



LIGHTNING RIDGE COMMUNITY WORKING PARTY

HOUSING and ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PLAN

MARCH 2022



MURDI PAAKI
REGIONAL
ASSEMBLY

Cover image: Coocoran Lake during a wet season, 21st May 2011
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Murdi Paaki Services Ltd
45 Bathurst Street
Cobar NSW 2835
T: 02 6879 8100 or 0438 602 246 E: admin@mpsa.com.au

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4	Amendments incorporated	9 th Mar 2022	KC
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**LIGHTNING RIDGE COMMUNITY
WORKING PARTY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

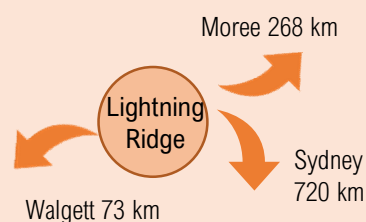


Lightning Ridge

Housing and Environmental Health Plan Executive Summary

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan provides a Master Plan for housing, infrastructure and housing-related human services for the Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge. The Master Plan is based on a body of evidence outlined in this Executive Summary. Much community input is drawn from the Household Survey organised by Murdi Paaki Services, and from the Lightning Ridge CWP's Community Action Plan. This Plan describes the current situation and proposes measures to improve the state and supply of housing, the way it is allocated and managed, and what needs to be done in the future to meet community needs for housing, wrap-around services and economic development. The Executive Summary begins with some facts about the community, looks at the housing situation, then presents the key points of the Master Plan. The Plan belongs to the Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge

Where we are to be found?



The Lightning Ridge climate is hot and dry. The number of days with temperatures $>35^{\circ}\text{C}$ is predicted to increase by 30-40 days by 2070

About the community:



Aboriginal population = 30% of total population of 1,441 persons

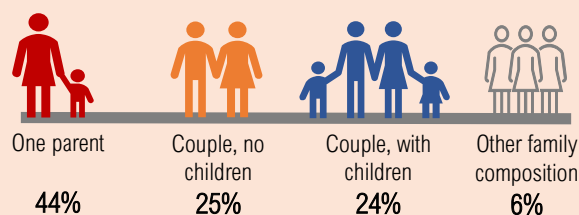
Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults



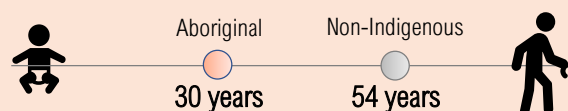
31% of the Aboriginal population is aged under 15 years



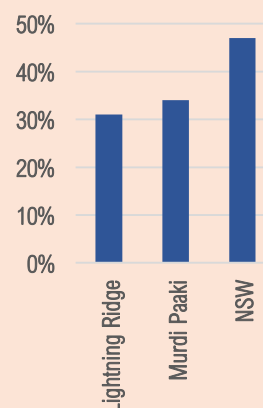
Family household composition



Median age of the population



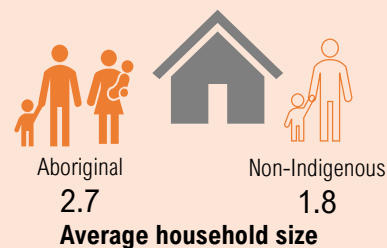
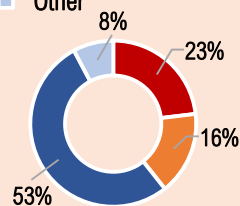
Employment to population ratio



Lightning Ridge

Tenure type (from Census)

- Owners
- Private renters
- Social housing renters
- Other

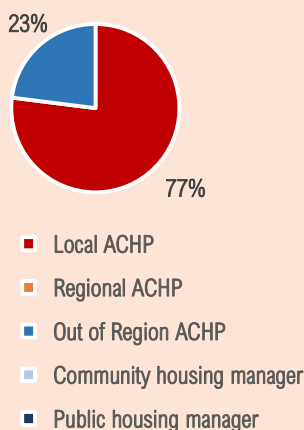


Facts about housing in our community:



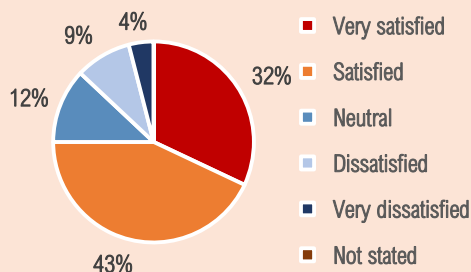
On Census night, 19% of private dwellings were not occupied

Social housing manager(s)

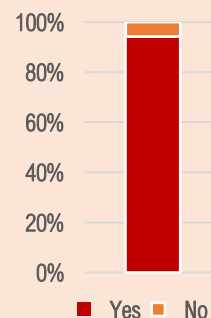


51% of households lived in the same house 5 years before the MRH&BC

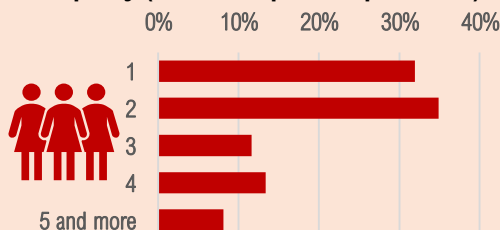
Satisfaction with housing manager



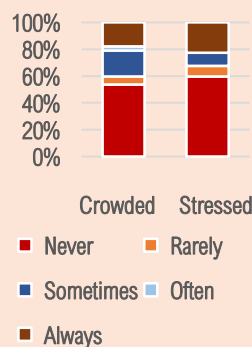
Feeling safe



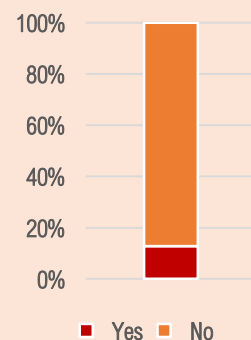
Occupancy (number of persons per house)



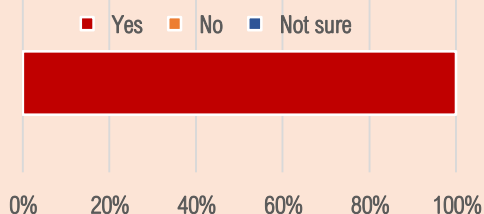
Households feeling



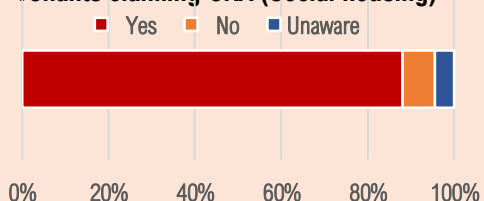
Households giving shelter



Tenants with a tenancy agreement



Tenants claiming CRA (Social housing)



REASONS FOR LIVING IN LIGHTNING RIDGE



Lightning Ridge

ESTIMATE OF HOUSING NEED

Predicted housing need

	Bedrooms			
	2	3	4	5
Families	3	2	-	-
Older persons	3	-	-	-
Young persons	13	-	-	-
Homeless families	-	-	-	-
Total dwellings	19	2	-	-

Note: ACHIF funding to BHCL for new supply

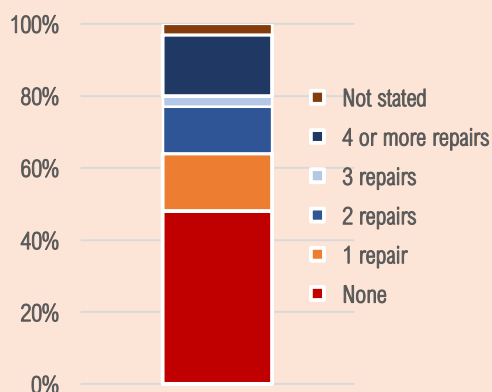
Home modifications

Required	5
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Extra bedrooms

	Bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Estimated	5	2	-

Tenant reported condition



Housing repairs (Number of properties)

Degree of work	Number
↗	8
↗ ↗	77
↗ ↗ ↗	26
↗ ↗ ↗ ↗	1
↗ ↗ ↗ ↗ ↗	3

Note: ACHIF funding to BHCL and LRLALC for r&r.

MASTER PLAN - HOUSING



- Advocate through MPRA and the RAHLA for greater levels of consultation and accountability by the AHO to the Region and CWP in all of its decision-making, planning and project roll-out processes in matters relating to the supply and maintenance of Aboriginal social housing
- Establish a line of regular and formal communication which allows information flow to the CWP on ACHP governance, operations and performance issues, including reporting on asset condition
- As part of the MPRH&BC project co-design process, conduct a rent review which accounts for housing condition, level of amenity and higher costs of living in a remote community. In view of the changing climate, request AHO to guarantee that, in addition to rents, all houses will be energy efficient and power and water charges affordable
- Housing supply and mix does not cater adequately for young individuals, older persons, families and the homeless. Advocate for supply to be increased by the number and mix of properties estimated by the HEHP as a minimum and prioritise local community members in the allocation process
- Discuss with Walgett Shire Council options for future land releases and strategies for further housing development
- Negotiate with the NSW Government to ensure Lightning Ridge LALC's backlog of land claims is dealt with promptly to increase opportunities for housing development
- Carry out independent property inspections, secure adequate investment, and carry out repairs, upgrades and extensions using only values-aligned contractors with the capacity to carry out work professionally to a high standard
- Train local Aboriginal workers to form the nucleus of a local trades workforce
- Maintain the role of MP TSEP in supporting tenants at risk of breach to retain tenancies, and to access human and other services necessary to support good physical and mental health and social and economic stability
- Undertake an assessment of the need for emergency accommodation: crisis accommodation, transit housing and/or short-term accommodation; quantify demand, prepare a feasibility study and advocate for building
- Arrange with AHO and/or IBA to deliver community information workshops in support of home ownership

Lightning Ridge

MASTER PLAN - INFRASTRUCTURE



Advocate with Walgett Shire Council for:

- Improved road maintenance and provision of kerb and guttering to established streets, including driveway crossings
- Installation of speed control devices in Black Prince Drive and Fantasia Street
- An audit and upgrading of streetlighting
- Introduction of a bulky waste pick up service

The Master Plan sets out the actions the CWP has adopted to secure a better future for the community. The actions come from the contributions of the community and from analysis of the gaps which prevent people from living healthy, prosperous and comfortable lives in Lightning Ridge. The actions written into this Executive Summary are shorthand versions of the actions in the Plan itself

MASTER PLAN - HUMAN SERVICES



- Ensure that service funding is allocated based on a realistic estimate of the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal population
- Foster a closer relationship between the CWP and all tiers of government to drive improvements in human services including a tighter focus on provider cooperation, service integration, performance and cost-effectiveness. Evaluate and review the role and operational objectives of the proliferation of human services providers across all sectors. Eliminate duplication and 'duck-shoving', address barriers and fill service gaps
- Where necessary, revise human services procurement practices to ensure stability, viability and continuity of community-approved providers. Involve the CWP in provider selection and performance reviews
- Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal community members in the health and human services sectors to improve cultural safety service quality and accessibility
- Expand the capacity, reach and role of MP TSEP so that team members can comfortably deliver or broker culturally safe services to meet community need across the service spectrum
- Build capacity of the community to participate in employment and economic development activities including addressing lack of accountability of Job Network providers and equipping young and not so young adults with skills to take positions in the health and human services sectors and in building trades
- Work with DCJ and DSS to ensure that appropriate services are available to all community members who need disability care and packaged aged care, that assessments are conducted within a reasonable timeframe, and to design and put in place accountability measures for service providers with regular feedback to MPRA and the CWP
- Negotiate through MPRA to secure a structural response to health workforce issues, including recruitment, rostering and retention, advocate for appointment of Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers to the Lightning Ridge MPS, and improve the community's ability to access universal and ACCHO-delivered health care services locally and regionally. Target mental health services for urgent strengthening
- Engage with DCJ, with the support of MPRA, to develop a locally-relevant solution and local infrastructure to meet the need for early childhood and family support services in Lightning Ridge, and improved support for families fostering children, and for children in Out of Home Care. Enliven the LRAC&FC with 100% Aboriginal staffing
- In collaboration with young people in the community and Walgett Shire Council, develop and implement a youth strategy, design and deliver youth programmes and diversionary initiatives from a dedicated youth centre

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Purpose of the plan	1
1.2	Governance arrangements	1
1.3	The bigger picture	2
2	BRIEF HISTORY	3
2.1	Information sources	3
2.2	Aboriginal ownership	3
2.3	Aboriginal people and the town of Lightning Ridge	5
3	GEOGRAPHY	7
3.1	Location	7
3.2	Access	7
3.3	Natural environment	7
3.4	Climate	8
3.5	Flooding and drainage	10
3.6	Native title	11
3.7	Sites of cultural significance	11
3.8	Economic geography	11
3.9	Design influences	12
4	THE POPULATION	13
4.1	Population profile	13
4.2	Educational status	16
4.3	Economic participation	18
4.4	Income	21
5	COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE	22
5.1	Lightning Ridge housing generally	22
5.2	A statistical comparative snapshot	22
5.3	Population mobility	24
5.4	The local housing market	24
5.5	Building activity	24
5.6	Aboriginal social housing	25
5.7	Housing assets	30
5.8	Summary findings of the MPRH&BC household survey	30
5.9	The experience of owners	32
5.10	The experience of private tenants	33
5.11	The experience of tenants renting Aboriginal social housing	33
5.12	Quantifying crowding	35
5.13	Evaluation of asset condition	36
5.14	Asset preservation	38
5.15	Homelessness	39
5.16	Evaluation of housing need	39
6	THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	41
6.1	Strategic planning	41
6.2	Planning controls	42
6.3	Municipal rates and charges	42

7	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE.....	45
7.1	Infrastructure accessibility.....	45
7.2	Infrastructure improvements	45
8	COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE.....	47
8.1	Community health profile summary.....	47
8.2	Health status – qualitative assessment	47
8.3	Health status – quantitative assessment.....	48
8.4	Available health services	53
9	HUMAN SERVICES	54
9.1	Human services target population	54
9.2	Human services in the community	54
10	COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES.....	58
10.1	Authority for change.....	58
10.2	Community priorities.....	58
10.3	Community engagement	58
11	MASTER PLAN	67
11.1	Aspiration.....	67
11.2	Cultural influences on decision-making.....	67
11.3	Master plan.....	67
11.4	Defining need for growth	73
11.5	Replacement housing	74
11.6	Housing extensions and modifications	74
11.7	Asset preservation	74
11.8	Tenant support and education	75
11.9	Home ownership	76
11.10	Emergency, short term and transitional accommodation	76
11.11	Infrastructure	76
11.12	Probable order of cost	76
11.13	Funding sources	77
11.14	Staging of works.....	77
11.15	Value-adding initiatives	77
12	REFERENCES.....	79

GLOSSARY

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHIF	Aboriginal Community Housing Investment Fund
ACHP	Aboriginal Community Housing Provider
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System
AHO	NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
APB	Aborigines Protection Board
BHCL	Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CAP	Community Action Plan
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Programme
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CWP	Community Working Party
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
DPIE	NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
HCP	Home Care Package
HEHP	Housing and Environmental Health Plan
HLP	Healthy Living Practices
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
IFD	Intensity Frequency Duration
ILOC	Indigenous Location
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LRAC&FC	Lightning Ridge Aboriginal Child and Family Centre
LRLALC	Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
MPRA	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
MPRH&BC	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium
MPRHC	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation
MPS	Murdi Paaki Services Limited
MP TSEP	Murdi Paaki Tenant Support and Education Programme
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
N-W NSW IREG	North-West NSW Indigenous Region
NSWALC	New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
OCHRE	Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment (NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Plan)
RAHLA	Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly
RaRMS	Rural and Remote Medical Services Ltd
SA1	Statistical Area 1
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SSC	State Suburb
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan has been prepared by the Lightning Ridge Community Working Party with the help of Murdi Paaki Services Ltd. The Lightning Ridge Community Working Party acknowledges the contributions of all community members and others who participated in the development of this Plan through offering their advice, knowledge and encouragement.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge and respect the efforts of those community members seeking to improve the wellbeing of all Aboriginal families and individuals living in our community.

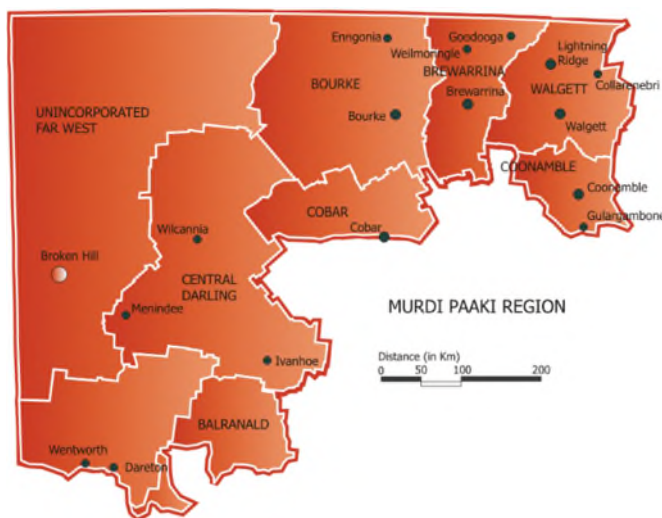
For the purposes of this Plan, an Aboriginal person is a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (person) and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the plan

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan (HEHP) is prepared by the Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge, in north-western NSW. The Lightning Ridge community is one of sixteen larger communities within the Murdi Paaki Region as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Murdi Paaki Region



- Contribute to a review of requirements for financial wellbeing of the Aboriginal social housing sector;
- Provide an informed basis for planning for future housing need and development, and associated value-adding initiatives; and
- Describe a high-level community-led approach to project master planning to shape the future of Aboriginal housing and related human services in Lightning Ridge.

The Plan describes the aspirations of Aboriginal people living in Lightning Ridge and outlines a strategic approach to achieving the community's goals. Planning is the necessary first step in a programme aimed at achieving better housing and environmental health outcomes by building and improving housing and environmental health infrastructure, together with related services and amenities in the community. The Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge, and particularly existing and future tenant households, will benefit directly through having the foundation of a more strategic, informed and innovative approach to resourcing and managing the Aboriginal social housing sector in the community.

The purpose of the HEHP is to:

- In conjunction with data collected through the Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium (MPRH&BC) project and described in the *Social Housing Providers and Assets Audit Report*, establish an evidence-base to guide the way in which housing policy is set and decisions are made in respect of Aboriginal social housing provision and management, and responses to environmental risk;
- Describe the current situation in relation to housing Aboriginal individuals and families in Lightning Ridge;
- Gauge interest in home ownership;
- To the extent possible, report on the condition of Aboriginal social housing assets;
- Give an assessment of 'wrap-around' human services;
- Determine the need for and form of tenant support and education services;

1.2 Governance arrangements

HEHPs are an initiative of the Murdi Paaki Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly (RAHLA), a partnership of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) and the NSW Government created through the OCHRE Local Decision-Making policy and directed by the Ministerial Agreement to improve Aboriginal social housing outcomes in the Murdi Paaki Region.

The RAHLA sees the preparation of HEHPs in all Murdi Paaki communities as a priority project under the Agreement and has authorised Murdi Paaki Services Ltd (MPS) to carry out the project to begin the process of developing the evidence base for regional policy setting and decision making as a vital step in rebuilding the social housing sector and the economic capabilities of the Region.

The Agreement sets a framework for the active participation of Murdi Paaki communities, through elected representative peak bodies, in the development and delivery of better services, and the building of individual and organisational capacity to raise skills, knowledge and competencies. In this regard, the Agreement recognises the status of the Lightning Ridge Community Working Party (CWP) as the principal point of contact for conducting business within the Aboriginal community and for leading the development of the HEHP planning process at community level.

- Work to ensure that assets are maintained in good condition in the long term;
- Ensure that tenants most at risk of a tenancy breach can access the services they need to sustain their tenancies;
- Provide greater opportunity for Aboriginal persons and families to engage with employment and education support that enables housing independence;
- Establish the level of financial investment in respect of capital and recurrent costs; and
- Set the foundation for value-add initiatives.

1.3 The bigger picture

This HEHP is intended to supplement the work undertaken to date through the MPRH&BC project with more detailed and targeted enquiry at community level.

Plans have been produced to a similar degree of detail for all communities across the Murdi Paaki Region, providing the opportunity for the MPRA to assess communities' strengths and needs both as individual communities and comparatively, in relation to each other. The Plans acknowledge the reality of the experiences of Aboriginal people living in far western NSW and form a resource for intelligent leadership and an integrated, creative response which places communities, to the greatest extent possible, as the principal drivers of sustainable local action.

Put together, it is hoped the HEHPs will:

- Reinststate and strengthen the capacity of Murdi Paaki regional and local Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) to ensure that all Aboriginal people living in Aboriginal social housing in the community can receive culturally appropriate, professional and sustainable tenancy and asset management services from ACHPs which themselves are viable and supported;
- Increase access, opportunity and choice in affordable, healthy and safe housing for Aboriginal persons and families living in Murdi Paaki communities through growing the size and mix of the ACHP asset base;

2 BRIEF HISTORY

2.1 Information sources

Material in this Chapter is drawn from a variety of sources, including Heather Goodall's doctoral dissertation (*A History of Aboriginal Communities in New South Wales, 1909 – 1939*) and her 1996 publication, *Invasion to Embassy*; Judith Burns's doctoral dissertation (*Routes and Branches: Residential mobility among Aboriginal people in Western NSW*), the *Walgett Shire Council Aboriginal Heritage Study*, the *Brewarrina Shire Community-based Heritage Study*, the *Report of the Community Based Heritage Study of Walgett Shire*, and *A Thematic History of Walgett Shire*.

2.2 Aboriginal ownership

Lightning Ridge is located within the country belonging to the Yuwaalaraay people (also variously spelled Euahlayi, Ualaroi, Wollaroi). The town itself is of recent development relative to other settlements in the Murdi Paaki Region, having been founded in the early decades of the twentieth century. Perhaps because of this, there are no discrete settlements or former reserves associated directly with the town of Lightning Ridge itself, although the historical Angledool Aboriginal Station was located only 50 km away. According to the mapping of anthropologist Normal Tindale, Yuwaalaraay country is situated on the 'Narran River from Narran Lake (Terewah) to Angledool; southeast to near Walgett; on Birrie and Bokhara rivers, southwest to Brewarrina; their western boundary fell between the Culgoa and Birrie rivers.' This places Lightning Ridge towards the eastern boundary of Yuwaalaraay country. As with other language groups, the country of Yuwaalaraay is profoundly storied, with creation accounts describing the way in which significant landscape features such as Narran Lake were created by Baiame and other ancestral beings.

Evidence of pre-contact Aboriginal society indicates that different language groups lived in different ways; either moving through their own country on a path which took them to certain places at particular times, or as fairly settled communities who practised a form of agriculture.

Country was divided in such a way that boundaries and localities could be readily identified by the practice of naming of landscape features. Aboriginal language groups had very complex kinship systems which controlled the way people were able to marry, and shaped formal relationships between family members and others.

The Aboriginal way of life was devastated by the arrival of Europeans in the region. European explorers Captain Charles Sturt and Major Thomas Mitchell opened the region to Europeans over a period of less than twenty years, between 1828 and 1845 and, in doing so, produced some of the earliest European accounts of Aboriginal culture and connections to country. As the pastoral industry expanded, the Aboriginal economy changed as a consequence of increasing difficulty in maintaining traditional practices, including land management activity. Aboriginal people were employed in pastoral or domestic servitude living in camps on grazing properties so had access to traditional country; an arrangement which had benefits both to traditional owners, who could continue to fulfil cultural obligations, and to pastoralists, who had access to essential labour. Descriptions of the traditional lifeworld of Yuwaalaraay were recorded by European professional and amateur anthropologists they encountered: AW Howitt, for example, and more particularly, Katie Langloh-Parker who lived at Bangate Station and published detailed accounts of Yuwaalaraay culture and the oral tradition of dreaming stories. It is certain, though, that by the time these accounts were written, the colonisation of Yuwaalaraay country, and the sedentarising impact that it had, would already have wrought change in the relationship between people and country.

Aboriginal property rights first received government recognition in the 1840s and, in 1850, the colonial government authorised creation of thirty-five small reserves across NSW. One was located north of Brewarrina on the boundary between Morowari and Yuwaalaraay country, but precise locations are not known. Aboriginal people continued to defend their land but the settler response was brutal: the Yuwaalaraay and their neighbours were victims of at least three massacres in the region: at Angledool; on

Currawillinghi Station and at Hospital Creek, where, in 1860, about 400 people were shot by stockmen on the Quantambone Plain north of Brewarrina.

In 1882, the Aborigines Protection Act passed through the NSW Parliament, and a Protector of Aborigines was appointed. This had ramifications for Aboriginal people which lasted directly until the 1960s, and which still affects the way Aboriginal families live their lives. The effect of that Act, and particularly of subsequent amendments, was that Aboriginal people were made wards of the state, and lost autonomy to make decisions about the way they lived their lives. Aboriginal people were robbed of the right to decide where to live, whom and when to marry, how to raise their children, what jobs to take, and every other facet of existence which anyone else would take for granted. The ironically named Protector of Aborigines commenced the establishment of reserves and government ration stations for Aboriginal people in the 1880s.

Many of the Yuwaalaraay people were employed on local stations in a variety of capacities ranging from station hands and stockmen to cooks and domestics. Because of their independence, they were initially insulated to some extent from the excesses of the Aborigines Protection Board (APB). An area at New Angledool was excised from a pastoral property in 1906 and reserved 'for use by Aborigines' with the intention for providing for the education of Aboriginal children in response to their formal exclusion from the public education system. The reserve effectively functioned as the Angledool pastoral property camp until, in 1912, the area was formalised as the Angledool Aboriginal Station, a managed reserve under the control of an APB manager.

