That was for, that was mainly for really single or just married couples but back in the day you know, Aboriginal people back then we used to live in groups, whole families would just live in that room, a husband and wife in the room and around the verandah would be extended families. So, it was shared, it was shared it wasn't specifically for immediate families back then.

We had that kind, aluminium ones, and then we had another aluminum ones which had a room, two rooms, and a toilet, and a shower and just a little area for the kitchen.

P2: Like a little old stove thing where they used to put fire, make the fire underneath and just put it on that little, like little stove top. Yeah, used to put **[unclear 02:41]** make damper.

P1: So, we had that, that sort of aluminium tin house, silver one, and then we had those silver aluminium ones which were for single quarters; had three rooms this way and big area in the middle. Yeah, we had those silver aluminiums for single quarters, three rooms at the side and one in the middle was the big kitchen, dining area and another three at the bottom.

P2: Some family members still used to sleep inside.

Elspbeth: So, that was for families as well?

P2: Yeah, families as well.

P1: Yes. Yeah, it was really for single people but sometimes they would, yeah still. And then we had another, what kinda house? Um.

P2: That's the only [mob] house now we remember.

P1: And with those ———yeah, those are the [old] ones.

P2: Oh, them big single quarters! The really big gotta one, two, three, bout five innit?

P1: Yeah, **[unclear 03:24]**

P2: That really big single quarters for the single old people bala.

P1: Yeah, that's the one too couldn't forget.

P2: What's your name again?

Elspbeth: Beth. I should have said.

P2: Beth, you remember I told you about those old poinciana trees and the big ——— all those tin houses were there? But they were the single men quarters, yeah. Bout five or six aye? P1: Mm.

Elspbeth: Were they ——— P2:

Big long ones.

Elspbeth: Long, one building?

P2: Yeah, one big building and just one room, and one room and just a little [small thing outside], so.

P1: But the ones, silver one with two rooms, they were for families, yeah. But the single ones, extended family could sleep outside. Even the green ones was specifically for families too, families would stay inside but sometimes people would sleep outside too, so it was always ———yeah. That was back in the late 70's sort of thing, those huts. The bottom camp area where you are now, that's where all those huts used to be. Elspbeth: You can see the concrete slabs there.

P1: Yeah, slabs are still there.

P2: Yeah, that's what I told you bout yesterday.

Elspbeth: I was just taking photos of them (laughs).

P2: Yeah (laughs).

P1: I've got heaps of photos for those ———

P2: Remember I told you she's got heaps of photo for them.

Elspbeth: You've got the Facebook page as well don't you?

P1: Ah, I'm not on Facebook now. I haven't been on Facebook since last year I've kind of cut back a bit, but I'm tryna go back this year.

P2: But you still got all them photos of that [whole lot of] **[unclear 05:01]** all them old people, kids playing around or just ———No complaints, aye? We never heard from nobody complaining about these little tin houses. Everybody just enjoyed it, and them humpy bin other side, that's just that side aye.

P1: Yes.

P2: All the old people, some of the elders they used to still sleep in humpies.

Elspbeth: Really?

P2: Yes.

P1: Yeah, they used to sleep in iron houses. They used to get aluminium, irons and just build it or sometimes with humpy.

P2: Humpy, bush humpy yeah. Used to live ———you remember 20, other side of———

Elspbeth: Was that across the creek?

P2: Yes. Yes. **[unclear 05:34].**

P1: And even when we moved back, that was in the late 60s, early 70s those houses. And then we had those new dwellings come in place, sunrise camp over that way. People were allocated those brick houses back then now, and then that old area for the old huts sort of got abandoned. So, when they were allocated new houses they used to ———it was abandoned and eventually til everybody got allocated new houses.

P2: Then the iron started falling, wasn't used much.

P1: Because, new dwellings were a thing now.

Elspbeth: So, about when did they stop?

P1: That was 70s?

P2: 70s. After, from that green shed hut, we moved over to that brick house, remember I told you bout yesterday? Other side of the church. All those houses were the first ones built up. And how many upstairs were there? Two or three? **[unclear 06:31]** three, bout three, six?

P1: Nah, all [bout up em] 10, 10 along **[inaudible 06:34].**

P2: 10 this side and 10 that side.

[unsure 06:35 to 06:42]

P1: So, there was 10 I think. I think there were 10, 10 dwellings upstairs, elevated ones and 10 brick houses. They were built so half of those people from those huts were allocated those house, and got abandoned a bit and then we had in the 90s then these, the other houses weren't elevated ones.

P2: The brick house, the one I'm living in, those three big houses was built. P1:

But those huts were, yeah.