Amendments to the Aborigines Protection Act in 1909, which came into force in 1910, had put in place the legislative basis for draconian control of Aboriginal individuals and families. The Aboriginal population of the Station in 1912 was 109, of whom 52 were receiving rations; in 1915 the population was 53, with 48 receiving rations. Numerous people had returned to station camps and pastoral employment, and were thus self-supporting. From 1915, further amendments to

the Act provided for the wholesale removal of children. In the period from 1912 to 1921 alone, 27 Aboriginal children were stolen from their families at the Angledool Government Station to become wards of the APB. During the 1920s, exclusion of Aboriginal children from schools in Walgett and other communities, and unease about the APB's own ability to control Aboriginal families living in pastoral and town camps, led the APB to transfer children from those communities to dormitories at Angledool, and their parents naturally followed.

Yuwaalaraay people, together with their Gamilaraay/Gomeri and Morowari/Murrawari neighbours, continued to live at Angledool until the 1930s, when the Aborigines Protection Board began to implement a policy of concentration. This policy involved the creation of a few large Government reserves such as those at Brewarrina and Menindee, and the selling-off of smaller, more scattered stations which were located, generally, on the traditional country of the language groups who lived there. The residents of the smaller stations were forcibly removed to the larger reserves by means of trains and cattle trucks. In May 1936, over 100 people residing at Angledool Mission were forcibly removed by semi-trailer to Brewarrina Mission, situated on country belonging to the Ngemba people. They had no choice in the matter, and their houses were burned to stop the people from moving home. The APB's justification for removing the population was that it could treat eye disease, rife in the Angledool population, and improve housing conditions more efficiently at Brewarrina. This whole process was extremely traumatic, and caused great sorrow, illness and death among the Yuwaalaraay people. As recently as the first years of this century, people who had been children at the time vividly recalled having been forced at gunpoint to leave their home. Heartrending accounts exist of Granny Ellen, the Angledool matriarch, having just arrived and having gathered with her people around fire buckets, rise and begin dancing and singing in Yuwaalaraay to mark their arrival and comfort her people.

Following the removal to Brewarrina, some Angledool people did leave the Brewarrina Government Station to move home to Angledool,

where employment conditions had improved; others moved to Collarenebri, Walgett and Lightning Ridge, where their descendants now form the nucleus of the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal community. There are still strong linkages between Lightning Ridge and Brewarrina, partly due to the close relations forged during the time of the Brewarrina Aboriginal Station; and, consequently, ongoing movement between the two communities. Because of these relationships, there are also members of language groups and nations other than the Yuwaalaraay living at Lightning Ridge.

2.3 Aboriginal people and the town of Lightning Ridge

Aboriginal people have been moving into Lightning Ridge to live since soon after the town was formalised in the first three decades of the twentieth century. According to the *Report of the Community-based Heritage study of Walgett Shire*:

Opal was discovered at Lightning Ridge in the 1880s. Prospecting and mining was begun in 1901-02 by Jack Murray and Charles Nettleton. By 1905 a rush for opals was under way, focussed on Sims Hill, and a small settlement had sprung up near the tank at Wallangulla Station. There were two streets with 23 timber buildings and a similar number of tents by 1906. Sanitation was a problem, and in 1908 surveyor A.W. Mullen laid out the New Town, bounded by Kopi, Gem, Harlequin and Onyx Streets. There was some resistance to moving, but between 1910 and 1912 most of the settlement had done so. Most of the commercial and service buildings were erected in Morilla Street.

Following a period of decline in the 1950s, provision of modern infrastructure in the 1960s, together with a mining boom in the 1980s, led to a substantial population increase over subsequent years, as well as burgeoning tourist traffic.

Yuwaalaraay residents of Lightning Ridge continue to live on their own country. Other Aboriginal residents have moved into the town from different communities: at times, moving back and forth to participate in the opal mining economy, before

settling permanently in the community. From the 1970s, following on from the repeal of the Aborigines protection legislation in the aftermath of the 1967 Referendum, community owned and controlled organisations began to form to provide services to the community. Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd was founded in 1979; the organisation has been successful over the ensuing four decades in providing social housing and enterprise development in the community. In 1984, following proclamation of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, the Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council was established as a statutory body. The Land Council has principal responsibility for cultural services; it also provides social housing for the community.

In 1996, under Native Title legislation, Michael Anderson, lodged a claim on the behalf of the Euaylay-i people to 4,107 square kilometres of land around Lightning Ridge. In 2002, though, the High Court handed down a decision that all native title rights had been extinguished to lands held under Western Lands Leases, and that the leases conferred exclusive possession on the lessees. This decision was a serious blow to the interests of the Yuwaalaraay people of Lightning Ridge.

The Lightning Ridge Community Working Party was established as the peak Aboriginal representative body in the community in 2003. The CWP's Community Action Plan (CAP) identifies the CWP's mission as: *'to enhance the social, economic and well-being status of the Aboriginal people of Lightning Ridge by acknowledging our culture and teaching the next generation as well as looking after our health and working with our community.'* The CWP *'sets community priorities to guide external agencies such as government departments, Non-Government Organisations and the private sector in developing policies and programs for the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal Community'*.

Aboriginal-owned businesses in Lightning Ridge are perhaps more prominent than elsewhere in the Region. Barriekneal, for example, owns and operates a fuel station and the Black Opal Motel. The late Roy and June Barker developed the Goondee Keeping Place as a cultural and historical museum and artefacts business, and this

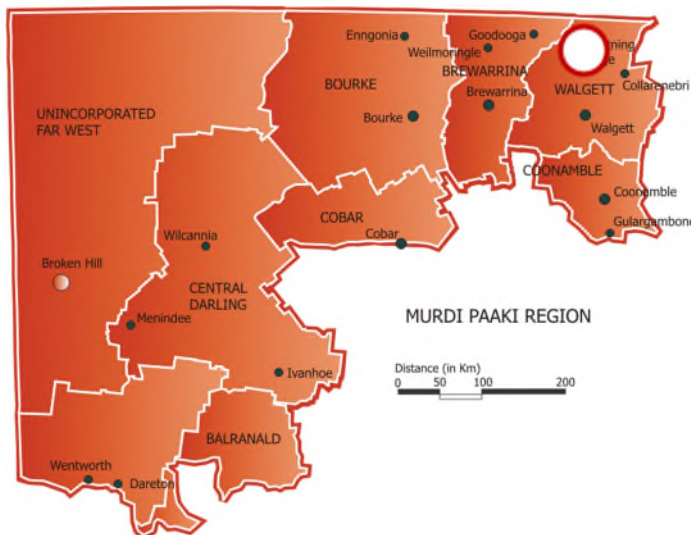
enterprise is now operated by their son and daughter.

3 GEOGRAPHY

3.1 Location

The town of Lightning Ridge is located in the west of New South Wales, 718 km to the north-west of Sydney by road and 70 kms to the south of the Queensland border. The nearest town is Walgett, 75 km to the south while the closest major service centre is Moree 268 km to the east on sealed road via Collarenebri. Lightning Ridge is classified as a district centre and is within Walgett Local Government Area (LGA). The location of Lightning Ridge is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Locality



3.2 Access

Road access to Lightning Ridge from Walgett is via the single lane Castlereagh Highway which continues past the town to the village of Hebel on the Queensland border. An unsealed, dry weather road connects Lightning Ridge to Collarenebri.

A public transport service between Lightning Ridge and Sydney is provided by the daily Explorer rail service from Sydney to Dubbo with onward travel by coach. An air passenger service is operated by Air Link twice weekly from Dubbo via Walgett.

3.3 Natural environment

Lightning Ridge lies in the central north region of the Murray Darling Basin and within the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion which stretches over most of the upper catchments of the Darling and Barwon Rivers in northern NSW and southern Queensland and extends south in the form of floodplains and channels to Dubbo and along the Darling River to Wilcannia and beyond. The Lightning Ridge area is also sited on the south-eastern corner of the Great Artesian Basin. Landforms are the result of erosion and sediment deposition from past and present watercourses.

The landscape is a series of overlapping, low gradient alluvial fans forming a floodplain with little topographic relief and ridge country of sedimentary rock emerging as low weathered sandstone rises in places around Lightning Ridge, sometimes capped with conglomerates, sometimes hardened to silcrete. Bedrock underlies the sedimentary formation. Opal is generally found between 6 m and 18 m below ground level in deeply weathered claystone which forms a distinct layer below overlying sandstone and conglomerates. The sandy and gravelly soils have low nutrient levels and drain quickly and sometimes feature small clay depressions or box hollows. Box hollows retain water after heavy rainfall events, providing ephemeral water sources for all fauna, and semi-aquatic habitat for frogs, invertebrates, waterbirds and plants.

The floodplain wetland complex is associated with a series of ephemeral streams of which The Big Warrambool, to the south of Lightning Ridge, is the most prominent. Two ephemeral lakes, Coocoran Lake to the west of the town and Angledool Lake, exist in the ridge country. The minor ephemeral watercourses are intermittently flooded by the Narran River and by localised runoff. When flooded, all the lakebeds are connected to each other and the Narran River.

The town is positioned on a red/brown stony ridge: elevation in the centre of town being 30 m above the surrounding floodplains which are approximately 140 m above sea level. The town is

peppered with mine shafts and white mullock heaps.

The landscape around Lightning Ridge is modified by the clearing of land for small mining operations and to improve agricultural productivity. Remnants of indigenous vegetation are characterised by mature woodland of silver leaf ironbark, white cypress pine, western bloodwood and mulga on the ridges with bumble box in box hollows; poplar box on lower slopes of loamy soils, and coolabah and river red gum on low-lying drainage plains with cracking clay soils, or black soils, that are periodically inundated. Habitat loss and encroachment by feral animals have depleted the range of fauna species and numbers supported by these woodland communities.

Grasslands and shrubland species are dominated by native grasses, mainly spinifex, and tall wilga shrubs. The spinifex community supports small mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates. Vegetation cover is sparse as is leaf litter leaving bare soil as the dominant ground surface. If land and stock management is not pro-active, disturbance of bare soils will generate local dust if meteorological conditions are adverse.

3.4 Climate

Lightning Ridge's climate may be described as hot, dry semi-arid. Recording of weather data commenced at the Lightning Ridge Visitor Information Centre (048243) in 1997 giving a short period of record to date. The nearest BoM station recording continuously over a long period of time is the Collarenebri Albert Street station (048031), the record for which commenced in 1884. The station is 59 km east of Lightning Ridge.

Mean monthly temperatures, and highest and lowest temperatures, are shown in Figure 3.2. Mean daytime temperatures range between highs of 36°C in summer and 4°C in winter.

Figure 3.2: Temperatures

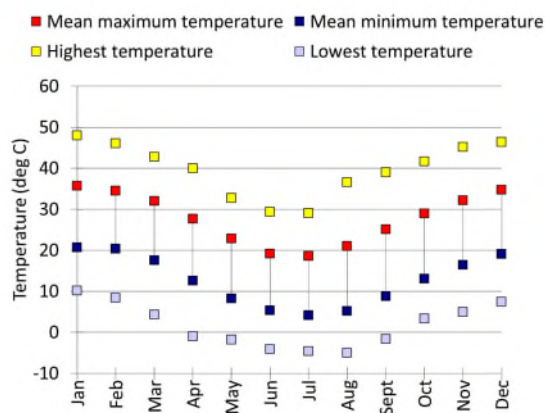


Figure 3.3: Trend in highest monthly temperature

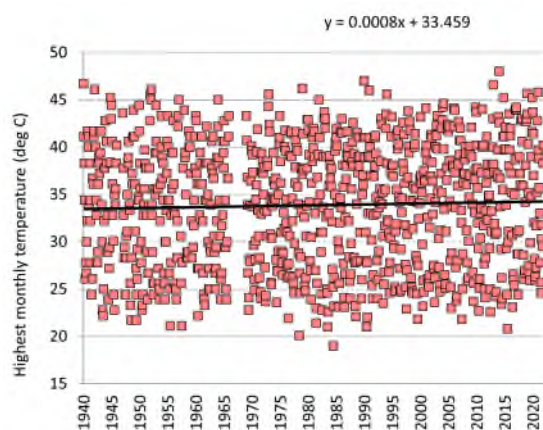
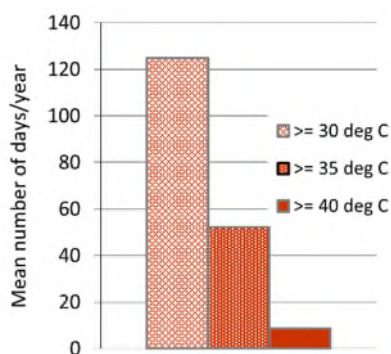
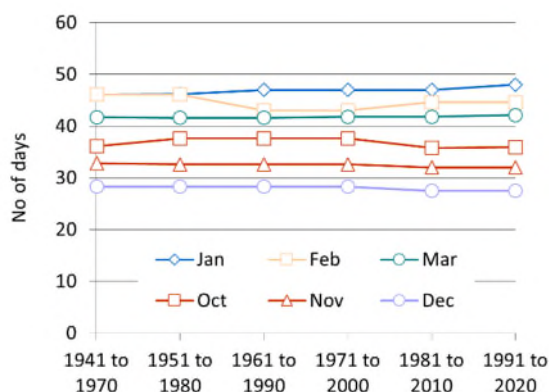


Figure 3.3 indicates that highest monthly temperatures experienced in the district have remained stable over the period from 1940. As shown by Figure 3.4, the mean number of days per year already exceeding $\geq 35^\circ$ is 54 over the period of record. The NSW Office of Environment & Heritage is projecting in its summary report, *Far West Climate Change Snapshot*, November 2014, the annual mean number of days with temperatures greater than 35°C to increase by over 40 days by 2060-2079. This is over and above the corresponding mean of 54.7 days for the period 1991 to 2020. The inevitable conclusion is that the district can expect extremes of temperature for longer with further exaggerated extremes and a consequent effect upon the ability of residents to live and work productively for longer periods of the year.

Figure 3.4 Mean number of hot days

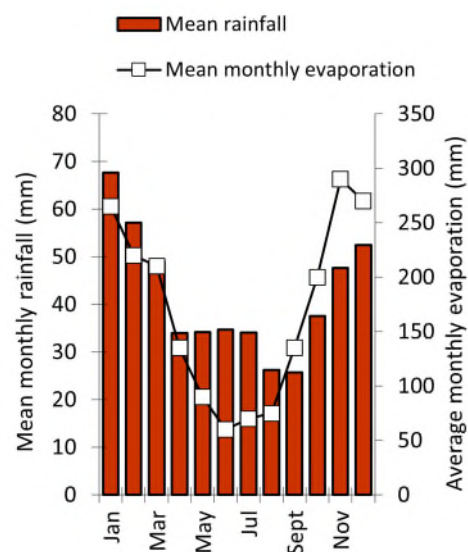


This projection is not yet reflected by Figure 3.5 which illustrates no increase in the mean number of days with temperatures $\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$ for all summer months for progressive 30-year time periods.

Figure 3.5 Number of days with temperatures $\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$ 

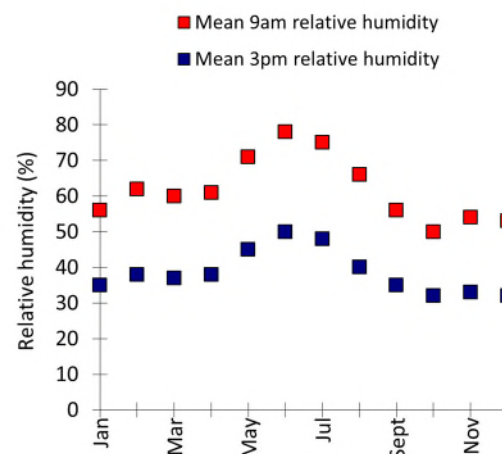
Mean annual rainfall calculated from nearly 140 years of record at Collarenebri between 1884 and 2021 is 495 mm. Monthly rainfall distribution is shown at Figure 3.6. Average monthly pan evaporation estimated from the Bureau of Meteorology is well in excess of the mean monthly rainfall throughout the year.

Figure 3.6: Rainfall and monthly pan evaporation



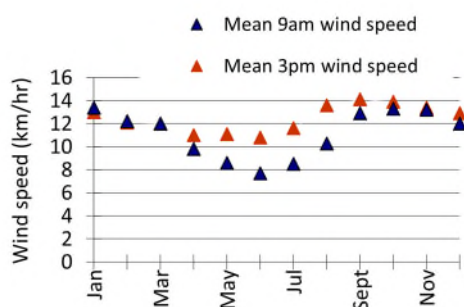
Change in relative humidity over the year is shown in Figure 3.7. Mean humidity is typically above 40% in the morning, the threshold accepted as ideal for human health and comfort, for all the year, but reduces to below 40% into the afternoon in the summer months.

Figure 3.7: Relative humidity



Wind is predominantly from the east and north-east in the morning (9.00 am) generating monthly mean wind speeds shown in Figure 3.8. Wind moves to into the south-westerly quarter in the afternoon.

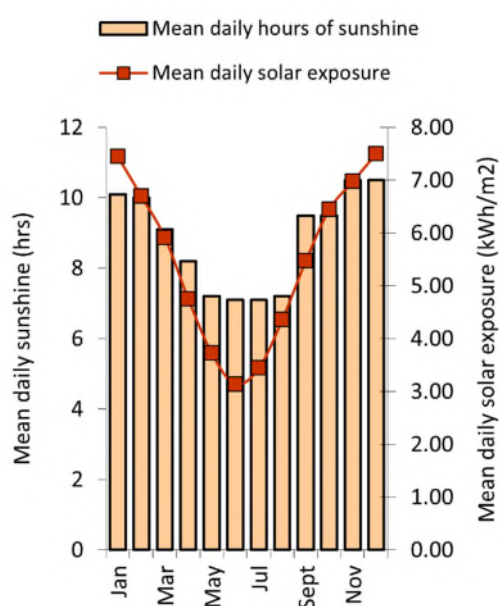
Figure 3.8: Wind speeds



Maximum wind gust speed is not recorded.

Mean daily hours of sunshine and solar exposure is given by Figure 3.9. Solar energy available to residential solar PV installations varies from a low 3.1 kWh/m² in winter to a high of 7.5 kWh/m² at the height of summer.

Figure 3.9: Sunshine and solar exposure



3.5 Flooding and drainage

Heavy rainfall in the upper reaches of the Murray-Darling catchment can cause closure of the Castlereagh Highway north of Walgett and isolate the town for extended periods but the town is not

directly affected by flooding. Local roads are subject to flash flooding in heavy localised rainfall events with stormwater backing up the drainage system. Table 3.1 provides the highest daily rainfall on record at Collarenebri and the year of occurrence for each month. The highest daily rainfall from the shorter period of record at the Lightning Ridge Visitor Information Centre station is 79.6 mm in March 2000.

Table 3.1: Highest daily rainfalls (mm) (048031)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
312	158.2	128.2	170.2	82.8	71.8
1974	1976	2000	1959	1995	2016
Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
64.8	57.2	66.2	63	97.3	103.6
1988	1939	2011	1910	1942	1917

Rainfall intensity-frequency-duration (IFD) values are shown at Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Rainfall IFD (29.4375 (S), 147.9875 E)

Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)				
Duration	10%	5%	2%	1%
1 min	4.16	4.92	5.95	6.76
2 min	7.23	8.59	10.2	11.4
3 min	9.99	11.8	14.1	15.8
4 min	12.4	14.7	17.6	19.8
5 min	14.6	17.2	20.7	23.4
10 min	22.7	26.8	32.5	37.0
20 min	32.2	38.1	46.3	52.9
30 min	38.0	45.1	54.8	62.5
1 hour	48.1	57.1	69.1	78.6
2 hours	58.3	69.3	83.7	95.1
6 hours	77.1	91.3	111	127
12 hours	92.3	109	135	156
18 hours	103	122	152	177
24 hours	111	132	165	193
48 hours	132	159	200	234
72 hours	144	174	218	257
96 hours	151	183	229	269
120 hours	156	188	235	276

3.6 Native title

No native title claims have been lodged for lands in the vicinity of Lightning Ridge. Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) have decisions on approximately twenty land claims pending.

3.7 Sites of cultural significance

A preliminary search of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System (AHIMS) for sites of cultural significance within the rectangle formed by latitude and longitude 29.4466S, 147.9526E and 29.4105S, 148.0096E indicates the existence of recorded Aboriginal site(s) in or near the above location. These sites are often a complex of different site types such as an open campsite, quarry and modified tree. In the interests of sites preservation, and as a condition of accessing the data, no details are included in this Plan other than to note its existence. Lightning Ridge provides several sources of outcropping silcrete suitable for knapping while the Narran-Warrambool Reserve presents a rich cultural landscape with a high potential for the presence of subsurface and surface Aboriginal cultural remains.

3.8 Economic geography

Lightning Ridge is a unique town with an eclectic culture influenced by the ethnic mix of residents and the lifestyles adopted. The town is famous as the world's major source of gem quality black opal and its economy is based primarily on independent operator, small-scale mining with tourism as an allied contributor. Most opal mining occurs in defined Opal Prospecting Areas in the Narran-Warrambool Reserve within the Lightning Ridge Mineral Claims District. Several other major opal fields are in satellite settlements to Lightning Ridge, at Coocoran and the Grawin, Glengarry, Sheepyards precinct 80km south-west of Lightning Ridge. Opal mining is generally only viable on ridge environments where opal bearing material is closer to the surface so mineral claims tend to be clustered around significant opal finds. The value of production is not known as records are not kept. Opal mining has a flow on effect in creating jobs in retail, tourism and hospitality industries.

The town is not very extensive and, as many miners live in semi-permanent dwellings situated on the mineral claim, the streetscape outside of the commercial area takes on the appearance of a low-density shanty town. Old mining areas can contain significant debris and discarded machinery and car bodies. There are reputed to be over 1,000 camps surrounding the town, most of which would be mined on a casual basis.

Tourism in Lightning Ridge brings visitors attracted by the lure of the opal and the town's quirky offerings and, in doing so, provides significant employment locally. Statistics published by Destination NSW for Walgett LGA for the pre-Covid year of 2019 indicates interstate visitors to number 34,000 with a further 67,000 interstate visitors. A reasonable assumption is that many of these visitors would have travelled to Lightning Ridge, there being few other attractions in the Shire. Average stay was four nights and the total spend per trip was \$495. The only reliable data in respect of the reason for visiting was holiday. Domestic visitors tended to be couples and friends travelling together staying in caravan parks or, to a lesser extent, motels. Over half were aged 55 years and over. The profile of predominant visitors is of grey nomads.

Businesses servicing the tourism industry in the Shire number 72 with two-thirds of these being either non-employing or small operators with between one and four employees.

Pastoral activity was predominantly sheep and cattle production but, as stock numbers declined from the early 2000s, dryland cropping: wheat and cotton, has become important. The scale of irrigated agriculture is small in comparison. Prosperity is heavily dependent upon the seasonal rainfall and recent years of drought have been accompanied by depressed economic conditions.

It is well established that the Murdi Paaki Region suffers the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage in NSW. As indicated in Table 3.3, Walgett LGA is ranked the third most disadvantaged LGA in NSW, being ranked 128th out of 130 LGAs in NSW on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) ranking.

Table 3.3: SEIFA Index of disadvantage (IRSD), Walgett LGA, 2016

SEIFA Index	832
Rank in NSW	128 th of 130
Murdi Paaki Region:	
Highest (Cobar)	968
Lowest (Brewarrina)	757

Within this context, economic diversification and growth is challenging.

3.9 Design influences

This Chapter focusses on a range of environmental and economic issues which bear upon the living conditions that the next generation of community members can expect to encounter over their lifetime and which help to define design criteria for new housing and other facilities. Any design decisions made now must recognise the more challenging environmental conditions predicted to occur within the serviceable life of a structure built in the near future.

Uppermost of the challenges is that presented by climate change and the longer periods of temperatures > 35°C as modelled by the former NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and discussed in the *Far West Climate Change Snapshot, 2014* which flags an additional 10-20 days of high temperatures in the period 2020 – 2039, increasing to 40 additional days of high temperatures by 2070. Separate bodies of work by Healthabitat and by NSW Health at Weilmoringle to assess the impacts of passive thermal control interventions verify that measures which reduce thermal gain result in much lower internal temperatures and make the active thermal controls such as air conditioning more effective and cost-efficient.

Retro-fitting improvements to existing housing is not easily accomplished although, by this time, all houses should have roof spaces fully insulated as a very minimum. The remainder of Aboriginal social housing is scheduled to be retrofitted with reverse

cycle air conditioning and grid connected 5.0 kW solar systems in 2022 and, similarly, the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is thought to be installing, or to have installed, rooftop solar and air conditioning to its housing but details have not been disclosed. Such measures and more will become standard features of housing design into the future.

4 THE POPULATION

4.1 Population profile

The statistical information set out in this Chapter has been derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census using data available from ABS TableBuilder.

Census data are generally for Lightning Ridge (L). Indigenous Location (ILOC) and Local Government Area (A) geography has been used where locality/suburb data are unavailable, as indicated in the table heading.

Table 4.1: Total population, Lightning Ridge (L)

1,441	persons
Change from 2011 Census	-66

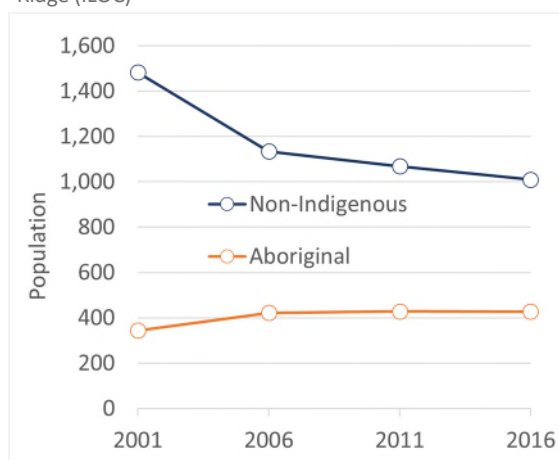
Source: ABS Census 2016

Table 4.2: Aboriginal population %, Lightning Ridge (L)

30%	n=427
Murdi Paaki Region	23%
New South Wales	3%

Source: ABS Census 2016

Figure 4.1: Population change, 2001 to 2016, Lightning Ridge (ILOC)



The most accurate count of the population is the Estimated Resident Population (ERP); however, the

finest scale at which this is available is by local government area. At the ABS 2016 Census, based on comparison with the ERP, the Aboriginal population of the Walgett Shire was undercounted by 23%, and the non-Indigenous population by 10%.

Data for Lightning Ridge indicate that the ABS has imputed populations for 87 dwellings which were thought to be occupied on census night but which returned no census form. Imputation is a statistical process for predicting values where no response was provided. The ABS imputes values for four variables: sex, age, place of usual residence and registered marital status, but not for Aboriginality. It does this by locating a 'donor record' and copying the relevant responses to the record requiring imputation. The donor record will have similar characteristics, will have the required variables stated, and will be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed. For Lightning Ridge, the ABS imputed a total of 173 persons (90 male and 83 female) to the 87 dwellings. These people form the great majority of the cohort for whom Aboriginality is not stated in census tables. It is not possible to know how many of these dwellings housed Aboriginal households. Indeed, given the arbitrary nature of the process, any one of the 87 households could equally house the population imputed to it based on the composition of the donor record household, or a group household of 80-year-old pensioners. It is, however, based on the undercount, likely that a greater proportion of these dwellings house Aboriginal households.

Where possible, the Murdi Paaki Region comparison geography used in this Plan is the aggregated 154 SA1s (Statistical Area 1) that approximate the Region. For variables where SA1 level data are not published, either the 8 LGAs approximating the Murdi Paaki Region or the NW-NSW Indigenous Region (IREG) has been adopted.

While the census suggests Lightning Ridge has a population of approximately 1,500, this figure is significantly underestimated by the exclusion of opal miners and their families who are temporary residents or not enumerated by the census. A large proportion of miners are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Population estimates developed during the planning process for the Lightning Ridge MPS in the early 2000s indicated that Lightning Ridge had a stable population of approximately 6,000, with an increase of about 4,000 during winter months. A count of post office boxes at the Lightning Ridge Post Office, conducted in 2013, yielded a total of active 1,863 boxes. The Postal Manager indicated that up to four families use each post box. In addition, 1,500 people collect their mail over the counter. The Postal Manager's best estimate of population was between 5,000 and 7,000 people. The low number of residents counted in the census means that the Lightning Ridge community is likely to receive less government funding for infrastructure and services than the true population warrants.

KEY FINDINGS

- The total population enumerated on Census night 2016 was 1,441 persons of whom 30% were persons of Aboriginal descent;
- Of all those counted in Lightning Ridge on Census night 2016, 91 people (all non-Indigenous) were in a non-private dwelling including hotel, motel, hospital, nursing home or staff quarters;
- Since 2006, the Aboriginal population in Lightning Ridge has increased by 2.41% on average each year;
- The median age of the Aboriginal population of the Lightning Ridge ILOC, at 30 years, is lower than that of the non-Indigenous population, but higher than the Murdi Paaki Region on average, and higher than the median age of Aboriginal people in NSW;
- The Aboriginal population aged under 15 years is smaller than both the Murdi Paaki Region as a whole, and for NSW, but is almost three times the population fraction for the non-Indigenous population of Lightning Ridge;
- Non-Indigenous households are almost one and a half times as likely to comprise a person living alone as an Aboriginal household;
- When compared with a non-Indigenous family, Aboriginal families living together in a household are almost twice as likely to be a single parent family;
- Aboriginal adults are 15% less likely to be in a couple relationship than non-Indigenous adults, perhaps reflecting the population age structure;
- No households (Aboriginal or non-Indigenous) contain multiple families;
- Aboriginal households have a higher proportion of resident non-dependent children than non-Indigenous households. The fraction in both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous households was less than both the Murdi Paaki Region and NSW as a whole;
- The total population is likely to be three times or more greater than recorded on Census night 2016 because of non-participation by the large CALD community living in mining camps.

Figure 4.2: Population age distribution, Lightning Ridge (L)

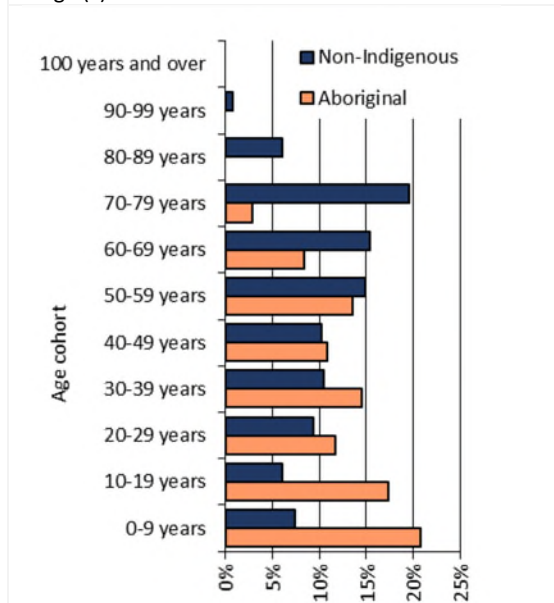
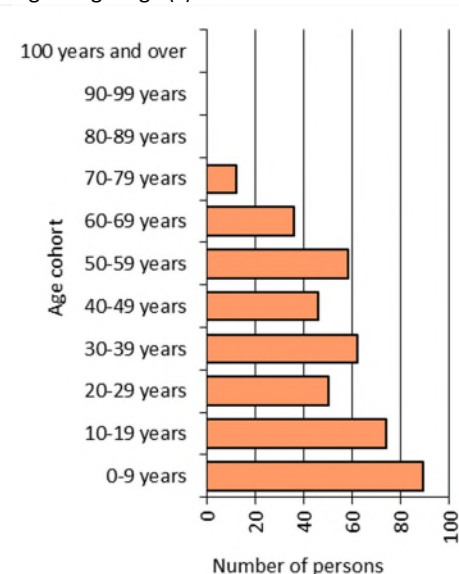


Figure 4.3: Aboriginal population age distribution, Lightning Ridge (L)



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.3: Median age of persons (years) (Lightning Ridge (ILOC))		
	30	54
Murdi Paaki Region	26	46
New South Wales	22	38

Table 4.4: Population aged under 15 years, Lightning Ridge

	n=132	n=111
Of population fraction	31%	11%
Murdi Paaki Region	32%	16%
New South Wales	34%	18%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.5: Social marital status, Lightning Ridge (L) (Persons aged 15 years and over)		
Registered marriage	8%	33%
De facto marriage	24%	14%
Not married	68%	53%

Table 4.6: Lone person households, Lightning Ridge (L)

	n=55	n=203
	30%	50%
Murdi Paaki Region	21%	36%
New South Wales	15%	24%

Table 4.7: Family household family composition, Lightning Ridge

One parent	44%	23%
Couple, no children	25%	51%
Couple, with children	24%	23%
Other family	6%	4%

One parent families:

Murdi Paaki Region	43%	15%
New South Wales	36%	15%

Table 4.8: Multi-family households, Lightning Ridge (of all family households)

	n=0	n=0
	-	-
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	1%
New South Wales	4%	2%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.9: Families with resident non-dependent children, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=26	n=28
	22%	15%
Murdi Paaki Region	25%	18%
New South Wales	25%	21%
A non-dependent child is a natural, adopted, step or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, who is aged 15 years and over and is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household		

4.2 Educational status

KEY FINDINGS

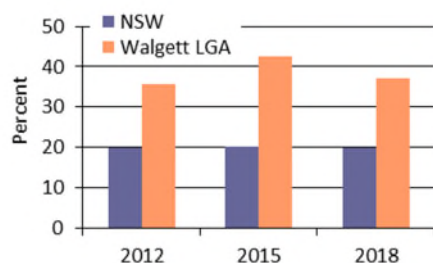
- Less than half of the Aboriginal four-year-olds enumerated in the ABS 2016 Census appeared to attend pre-school compared to 60% of the non-Indigenous children. 86% of the Aboriginal, and all the non-Indigenous three-year-olds enumerated were recorded as attending pre-school;
- On Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) indicators, children commencing their first year of full-time schooling in Walgett LGA have not reached the same stage of early childhood development as their counterparts in NSW;
- Student attendance level for children (the proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) is 48% at the Lightning Ridge Central School;
- Educational attainment at the Lightning Ridge Central School is below the average of all Australian students;
- Of the Aboriginal young people aged 15 to 19 years in Lightning Ridge who had left school, 36% had completed Year 12. None of the non-Indigenous young people who had left school had completed year 12;
- Less than one third of Aboriginal persons aged 17 or 18 years were engaged in training or learning;
- Non-Indigenous adults were almost one and half times more likely than Aboriginal adults to hold a post-school qualification at any level. The Aboriginal population aged over 15 years in Lightning Ridge had a lower proportion of the population with a post-school qualification compared to both the Murdi Paaki Region and NSW.

Table 4.10: Educational institution attended by the Aboriginal population, Lightning Ridge (L)	
	n=151
Pre-school	15
Infants/primary – Government	54
Infants/primary – other non-Government	0
Secondary – Government	30
Secondary – Other Non-Government	3
University or other Tertiary Institution	20
Other educational institution	3
Not stated	26

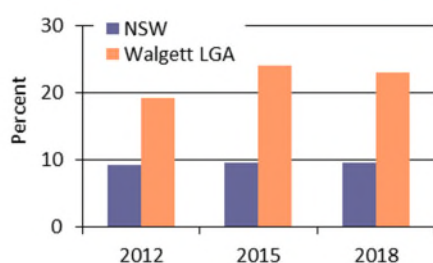
Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.11: Pre-school attendance, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=7	n=8
Children 3 years old	86%	100%
Murdi Paaki Region	41%	50%
New South Wales	52%	49%
	n=11	n=10
Children 4 years old	45%	60%
Murdi Paaki Region	82%	79%
New South Wales	72%	72%

Figure 4.4: AEDC summary indicator of developmental vulnerability (all children)

One or more domains:



Two or more domains:



Aboriginal children (n=45 or 56% of 81)

Table 4.12: AEDC vulnerability indicators

	Vuln 1	Vuln 2
Walgett LGA	37.2%	23.1%

Source: Australian Early Development Census, Community Profile 2018, Walgett LGA

Figure 4.5: Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time), Lightning Ridge Central School, 2019 Semester 1

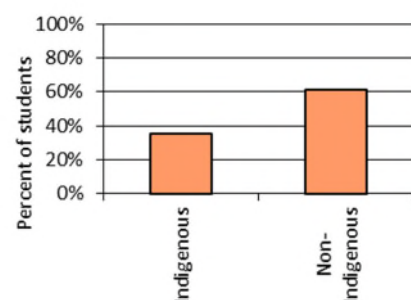


Table 4.13: Educational attainment, NAPLAN, School average when compared with all Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3					
Lightning Ridge CS	4	4	3	5	5
Year 5					
Lightning Ridge CS	5	5	5	5	5
Year 7					
Lightning Ridge CS	5	5	5	5	5
Year 9					
Lightning Ridge CS	5	5	5	5	5
Legend					
Above average	2	Close to		3	
Below average	4	Well below		5	

Source: acara MySchools website

Figure 4.6A: Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults, Lightning Ridge (L)

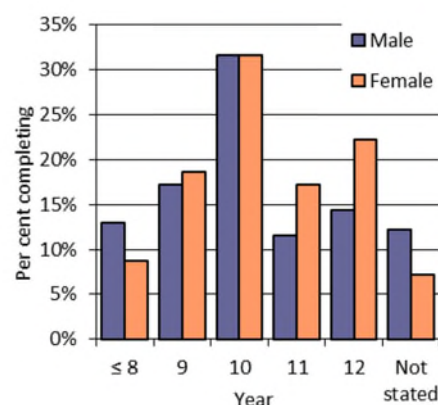
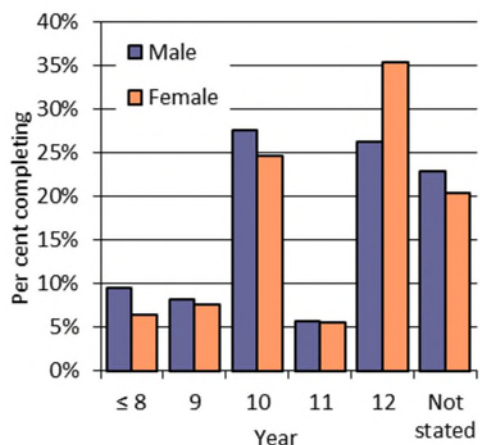


Figure 4.6B: Highest year of schooling, all non-Indigenous adults, Lightning Ridge (L)



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.14: Percentage of students completed Year 12, Lightning Ridge (L) (Persons aged 15 to 19 who have completed schooling and are no longer at school)		
	n=14	n=0
	36%	-
Murdi Paaki Region	20%	48%
New South Wales	33%	51%
Table 4.15: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a vocational qualification, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=36	n=130
Cert I-IV	12%	15%
Murdi Paaki Region	18%	26%
New South Wales	25%	20%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.16: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with an undergraduate diploma, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=19	n=72
Diploma and Advanced Diploma	6%	8%
Murdi Paaki Region	5%	7%
New South Wales	7%	10%
Table 4.17: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a tertiary qualification, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=15	n=84
Degree and higher	5%	9%
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	12%
New South Wales	8%	27%
Table 4.18: Engagement of persons aged 17 and 18 years in employment, education and training, Lightning Ridge (L)		
Fully engaged	29%	62%
Murdi Paaki Region	49%	74%
New South Wales	62%	84%

4.3 Economic participation

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.19: Labour force status, Lightning Ridge (L) (Percent of labour force)		
	n=115	n=349
In full-time or part-time work	78%	90%
35% of those employed worked part-time		
Unemployed, looking for work	22%	10%
Murdi Paaki Region	76%	94%
New South Wales	85%	94%

Table 4.20: Participation in the labour market, Lightning Ridge (L) (Percent of population aged 15 and over)

	n=292	n=738
In labour force	39%	47%
Not in labour force	61%	53%
Murdi Paaki Region	44%	61%
New South Wales	56%	64%

Table 4.21: Employment to population ratio, Lightning Ridge (L) (Percent of population aged 15 and over)

	n=90	n=313
Employment to Population ratio	31%	35%
Murdi Paaki Region	34%	57%
New South Wales	47%	60%

Table 4.22: Industry of employment – Lightning Ridge (L)

Industry	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous	
	No employed	% of total employed	No employed	% of total employed
Education and Training	20	27%	59	20%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12	16%	41	14%
Retail Trade	11	15%	38	13%
Accommodation and Food Services	10	14%	44	15%
Administrative and Support Services	6	8%	20	7%
Public Administration and Safety	6	8%	19	6%
Mining	5	7%	25	8%
Arts and Recreation Services	0	0%	10	3%
Construction	0	0%	10	3%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0	0%	9	3%
Manufacturing	0	0%	9	3%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	0	0%	4	1%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	0	0%	0	0%
Financial and Insurance Services	0	0%	0	0%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0	0%	0	0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	0	0%	0	0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0	0%	0	0%
Wholesale Trade	0	0%	0	0%
Other Services	4	5%	0	0%
Inadequately described/not stated	0	0%	14	5%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.23: Occupation of all persons employed, Lightning Ridge (L)		
Managers	5%	10%
Professionals	18%	22%
Technician/trades	11%	8%
Community service workers	27%	18%
Clerical/admin workers	9%	10%
Sales workers	9%	9%
Machinery operators	8%	8%
Labourers	13%	14%

Table 4.24: Number of Aboriginal workers employed in the public and private sectors, Lightning Ridge

Australian Government	0
NSW Government	11
Local Government (Walgett)	0
Private sector	72
Not stated	0

KEY FINDINGS

- With an unemployment rate twice that of the non-Indigenous population and a reasonable participation rate, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal people in Lightning Ridge implies that one in three adults are in any form of employment. This ratio is the same for the non-Indigenous population fraction;
- Investigation of the age structure of the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal population through calculation of the dependency ratio (55.3 for Lightning Ridge – less than for the Murdi Paaki Region, at 61.6) indicates that Aboriginal people of working age resident in Lightning Ridge have a low workforce participation;
- Aboriginal workers are more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be employed in education and training or health care and social assistance or but less likely to be employed as a manager or professional;
- The education and training sector employs the largest proportion of the workforce,

followed by health care and accommodation and food services;

- Data for the Mining industry sector is clearly anomalous as a greater number of workers are employed in mining than is declared.

Hours worked by age cohort is shown in Figure 4.7. The high percentage of workers aged 25 to 44 years of age appear to be working regular hours, perhaps reflecting the high proportion of employees in the public sector while older workers are equally represented across all part-time and full-time work. Few younger adults are represented in either part-time or full-time work.

Figure 4.7: Hours worked by age group, Lightning Ridge

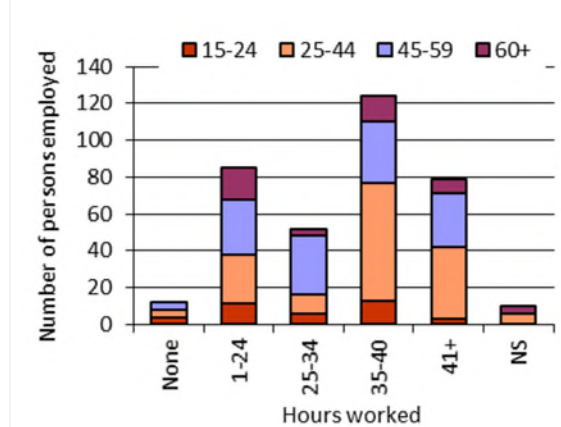


Table 4.25: Total number of businesses, Walgett LGA

At 30th June 2019

No of employees	No of businesses
Nil	466
1-4	172
5-19	66
20 or more	8

Table 4.26: Business entries and exits, Walgett LGA

At 30th June 2019

Year	Change in number
2015	-
2016	15
2017	26
2018	-2
2019	-16

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry sector claimed the greatest number of businesses in Walgett LGA in 2018 with 338. Of these, the scale of operations for 163 businesses was in the \$200k to less than \$2.0M turnover band. This was not matched by any other sector. In comparison, only eight businesses with interests in mining reported turnover in this range. Overall, Table 4.26 tends to suggest that, despite the challenges associated with a difficult operating environment, the region's economy is resilient.

4.4 Income

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.27: Median total household income (\$), (Lightning Ridge (ILOC))		
\$/week	739	773
N-W NSW IREG	907	1,013
New South Wales	1,214	1,498
Table 4.28: Estimates of personal income, total population, Walgett LGA		
Median employee income (\$) (2017)	37,750	
Income share of top 10% of earners (excl. government payments)	44%	
FW and Orana SA4	44,418	
New South Wales	49,256	

Figure 4.8: Growth in median employee income, 2013-2017, Walgett LGA

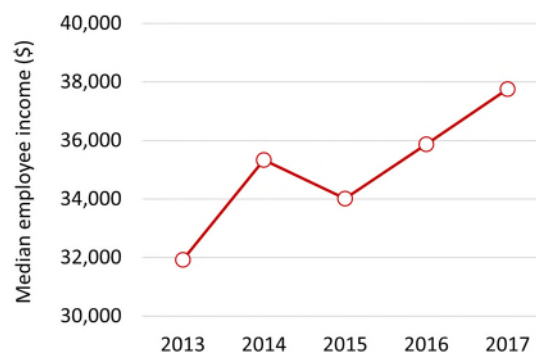


Table 4.29: Sources of income support Walgett LGA

In 2019, percentage of total population aged 15 and over receiving:

Age pension (n=857)	18%
Carer payment (n=240)	5%
Disability support pension (n=554)	11%
Newstart allowance (n=571)	12%
Parenting payment, single (n=189)	4%
Family tax benefit A (n=569)	12%
Family tax benefit B (n=501)	10%
Commonwealth rent assistance (n=559)	11%

KEY FINDINGS

- The median weekly income for Aboriginal households in Lightning Ridge was slightly lower than for non-Indigenous households;
- The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Lightning Ridge was \$434 compared with \$664 for NSW as a whole;
- Eleven percent of the total population of Walgett LGA aged 15 years and over were receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA);
- Income inequality is evident with the top 10% of earners in Walgett LGA receiving 44% of total income.

5 COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE

5.1 Lightning Ridge housing generally

As is the case for Chapter 4, census data used in this Chapter are generally for Lightning Ridge (L). Indigenous location (ILOC) and Local Government Area (A) geography has been used where locality/suburb data are unavailable, as indicated in the table heading.

Table 5.1: Dwelling types, Lightning Ridge (L)

Total number	782	
Separate houses	612	78%
Terraces, town houses	3	0%
Apartments	88	11%
Other dwelling types	79	10%

Table 5.2: Private dwellings unoccupied on Census night, Lightning Ridge (L)

n=782		
	110	14%
ABS 2011 Census	158	
Change since 2011	48 fewer unoccupied	
Murdi Paaki Region	19%	
New South Wales	9%	

132 people were counted elsewhere on Census night

Table 5.3: Households counted in a dwelling on Census night, Lightning Ridge (L)

Resident households	574
Visitor households	85
Non-classifiable	86

Table 5.4: Number of bedrooms per dwelling, Lightning Ridge (L)

0 or 1 bedrooms	138	22%
2 bedrooms	170	27%
3 bedrooms	210	34%
4 bedrooms	88	14%
5 bedrooms and more	15	2%

Figure 5.1: Dwelling size by number of bedrooms, Lightning Ridge (L)

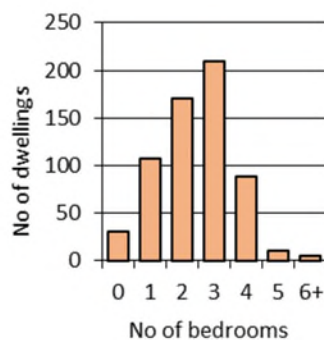


Table 5.5: Building approvals, 2019 (Walgett (A))

Total building approvals	4
Private sector houses	-
Private other dwelling	-
Other dwelling units	4

Source: ABS Data by Region, 2011-19, Economy and Industry

Table 5.6: Median residential property price (Walgett (A))

	\$97,000
In 2019	0
No of transfers	42

Source: ABS, Data by Region, 2011-19, Economy and Industry

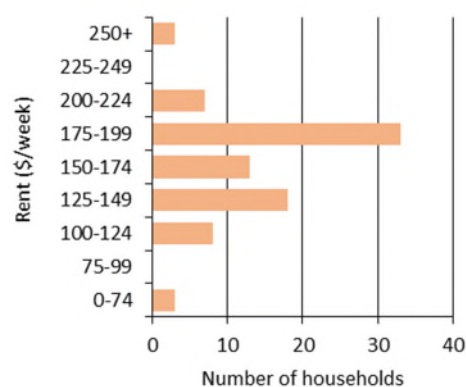
5.2 A statistical comparative snapshot

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.7: Average household size (Lightning Ridge (ILOC))		
Persons	2.7	1.8
N-W NSW IREG	3.0	2.1
New South Wales	3.1	2.6

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.8: Average number of persons per bedroom (Lightning Ridge (ILOC))		
Persons	0.9	0.8
N-W NSW IREG	0.9	0.7
New South Wales	1.0	0.9
Table 5.9: Households enumerated, Lightning Ridge (L)		
One family household	113	191
Multiple family household	4	0
Non-family household	56	218
Non-classifiable	0	0
Not applicable	0	0
Table 5.10: Occupancy, Lightning Ridge (L)		
One person	55	203
Two people	60	140
Three people	20	39
Four people	23	20
Five people and greater	14	13
Table 5.11: Proportion of all households renting, Lightning Ridge (L)		
Proportion of all households	71%	28%
Real estate agent	18%	28%
NSW housing authority	35%	4%
Community housing provider	32%	4%
Other private	11%	32%
Other	4%	32%
Murdi Paaki Region	62%	24%
New South Wales	56%	32%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.12: Median rent (Lightning Ridge (ILOC))		
\$/week	\$180	\$140
N-W NSW IREG	160	150
New South Wales	270	390
Table 5.13: Percentage of all households with rent equal to or greater than 30% of household income (2016) (Walgett (A))		
Renting	8.2%	

Figure 5.2: Weekly rent payable by Aboriginal households, social housing rentals, Lightning Ridge (L)



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.14: Home ownership (including owned with a mortgage), Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=35	n=270
Proportion of all households	22%	47%
Murdi Paaki Region	38%	76%
New South Wales	44%	68%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.15: Change in Aboriginal home ownership, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	2016	2011
Proportion of all Aboriginal households	22%	27%
Table 5.16: Persons accommodated in non-private dwellings, Lightning Ridge (L)		
Hotel, motel, B&B	0	74
Public hospital	0	17
Table 5.17: Number of persons homeless in Bourke-Lightning Ridge-Cobar SA3 (After Chamberlain and MacKenzie)		
Marginally housed		14
Tertiary homeless		7
Secondary homeless		45
Primary homeless		294
Living in crowded conditions		167

5.3 Population mobility

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.18: One-year residential mobility, Lightning Ridge (L)		
	n=154	n=386
Residents in the household aged one year and over with a different address one year ago		
All residents	14%	14%
Some of the residents	3%	2%
No resident	83%	84%
Murdi Paaki Region		
	12%	10%
New South Wales		
	16%	13%
Residents in the household aged five years and over with a different address five years ago		
All residents	37%	32%
Some of the residents	9%	3%
No resident	54%	65%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.19: Number of Aboriginal persons with a different address at stated location 1 year ago and five years ago, Lightning Ridge (L)		
Place of residence	1 year ago	5 years ago
Within Walgett LGA	36	36
Elsewhere in the MPR	0	0
Elsewhere in NSW	10	14
Other	0	0
Table 5.20: Access and mobility, Lightning Ridge (L)		
No motor vehicles	16%	8%
One motor vehicle	41%	40%
Two motor vehicles	24%	20%
Three motor vehicles	8%	6%
Four or more vehicles	0%	3%
Not stated	11%	22%

5.4 The local housing market

House prices in Lightning Ridge vary markedly depending on the quality of construction and building age, size and condition. Excluding mine camps and associated dwellings, 16 properties were sold in 2020. For the 4 years 2017-2020 information is available for 78 sales; sale prices have been disclosed for 63 of these. The median price was \$127,500 and the range was \$60,000 (2019) for a 1-bedroom dilapidated shack to \$320,000 (2020) for a large brick home on a substantial block. At the time of writing there were 6 houses on the market in Lightning Ridge with prices between \$80,000 and \$450,000.