Elspbeth: Did the older people, did they like the huts? Or ———P1:

Yeah, yeah.

P2: Yeah, of course they did.

P1: Yeah, we enjoyed living in that green thing it was so much fun, even though we had no electricity.

P2: We used to make fire, have shower with hot water bucket, fire. Just kerosene lamp, that's all.

Elspbeth: And everyone was together.

P2: Yeah, everyone was together. Each family group over there, we used to go visit, sit, sit down by the fire.

P1: It's a big difference now when we see, when houses are being allocated you know, not like back in the days where families used to be together now you've got families individual in different, different houses nowadays, so it's all apart.

Elspbeth: Everyone's separated.

P1: It is, back in the day it was so close. It was good.

Elspbeth: Has that made a difference?

P1: Big difference.

P1: Yeah, I reckon it made a big difference.

P1: But because now overcrowding issues and stuff, see we are now looking for new houses, for more houses now because of overcrowding stuff. But, back in the day overcrowding didn't matter to us, it was just part of our culture, it's how we lived. It still is.

Elspbeth: But that's changed? P2:

Yeah, it changed.

P1: Nup, it still is. Still now you've got 15, 20 people living in a house.

P2: Oh yeah, still family groups. Still can't let the family go away.

P1: It's still family groups, it's still there.

Elspbeth: Is that a problem? That people are so close together. Or is it just the housing? P1: Well, it is now for some people, it is now a problem because you've got toilets and stuff being blocked because there's too many people using and ———— it is, it is now a problem. But some people still see it as the way.

P2: You know one being family keeping together safely.

Elspbeth: I can see how the huts would be easier then because the toilets are outside and ———

P1: Yeah, yeah, yeah that's the difference now. And we make fire and there's water there all the time and ———— whereas these days we have a big, 20 people staying in a house it is so a problem now. Because everything's wrong, we got toilet stuff now and hot water and all that; lotta hot water's been used, and now we have to pay for electricity and power. That's all coming in place now, so that is hard, that's why some people prefer you go and get a housing application and get your own house so that, that way you know ———— so that's happening now.

Elspbeth: and people are separate.

P2: Whereas before, like them old tin house aye people used to move one family group there, one family group, one family group, all in their own tribe.

Elspbeth: Do you think it's ———— people like the houses now? Or could they improve them?

P2: They can improve I reckon.

P1: Nah. We sort of like but we still need improvements, I reckon. Yeah, on more, on new dwellings. I don't need three bedrooms I think we're looking at four bedrooms now, cause we've got extended family. Families who've got big families, you know?

P2: And you've got the little ones [here], the younger ones. Elspbeth:

Do the younger ones know much about the huts?

P2: Yeah, I speak to mine and they learn that from my sister when she does cultural teaching.

P1: Yeah, I'm a language and culture teacher so I talk a lot about the history, especially all that old Bamyili area, so they know. **[10:08]**

P2: It's good that my sister does that during the cultural teaching.

P1: It's important.

Elspbeth: That's really good. So, do you think they should stay there? What's left. P2:

Yeah aye, yeah.

P1: Those huts. I reckon there as a reminder, even though it's been renovated and changed a bit, but yeah. If only we could have those proper ones that ———— oh, it would be.

Elspbeth: Yeah, like that one there so that everyone could see what it was like.

P1: Yeah, a replica. Not a replica but the original one if it was only still standing there!

Elspbeth: I know, tell me about it.

P2: Is [there still one bala bin this side?] where [name retracted] mob, where [name retracted] and all **[unclear 10:56]** stayed? I don't know why they bin ———

P1: I don't know why ———

P2: We should still keep that, aye.

P1: There was one standing there and they'd bin still using it, they bin living in it.

Elspbeth: Really?

P1: Yeah.

Elspbeth: Does it have power or water?

P1: No, they ran a long extension cord that they could find and plug it from their family's place (laughs) to get power.

Elspbeth: Really!

P1: Yeah! (laughs).

P2: Whereas our time, we didn't care about power, heat, nothing we just, I don't know, enjoyed it and liked it. Even though it was just a one little ——— Elspbeth: Were your parents okay with it?

P2: Yeah!

Elspbeth: I don't think I expected people to have such fond memories of the huts.

P2: We had that uh ——— it was a slab thing. We just had, in order to make fire we had to go and make fire outside. Sometimes, we used to make fire in the middle.

P2: Yeah, mum and dad used to put that old iron, and just put fire on top.

P1: In the house.

P2: when it was cold.

P1: Or when it was raining. It was raining outside, we used to have fire inside and we would open the windows for the smoke to come out so that worked really well!