5.5 Building activity

Details of residential building approvals issued by Walgett Shire Council for the FY2020-2021 are given by Table 5.21.

Table 5.21: Walgett Shire building approvals

Type	Number	Value
New house	7	\$1,314,000
New other building	6	\$877,000
Alterations and additions	1	\$2,601,000

The number of new builds was twice the previous year but still only equates to an addition of 1% to total existing housing assuming these were not knock down and rebuilds. The average building price per property is \$187,700.

5.6 Aboriginal social housing

Several NSW Government agencies and Aboriginal organisations have title to public housing in Lightning Ridge: NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd (BHCL) and Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). Details are shown in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Public housing ownership

Owning organisation	Number
Aboriginal Housing Office	50
Land and Housing Corporation	11
Barriekneal Housing and Community	60
Lightning Ridge LALC	5
Total	125

In addition to developed lots, Lightning Ridge LALC and Barriekneal have vacant lots suitable for

residential development. Lightning Ridge LALC is awaiting a decision of several land claims which will increase options for future development.

The mix of Aboriginal social housing house sizes identified by owner and manager is shown in Table 5.23. The one external manager is Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation (MPRHC).

Table 5.23: Housing assets

Owner	Manager	Bedrooms			
		2	3	4	5
AHO	BHCL	5	9	12	2
AHO	MPRHC	5	11	5	1
BHCL	BHCL	12	25	23	-
LR LALC	MPRHC	-	3	1	1
Total		22	48	41	4

Property details are provided in Table 5.24 to Table 5.26 and an aerial view of the town is shown in Figure 5.3.

Table 5.24: Cadastral information for AHO residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
Managed by Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd							
58		837866		AHO	1, 18 Fantasia Street	Unit	2
58		837866		AHO	2, 18 Fantasia Street	Unit	2
49		837866		AHO	1, 21 Halleys Comet Street	Cottage	2
49		837866		AHO	3, 21 Halleys Comet Street	Cottage	2
49		837866		AHO	4, 21 Halleys Comet Street	Cottage	2
68		837866		AHO	44 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
43		803512		AHO	20 Cardinal Road	Cottage	3
34		803512		AHO	38 Cardinal Road	Cottage	3
45		837866		AHO	7 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.24: Cadastral information for AHO residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
49		837866		AHO	2, 21 Halleys Comet Street	Cottage	3
10		837866		AHO	19 Lappkalle Street	Cottage	3
84		45077		AHO	91 Opal Street	Cottage	3
14		39545		AHO	27 Nettleton Drive	Cottage	3
36		837866		AHO	25 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
123		45077		AHO	53 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
9		837866		AHO	17 Lappkalle Street	Cottage	4
51		1094192		AHO	3B Gem Street	Cottage	4
46		837866		AHO	5 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
72		845063		AHO	4 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
47		837866		AHO	3 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
22		803512		AHO	1 Red Admiral Street	Cottage	4
57		837866		AHO	16 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
128		45077		AHO	41 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
135		45077		AHO	27 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
40		837866		AHO	17 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
66		837866		AHO	40 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
50		1094192		AHO	3A Gem Street	Cottage	5
85		822037		AHO	17 Cardinal Road	Cottage	5
Managed by Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation							
31		837866		AHO	35 Fantasia Street	Cottage	2
71		837866		AHO	1, 50 Fantasia Street	Villa	2
71		837866		AHO	2, 50 Fantasia Street	Villa	2
14	22	758612		AHO	2, 9 Potch Street	Villa	2
14	22	758612		AHO	1, 9 Potch Street	Villa	2
34		837866		AHO	29 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
38		837866		AHO	21 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
4		39545		AHO	8 Red Robin Street	Cottage	3
48		40834		AHO	20 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	3
113		45077		AHO	56 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
29		803512		AHO	8 Red Admiral Street	Cottage	3
127		45077		AHO	43 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
92		45077		AHO	14 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
46		40834		AHO	24 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	3
10		39545		AHO	40 Nettleton Street	Cottage	3
8	27	758612		AHO	57 Opal Street	Cottage	3
60		40834		AHO	11 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	4
67		837866		AHO	42 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
41		803512		AHO	24 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
3		39545		AHO	6 Red Robin Street	Cottage	4

Table 5.24: Cadastral information for AHO residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
11		40573		AHO	3 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
12	18	758612		AHO	3 Pandora Street	Cottage	5

Table 5.25: Cadastral information for Barriekneal Housing and Community residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
Managed by Barriekneal Housing and Community							
15	4	758612		BHAC	1, 7 Matrix Street	Unit	2
15	4	758612		BHAC	2, 7 Matrix Street	Cottage	2
15	4	758612		BHAC	3, 7 Matrix Street	Unit	2
15	4	758612		BHAC	4, 7 Matrix Street	Unit	2
10	11	758612		BHAC	30 Kaolin Street	Unit	2
1	18	758612		BHAC	20 Harlequin Street	Unit	2
6	13	758612		BHAC	1, 64 Morilla Street	Unit	2
6	13	758612		BHAC	2, 64 Morilla Street	Unit	2
6	13	758612		BHAC	3, 64 Morilla Street	Unit	2
6	13	758612		BHAC	4, 64 Morilla Street	Cottage	2
12	28	758612		BHAC	1, 44 Pandora Street	Cottage	2
12	28	758612		BHAC	2, 44 Pandora Street	Cottage	2
17	28	758612		BHAC	54 Pandora Street	Cottage	3
125		45077		BHAC	47 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
49		40834		BHAC	18 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	3
22	20	758612		BHAC	11 Nettleton Drive	Cottage	3
20		837866		BHAC	8 Lappkalle Street	Cottage	3
90		45077		BHAC	10 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
8	26	758612		BHAC	80 Opal Street	Cottage	3
76		845063		BHAC	28 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
41		837866		BHAC	15 Fantasia Street	Cottage	3
9		803512		BHAC	15 Flamingo Street	Cottage	3
103		804526		BHAC	29 Potch Street	Cottage	3
22	18	758612		BHAC	2 Silica Street	Cottage	3
19	18	758612		BHAC	8 Silica Street	Cottage	3
15	18	758612		BHAC	16 Silica Street	Cottage	3
20	12	758612		BHAC	59 Morilla Street	Cottage	3
1	22	758612		BHAC	31 Gem Street	Cottage	3
18		803512		BHAC	4 Flamingo Street	Cottage	3
15		803512		BHAC	3 Flamingo Street	Cottage	3
13		803512		BHAC	7 Flamingo Street	Cottage	3
42		40834		BHAC	32 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	3
130		45077		BHAC	37 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	3
101		804526		BHAC	25 Potch Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.25: Cadastral information for Barriekneal Housing and Community residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
12	19	758612		BHAC	11 Pandora Street	Cottage	3
4	27	758612		BHAC	49 Opal Street	Cottage	3
14	31	758612		BHAC	24 Nettleton Drive	Cottage	3
26		39545		BHAC	25 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	4
24	20	758612		BHAC	15 Nettleton Drive	Cottage	4
75		845063		BHAC	26 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
35		803512		BHAC	36 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
59		837866		BHAC	20 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
73		845063		BHAC	6 Fantasia Street	Cottage	4
42		803512		BHAC	22 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
143		45077		BHAC	11 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
17		803512		BHAC	2 Flamingo Road	Cottage	4
96		45077		BHAC	22 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
7	5	758612		BHAC	12 Matrix Street	Cottage	4
38		803512		BHAC	30 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
1		803512		BHAC	21 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
61		40834		BHAC	13 Butterfly Road	Cottage	4
51		40834		BHAC	14 Butterfly Road	Cottage	4
13	22	758612		BHAC	7 Potch Street	Cottage	4
102		804526		BHAC	27 Potch Street	Cottage	4
83		45077		BHAC	93 Opal Street	Cottage	4
3		837866		BHAC	5 Lappkalle Street	Cottage	4
112		45077		BHAC	54 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
102		45077		BHAC	34 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
51		803512		BHAC	9 Cardinal Road	Cottage	4
11		837866		BHAC	21 Lappkalle Street	Cottage	4
13	4	758612		BHAC	11 Matrix Street	Vacant	-

Table 5.26: Cadastral information for Lightning Ridge LALC residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
Managed by Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council							
138		45077		LRLALC	21 Black Prince Drive	Cottage	4
43		40834		LRLALC	30 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	3
19		39545		LRLALC	37 Nettleton Street	Cottage	3
15		39545		LRLALC	29 Nettleton Drive	Cottage	3
47		40834		LRLALC	22 Butterfly Street	Cottage	5
87		822053		LRLALC	123-135 Pandora Street	Vacant	-
2	12	758612		LRLALC	11 Brilliant Street	Vacant	-
8	15	758612		LRLALC	34 Morilla Street	Vacant	-

Table 5.26: Cadastral information for Lightning Ridge LALC residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	WLL	Owner	Property Address	Type	Bedrooms
Identified by MP TSEP as an omission and added after HEHP completion and endorsement							
				LRLALC	29 Butterfly Avenue	Cottage	
7	20	758612		LRLALC	12 Pandora Street	Cottage	

Figure 5.3: Aerial view of Lightning Ridge



Map data: Google, Image © 2021, Maxar Technologies

5.7 Housing assets

The houses shown in Figure 5.4 to Figure 5.6 are illustrative of the form of building construction typically found in Lightning Ridge. Being a remote community with few trades, the main forms of construction are:

- Lightweight timber framing with suspended timber floor on piers, with Hardiplank style external cladding and metal roof;
- Lightweight timber framing on concrete slab on ground, with Hardiplank style cladding and metal roof; and
- Brick veneer construction on concrete slab on ground with either metal or tile roofing.

Figure 5.4: Lightweight construction with timber framing, suspended floor and metal roof



Figure 5.5: Timber framing on concrete slab on ground and metal roof



Figure 5.6: Brick veneer on concrete slab on ground and metal roof



5.8 Summary findings of the MPRH&BC household survey

A data gathering exercise was undertaken in 2016-2017 under the guidance of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly to provide the evidence for reform of the Aboriginal social housing sector in the Murdi Paaki Region. Over 1,400 households took part including 95 households in Lightning Ridge. The ABS 2011 Census had enumerated 207 Aboriginal households in the town so responses equated to 46% of all Aboriginal households identified by the census. As well as tenants living in social housing, homeowners, people living in camps, private renters or people who were homeless at the time contributed to the survey. Findings are set out in Figure 5.7 to Figure 5.16 inclusive. The charts relate to Aboriginal social housing tenants unless stated otherwise.

Figure 5.7: Housing mix (All households participating in the survey)

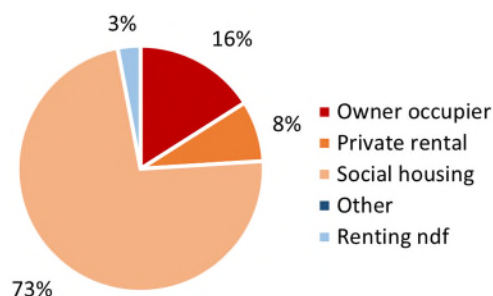


Figure 5.8: Managing organisation

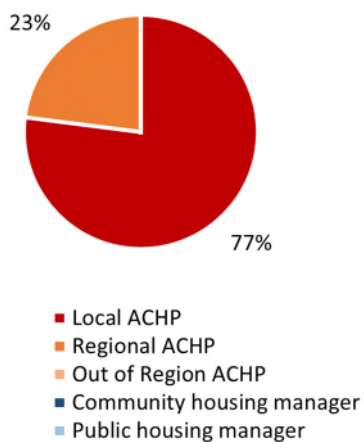


Figure 5.9: Level of satisfaction with manager

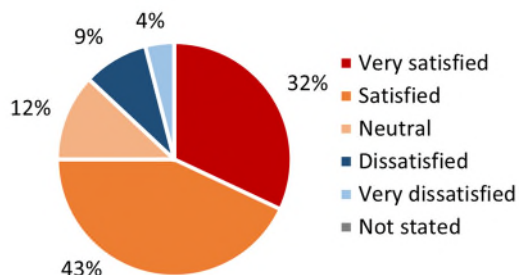


Figure 5.10: Preferred manager of Aboriginal social housing

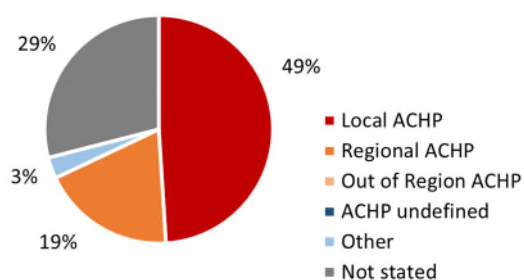


Figure 5.11: Households with a tenancy agreement

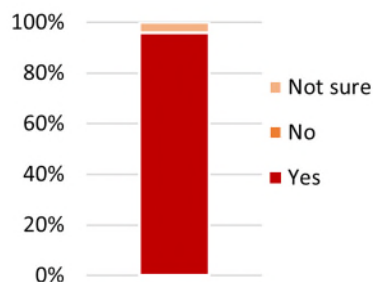


Figure 5.12: Households claiming Commonwealth Rent Assistance

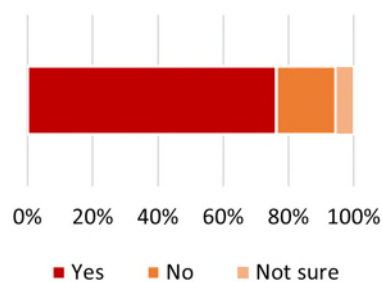


Figure 5.13: Rent levels (2016-17)

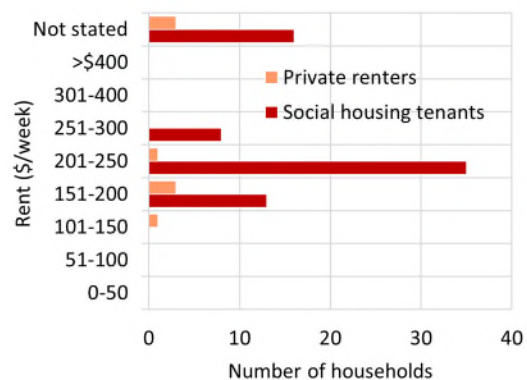


Figure 5.14: Household size range, all households

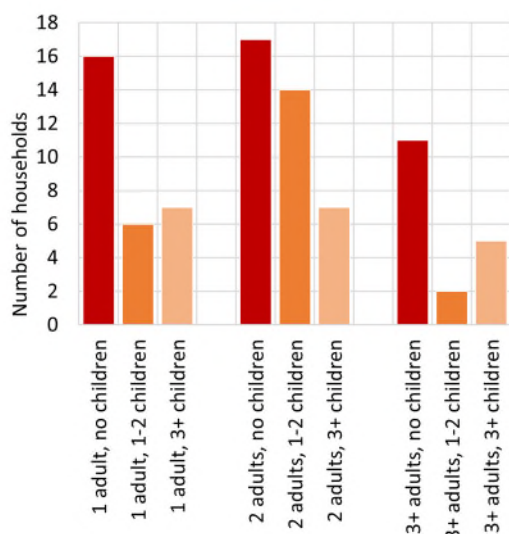


Figure 5.15: Address of household 5 years ago

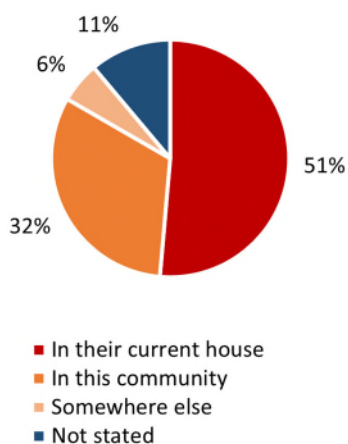
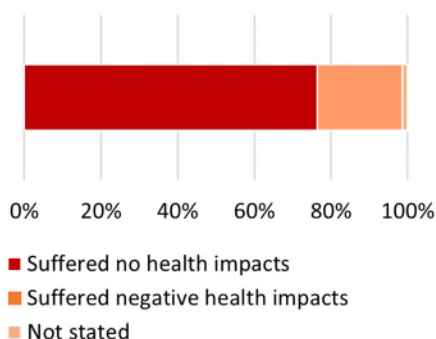


Figure 5.16: Respondents reporting a negative health impact



KEY FINDINGS

- 76% of respondents to the survey were renting social housing, 8% were in private rentals and 16% were homeowners;
- Of social housing tenants, 77% rented through a local Aboriginal community-controlled housing manager while 23% of tenants rented through a regional Aboriginal housing manager;
- 75% of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with their housing manager, 12% were neutral, while only 13% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied;
- 68% of tenants stated a preference for a local or regional Aboriginal community-controlled provider. while 29% of respondents chose not to answer this question;
- Almost all households surveyed held a formal tenancy agreement;
- Half of all social housing respondents said they were paying rent in the \$200 - \$250/week bracket. 18% paid rent of between \$150-\$200/week and 11% paid in the \$250-\$300/week bracket. Almost a quarter participating in the survey chose not to disclose details;
- Nearly four in five social housing households were claiming Commonwealth Rent Assistance;
- About one in five respondents stated they were the only adult living in the house, some with children and other without;
- About half of respondents stated they were living at the same address 5 years ago. One third said they were living in Lightning Ridge but at a different address while the balance of those responding lived in another community. 11% of participants did not respond to the question;
- Nearly one quarter of respondents said they were suffering negative health impacts because of living in their current rental property. The reasons are discussed later in this Chapter.

5.9 The experience of owners

Of the fifteen homeowners who responded to the survey, eight were living in mining camps. Nine

owners were purchasing or had purchased a lot with a detached house while the remaining owners were purchasing or had purchased a caravan, cabin or similar form of accommodation to live on their mining lease. These acquisitions were all self-funded. Properties in town, being of a more conventional nature, were being purchased with the aid of loans from a bank, building society or credit union except for one respondent who had sourced a loan from another institution and one who purchasing with the aid of a loan from Indigenous Business Australia (IBA).

Every owner was satisfied with their decision to purchase. A sense of security and financial advantage were reasons given plus the opportunity to pick the part of town they lived in. On the downside, the cost of repair and maintenance and lack of services were given as the main disadvantages of ownership. Only one third of owners admitted to financial stress as reflected in difficulty in meeting energy costs.

In most instances, owners had long-standing attachment to the community, through having been born in Lightning Ridge or through a lengthy family residency. Living on Country was an important consideration, as was being close to other family, relations and to friends. In consequence, owners exhibited a high degree of stability in their tenure: twelve respondents were living in the same address one year prior to the household survey (n=13) while twelve reported they were living at the same location five years prior to the household survey (n=14).

Although many households (n=11) reported visitors staying for longer than a week, crowding and stress because of crowding did not feature as issues for most of respondents. No household was giving shelter to a person or persons who would otherwise have been homeless at the time of the household survey.

5.10 The experience of private tenants

Tenants in private rental housing appeared in the household survey to be receiving good service from their housing manager. Of the seven of eight tenants that provided an answer, all had a tenancy

agreement and only one was not in receipt of CRA. Over half were renting a 1- or 2-bed unit for a weekly rental of less than \$200. Only two respondents were waiting for urgent repair and maintenance work to be carried out which tends to suggest the managers were attentive to the needs of the tenants. Only one tenant complained about a less than satisfactory service.

Tenants tended to be older persons living alone or in a couple relationship, and a lengthy association with Lightning Ridge. Only one respondent had applied and been accepted for alternative housing.

Three respondents reported an adverse health outcome, mainly related stress associated with unstable living arrangements: fear the house might be sold.

5.11 The experience of tenants renting Aboriginal social housing

Aboriginal social housing tenants rented housing provided by either NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd or, to a lesser extent, Lightning Ridge LALC. Altogether, 72 responses to the household survey were received.

There is a small housing market in Lightning Ridge so options for individuals and families looking for accommodation are limited. It is unsurprising then that over 80% of all social housing respondents said that they rented because it was either the only housing available or the most affordable housing available. Given that housing is hard to come by, it is also unsurprising that half of respondents answering the question felt that tenancies should be handed down within the family.

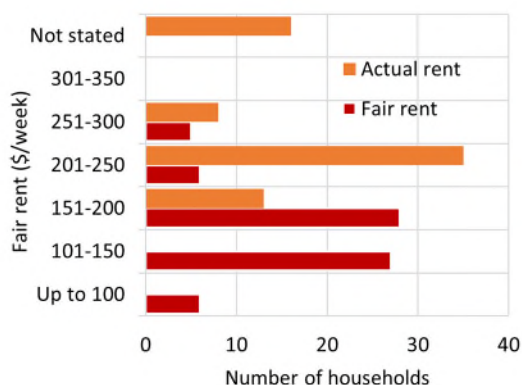
The waiting time for a unit or house could not be reliably determined from responses to the household survey but the data suggested waiting time exceeded 24 months because tenancies were stable and opportunities rare. The median duration of a tenancy was estimated to be five years. Respondents were, by and large, long-time residents of Lightning Ridge, only 6% having moved into the community from elsewhere in the five years prior to the household survey. Over nine of ten households were living at the same address

one year prior to the survey while about two-thirds of tenants indicated they did not have any intention of moving if their circumstances changed.

Principal motivation for living in Lightning Ridge quoted by respondents was that their families had been resident in Lightning Ridge for a long time (n=51). Nearly four in ten respondents had been born in the town (n=27). Reference to employment being a factor was seldom made.

As is evident from Figure 5.10, there is a strong preference to retain the status quo in terms of housing management although a sizeable proportion chose not to answer the question. Responses to the household survey indicated a strong level of satisfaction with housing management services. When invited to make comment on matters not specifically raised by the survey, twenty-three respondents stated they were happy with their current tenancy arrangements. All social housing tenants had a signed tenancy agreement and most were aware of the limit on occupancy. Three-quarters of respondents were claiming CRA as shown in Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.17: Comparison of actual rent and tenant assessed fair rent



Further to Figure 5.13, respondents provided their own opinions as to a fair rent. The comparison shown at Figure 5.17 positions, in the eyes of respondents, a fair rent at a lower level than actual rent charged. While such a view might be predictable, underlying evidence of financial stress was reflected by over half of respondents reporting trouble in paying their electricity bills. The size of

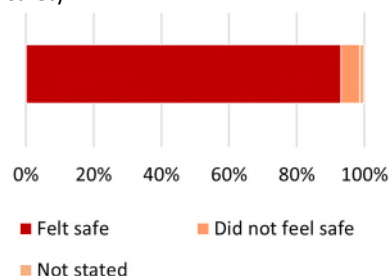
house did not appear to be a material factor in contributing to the difficulty tenants had in meeting energy costs: respondents living in a 4-bedroom house were just as likely to be feeling financial stress as respondents living in a 2-bedroom unit.

Interestingly, one in seven respondents had applied for a private rental in the three years prior to the survey. Whether this was before or after securing the current tenancy was not known.

Very few respondents stated their cultural needs could not be satisfied by the property they were living in. Of those whose cultural needs were not met, deficiencies in the design of the house and external areas were quoted as the reasons. Further to Figure 5.16, one in five respondents stated that their accommodation impacted negatively upon their health. Stress relating to crowding was a common factor as was house condition. The lack of an adequate means of heating and cooling was also raised.

If the household survey is a guide, Lightning Ridge is a safe community because very few respondents raised safety concerns as shown by Figure 5.18. Of those that did, perceived threats arose from living in an unsafe neighbour where residents were subject to antisocial behaviour or in an insecure dwelling.

Figure 5.18: Respondents reporting a concern over their safety



At the time of the household survey, as indicated by Table 5.27, seventeen young people indicated a desire for their own accommodation and nine had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list for a unit or house in Lightning Ridge. None had applied for a house or unit in another community. Four older people interviewed were seeking

accommodation and no older people had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list for a unit or house in Lightning Ridge. In addition, five households were dual family households.

Four households stated a prior need for home modification and one of these had been completed at the time of the household survey.