P2: Yeah! In the rain. We used to put the wood inside before it rained.

P1: Keep the wood inside and, yeah.

P2: I don't know, we just liked it!

P1: Just one door, and just three windows!

P2: No complaints, no anything. We just loved sleeping in those little huts, those little tin house.

Elspbeth: And did it change the way people used the house space? Before and after the huts? Like, cooking and cleaning, did the women do that? Did the men do that?

P2: Both, aye.

P1: Men get the firewood, but the ladies would do the cooking and stuff but for kangaroo and bush tucker men would cook as well.

Elspbeth: Okay, so like the meat and stuff?

P1: Yeah, cause they have to ———— the men's job was to take out the intestines, cut it out.

P2: **[unclear 12:59]** skin him, burn the fur.

Elspbeth: Before the huts as well, that was their job?

P1: That was, yeah. I mean even when the huts were still ———— all the corrugated iron houses were there they still used to do that!

Elspbeth: Is that the same now as well?

P1: Well, yeah if we're lucky enough to get kangaroo.

Elspbeth: Do women now do cooking and cleaning? Or do men help as well?

P1: Both.

P2: Bit of both.

Elspbeth: That's really good. And what do you think Barunga needs to be better in the future, for people?

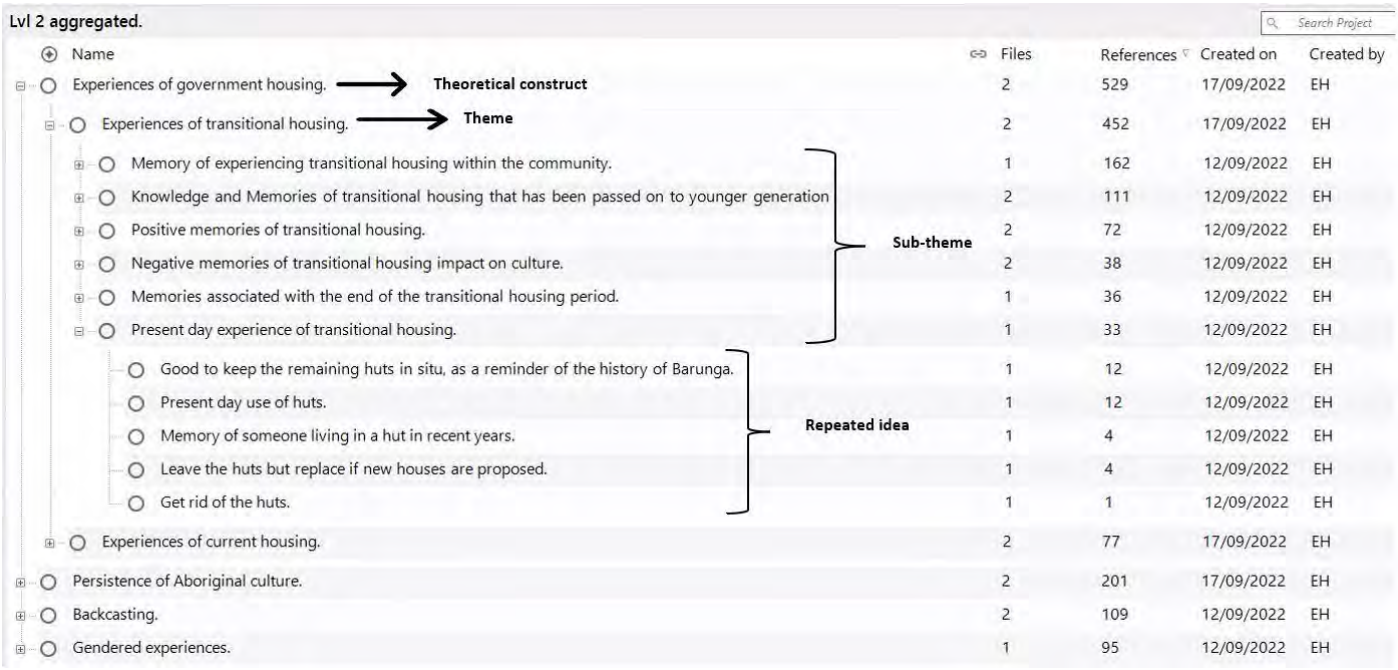
P2: I said more houses, I reckon.

P1: I'd like to see more houses. More houses, this time with four rooms. And quality houses, you know? Proper house. Good houses. I reckon that's what we need more, make the improvement of our community, more houses. And more space.

[13:48]

[End yarn].

Appendix 4: Example of NVivo coding



Final transcript data as coded in NVivo.