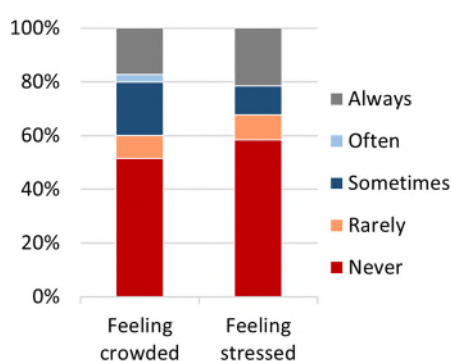
Table 5.27: Unadjusted need for new housing as determined from responses to the MPRH&BC household survey

Cohort	Number
Young persons	17
Older persons	4
Families	5
Outstanding home modifications	3

5.12 Quantifying crowding

Crowding appears to be creating mental-health issue for many tenants based on the findings of the MPRH&BC household survey. Figure 5.19 refers.

Figure 5.19: Respondents reporting feeling crowded



The sense of being often or always crowded, and the stress induced, was experienced by one in five households. Figure 5.19 suggests a correlation between feeling crowded and being stressed because of crowding. Over 60% of households were accommodating one, and principally more, visitors at the time of the survey whose stay had lasted for longer than one week. One in seven

households were giving shelter to one or more people who would otherwise be homeless at the time of the survey as shown by Figure 5.20.

Figure 5.20: Households providing shelter to one or more people who would otherwise be homeless

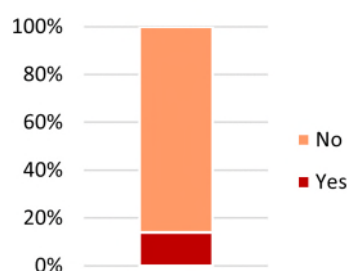


Table 5.28 describes the degree of utilisation of existing dwellings as reported by respondents to the survey where sufficient information is available to calculate occupancy levels. Numbers stated do not account for visitors or family reformations. In the balance of dwellings, it is assumed that all bedrooms would be occupied.

Table 5.28: Number of bedrooms occupied by permanent residents only, all households

Size of house	Number of households using				
	1	2	3	4	5
	bedrooms				
2-bed	9	-			
3-bed	8	9	-		
4-bed	1	7	8	-	
5-bed	-	-	1	-	-
All	18	16	9	-	-

Canadian National Occupancy Standard

CNOS adopts the following criteria to determine the number of bedrooms required by a household:

- There should be no more than 2 persons per bedroom;
- Children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may share a bedroom;
- Children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms;
- Children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may share a bedroom;
- Single household members 18 years or older should have a separate bedroom; and

Canadian National Occupancy Standard

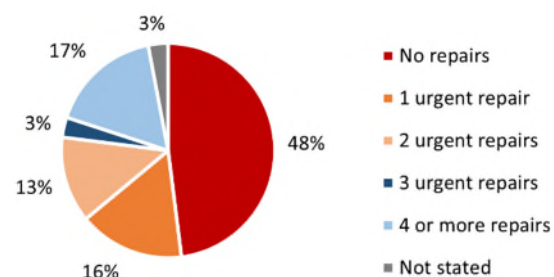
- Couples share a bedroom.

Occupancy was assessed against the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) for crowding. At the time of the survey, four dwellings exceeded the threshold criteria and required additional bedrooms although this number may be an underestimate as not all responses were sufficiently descriptive to allow full assessment. Three houses required an additional bedroom and one house two additional bedrooms.

5.13 Evaluation of asset condition

The MPRH&BC household survey invited respondents to advise the need for urgent repairs as a general indicator of housing manager responsiveness to critical defects and, subsequently in the survey, to provide a more detailed appreciation of condition. Responses from social housing tenants to the first enquiry are shown in Figure 5.21.

Figure 5.21: Tenant reported property condition



Based on this advice, housing would appear to be adequately maintained by the managing ACHPs and be in reasonable condition.

To characterise asset condition in greater depth but still based on information self-reported by tenants about dwelling condition, defects and facilities, a method of analysis similar to that employed by the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) conducted by AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018) has been used. The basis of this assessment is the judgment that a house is deemed to be of acceptable standard if it

has no more than two major specified structural, electrical and/or plumbing problems and has at least six working facilities. In this context, facilities are those comprising 'health hardware' in the Housing for Health terminology which characterise safety and nine healthy living practices (HLPs):

- HLP 1: Washing people
- HLP 2: Washing clothes and bedding
- HLP 3: Removing wastewater safely
- HLP 4: Improving nutrition – the ability to store, prepare and cook food
- HLP 5: Reducing the negative impacts of over-crowding (treated separately in this Plan)
- HLP 6: Reducing the negative effects of animals, insects and vermin
- HLP 7: Reducing the health impacts of dust
- HLP 8: Controlling the temperature of the living environment
- HLP 9: Reducing hazards that cause trauma

The household survey sought to establish observance of the practices using the indicators shown in Table 5.29.

Table 5.29: Indicators for meeting safety and HLPs

Practice	Represented by functional:
HLP 1	Bath or shower, and hot water heater
HLP 2	Laundry tub
HLP 3	Toilet and wastewater disposal/septic
HLP 4	Cooking stove and oven, kitchen sink
HLP 6	Flyscreens and site drainage
HLP 7	Glazed windows
HLP 8	Heating and cooling devices
HLP 9	Electrical installations

The single divergence from the NSHS methodology adopted in this project is to increase the number of working specified facilities to seven through the addition of air-conditioning which MPRA and HLP 8 consider to be essential to managing the health of residents at risk from heat, particularly children, older people and those with long term health conditions. A means of heating the home is also included. Table 5.30 lists the indicators used to evaluate property condition.

Table 5.30: Classification of structural and major services faults

▪ Sinking/moving foundations
▪ Uneven/sagging floors
▪ Major cracks in wall and/or ceiling
▪ Termite damage
▪ Roof leaking inside
▪ Major electrical faults
▪ Major plumbing faults
▪ Major air-conditioning problems
▪ Malfunctioning on-site wastewater treatment system

The results of the evaluation of tenant responses are shown at Table 5.31. Classification in this way might be considered somewhat arbitrary in that a single major structural problem could objectively render the dwelling uninhabitable, but it is to be expected that, if serious faults were present at the time of the household survey, the property would have been vacant and not included.

Table 5.31: Social housing condition as expressed by tenants

Condition	
No structural problems, and 7 working facilities	7%
No more than 2 structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	68%
3 or more structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	23%
None, 1 or 2 structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	0%
3 or more structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	3%

The principal deficiencies recorded in the quality of social housing are noted in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32: Social housing principal structural, electrical, plumbing and facilities problems (%)

Problem area	Houses affected
Moving foundations	24%
Uneven floors	17%
Cracks in wall and/or ceiling	22%
Termite damage	3%
Roof leaking inside	17%
Major electrical faults	15%
Major plumbing faults	14%
Major air conditioning problems	24%

Table 5.32: Social housing principal structural, electrical, plumbing and facilities problems (%)

Problem area	Houses affected
Septic/sewerage problems outside	8%
Non-functional facilities	
Kitchen stove/oven	7%
Solar hot water heater	1%
Shower	3%
Toilet	3%
Air conditioning	14%

The results of the assessment against the Housing for Health safety and healthy living practices are reported in Table 5.33. Whereas Table 5.32 indicates the proportion of installed systems, appliances and fixtures which are non-functional, Table 5.33 captures those households which do not have the benefit of some appliances, primarily wood or electric heaters or air conditioners. For example, three households reported they had neither a wood heater or electric heating and fifteen households stated their properties were not provided with any means of cooling.

Table 5.33: Social housing observance of the HLPs (%)

Practice	Meeting the standard	
HLP 1	Washing people	100%
HLP 2	Washing clothes and bedding	86%
HLP 3	Wastewater disposal	97%
HLP 4	Improving nutrition	97%
HLP 6	Pest control	53%
HLP 7	Reducing impact of dust	89%
HLP 8	Temperature control (heating)	72%
HLP 8	Temperature control (cooling)	69%
HLP 9	Free of electrical hazards	83%

Tenants also reported other minor defects such as broken verandah decking (10%), no working clothesline (11%) and the like. An inability to secure the house because entry and/or back doors could not be closed or locked (7%) was noted, contributing to the feeling of insecurity mentioned by some tenants.

In respect of HLP 2 and HLP 4, provision of whitegoods is a tenant responsibility.

5.14 Asset preservation

As discussed above, and in answer to a series of objective, closed questions, tenants reported a range of structural, building fabric and facilities defects in response to the household survey. An independent scoping of properties has not been carried out to determine the scale of repairs needed to restore properties to a fully serviceable state and develop a schedule of planned maintenance. This Plan relies on the household survey to generate a profile of asset condition.

To provide a cost base on which to estimate expenditures, this HEHP adopts an analysis of previous repair and maintenance projects to derive an 'order of probable cost'. The sample totals 98 properties spread across seven communities in the Region, large and small, and includes properties requiring little or no work to those in need of major refurbishment. The sample is grouped into five bands (quintiles) of increasing scope to generate median values for each band. No adjustment has been made for the average age of properties or type of construction, but values have been revised to account for remoteness as per Rawlinsons cost guide. Costs are to September 2020.

For Lightning Ridge, band medians are listed in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34: Median values for property repair and maintenance, Aboriginal social housing

Band	Median value (\$)
One	8,310
Two	25,300
Three	39,110
Four	58,470
Five	87,580

The median values for repair and maintenance quoted in Table 5.34 allow for minor routine works or responsive works in the case of Band 1 and Band 2 properties progressing through Band 3 to Bands 4 and 5 which include elements of works categorised as planned: cyclical and life cycle (preventative) maintenance. Band 4 and Band 5 works would include internal and external

repainting; replacement of floor coverings; replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and/or laundries; replacing appliances, fixtures and fittings where these are no longer serviceable; and ensuring roofing, gutters and downpipes are brought to a satisfactory condition.

The values quoted in Table 5.34 are median values so it is possible that repairs on any distressed properties could exceed \$100,000 at which point the value question arises as to whether it is more cost effective to replace rather than refurbish.

The probable order of cost for repairs and maintenance is estimated to be as Table 5.35. Information about any expenditures between the time of the household survey and the preparation of this HEHP which might influence cost projections is not available.

To derive an order of cost for all repairs and maintenance, the number of properties has been factored up in the inverse of the ratio of household survey respondents providing detailed information on asset condition to the total number of social housing properties in the community; in the case of Lightning Ridge, the factor is 115/72 or 1.60.

Table 5.35: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

Band	Number of properties assessed from survey	Total number of properties for repair	Probable order of cost (\$)
One	5	8	66,500
Two	48	77	1,948,100
Three	16	26	1,016,900
Four	1	1	58,500
Five	2	3	262,700
Total	72	115	3,352,700
Average spend/property = \$29,150			

It is stressed that the cost projections are based on information provided by respondents to the MPRH&BC household survey and the actual scale of repair and maintenance work will be identified through scoping once regional priorities have been established. From the data analysis and as identified in Table 5.35, three or four properties

could require major refurbishment. It is assumed these properties are salvageable so no properties have been identified for replacement.

AHO reports that between 2012-16, \$1,348,314 was committed to the Walgett LGA for cyclical maintenance across an average of 129 properties and \$1,694,106 on responsive and non-cyclical planned maintenance across an average of 90 properties annually. There is no breakdown available as to how much of this was committed in the three communities in the Shire or information on scope and focus of these works. This work would have been completed before the MPRH&BC household survey and would be factored into household responses in relation to property condition.

Between 2017-19, \$488,113 was reportedly spent in the Walgett LGA on cyclical maintenance across 149 properties, at an average of \$3,276 per property (\$1,310 annually), and the amount committed to responsive and non-cyclical planned maintenance across 265 properties in the LGA was \$1,731,100. This work would have been completed after the MPRH&BC household survey was conducted and would not be reflected in household responses in relation to property condition.

5.15 Homelessness

Whereas the MPRH&BC household survey identified crowding as an issue, no homeless persons were interviewed. Homelessness is a real issue for the community and reference has been made to the 2015 report *Demand and Supply of Aboriginal Housing in Remote and Outer Regional NSW*, prepared on behalf of the AHO, to provide an outline of the “unexpressed demand”. The study investigated the underlying demand for remote Indigenous housing in twenty-two remote, very remote and outer regional communities across central, western and far west NSW. The focus of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that contributed to homelessness and crowding in these communities and the attitude towards home ownership. The report found that homelessness and overcrowding are significant issues in Lightning Ridge. The waiting list at the

time numbered 31 applicants. The level of crowding was described as moderate. All adult age groups and family compositions were stated to be priorities for housing and special mention was made of the need for supported accommodation for people experiencing mental health conditions, and newly built homes. The report commented on the plight of older people who were being forced to move into town from mining camps because of health issues.

5.16 Evaluation of housing need

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) waiting list published in the Housing Register for the Lightning Ridge allocation zone indicates demand from the Aboriginal and non-Indigenous communities as 15 approved general applicants and fewer than 5 priority applicants as of 30th June 2020. In comparison, the AHO advised a waiting list of nine applicants for Aboriginal social housing in mid-2019, four of whom required a 3-bedroom dwelling while the property size for remaining five was undefined. \$5.15 flags a waiting list of 31 applicants in 2015. Where actual demand lies is uncertain.

The DCJ Housing Pathways application process is exceedingly difficult to work through, creating a barrier to service access. Support is available through the Murdi Paaki Tenancy Support and Education Team (MP TSEP), but too often, applicants do not have supporting documentation, including a recognised confirmation of Aboriginality, and cannot complete the process. A widespread view within the community is that there are no rental properties available locally so why bother to apply.

The unadjusted housing need derived from responses to the MPRH&BC household survey is summarised in Table 5.27. To arrive at a realistic estimate, each individual survey return has been examined and allocation made based on expressed need, existing household composition, crowding, homelessness and potential family formation. The results are shown at Table 5.36.

Table 5.36: Housing need

		From MPRH&BC household survey				Factored for whole community			
		Number of bedrooms				Number of bedrooms			
Tenure type	Ratio	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Owner occupier	50 / 15	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Private rental	35 / 8	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Homeless	172 / 95	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Social housing rental	115 / 72	12	1	0	0	19	2	-	-
Employer	- / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Not defined	17 / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total		12	1	0		19	2	0	0

6 THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 Strategic planning

Lightning Ridge is in the Walgett Local Government Area. Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017-2027 outlines key challenges confronting the community and Council's aspirations for future growth focused on continuing the ambition of the Shire to "be a great place to live, work and visit". The action areas proposed by the CSP are:

- Access to a greater range of local services and facilities;
- More local jobs and improved education;
- Better transport options and safer roads;
- Protection and improvement of natural places and waterways, and the ability to live a healthy lifestyle in rural surrounds; and
- A safe environment.

These aspirations align with the aspirations of the Aboriginal community although there is little in the way of strategic intent in advancing common interests. The only reference to engagement is to be found in Goal C 1.3: *A diverse and creative culture, Strategy 1.3.3: Work in collaboration with agencies and community groups to address existing and emerging issues specific to the Aboriginal youth and ageing communities.*

Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), which defines land-related medium-term economic, social and environmental development proposals, including guiding change to Council's Local Environmental Plan 2013 (LEP) and Development Control Plan 2016 (DCP), reflects a greater level of engagement and opportunity across areas of common interest. The LSPS, in responding to the Directions in the NSW Government *Far West Regional Plan 2036*, focusses on planning priorities aimed at supporting sustainable living, maintaining natural assets and environment, and strengthening the local economy, this within the context of "a declining population base projected to decrease by about 19% by 2036 if there are no catalyst events or development which would see the trend reversed".

In respect of residential development, Council is keen to consolidate development within the existing urban area and anticipates current zonings and land use controls will facilitate this objective. Current minimum lot sizes are likely to be retained. Being a district centre, Lightning Ridge is sufficiently large to support a range of local services. Residents also have the benefit of a high school, multi-purpose health service, recreational facilities and supermarkets. Employment growth is weak so there is no pressure currently for additional land releases for commercial purposes.

Beyond the town, residential camps have materialised on mineral claims. While residential use of claims is viewed as temporary, lease conditions allow a degree of permanency of tenure. Living conditions can be challenging though, especially for older residents, as settlements are not provided with basic municipal services or power, access is on unsealed roads subject to closure in wet weather, and local health and support facilities are not readily available. Past use and rehabilitation of sites have been poorly managed providing a fertile environment for land use conflict as well a modified landscape. Efforts are in hand to address legacy issues while supporting the continued viability of mining.

The LSPS intersects community strategic interests at several points, most directly through Council planning priorities:

- Respect Aboriginal communities through promoting management and ownership of land of which they have a traditional association, or which can assist with their social, cultural and economic development;
- Engage Aboriginal people in employment or education, with an emphasis on workforce participation and opportunities; and
- Encourage sustainable management of natural assets and environmental features, including protecting and enhancing the natural environment, improving biodiversity, and protecting items, places, and areas of natural and cultural heritage.

The opportunity exists for the CWP to engage with Council to give effect to these intentions.

On a broader front, Council has developed a series of strategies and actions aimed at increasing residential housing supply and mix, for example:

- Encouraging development of a range of housing types in suitable locations to provide for differing needs: particularly rural residential, medium density housing and accommodation for elderly people; and
- Preparing guidelines for strategies that provide direction on achieving greater housing diversity, and planning for social and affordable housing needs.

But within defined planning controls which:

- Retain appropriate minimum lot sizes to avoid environmental impacts of on-site effluent disposal;
- Encourage alternative and/or additional use of vacant housing stock where residential amenity is not compromised; and
- Continue to utilise the LEP SP1 zoning to protect opal fields from encroachment of housing.

Notwithstanding the assessment that extent of existing urbanisation is adequate for short- and probably medium-term needs, Council is considering the potential need for further large lot residential development. Figure 6.1 illustrates the three areas under investigation.

Figure 6.1: Areas under investigation for potential future large lot development



Source: Walgett Shire Council, LSPS

The *Walgett Shire Rural Residential Strategy, 2018* prepared by consultants GHD suggests that, of the three sites earmarked, only Candidate Site C is suitable for development.

6.2 Planning controls

Walgett Shire Council LEP 2013 sets out the planning controls applicable to residential development in the Shire and the DCP further requirements in relation to planning and design. Key controls are shown at Figure 6.2 which identifies zoning and Figure 6.3 which indicates minimum lots size, generally 700 m² for the General Residential (R1) zone. The Additional Permitted Uses Map – Sheet APU_004AA, not included, shows the mining camps in town permitted to contain a dwelling.

6.3 Municipal rates and charges

Council is permitted by legislation to levy a different municipal rate across its towns and villages. Rates relating to the residential category and service charges for 2021/22 are shown in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2.

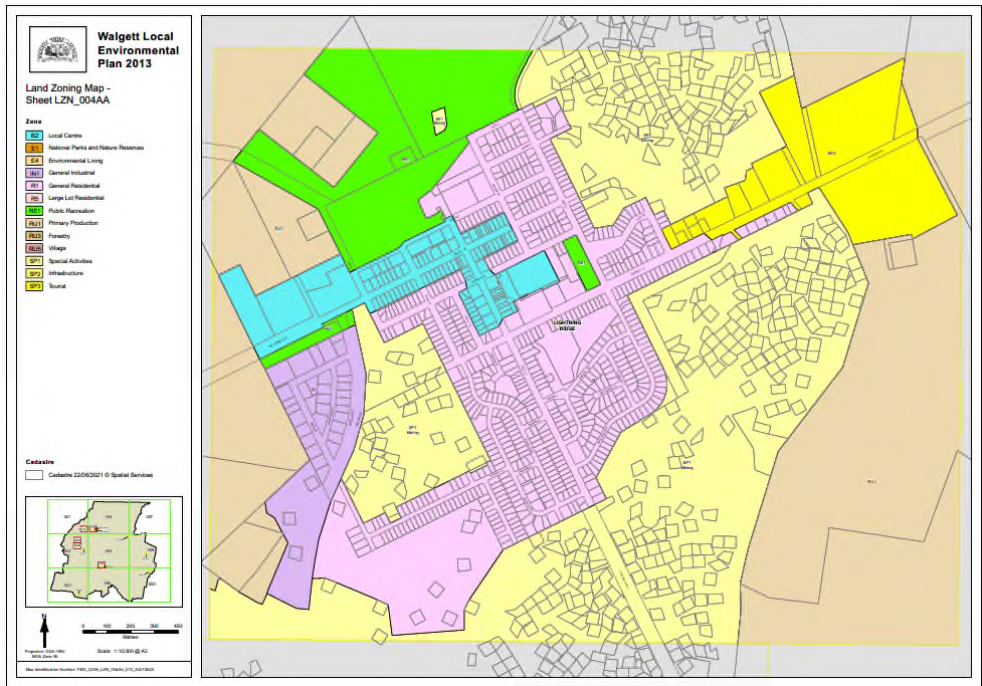
Table 6.1: Ordinary rate, residential (2021/22)

General rate	Base rate	Ordinary rate
		(\$ in the \$)
Walgett	205.00	0.02075736
Lightning Ridge	205.00	0.01123224
Collarenebri	180.00	0.13910987

Table 6.2: Water and sewer charges (2021/22)

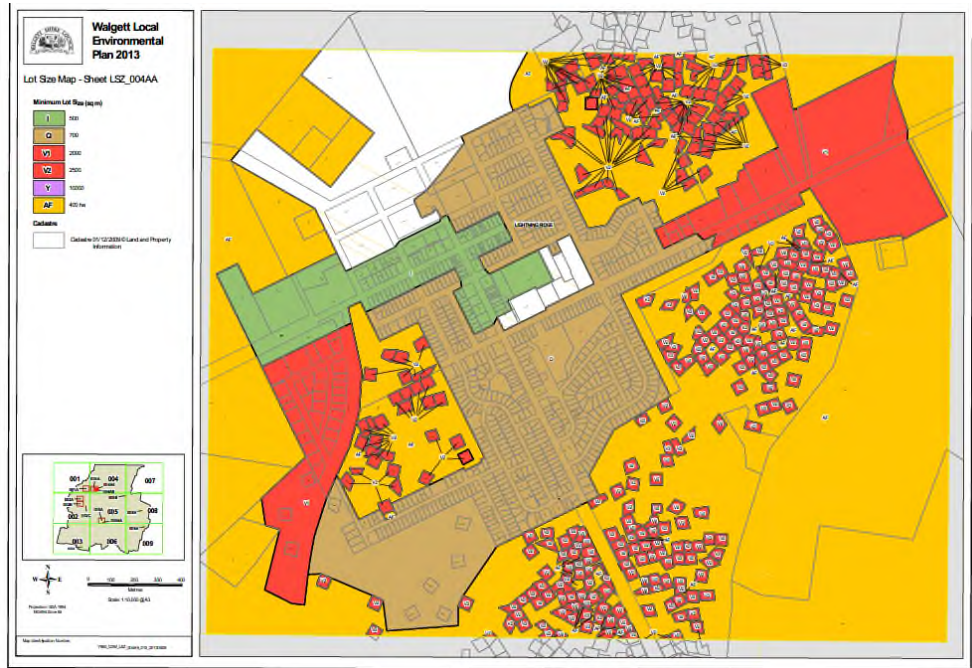
Water	
Filtered water access, 20 mm	\$390.00
Water cost: 0-600 kL	\$0.34/kL
Water cost: over 600 kL	\$0.50/kL
Sewerage	
Sewerage access	\$457.00
Waste management	
Domestic waste management, service	\$62.70
Domestic waste management, collection	\$535.00

Figure 6.2: Land zoning map



Source: Walgett LEP 2013, 7900_COM_LZN_004AA_010_20210622 (243 kb)

Figure 6.3: Lot size



Source: Walgett LEP 2013, 7900_COM_LSZ_004AA_010_20210622

Table 6.3 provides an indication of the spread of unimproved land values across properties owned by the AHO and Barriekneal.

Table 6.3: Typical land values		
Property	Area (m ²)	Unimproved value (\$)
80 Opal Street	951	31,500
7 Fantasia Street	1,000	29,000
3 Cardinal Road	600	29,000
27 Potch Street	976.2	24,500

Typically, in 2021/22, residential lots of about 1,000 m² in Lightning Ridge will incur an annual rate charge of between say \$275 and \$360 and service charges totalling \$1,750, for a total annual bill of between \$2,025 and \$2,120, depending upon individual circumstances. Water use is assumed to be 800L/person/day applied to the average household size stated at Table 5.7.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 Infrastructure accessibility

Residents of Lightning Ridge have access to a range of municipal and other services as summarised in Table 7.1 but, as utilities including Council face the challenges common to most small regional and remote communities, these may only be provided to a minimum functional standard. No infrastructure elements are owned, operated or maintained by any local Aboriginal community organisation.

Walgett Shire Council does not provide municipal services to the mining claims and/or leases so all residents of these areas must provide their own water supply, wastewater and solid waste disposal and, in most cases, power. Neither are roads maintained by Council. As evidenced by the MPRH&BC household survey, several Aboriginal individuals and families live on these claims.

In view of the complexities of addressing the circumstances of these households, this HEHP does not propose any improvements to environmental health infrastructure but, rather, seeks to provide for those Aboriginal individuals and families living in mining camps to move to Aboriginal social housing in town in the future.

7.2 Infrastructure improvements

Inevitably, the community questions the processes by which works are prioritised and the slow pace of improvement. It is appreciated that Council operates within a tight financial climate heavily reliant on government grant funding but community members are ratepayers and feel obliged to speak out if municipal and other services are thought to be wanting. This HEHP flags issues of concern to the Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge in the hope that Council can acknowledge and address the infrastructure deficiencies identified by the CWP at Table 7.2 with permanent technical and operational improvements.

Table 7.1: Service accessibility, Lightning Ridge town

Service	Responsibility	Availability	Service level	To community expectations
Reticulated potable water supply	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	
Reticulated raw water supply	Walgett Shire Council	-	-	
Reticulated sewerage	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	
On-site wastewater management	Walgett Shire Council	-	-	
Stormwater	Walgett Shire Council	✓		
Roads and drainage	Walgett Shire Council	✓		
Solid waste disposal – bulky items	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	
Solid waste disposal – kerb collection	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	
Animal control	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	
Electrical power	Essential Energy	✓	-	
Streetlighting	Essential Energy	✓	-	
Mobile telephone	Telstra	✓	4G	
	Optus	✓	4G	
NBN		✓	FTTN	

Table 7.1: Service accessibility, Lightning Ridge town

Service	Responsibility	Availability	Service level	To community expectations
TV satellite	Viewer Access Satellite TV (VAST)	✓	-	■
Fire fighting	NSW Fire and Rescue	✓	-	■
	NSW Rural Fire Service	✓	-	■

Table 7.2: Community expressed service deficiencies

Service	Deficiency
Reticulated potable water supply	Occasional contamination by faecal matter as indicated by presence of E. Coli in test samples, together with delayed reporting of results, public alerts and implementation of chlorination as required by Council's Drinking Water Management System Plan (Water supply system upgrade project valued at \$1.01M is progressing under the NSW Government Safe and Secure Water Programme)
Reticulated sewerage	System chokes in winter but there are no contractors to clear pipes
On-site wastewater management	Lengthy wait for the septic pump out service gives rise to odours and increased risk of unhealthy conditions adjacent to dwellings
Solid waste disposal – bulky items	Current arrangements for domestic waste management are inadequate in that Council does not provide a bulky items pick up service, nor a recycling service, nor a domestic waste collection service to mining camps
Roads and drainage	Sealed road surfaces are breaking up in places and require repair Lack of kerb and guttering in established streets. Access to driveways is across unsealed shoulders which become muddy in wet conditions – Potch Street, Silica Street and Kaolin Street were mentioned but the deficiency is not confined to these three Speeding vehicles are a danger in Black Prince Drive and Fantasia Street, warranting the installation of speed control devices Generally, sealed road surfaces are poor and require maintenance
Streetlighting	Streetlights are too widely spaced, light levels are too low to be effective, and too many lamps are broken
Environmental amenity	Dust levels are high, made worse by trafficking of unsealed road shoulders and unsealed roads in and around mining camps (The nearest DustWatch monitoring station is at Walgett so definitive data is not available to assess the potential hazard to health from PM _{2.5} particles, but the additional effort required to maintain a clean-living environment is evident from CWP comments)

8 COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE

8.1 Community health profile summary

Lightning Ridge is one of twenty-three local government areas in the Western NSW Local Health District (LHD). Quantitative data for the Lightning Ridge community is not available due to its small size. A mixed methods approach has been used to describe the health of the community.

In 2019, 77.8% of Western NSW LHD residents who participated in the annual NSW Population Health Survey reported excellent, very good, or good health¹.

Combined methods show that the Aboriginal community of Lightning Ridge differs in terms of health outcomes compared to other communities in the Walgett LGA, NSW and Australian population. The Aboriginal community in Lightning Ridge is reasonably well and has reasonable access to good health care locally. There are, however, some evident gaps in services.

8.2 Health status – qualitative assessment

Qualitative evidence was gathered by interviewing local health care providers to assess the perceived health status of the Lightning Ridge community. Evidence indicates that the health of the Aboriginal population is good. Interviewees made the following observations:

- There are few cases of infectious diseases like head lice and skin disease. If detected, they are treated quickly; mostly people know how to treat them;
- Dust from mining activity is one of the main health issues: silica in dust is contributing to the higher number of people being diagnosed with lung conditions;
- Chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and heart disease are evident but not as likely as in some neighbouring communities;
- Patients who require palliative care can be admitted to the hospital, however many choose to have their end-of-life care at home;
- Mental health and drugs are constant issues in Lightning Ridge. There is limited support even though the 'hub' for these services is located in the town. A network of 'community responders' is suggested;
- Specialist staff including the diabetes educator and the under-staffed mental health team are stretched because of the need to cover the four hub communities (Lightning Ridge, Goodooga, Collarenebri and Walgett);
- Sometimes, Aboriginal community members must relocate to other towns (for example Walgett or Collarenebri) to access aged care beds;
- Consistent general practice is problematic because of a lack of continuity - constant rotation of locums, lack of knowledge of services;
- There is not enough community transport in town. There is no public transport or taxi service. Health transport is limited and confined to town. If family or friends are unable to provide transport out of town then the only alternative is the TrainLink service to Walgett, Coonamble, Dubbo or Sydney. If travelling beyond Coonamble, it could involve an overnight stay;
- Water is sourced from the artesian bore and is treated. There is often a sulphur smell and sometimes chlorine. The water is not pumped and stored well in summer and is usually very hot once it reaches people's houses;
- Most Aboriginal housing is fitted with atmospheric water generators which are used for drinking water;
- There are sometimes E-coli alerts for the bore water which are promptly treated by the Shire. This is disruptive to supply and affects those without an alternative water supply;
- Houses are sometimes overcrowded but this is usually due to visitors rather than permanent stayers. But it is reported that sometimes the houses are not fit for purpose: the stock is ageing and some are not well maintained;
- There is a need for additional 4+ bedroom houses and single bedroom houses to meet the needs of younger people;

- There is limited affordable housing in Lightning Ridge;
- People living in camps with health issues and without a car find access to services difficult. Health conditions are often exacerbated by lack of cooling and refrigeration;
- Employment opportunities in town are few;
- While the school is offering more variety in subjects, there continues to be little interest in staying at school to years 11 and 12;
- Many Aboriginal children are going to boarding school (on scholarship) in Orange or Sydney;
- There is not enough employment, or continuing or alternate education options to keep young people (aged 14 and over) in town. Young people either leave their families or, if they decide to stay, get themselves into trouble.

8.3 Health status – quantitative assessment

Data for Walgett LGA, Western NSW LHD and NSW is presented to describe the health status of the population.

8.3.1 Mother and baby health

- The proportion of babies born to teenage mothers in Western NSW LHD is 2.5 times higher than in NSW²;
- Almost two-thirds of Aboriginal mothers in Western NSW LHD had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks gestation (65.4%) compared to all NSW Aboriginal mothers (75.3%) and all NSW mothers (79.6%)³;
- By comparison, 71.3% of all women in Walgett LGA had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks, which is significantly lower than the proportion of all women in NSW⁴;
- Aboriginal women in Western NSW LHD are almost 6 times more likely to smoke during pregnancy (49.5% compared to 8.8%)⁵;
- Compared to all Aboriginal women in Australia, Aboriginal women in the Walgett LGA are also more likely to smoke during pregnancy (59.1% compared to 47.3%)⁶.

- All women in Walgett LGA are significantly more likely to smoke during pregnancy compared to NSW (40.3%)⁷;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are almost 2 times more likely to have a baby with a low birthweight (<2,500g)⁸;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are 1.5 times more likely to have a baby prematurely (<37 weeks gestation)⁹;

8.3.2 Growth and development of children and young people

- Compared to all NSW 1-year olds, there are more Aboriginal 1-year olds fully vaccinated in the Western NSW LHD (95.2% compared to 94.2%)¹⁰;
- Children in Western NSW LHD had significantly more decayed, missing and filled deciduous (baby) teeth (dmft) compared to all NSW children (average of 2.4 dmft in Western NSW LHD children compared to 1.53 in NSW children). The average number of decayed, missing and filled permanent (adult) teeth (DMFT) in Western NSW LHD children is about the same as all NSW children (average of 0.87 DMFT in Western NSW LHD children compared to 0.74 in NSW children)¹¹;
- The average number of dmft and DMFT for all Aboriginal children in NSW are both significantly higher than the NSW comparison (3.04 average dmft and 1.17 average DMFT)¹²;
- Children in Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to have no caries in their baby teeth (dmft=0) compared to all NSW children (47.7% of children in Western NSW LHD children compared to 61.2% of NSW children). The proportion of Western NSW LHD children with no caries in their adult teeth (DMFT=0) is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (58.4% of children in Western NSW LHD with DMFT=0 compared to 65.4% in NSW children)¹³;
- The proportions of Aboriginal children who are caries free in both their baby and adult teeth (dmft=0, DMFT=0) are both significantly lower than the NSW comparison (35.2% with dmft=0 and 53.6% with DMFT=0)¹⁴;
- Children in the Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to eat the recommended number of serves of vegetables

compared to all NSW children (2.8% of Western NSW LHD children eating the recommended number of serves compared to 5.5% in NSW). The proportion of children in Western NSW LHD eating the recommended number of serves of fruit is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (67.7% of Western NSW LHD children eating the recommended number of serves compared to 62.7% in NSW)¹⁵.

8.3.3 Morbidity

- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA are significantly more likely to present to the Emergency Department for all reasons. Overall, Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA are 2 times more likely to present to the Emergency Department compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia (133,017.9 per 100,000 people compared to 62,109.4 per 100,000 people)⁶;
- In 2016/17 there were, on average, more than 110,000 admissions to hospital by Western NSW LHD residents, of whom 14% were Aboriginal people, who form 13% of the total LHD population¹⁶;
- The leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD is dialysis (27%) then maternal health, childbirth and neonatal issues (9%) and symptoms and signs of illness (8%)¹⁶;
- The proportion of Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD admitted to hospital for dialysis is more than twice that of the proportion expected based on comparison with the NSW (total) population¹⁶;
- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA are significantly more likely to be admitted to hospital for diabetes, mood affective disorders, ischaemic heart disease, respiratory system diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, digestive system diseases, skin diseases and injury or poisonings. There are significantly fewer admissions for cancers⁶;
- Similarly, the admission rate for all people in the Western NSW LHD for skin infections is significantly higher than the rate in NSW

(493.4 per 100,000 people compared to 355.3 per 100,000 people)¹⁷;

- The rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations in Walgett LGA is significantly higher than in NSW (3,495.0 per 100,000 admissions compared to 2,160.7 per 100,000 admissions)¹⁸;
- The leading cause of potentially preventable hospitalisation in the Western NSW LHD is cellulitis followed by dental conditions and ear nose and throat infections¹⁹;
- Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA are significantly more likely to be admitted to hospital for a potentially preventable condition compared to all Aboriginal Australians (6,465.6 per 100,000 people compared to 5,395.2 per 100,000 people)⁶.

8.3.4 Mortality

- In 2018, there were 2,467 deaths of people who lived in the Western NSW LHD. For people who lived in the Western NSW LHD, the all causes death rate was significantly higher than the rate for all of NSW (610.1 per 100,000 people compared to 506.4 per 100,000 people)²⁰;
- For all Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA, the median age at death is 61.0 years compared to 61.0 years in NSW⁶. By comparison, the median age at death for all people who live in Walgett LGA is 73.0 years compared to 82.0 years for all NSW residents²¹;
- The leading age adjusted death rate for all Aboriginal people in NSW is circulatory disease (189.0 per 100,000 population) which is significantly higher than the rate of circulatory disease death in all of NSW (144.6 per 100,000 population)²²;
- Similarly, in the Western NSW LHD the leading cause of death is also circulatory disease (28.1% of all deaths)²³;
- In Walgett LGA the death rate from injury and poisoning in 2016-2018 was significantly higher than in NSW (53.0 per 100,000 population compared to 35.6 per 100,000 population)²⁴;
- In NSW 6.9% of all deaths in outer regional and remote areas are due to injury and poisoning and 1.5% are due to infectious and parasitic diseases²⁵;

- The rate of potentially avoidable deaths in Walgett LGA is not significantly different to the rate in NSW (129.0 per 100,000 population compared to 99.4 per 100,000 population)²⁶;
- Aboriginal people in Walgett LGA are significantly more likely to die prematurely from circulatory systems diseases compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia (131.4 per 100,000 people compared to 69.8 per 100,000 people)⁶;

Tables 8.1 to 8.5 and Figure 8.1 provide detailed information of the health statistics for the region.

8.3.5 Health risk factors

In NSW, 26.4% of the Aboriginal population smoked cigarettes daily²⁷. In the Western NSW LHD, 12.4% of the total population aged 16 and over smoked daily; by comparison the proportion of smokers in NSW was 11.2%²⁸.

In NSW, 48.7% of the Aboriginal population drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health²⁹. In the Western NSW LHD, 35.9% of the total population aged 16 and over drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health; by comparison the proportion of at-risk drinkers in NSW was 32.8%³⁰.

Table 8.1: Cause of presentation to Emergency Departments, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Walgett LGA	NSW	Australia
All causes	133,017.9*	71,135.8	62,109.4
Infectious and parasitic disease	4,739.4*	3,393.1	3,293.9
Mental health and related conditions	5,258.0*	3,649.3	3,636.7
Circulatory system diseases	2,247.0*	1,274.2	1,570.1
Respiratory system diseases	8,991.4*	7,153.7	6,340.7
Digestive system diseases	9,061.6*	3,972.5	3,500.8
Musculoskeletal system diseases	8,131.5*	3,936.2	2,910.1
Urinary system diseases	3,781.5*	2,364.4	2,263.4
Injury, poisoning and external causes	29,734.1*	16,420.0	14,458.8
Other factors requiring contact with the health system	5,343.7*	5,889.1	4,664.0
Other reasons	55,407.1*	23,097.0	19,471.0

* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia

Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia.

Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia

Table 8.2: Leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people, Western NSW LHD, 2016-17

	% admissions: Aboriginal people in Western NSW LHD	All NSW Aboriginal % admissions	All NSW % admissions
Dialysis	27%	27%	13%
Maternal, neonatal & congenital disorders	9%	10%	7%
Symptoms & abnormal findings	8%	7%	8%
Respiratory diseases	8%	7%	5%
Digestive system diseases	7%	7%	10%
Injury & poisoning	7%	7%	7%
Other factors infl. health	6%	7%	11%
Nervous & sense disorders	4%	4%	7%
Circulatory diseases	4%	3%	5%
Genitourinary diseases	4%	4%	5%
Mental disorders	4%	5%	5%
Musculoskeletal diseases	3%	3%	5%
Skin diseases	2%	2%	2%
Infectious diseases	2%	2%	2%
Malignant neoplasms	2%	2%	4%
Endocrine diseases	2%	2%	2%
Blood & immune diseases	1%	1%	1%
Other neoplasms	1%	1%	2%

Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

Table 8.3: Cause of admission, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Walgett LGA	NSW	Australia
Infectious and parasitic disease	936.9	759.9	1,093.5
All cancers	516.7 [#]	926.1	983.8
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	1,205.8	704.9	1,101.0
Diabetes	665.3 [*]	319.0	420.9
Mental health and related conditions	2,585.8	2,515.3	2,626.5
Mood affective disorders	147.7 [*]	351.3	355.6
Nervous system diseases	991.9	807.1	916.5
Eye and adnexa diseases	437.1	465.4	531.6
Ear and mastoid process diseases	405.1	336.1	423.4
Circulatory system diseases	2,001.8	1,389.5	1,822.7
Ischaemic heart disease	872.2 [*]	473.7	652.8
Heart failure	187.6	163.4	238.4
Respiratory system diseases	4,358.7 [*]	2,659.0	3,373.8
Asthma	364.3	280.6	300.4
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	1,173.4 [*]	548.3	594.9
Digestive system diseases	4,302.2 [*]	2,843.6	3,099.5
Skin diseases	1,057.9 [*]	821.0	1,370.0
Musculoskeletal system diseases	1,240.7	1,415.0	1,446.0
Urinary system diseases	1,833.2	1,460.8	1,696.2

Table 8.3: Cause of admission, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Walgett LGA	NSW	Australia
Chronic kidney disease	499.5	252.7	387.3
Pregnancy and childbirth	16,022.6	12,749.2	14,700.7
Congenital conditions	263.9	215.0	210.3
Injury, poisoning and external causes	4,895.9*	3,305.9	4,364.1

* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia

Significantly lower than the rate for Australia

Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia.

Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia

Table 8.4: Leading cause of death, Western NSW LHD and NSW, 2018-19

	Western NSW LHD total population			NSW	
	Ave # deaths per year	Rate per 100,000	% deaths	Aboriginal % deaths	Total % deaths
Circulatory diseases	714.5	169.2	28.1	21.8	27.6
Malignant cancers	659.5	167.9	26.0	25.3	28.3
Respiratory diseases	305.5	73.9	12.0	11.6	9.8
Injury and poisoning	147.0	47.5	5.8	13.6	5.9
Mental and behavioural disorders	147.0	33.6	5.8	6.7	6.9
All other causes	567.5	142.2	22.3	21.0	21.5
All causes	2541	634.2			

Data source: NSW COC URF, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

Table 8.5: Premature deaths, Aboriginal people aged 0-74 years, rate per 100,000, Walgett LGA, NSW and Australia 2013-2017

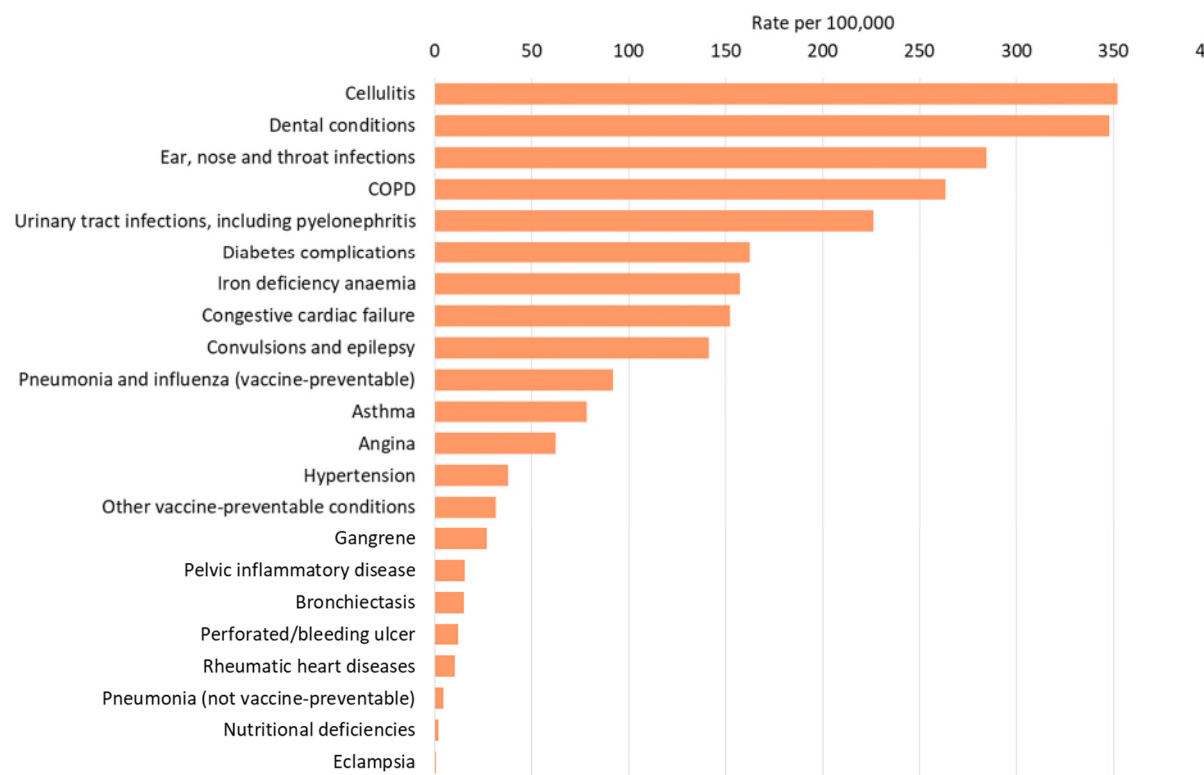
	Walgett LGA	NSW	Australia
Deaths from cancer	81.4	56.3	72.1
Deaths from diabetes	27.1	10.0	23.4
Deaths from circulatory system diseases	131.4*	46.1	69.8
Deaths from respiratory system diseases	44.0	22.4	26.9
Deaths from external causes	100.5	41.5	58.1

* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia

Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia.

Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia

Figure 8.1: Potentially preventable hospitalisations (rate per 100,000), total population Western NSW LHD, 2018-19



Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

8.4 Available health services

Lightning Ridge Multi-Purpose Health Service is a small rural health service offering primary health care on weekdays as well as providing a Level 1 emergency service with 24-hour on call general practitioner services. The facility has four acute care beds and twenty aged care beds which, if available, can be used for respite care. Recent expansion creates additional space and amenities for the community health team, for clinicians and for visiting specialist and allied health services.

Health services in Lightning Ridge are provided by the Western NSW LHD, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and other stand-alone providers.

- In addition to a visiting medical officer and complement of registered nurses, the Western NSW LHD provides:
- Aboriginal health practitioners

- Administration support
- Security and domestic services
- Community nurses
- Diabetes educator
- Sexual health nurse
- Mental health, drug and alcohol and sexual assault services
- Video access to Dubbo palliative care team
- Access to Dubbo-based medical specialists.

Walgett AMS provides:

- Eye health (including an optometrist)
- Ear health (including an audiologist).

Other standalone services include general practice services available through medical centres operated by Rural and Remote Medical Services and Ochre Health and allied health services: speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, offered by Outback Therapy Services.

9 HUMAN SERVICES

9.1 Human services target population

The sectors of the Aboriginal population which should be the target of human services are identified in Table 9.1 together with the corresponding population numbers. The figures are for 2016.

Table 9.1: Service age groups, 2016					
Total persons (Usual residence)	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous		
Service age group (years)	Number	%	Number	%	Ratio
Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)	42	9.9	35	4.2	2.4
Primary schoolers (5-11)	67	15.7	41	4.9	3.2
Secondary schoolers (12-17)	43	10.1	29	3.5	2.9
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	32	7.5	39	4.6	1.6
Young workforce (25-34)	53	12.4	86	10.2	1.2
Parents and homebuilders (35-49)	83	19.5	131	15.6	1.3
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	56	13.1	131	15.6	0.8
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69)	37	8.7	134	16.0	0.5
Seniors (70-84)	9	2.1	194	23.1	0.1
Elderly aged (85 and over)	4	0.9	20	2.4	0.4
Total	426	100.0	840	100.0	-
Source: ABS Tablebuilder with age classifications as .id Consultants					

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 9.2: Core activity need for assistance		
	n=405	n=815
Of cohort population	10.4%	11.0%
Murdi Paaki Region	7%	7%
New South Wales	8%	6%

The proportion of the Aboriginal population requiring assistance in the core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication because of disability, long term health condition or old age is identified at Table 9.2, together with the non-Indigenous population for comparison. The age range of the Aboriginal population fraction requiring assistance is given at Table 9.3.

9.2 Human services in the community

Human services available to the Aboriginal community to cater for a range of needs are shown at Table 9.4 and the features of home care services are described at Table 9.5. Table 9.6 lists the NSW government principal agencies providing services to Lightning Ridge. There is no Australian Government presence.

Table 9.3: Core activity need for assistance by age group, Aboriginal population	
Age range	Number of persons
0-9 years	4
10-19 years	4
20-29 years	0
30-39 years	3
40-49 years	4
50-59 years	12
60-69 years	4
70-79 years	10
80-89 years	0
90+ years	0
Total	41

The NDIS is funding a total of 45 NDIS packages across Walgett LGA as a whole. Total Aboriginal population requiring assistance across Walgett LGA is 104 persons

Table 9.4: Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Health services	Royal Flying Doctor Service	Primary health care, retrieval plus visiting Specialists	Broken Hill	General population	-
	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	Primary health care clinic	Walgett	Aboriginal community	-
	Western NSW Local Health District (LHD)	Lightning Ridge Multi-Purpose Service	Dubbo	General population	-
	Ochre Health	Primary health care	Lightning Ridge	General population	DCJ
	NSW Outback Division of General Practice	General practice	Lightning Ridge	General population	-
Aboriginal social housing services	Orana Haven Aboriginal Corporation	Drug and Alcohol service	Gongolgon	Aboriginal community	-
	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation	Aboriginal social housing	Broken Hill	Aboriginal community	-
	Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council	Aboriginal social housing	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NSWALC
Tenant support	Murdi Paaki Services Ltd	Tenant education and support programme	Cobar	Aboriginal community	DPIE/AHO
	Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	Tenant advocacy and representation	Dubbo	Aboriginal community	Fair Trading
Homelessness services	CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes	Youth at risk of homelessness	Lightning Ridge	Youth population	DCJ
	Mission Australia	Homelessness and Housing Support/ Women's Safe House	Lightning Ridge	General population	DCJ
	Veritas House	Premiers Youth Initiative	Dubbo	Youth population	DCJ
	MacKillop Family Services Ltd	Reconnect program	Walgett	Youth population	-
Early childhood services	Mission Australia	Parent Next program	Lightning Ridge	Young children	-
	MacKillops Family Services Ltd	Lighting Ridge Mobile Children's Service	Walgett	Young children	-
	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	Goonimoo Mobile Children Services	Walgett	Young children	-
	Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Inc	Dhirraway Dharrun Bawu Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, Parents as First Teachers project, Aboriginal Fathers project and Inclusive Communities program	Brewarrina	Young Aboriginal children	DCJ/NIAA /NDIA
	Lightning Ridge Pre-school Centre	Early childhood education	Lightning Ridge	Young children	NIAA

Table 9.4: Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Family support services	NSW Outback Division of General Practice	Did Ya Know programme	Bourke	General population	-
	CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes Ltd	FamilyCare Service	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	Mackillop Family Services Ltd	Family Strengthening Service, Aboriginal Families as Teachers	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	Mission Australia	Family Preservation Service, Upper Western Community DFV Project, Keeping woman safe in their homes and Central north woman's domestic violence court advocacy service	Lightning Ridge	General population	DCJ
Employment services	REDI.E	Community Development Program	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NIAA
	REDI.E	Jobactive employment service	Walgett	Aboriginal community	DESE
Social support	REDI.E	Centrelink service	Walgett	General population	-
Legal services	Legal Aid NSW	Legal services to disadvantaged people	Lightning Ridge	General population	Australian Government
Residential aged care services	Australia Unity	Aged care	Walgett	General population	-
	Live Better Services Ltd	Intensive Residential Care Transition	Lightning Ridge	General population	-
Home care and home support services	Australian Unity Home Care – Aboriginal Home Care	Home care packages community services	Lightning Ridge	Aboriginal community	HCP/CHSP
	Live Better Services Ltd	Aboriginal home care services	Lightning Ridge	General population	NDIS
Cultural Services	Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Land Council	Culture and heritage, land management	Lightning Ridge	Aboriginal community	NSWALC
Disability services	Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) Ltd	Plan development, support coordination and support services	Bourke	General population	NDIS
	Flourish Australia		Walgett	General population	NDIS

Table 9.4: Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
	Live Better		Lightning Ridge	Aboriginal population	NDIS
	Wellways		Lightning Ridge	General population	NDIS

Table 9.5: Home care and home support services

	Services	Transport	Meals	Other food services	Home maintenance	Home modifications	Social support individual	Flexible respite	Personal care	Domestic assistance	Social support group	Nursing	Centre-based respite	Specialised support services	Allied health and therapy services	Assistance with care and housing	Transition care
		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Australian Unity Home Care		Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
Live Better Services Ltd		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y
Lightning Ridge Multi-Purpose Service												Y					

Table 9.6: NSW Government agency representation in Lightning Ridge

Cluster	Principal department and agencies	Responsibilities	Service access
Stronger Communities	Department of Communities and Justice	Families, communities and disability services; public housing and homelessness services; law and justice; child protection; sport, seniors and veterans	Lightning Ridge
Customer Service	Department of Customer Service	Customer services: primary access point to government services; registration and licencing; payment of fines	Lightning Ridge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Office of Fair Trading Revenue NSW 		
Planning, Industry and Environment	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment	Urban and regional planning; water and natural resources; industry; environment, energy and science; Aboriginal and social housing; and Aboriginal heritage and land use	Dubbo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Parks and Wildlife Service 		

10 COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

10.1 Authority for change

The way Aboriginal social housing is managed has changed markedly since the first Murdi Paaki HEHPs were produced, that change being very much to the detriment of the Region:

- The discriminatory treatment of regional and local managing ACHPs has adversely impacted management services, enfranchisement of tenants, and asset condition and preservation;
- Variable and inadequate regional investment in capital works coupled with poorly planned and coordinated implementation, inappropriate material and equipment specification, and ineffective quality supervision, has contributed to greater variability in the number and condition of housing assets and infrastructure; and
- Opportunities to build on proven Aboriginal employment and training in construction and environmental health skills, once productive in the region, have been non-existent.

There is therefore a compelling need to redraw the sector landscape at community scale to reflect the status of Aboriginal housing and environmental health infrastructure in all Murdi Paaki communities.

10.2 Community priorities

The Lightning Ridge CWP has set out its aspirations and priorities for improved community wellbeing, including as they relate to housing, in its Community Action Plan (CAP), advocating for improved service delivery across the full spectrum of health and human services. The CAP priorities and key actions which relate to this Plan are set out in Table 10.1 and the issues which give rise to the action areas are summarised in Table 10.3 and Table 10.4.

10.3 Community engagement

All Aboriginal social housing in Lightning Ridge is managed by either a local or the Regional ACHP. The effect of this is that the community has not had to deal with the impacts of management of housing by either an out-of-Region ACHP or a mainstream CHP. Even so, community feedback obtained from the MPRH&BC Household Survey, conducted in 2016-2017, reflects the challenges that have beset the Regional ACHP, Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation, because of restricted ACHP income. Community members indicated a preference for housing managers to be located within the community or relatively close by within the Region (such as by Dreamtime Housing, at Coonamble) so that repairs and other issues can be resolved in a timely manner. MPRHC has faced difficulties in servicing a community so far from its base in Broken Hill. MPRHC tenants generally distinguished housing condition from tenancy management services, and were satisfied with the management of their tenancies other than in relation to having repairs and maintenance effected. MPRHC's inability to satisfy tenant expectations in this regard were attributed to distance. Most Barriekneal tenants, too, were happy with the services provided. However, comments from several survey participants suggested that there is division within the community about Barriekneal's policies and asset management practices, and that there are perceived equity issues around governance, membership, property allocation and attention to housing repair and maintenance requests. Relationships with some tenants might be described as hostile. The Land Council made mention of Barriekneal not undertaking repairs and maintenance to Land Council properties while they were under Barriekneal management because of AHO's Build and Grow programme.

Discussion at the two community meetings held on 5th August and 21st October 2021 reinforced survey findings relating to quality of housing, including health- and amenity-related inclusions; local provision of management services; and housing need. Discussions indicate that the community is aware of the impacts on its housing of the AHO's Build & Grow policy. Most houses were reported to be in good condition overall; however,

community members observed that housing defects identified at commencement of Build & Grow have either not been attended to at all, or have not been remediated adequately, and that housing repairs and maintenance conducted under Build & Grow were substandard. Trades from outside of the community who were responsible for work carried out were reported to be disrespectful, racist and careless: community members reported destruction of equipment and fixed furniture, damage to tenants' furniture and personal possessions; and theft of items such as light fittings. Housing providers and tenants have been left with an ongoing legacy of damage and disrepair:

"It wasn't successful, they didn't even paint behind picture frames."

Painting appears to have been a particular bone of contention for tenants. An audit undertaken following the Build & Grow repair and maintenance programme recorded community concerns about the work undertaken; however, community members indicate that works identified in the audit have not been carried out; the audit report has not been made available for community review; and that accountability for expenditure of Aboriginal-identified funding is a continuing problem.

AHO is reported to prioritise its own properties when funding and delivering upgrades and maintenance. Tenants recognise that funding of repairs and maintenance is constrained:

"I believe that there is not enough money to go around and that people who pay their rent should get their maintenance done."



Table 10.1: Community Action Plan goals and objectives

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

4	To improve our wellbeing by recognising and actively supporting specific health and wellbeing issues faced by our community
4.1	Reduce the level of use of alcohol and other drugs in town
4.2	Reduce levels of domestic violence and increase support for victims
4.3	Enhance service delivery for the aged, frail and those with a disability
4.4	Ensure that our people in Lightning Ridge have the tools to experience respectful relationships
4.5	Ensure Aboriginal community is represented on the Lightning Ridge Health Advisory Board
4.6	To develop the participation of the Aboriginal community in sports and recreation

Table 10.1: Community Action Plan goals and objectives**SAFE COMMUNITIES**

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 5 | To have a safe place for families, young people and individuals by having an integrated and appropriate approach to safety issues in the community |
| 5.1 | Implement a circle sentencing programme to work with Aboriginal people |
| 5.2 | Provide support for our children and youth at risk |
| 5.3 | Improve community infrastructure |
| 5.4 | Ensure best quality of visiting services is provided to keep community safe |
| 5.5 | Increase family safety and prevent the risk of harm to our community members |

HOUSING

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 7 | To provide suitable housing to meet the needs of our community and that integrates with the natural environment |
| 7.1 | Improve access to affordable housing |
| 7.2 | Increase awareness of home ownership programme(s) |
| 7.3 | Encourage home maintenance practices |
| 7.4 | Address the specific housing needs of the aged, the frail and those with disability |
| 7.5 | Ensure homes are environmentally friendly |
| 7.6 | Supply air conditioners to all Aboriginal houses in our community |
| 7.7 | Ensure all families have safe and stable homes |

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 8 | Increase opportunities for employment and economic development for our local Aboriginal community |
| 8.1 | Promote Aboriginal employment opportunities at the LRAC&FC |
| 8.2 | Promote Aboriginal employment opportunities at the Australian Opal and Fossil Centre |
| 8.3 | Get employment quotas implemented in local private enterprise |
| 8.4 | Support the ongoing sustainability of the Goondi Aboriginal Keeping Place |
| 8.5 | Develop education and skills for all |

Lack of Aboriginal tradespersons in Lightning Ridge is seen as a contributing factor to the inadequate response to housing defects, and the community has identified a need for more incentives to support an Aboriginal trainee, apprenticeship and employment programme in building trades.

Qualified, licensed local trades are in short supply; Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd experiences difficulties in securing contractors. Need exists for local electricians, plumbers and builders, and this is exacerbated by competition across the Region for trades as repair and maintenance programmes such as the Aboriginal Community Housing Investment Fund (ACHIF) are rolled out at broad scale. In Lightning Ridge, for example, ACHIF will fund fences, solar PV panels, carports, flooring and painting within the next year, and the preference is to have local contractors undertake the work.

Climate control in Aboriginal social housing is a high priority for the community:

“Please provide us with an air conditioner even if it’s just in one room. Sometimes it’s so HOT in this house I have to take my kids to sleep at my mum’s or my sister’s house.”

Existing air conditioning is reported to be basic in specification, old and noisy and, if it fails in service, housing managers remove the units rather than have them repaired or replaced. Where ducted units are installed, it was reported that ducting is often damaged or disconnected. Discontent has also been expressed about the hydropanels installed on roofs by the AHO.

The community has identified a significant need for additional housing to meet the needs of older people seeking purpose-built accommodation,

larger families living in crowded dwellings, and young people, especially young men. There is a pressing need for one- and two-bedroom flats, particularly for young men who have shared custody arrangements, and for elders. A preference was expressed for a mixture of granny flats, duplexes with small gardens, and two-bedroom free-standing houses, with dwellings to incorporate mobility aids where required by prospective tenants. The flats in Halleys Comet Street are viewed as an example of good design. The community sees provision of smaller flats and houses as a means to free three- and four-bedroom dwellings currently housing one or two people for use by families, subject to existing tenant willingness to move; tenant preference to stay in the family home is to be respected. Design of new housing should consider tenant preference for adaptability around changing family size and mobility needs, and should reflect a desire for variety in appearance: dwellings should not look like “housing commission houses”.

Lightning Ridge is one of the communities selected for AHO’s Granny Flat pilot project. Community members have expressed disquiet about this project: concerns relate to lack of community engagement, allocation of the flats, impact of construction of the flats on outdoor living space in backyards; and the effect on independence of young people at the stage of household formation who, community members believe, should be independently applying for their own housing rather than being decanted into a flat in the parental backyard.

Several of the owner-occupier households which responded to the MPRH&BC Household Survey were singles or couples living in mining camps. A number of these respondents wished to move into town for access to reticulated electricity, water and sewerage, but would not be able to afford to buy a house in the urban area.

Shortage of developable land is a chronic problem: Lightning Ridge LALC has over 20 land claims outstanding; it has five vacant blocks. Some development is taking place currently but one of the blocks is not zoned for dwelling construction. The community would like to see Walgett Shire

Council release additional serviced building blocks for housing construction.

Housing costs, whether for rental or purchase, are seen as inequitable and unaffordable. Tenants feel that they are paying more than people renting in Dubbo, yet do not have access to the same shops, facilities, services and infrastructure. The view is that rentals should reflect the remoteness of the community, and should be based upon the house size rather than household income. The community wishes to introduce a standardised approach to rent setting on this basis.

Community members wish to see more incentives for Aboriginal people to purchase their houses. House prices in Lightning Ridge are seen as prohibitively expensive; the community would like to see measures put in place to assist with affordability.

Housing related support services are provided in the community by the TSEP Team and Mission Australia. The TSEP service provided by Murdi Paaki Services is well-regarded in the community; as a culturally safe and effective housing support service available to residents. Community members observed that shame prevents some people who require help from seeking it; it was noted that tenants need education to support them in their housing but that the TSEP team is stretched.

Mission Australia provides Specialist Homelessness Services and housing support, and auspices the Women’s Safe House. Services are provided in accordance with the service brief through a full-time, business hours presence in Lightning Ridge. Mission Australia is better funded than the TSEP to provide material resources for people fleeing an emergency or for homeless clients to set up a new tenancy, but refers to the TSEP for support for housing application preparation, which they are also funded to provide. Details of emergency accommodation available in Lightning Ridge is listed in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2: Emergency accommodation

Function	Type	No	Bedrooms
Women's safe house	Share house	1	3
Crisis units		2	2
Transitional units	-	1	1
	-	4	2
Exit units	-	2	3

Service providers indicate that Link2Home is unable to provide support to homeless people in Lightning Ridge. No emergency accommodation is available, so the service cannot be used.

Need has been identified for transitional accommodation for young people: a "safe house" which can provide residential care for young people who have been removed from their homes pending action through the court. Survey responses also revealed a need for emergency housing specifically for homeless men of all ages, including those escaping domestic and family violence situations.

Feedback from the community meetings indicated that human services provided range from effective and accessible to culturally unsafe to dysfunctional to invisible. Community members indicated that gaps and duplication in service delivery are problematic, and that there is a preference to eliminate multiple providers in any one sector and to have a single local specialist provider in each service sector take responsibility for meeting community needs. Areas where this is a particular problem include aged and disability care, and employment services.

Accessibility of responsive, consistent health care services is compromised by delivery arrangements. Of the 95 households participating in the MPRH&BC Household Survey, over 22% (most of those who responded to the open-ended questions about services) mentioned improved access to health services as a priority need:

"I've worked in the community for seven years, I feel a great need for Aboriginal health services, for example, transport and cultural awareness."

"Although services are available, they are not effective or

efficient. We need health for Indigenous community members."

"Our community needs more Aboriginal health workers."

Local doctors are provided with housing but constant break-ins are a contributing factor to turnover. The community now has access to two general practices: RaRMS and Ochre Health. RaRMS is a long-established not-for-profit practice; the relatively recent arrival of Ochre Health appears to have had a disruptive effect on long-standing arrangements and relationships, including changes to the Lightning Ridge Hospital Visiting Medical Officer roster. High turnover of GPs has become a problem for the community following a period of stability; both general practices are advertising GP vacancies. Physical access to health services, too, is difficult, with community members challenged by the application process via My Aged Care to obtain access to community transport. Service providers are concerned about lack of public transport to travel away from Lightning Ridge to access medical and other services. This was particularly problematic during COVID because of lack of seats on the single daily Dubbo bus service.

The community wishes to see an Aboriginal Liaison Officer appointed to the hospital to alleviate communication difficulties at even the most basic level, which compromise patient care:

"The staff at the hospital flew me to Dubbo with abdominal pain even though I presented with chest pain."

Sharing of health personnel between Lightning Ridge and Goodooga is reported to cause short staffing in Lightning Ridge. Recruitment and retention of health personnel, overall, makes it difficult for community members to access health services. Shortages were reported among permanent GPs and nurses, drug and alcohol counsellors, physiotherapists and speech pathologists. In common with other regional and remote locations, Lightning Ridge suffers from the lack of an effective policy response to health sector staffing issues. Training of a local health workforce has been suggested by the community to address staff shortages. The community wishes to work in partnership with MPRA on this issue.

A degree of dissatisfaction is also experienced with the local community pharmacy in relation to delays and difficulties with dispensing of medication. RFDS provide oral health services to Lightning Ridge but community members are unaware of how to obtain access to the service, or even the service location. RFDS is also about to open a Wellbeing Place in Lightning Ridge, to provide mental health services. The community has questioned the non-availability of Aboriginal community-controlled health services in Lightning Ridge; discussion with Walgett AMS has been suggested as the start point for a possible solution.

Community members and service providers alike are frustrated by very limited access to mental health services and associated support:

"We have the worst mental health service in the whole world."

Patients with high level needs are unable to obtain services within the community: the waiting list for the visiting psychiatrist who works from Community Health is lengthy. Duplication in risk assessment and preparation of health plans between referring organisations and the psychiatrist is time-wasting and stressful for the client. There is only one mental health nurse in the area to support patients with acute mental illness, and the position is contracted for three months at a time, so continuity of care is problematic. Providers report that a substantial proportion of clients are high-need mental health patients who require assisted living services, but these services are not available in Lightning Ridge. Youth mental health services are reported to be "non-existent": the nearest Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is based in Dubbo. There are three staff to cover the entire region but the closest worker is in Dubbo, so outreach visits are rare. RFDS provides a mental health counsellor on an outreach basis but is not funded to provide child and adolescent mental health services. Mental health personnel experience a high level of turnover; this is attributed, at least in part, to a lack of support services and the absence of permanent housing. Access to alcohol and other drug services are similarly problematic; there is only one detoxification bed in the entire region (in Brewarrina).

A recurring theme through community discussion of human services provision is lack of awareness of a provider's presence or means of service access. The CWP spoke of several cases where community members were unaware of an organisation's presence in Lightning Ridge; even if services are known, and do have a local presence, people may not be aware of how to obtain a referral, or may otherwise be fobbed off when contacting the organisation. This appears to be a particular problem in relation to obtaining aged care services, some of which are provided by outreach from Walgett or even Dubbo. Home Care packages are provided by Australian Unity via the Ngangana Aboriginal Home Care Service but as far as the community is aware, no further packages are currently available, and people are concerned that they will not be able to obtain packaged care unless a vacancy is created by a current recipient passing away. For those who do have access to a package, many are forced to accept lower-level packages than the level for which they have been assessed because of service limitations. In addition, access to Meals on Wheels is restricted by age criteria, even for people in need. Community members are frustrated by a tendency within Australian Unity to keep referrals in circulation within the organisation rather than any individual staff member taking responsibility for provision of a service, so nobody receives the assistance required. Other care providers, Dubbo-based Uniting Care and Live Better, who have a Lightning Ridge office, have a limited profile in the Aboriginal community, with widespread lack of awareness of processes for obtaining a service; the situation regarding NDIS providers is similar. NDIS services are reported to be very difficult to access; the community is aware of one provider in Walgett. Service providers report that all NDIS packages currently allocated are full. Even when a client is allocated a package, the services they need cannot be delivered in Lightning Ridge due to lack of availability. Most services are FIFO or DIDO.

Family support services are reported to be lacking in the community. Discussions with DCJ have not yielded acceptable outcomes. The community is particularly concerned about children in Out of Home Care, and wishes to see both a greater level of support for families which are fostering, and arrangements to ensure that children can be

housed and cared for locally. The Little Diggers Child Care Centre provides a well-accepted, quality service to the community. The Walanbaa Dhurruli Aboriginal Integrated Child and Family Centre is operational, but not in the form originally intended. The community was advised that if the Child and Family Centre were to provide childcare services, sustainability funding received by Little Diggers would cease. The Child and Family Centre has since opened, providing childcare and pre-school services and a disability support worker, but not a family support service. The pre-school service is reported not to be operating well. Family violence services provided by Thyala-Li are well regarded, as are the services provided by the Western Women's Legal Service.

The Household Survey conducted in conjunction with preparation of the MPRH&BC Reports elicited a need for more services for men. Refuge facilities for men are non-existent:

"There needs to be more services available for people who need assistance with a place to stay overnight – especially for men – they suffer domestic violence, homelessness."

"Address issues in regard to homelessness for single men."

"Lightning Ridge needs places for young and old Aboriginal men to stay, like a hostel. There are too many men on the streets."

Employment services providers are the subject of criticism. Services delivered by BEST Employment, Joblink and Sureway are reported to be inadequate. The feeling within the community is that there are not enough people employed in Lightning Ridge. There is scope for community members to be trained and employed locally in the health and human services sectors but little effort in making this happen.

All in all, provision of human services in the community is variable at best. The community requires better information on services available, and wishes providers to promote their services in an accessible way. Duplication in service delivery

must be addressed. The choice the system is supposed to represent is illusory: community members do not wish to see multiple organisations failing to provide the one service; they wish to see one organisation providing it well.

Lack of access to social infrastructure presents problems for the community. The library is a popular facility and Walgett Shire Council has recently built a multi-purpose centre but there is no community hall, and the community is dissatisfied with Council's charging policy whereby community members are required to pay to use community facilities. The community wishes to see a range of sporting activities available for children and young people in the community. Service providers report that there are no after-school activities available in Lightning Ridge for young people.

Estimation of service need across the gamut of human services is confounded by inaccuracies in census counts. Community members advised that the Lightning Ridge community does not respond well to the census and that figures thus are not meaningful. The view within the community is that the enumerated population could be less than half of the real population:

"Everyone is frightened to fill it out, thinking they will have their Centrelink cut off. Some people aren't able to read the information."

Engagement of an Aboriginal person to assist with previous censuses was reported not to have been successful.

Table 10.3: Summary of housing and housing-related issues

Issue	Description
Housing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing managers for Aboriginal social housing are to be located within or close to Lightning Ridge
Housing supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of social housing properties available for rent is insufficient and does not cater for large families, older or less mobile people in need of smaller, purpose-built dwellings, or household formation by young people Provision of one- and two-bedroom flats, including 'granny flats', to accommodate older people and young people who wish to leave the family home can alleviate crowding in family dwellings and make use of existing housing more efficient Information about, and incentives for, taking up home ownership are desired. Affordability is an issue; measures to assist should be implemented
Housing repair and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing repairs and maintenance undertaken under AHO's Build & Grow was largely substandard; the legacy of damage and disrepair is to be re-scoped and repairs funded and performed by reputable local trades Prompt attendance by ACHPs to responsive maintenance requests is required Trades are to be engaged on the basis that they will work respectfully with tenants A strong preference exists for a local Aboriginal trades capacity to be built and deployed on repair and maintenance services
Housing amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air conditioning is required for all Aboriginal social housing dwellings Obsolete or failing air conditioning units should be replaced
Rental housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current rents for social housing are not equitable; a revised rent setting model based upon dwelling size and which recognises remoteness impacts should be implemented
Land availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land availability for building is constrained The NSW Government should act to prioritise resolution of Lightning Ridge LALC's outstanding land claims Walgett Shire Council should release additional serviced lots in Lightning Ridge for housing development
Housing design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing design should take into account the need for adaptability to changing family needs New dwellings should vary in appearance
Emergency accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community requires a youth safe house or halfway house to accommodate young people removed from their homes Emergency accommodation for homeless men and men escaping family violence is required

Table 10.4: Summary of human services issues

Issue	Description
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community's preference is for locally based service providers; visiting providers based in Walgett and Dubbo are delivering inadequate (or non-existent) services Poor communication between service providers and the community, coupled with non-resident service provision, leads to a lack of awareness of human services available and creates barriers to access Communication issues between community members and service providers should be resolved through employment of local Aboriginal people by service providers
Mental and physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to health services is a priority need Better access is needed to mental health services, and particularly to child and adolescent services The community wishes to see health workforce issues in the community, such as GP turnover, dependence on locums to deliver health services, shortages of health personnel across disciplines, and sharing of health personnel with Goodooga,

Table 10.4: Summary of human services issues

Issue	Description
	<p>addressed through a structural response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lightning Ridge Hospital needs an Aboriginal Liaison Officer to be available at all times to assist with communication issues between community and hospital staff ▪ Access to health-related community transport is very difficult and should be streamlined ▪ The community desires support from Walgett Shire Council with housing for GPs and with difficulties experienced with the local community pharmacy ▪ Lack of local Aboriginal community-controlled health services is a problem; the community would like to open negotiations with Walgett AMS to work towards a solution ▪ Training of a local health workforce is seen as a way to address health personnel services; the community wishes to work on this with MPRA
Aged and disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to aged care support and NDIS is complex and it is difficult for people to receive care matching their eligibility and need ▪ Lack of accountability among providers means that community members are unaware of the presence of some providers funded to deliver services in Lightning Ridge. Caps on home care packages require to be revised to ensure that access to packaged care meets need, and that clients are able to obtain a package at the level for which they have been assessed ▪ Age restrictions on access to Meals on Wheels require review ▪ The community wishes providers to take responsibility for actioning referrals
Children's and family services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family support services are limited in Lightning Ridge. The community requires DCJ to engage around this issue with the objective of finding a solution which satisfies community needs ▪ The community wishes to see a higher level of support for families which are fostering, and for children in OOHC in the community
Men's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More support is needed for men of all ages who are homeless in Lightning Ridge, or are affected by domestic and family violence
Employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The community is concerned that not enough Aboriginal people are employed in Lightning Ridge ▪ Services delivered by local job network providers are inadequate ▪ The community has identified scope for community members to be trained and employed locally in the health and human services sectors and in building trades
Social infrastructure and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The community is dissatisfied with Walgett Shire Council's charging policies, and wishes to see free access to community facilities ▪ A community hall is needed ▪ The community wishes to see a range of sporting activities available for children and young people beyond afternoon Youth Centre activities
Service planning, efficiency and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Duplication among service providers is impacting on the community due to inefficient service provision and lack of accountability ▪ The Aboriginal undercount in the ABS Census means that use of ABS Census data in service planning is underestimating service need. A better way is needed to encourage Aboriginal people to participate in the Census so that population counts are more reliable

11 MASTER PLAN

11.1 Aspiration

Development of this HEHP ends the second round of MPRA's approach to sector strategic planning at community scale. The HEHP makes transparent the core demand drivers that are affecting the sector; documents an evidence base of the community's housing and infrastructure needs; and identifies the order of sector investment. The lead time and long lifetime of housing infrastructure requires a long-term view so identifying, planning and prioritising a package of measures to ensure the sector delivers sustainable long-term outcomes for the community is vital.

Interdependencies between the housing and human services sectors add to complexity and uncertainty in the strategic planning process, particularly in a cultural context. Learning lessons is a central part of any project so with the RAHLA now firmly established and evidence provided, the community expects informed policy-setting and decision-making to lead to positive change.

11.2 Cultural influences on decision-making

The *NSW Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Programmes Implementation Manual* was an initiative of MPRA and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (as was) flowing from the successful Australian Government National Aboriginal Health Strategy projects. Written in 1999, the manual placed the concept of effective community management of capital works and associated housing and infrastructure projects into a more practical local context. Working with a community-selected professional Project Manager, CWP's demonstrated ample capacity to set community objectives, and to control and co-ordinate overall programme delivery on behalf of, and in the best interests of, their communities. The agreed negotiated system of rules governing projects roll out was formal acknowledgement of the ongoing position of CWP's as the local decision-making body. The Regional and local governance structures remain in place and CWP's remain uniquely positioned to bring their local knowledge

and cultural perspectives to inform the shape and configuration of housing and infrastructure developments. This Master Plan evidences this decision-making in practice.

11.3 Master plan

The master planning process adopted by this HEHP aims to create an integrated process of change at community level, arching across the built environment, and social and economic issues within a cultural context. The Plan is about taking the initiative in terms of planning for, and design of, improvements to the living environment, job creation, and coordination and integration of a raft of human services. It aims also to give renewed life to the principles of self-determination and self-management. This approach challenges stakeholders to be open and willing to change the way business with the community is conducted.

The Lightning Ridge CWP Master Plan is set out at Table 11.1. It brings together the modest relevant aspirations as documented in the CAP and the views of the community as derived from a structured survey and direct consultation. The proposed actions are those which matter to people.

Implementation will take years. Ongoing engagement between the community through the CWP, stakeholders and decision makers is vital to ensure the strategic focus is maintained throughout the course of the project. Change will happen and, with this expectation, there is a need to foster a strong collaboration between all parties to ensure that the ultimate objective of bringing about positive improvement in the lived experiences of Aboriginal people is achieved.

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
LR-01	1.3 10.3	Sector governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate through MPRA for greater levels of consultation and accountability by the AHO to the CWP in its decision-making processes in matters relating to Aboriginal social housing in the Lightning Ridge community, including the installation of equipment and facilities Advocate through MPRA for greater levels of accountability by the AHO in its procurement and supervision of building contracts for housing-related work in the community Advocate through MPRA and the RAHLA co-design process for a non-discriminatory approach to access to property allocation, repairs and upgrades for ACHP-owned housing 	<p>The CWP expressed dissatisfaction over the management of the 'Granny flat' pilot project rolled out in the community. Specific criticisms related to the way participants were selected, and inadequate consultation and advice as to the impact of building a separate new dwelling on the amenity and functionality of the existing property</p> <p>The community questioned the value of installations such as hydropanels when the community had other and higher priorities</p> <p>The CWP is critical of AHO prioritising its own properties for upgrades and maintenance, creating division in the community</p>
LR-02	5.12 5.16 10.3	Housing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In view of wide-ranging changes to the housing management landscape, invite Barriekneal Housing and Community to brief the CWP of its future strategies to ensure the viability of on-going operations and continuity of capital and operational subsidies As part of the MPRH&BC project, co-design application and allocation processes which are simple, equitable and preference local applicants Establish a line of regular and formal communication which allows information flow to the CWP on managing ACHP(s) performance and emerging tenancy and asset management issues, including reporting on asset condition Arrange with ACHPs to review utilisation of existing properties and determine the potential for voluntary relocation of tenants from larger to smaller dwellings with the objective of achieving the most efficient use of assets 	<p>The MPRH&BC household survey and discussions with the CWP have raised concerns about the quality of tenancy and asset management services: in particular, accessibility and visibility of the managing ACHP(s), lack of communication and accountability, and lack of urgency in carrying out asset repairs and maintenance. The community expressed a preference for a local or Regional ACHP with a local presence as manager. With further restructuring of the Aboriginal social housing sector, and stronger ACHP compliance requirements, Coonamble-based Dreamtime Housing is the only regionally based managing ACHP able to satisfy the community's aspirations</p> <p>Some actions proposed by the CWP, as documented in the CAP, sit within a regional context and should be referred to MPRA for a Regional response. Review and revision of the application and allocation processes fall within this category</p>
LR-03	5.11 10.3	Housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the MPRH&BC project co-design process, conduct a rent review which accounts for housing condition, level of amenity and higher costs of living in a remote community Install residential solar PV panels to all dwellings not currently provided with solar power and include associated energy saving measures 	<p>Review and revision of rent setting sits within a regional context and should be referred to MPRA for a Regional response within the RAHLA co-design process</p> <p>Energy poverty is experienced in communities across the Region, including the Lightning Ridge community. Previous energy affordability measures have not addressed the needs of all Aboriginal social housing tenants so this proposal is a step to ensure that all households benefit from a reduction in electricity bills</p>
LR-04	5.12	Housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of social housing properties available for rent is 	<p>This HEHP provides the evidence of need for increased social housing</p>

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
	5.15 5.16 10.3 11.4		<p>insufficient and the housing mix does not cater adequately for young individuals and families. Advocate for supply to be increased by the number and mix of properties stated at Table 11.2 as a minimum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the impacts of crowding are adequately and progressively addressed in the assessment of need and a transparent allocation process Engage the CWP in planning and design processes for all new developments consistent with the principles of self-determination, self-management and the aim of OCHRE to grow local Aboriginal leaders' and communities' capacity to drive their own solutions 	<p>supply and mix. The MPRH&BC household survey identified five families living in multi-family households, 17 young people and four older persons requested to reflect need across the whole community, assessed and factored to need across the whole community, amounted to a total of 21 dwellings. This number is above the 2019 waiting list provided by the AHO by a factor greater than 2 but such is the variability in waiting list over time that comparison is unreliable. Demand is for smaller dwellings: duplexes and units, and co-located granny flats, plus purpose-built homes for community members with ambulatory difficulties, which priorities are consistent with those stated in the 2015 AHO report, <i>Demand and Supply of Aboriginal Housing in Remote and Outer Regional NSW, Table 4</i></p>
LR-05	6.1	Land acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with Walgett Shire Council options available for future land releases and strategies for further residential development in the urban area Negotiate with the NSW Government to ensure Lightning Ridge LALC's backlog of land claims is dealt with promptly to increase opportunities for residential development 	<p>There are few vacant lots held by ACHP(s) available for residential development so further supply must involve the acquisition of existing privately held vacant and/or developed lots unless dual occupancies are considered suitable options. The opportunity may exist to acquire new rural residential lots as Council subdivides and services areas earmarked for development shown in \$6.2</p>
LR-06	5.14 10.3 11.6 11.7	Asset condition and serviceability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange with managing ACHP(s) to determine the extent of all work necessary to restore structural soundness, functionality, amenity, safety and security to social housing properties, secure adequate investment, and carry out repairs and upgrades Establish a Region-wide panel of approved, qualified and licensed trades to ensure that contracts are awarded only to values-aligned contractors with the capacity to carry out work professionally Where possible, engage trades which employ or are willing to train local Aboriginal workers to form the nucleus of a local trades workforce Carry out modifications and extensions as detailed in \$11.6 Provide all Aboriginal social housing with adequate heating and energy efficient cooling appliances where absent, obsolete and/or non-functional, and ensure all houses are sufficiently insulated to maximise thermal benefits 	<p>Tenants reported on asset condition as at the time of the MPRH&BC household survey with reports ranging from acceptable to poor. Response time and quality of repairs were bones of contention. The results of a subsequent audit of Build & Grow repair and maintenance work are not accessible to community members. No rectification has been carried out on identified faults on repair and maintenance work carried out</p> <p>Serious attitude problems and behaviours have been encountered with externally sourced trades</p> <p>The calculated need for extra bedrooms/extensions assumes that the required number of new dwellings will be met. If this is not the case, the number of extra bedrooms will be as stated in \$5.12: three one-bedroom and one-two-bedroom extensions</p> <p>Three respondents required assessment and/or installation of aids</p> <p>The MPRH&BC household survey established that 24% of Aboriginal social housing dwellings had no heating appliances and 60% were without a cooling appliance. With the duration of high temperatures increasing, it is essential for reasons of personal health and general</p>

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
LR-07	10.3 11.8	Tenant support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the role of MP TSEP in supporting tenants at risk of breach to retain their tenancies, and facilitating access to human and other services necessary to support good physical and mental health and social and economic stability Significantly increase the proportion of tenants claiming CRA 	wellbeing for air conditioning to be provided to each property Acceptance of MP TSEP by the community is allowing tenants and others in need to access much needed housing support services. The team is building an impressive capability to work across a wide range of human services and tackle barriers to housing on behalf of applicants, including the current online application process
LR-08	10.3 11.10	Emergency accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an assessment of the need for emergency accommodation: crisis accommodation, transit housing and/or short-term accommodation; quantify demand, prepare a feasibility study and advocate for building 	Lightning Ridge has a serious homeless problem among men of all ages, including men leaving domestic violence situations. The community has also identified a need for supervised 'halfway house' type accommodation for young people who have been removed from their homes pending court proceedings
LR-09	10.3 11.9	Home ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange with AHO and/or IBA to deliver community information workshops in support of home ownership 	The community supports measures to increase levels of home ownership in Lightning Ridge, but is concerned about affordability issues. Providing the community with a full briefing on options, processes, advantages and pitfalls will allow community members to make an informed judgement as to whether purchase is a possibility for them
LR-10	7.2	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate with Walgett Shire Council for improved road maintenance and for the provision of kerb and guttering to established streets, including driveway crossings Advocate with Walgett Shire Council for installation of speed control devices in Black Prince Drive and Fantasia Street Advocate with Walgett Shire Council for an audit and upgrading of streetlighting Advocate with Walgett Shire Council for the introduction of a bulky waste pick up service 	Residents request potholes be filled and kerb and guttering be provided to established residential streets with the aims of drainage control, improved access, reduction in sedimentation and improved residential amenity. Access to driveways is across unsealed shoulders which become muddy in wet conditions and generate dust in dry weather Streetlights are reported by the community to be too widely spaced, light levels too low to be effective, with many lamps broken, creating an unnecessary risk to pedestrians and other road users Dust levels are high, made worse by trafficking of unsealed road shoulders and unsealed roads in and around mining camps, giving rise to concerns about the potentially hazardous impact on health from PM _{2.5} particles in addition to the more general domestic issue of keeping house interiors clean Current arrangements for domestic waste management are inadequate in that Council does not provide a bulky waste pick up service, nor a recycling service, nor a domestic waste collection service to mining camps

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
LR-11	9.1 10.3	Human services improvement, reach and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that service funding is allocated based on more realistic estimates of the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal population Foster a closer relationship between the CWP and all tiers of government to drive improvements in human services including a tighter focus on provider cooperation, service integration, performance and cost-effectiveness Evaluate and review the role and operational objectives of the proliferation of human services providers across all sectors. Eliminate duplication and 'duck-shoving', address barriers and fill service gaps. Where necessary, revise human services procurement practices to ensure stability, viability and continuity of community-approved providers Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal community members in the health and human services sectors to improve cultural safety service quality and accessibility Expand the capacity, reach and role of MP TSEP so that team members can comfortably deliver or broker culturally safe services to meet community need across the service spectrum 	The CWP has observed that service funding is incorrectly calculated and allocated based on the census count which grossly underestimates the Aboriginal population. In the eyes of the CWP, this is not an equitable practice. CWP input indicates that community awareness of availability of various human services, and of the presence of some providers, is patchy at best. Service delivery by remotely headquartered providers leads to poor communication, lack of awareness and hence forms a barrier to services
LR-12	10.3	Employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capacity of the community to participate in employment and economic development activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with MPS to ensure the Commonwealth Government addresses the issue of lack of accountability among Job Network providers Equip young and not so young adults with the skills to take positions in the health and human services sectors and in building trades 	<p>The CWP aspires to improve the economic position of the community by increasing the level of active participation in the labour market and business.</p> <p>The employment to population ratio for Aboriginal people aged 15 years and over as at the ABS Census 2016 was only 31% which is lower than for the Murdi Paaki Region as a whole, and only 29% of 17- and 18-year-olds were engaged in either employment, education or training compared with 49% across the Region</p>
LR-13	10.3	Physical and mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate through MPRA to secure a structural response to health workforce issues, including recruitment, rostering and retention Advocate for appointment of Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers to the Lightning Ridge MPS to ensure on-call coverage at all times Improve the community's ability to access health care services locally and regionally Negotiate with Walgett AMS to obtain local access to Aboriginal 	<p>Improved access to health services is a priority for the community. Local health workforce recruitment and retention issues are a barrier to consistent provision of adequate physical and mental health services. The arrival of an additional GP practice has had the perverse effect of disrupting long-established arrangements and relationships to the extent that neither practice is able now to meet community needs. Staff shortages exist across disciplines; lack of adequate housing for medical personnel adds an extra layer of difficulty. Issues of communication and expectations exist with the hospital and the</p>

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
			community controlled health service provision	community pharmacy. Access to health-related community transport presents further difficulties. The community would like to be able to obtain Aboriginal community-controlled health services locally, and would like to have a trained local Aboriginal workforce providing these services
LR-14	9.1 10.3	Aged and disability care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DCJ and DSS to ensure that appropriate services are available to all community members who need disability care and packaged aged care, and to design and put in place accountability measures for service providers with regular feedback to MPRA and the CWP Ensure that assessments to determine eligibility for services are available when required 	Community members face difficulties in obtaining services in general and, in particular, gaining access to services matched to their assessed eligibility and level of need. Home care packages are limited in numbers; access to Meals on Wheels is also constrained. Information about service availability is difficult to obtain and referrals are often passed around in organisations without individual workers taking responsibility for actioning them
LR-15	10.3	Children's and family services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with DCJ, with the support of MPRA, to develop a locally-relevant solution to meet the need for family support services in Lightning Ridge Enliven the Lightning Ridge Aboriginal Child and Family Centre with 100% Aboriginal staffing Negotiate better targeted support for families which are fostering children, and for children in Out of Home Care Refurbish the pre-school building so that the Lightning Ridge Pre-school can return to its own premises to resume operations 	Family support services are limited in Lightning Ridge. The Child and Family Centre, which was originally intended to deliver family support service, has, following a period of dysfunction, opened to provide childcare and pre-school service, but not family support. There is one provider, MacKillop Family Services, which is well-regarded by the community but scope is limited and services overall are insufficient to meet need
LR-16	10.3	Social infrastructure and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to Walgett Shire Council for provision of a community hall Negotiate with Walgett Shire Council for revisions to Council's charging policy with a view to obtaining access to community facilities free of charge In collaboration with young people in the community, develop and implement a youth strategy, design and deliver youth programmes and diversionary initiatives 	The community is dissatisfied with Walgett Shire Council's requirement that access to community facilities is on a 'user pays' basis. Community facilities in Lightning Ridge are limited; a community hall has been identified as a priority need. One third of the Aboriginal population is aged between five and 24 years. Organised sporting and recreational opportunities for this group outside of the afternoon Youth Centre activities are limited

11.4 Defining need for growth

The total number of Aboriginal social housing dwellings in Lightning Ridge was 115 in June 2020 as detailed in the AHO property schedule, having reduced by 8 from a total of 122 as of June 2018.

At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, there was a waiting list for Aboriginal social housing across all adult age groups. The estimate of housing need shown at Table 5.36 is derived by extrapolating the findings of the MPRH&BC household survey across all Aboriginal households and tenure types to estimate need arising from those that did not participate. The CWP has refined the estimate and a final estimate is shown at Table 11.2.

The number of new dwellings enumerated in Table 11.2 is more than the number of approved applicants shown on the DCJ Housing Register for the total population: 15 general applicants and fewer than 5 priority applicants. No indication of the size is given.

The age profile of the community is such that the majority of those in search of their own housing are young single people or couples without children. It is notable that the survey captured five identifiable multi-family households and one severely crowded household.

Table 11.2: Housing need

		From MPRH&BC household survey				Factored for whole community			
		Number of bedrooms				Number of bedrooms			
Tenure type	Ratio	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Owner occupier	50 / 15	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Private rental	35 / 8	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Homeless	172 / 95	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Social housing rental	115 / 72	12	1	0	0	19	2	-	-
Employer	- / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Not defined	17 / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total		12	1	0		19	2	0	0

A breakdown of social housing waiting list by bedroom capacity as of June 2018 provided by the AHO is shown at Table 11.3 for comparison purposes, giving a total of 9.

Table 11.3: Waiting list, number of dwellings by bedroom size, 2018

	Number of bedrooms					
	1	2	3	4+	NK	Σ
Waiting list	-	-	4	-	5	9

Feedback received from the community summarised in Chapter 9 reinforces the need for additional housing on the scale and with the mix proposed.

Table 11.4 puts an order of cost against increased supply based on new builds and suggests that given the costs for new builds, and land, that purchasing mainstream housing is an option to be considered.

Table 11.4: Estimated cost of new builds (GST excl)

Number of bedrooms	GFA (m2)	Unit cost (\$/m2)	No	Estimate (\$)
2	120	3,470	19	\$7,911,600
3	160	2,850	2	\$912,000
4	185	2,850	-	-
5 and more	200	2,850	-	-
			Total	\$8,823,600

11.5 Replacement housing

No dwellings are recommended for replacement. The MPRH&BC household survey did not record any social housing respondents describing their properties as 'condemned' or 'unliveable'. This HEHP takes the position that scoping of properties is unlikely to reveal any houses beyond economic repair that will require a decision on serviceability.

11.6 Housing extensions and modifications

Expressed need for extensions projected on the same basis as Table 11.2, is stated in Table 11.5. A budget of \$35,000/extension is allowed for extension and \$3,000 for each home modification.

Table 11.5: Requirement for housing extensions and modifications

Extensions (Factor 1.60)	Number of bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Number of extensions	5	2	-
Total number of bedrooms	5	4	-
Modifications			
Number of dwellings	5		

Estimated budget to attend to extensions and modifications listed in Table 11.5 is given in Table 11.6.

Table 11.6: Estimated budget for housing extensions and modifications

	Estimate (\$)
Extensions	315,000
Modifications	15,000
Total	330,000

11.7 Asset preservation

Estimated costs for routine repair and maintenance including planned maintenance, and for any particular works such as roof replacement, foundation packing and releveling if any, required to attend to immediate restoration and asset preservation are summarised in Table 11.7. Average unit expenditure for 115 properties in Lightning Ridge is approximately \$29,150 per property.

Table 11.7: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

	Cost (\$)
Property repair, maintenance and upgrade	3,352,700
Particular works	-
Total	3,352,700

All properties are, or should be, subject to regular and planned inspection and, where under head lease, as per an AHO housing management agreement. Barriekneal and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) on behalf of the Lightning Ridge LALC have secured funding through the AHO ACHIF programme for property repair and maintenance. Table 11.8 details the AHO allocations for upgrades totalling \$1,967,714.

Table 11.8: Aboriginal Community Housing Investment Fund allocation

Organisation	Estimate (\$)
Barriekneal Housing and Community	
▪ New supply	984,777
▪ Upgrades	1,716,414
NSWALC for Lightning Ridge LALC	
▪ Upgrades	251,300

Assuming all funding is efficiently directed to building work, a potential shortfall of \$2,116,623 remains.

11.8 Tenant support and education

The MP Tenant Support and Education Programme has become an essential and valued support service in the social housing space in all communities across the Region. Team members play a key role in supporting community members to establish and maintain tenancies, negotiate application and compliance processes and leverage partnerships to deliver wrap-around services as required by the principal objectives of the programme:

- Increase community knowledge of the Aboriginal housing sector among both tenants and service providers;
- Increase awareness and accessibility of services for vulnerable groups who may be at risk of homelessness or living in overcrowded situations;
- Increase the number of tenants engaged with support services;
- Increase knowledge of housing application processes; and
- Increase housing stability through case management.

Relationships have been established with all Community Working Parties, many community organisations and human services support providers, and through this network, MP TSEP is gaining further valuable insights into the internal dynamics of each community. This knowledge allows MP TSEP to step beyond local politics and mechanisms of control to play an increasingly strategic role in supporting CWP and MPRA

initiatives. Given the complexity of the housing and related human services landscape from a community perspective, the role of MP TSEP is critical to ensuring equity to tenants in service delivery.

A MP TSEP client will often require several case management interventions before housing-related assistance can begin. Typically, these external supports delivered through partner organisations might include:

- Arranging a repayment plan for rental arrears, power bill arrears, and fines and debts with State Debt Recovery Office;
- Referral to health and wellbeing services, mental health and addiction services;
- Assistance to obtain childcare; and
- Referral to DCJ in relation to child and family matters, help to negotiate the justice system, and support for victims of domestic and family violence.

In respect of housing, MP TSEP provides direct assistance to the community through:

- Arranging for identification documents and working with an applicant through the Housing Pathways process;
- Helping tenants to apply for Commonwealth rent assistance and/or are receiving this assistance through Centrelink;
- Intervening when tenants are in danger of breaching their tenancy agreements and, as above, arranging a repayment plan when tenants fall behind with their rent; and
- Generally supporting tenants at risk to sustain tenancies and reduce the risk of homelessness.

This Master Plan acknowledges the valuable contribution of MP TSEP to help maintain stability in the Aboriginal social housing sector and acting as the link between tenants in need of support and the human services responsible for providing that support.

11.9 Home ownership

Fifteen respondents to the MPRH&BC household survey, including six living on mining leases, were owners and all were satisfied with their decision to purchase. This cohort provides a local example of the benefits of home ownership compared with renting. Unfortunately, the CWP sees the Lightning Ridge market as expensive and beyond the reach of low-income individuals and families. This might be overcome with incentives. Prospects exist for capital gain on future sale but feedback suggests this is not a motivating force for community members who, instead, value stability in a community with which there is a strong attachment. Discussion with the AHO and/or Indigenous Business Australia about options would be a useful starting point.

11.10 Emergency, short term and transitional accommodation

Emergency accommodation exists in Lightning Ridge only to the extent of the Women's Safe House which is managed by Mission Australia along with the Lightning Ridge Homeless and Housing Support Service. This service provides support to young people and adults; however, the only accommodation it has available to it is the Women's Safe House. The community has identified a pressing need to deal with homelessness among adult men of all ages. Emergency housing in the form of a men's refuge is seen as an essential response to primary homelessness in the community. The community has also expressed a desire for supported local temporary accommodation for young people removed from their families pending court action. The cost of provision is subject to further discussion between the CWP and DCJ.

11.11 Infrastructure

Table 7.2 itemises infrastructure elements of concern to the CWP. Of these, the occasional deterioration of water quality is being addressed by Council with the installation of chlorine dosing plant. Other areas for improvement resting with Council are itemised in Table 11.1: kerb and guttering to established streets, speed control

devices; improved streetlighting and bulky waste pick up service.

No cost is attached to any of the above projects from this HEHP as they are the responsibility of others.

11.12 Probable order of cost

Probable orders of cost for each strategy are summarised in Table 11.9. The estimates were prepared on the following basis:

- Costs for building-related work are derived from industry standard cost information and/or for project costs for similar work in the Murdi Paaki Region;
- Prices are current to September 2020;
- An index appropriate to locality is applied;
- Building costs assume that construction takes place in accordance with MPS procurement practice. Projections may need to be re-evaluated if training schemes are integrated;
- Allowance for project management has been assumed to be generally between 10% and 15% of the construction budget depending upon the nature of the work involved and the degree of investigative work required; and
- Estimates are stated as GST exclusive.

Table 11.9: Probable orders of cost, housing and environmental health infrastructure

Description	Order of cost (\$)
Planning and development	180,000
Land acquisition	500,000
Site infrastructure (nominal)	200,000
New housing supply	8,823,600
Replacement housing	-
Housing extensions	315,000
Housing modifications	15,000
Repair and maintenance	3,352,700
Sub-total	13,386,300
Unquantified risk allowance (5%)	669,320
Project management (12.5%)	1,588,290
Programme admin (3%)	401,590
Total	16,045,500

No costs have been assigned to improvement in and extension of human services because these services are already the subject of government programme planning and resource allocation processes. Performance monitoring of government services is a key area of focus under the OCHRE Murdi Paaki LDM Accord II and Accord processes should be brought to bear on areas of underperformance. With consistent themes emerging across the Murdi Paaki Region, many recommendations will have regional application and universal application locally.

11.13 Funding sources

Funding for works and measures proposed by Table 11.1 and Table 11.9 will need to be negotiated through the RAHLA as the principal decision-maker on matters of Aboriginal social housing in the Region. Neither ACHP is in a financial position to contribute to these extraordinary costs from revenue derived from property rents and subsidies so realising a solution is dependent upon grant funding from governments.

11.14 Staging of works

There are no priorities attached to the improvements listed in Table 11.9. All works may be classified as immediate. Repair and maintenance work should be programmed to proceed as one integrated contract following scoping. Programming may be subject to building sector capacity which can be mobilised locally and/or using the work as a vehicle for an Aboriginal apprentice training scheme. Building extensions should be included within the scope of any repair and maintenance contract.

Once a commitment to new supply is negotiated, the CWP may consider whether new housing programmes be delivered at a slower rate over several years, building 3-5 houses per year so that an effective and longer-term construction training programme can be implemented.

Key to rolling out new building work at any scale may be resolution of the planning and land acquisition issues. There are three blocks of vacant land noted in the AHO property database held by Lightning Ridge LALC, but the CWP has indicated that other organisations hold more vacant land.

11.15 Value-adding initiatives

Previous housing upgrade programmes such as the works conducted under Build & Grow have been the subject of significant community feedback to the CWP, focussing on dissatisfaction with the quality and management of these works. In any future housing construction or upgrade programmes, the CWP must be involved in the decision-making process to ensure these mistakes and poor outcomes are not repeated. To respond to the CWP proposal for development of an Aboriginal trades capacity, the construction of new housing and maintenance of existing properties, should provide opportunities for integrating training and economic development activities aligned to the construction industry.

Such initiatives have been successfully implemented in the Region in the past at scale in conjunction with Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers. Murdi Paaki Services Ltd has the

capacity to work with the CWP and providers to develop a suitable employment and training framework and negotiate its implementation.

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