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Towards a Culturally Relevant Model for Assisted Accommodation Services for Homeless Young Aboriginal Women:

A Case for Actualising One’s Potential or the continuing Process of Subjugation of Peoples Colonised?

by

Betty Salvatori

Submitted as part of course requirement for:
Bachelor of Health Science (Aboriginal Health and Community Development)
Honours Thesis

Date of submission: 21st November 2000
Disclaimer

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a degree to any other University or Institution.

Signature: ...........................................

Name: .... Betty Salvatori ....

Date of submission: 21st November 2000
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Eternal Mother of us all; to my Yuin ancestry; to Ma Page my black grandmother, and to the spirit of my earthly mother who urged ‘... take up your pen and start to write...’

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my mentor Ratziel Bander, who knows me better than I. But for he, I would not be writing these words today. I would like to thank the many people who have inspired me along the way: researchers who have paved the way for greater learning; Dr Kathleen Clapham for her fine classes on racism, Honours Coordinator Dr Freidoon Khavarpour, Shane Merritt for his keen interest, and also John Maskell and others at Yooroong Garang who have been supportive with their time and compassion.

Special gratitude goes to my supervisor, John Grootjans who nurtured the seed idea of this thesis during the gestation period and to Dr. Trevor Cook who took it by the ankles and smacked into the breath of life.

My thesis is now borne, ready to go out into the world, many steps will be taken before she reaches her full potential for self-actualisation. I gratefully acknowledge all those who have been a part of her birth.
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the needs of homeless young Aboriginal women and develop a culturally appropriate, therapeutic, service delivery model. This model could assist in the natural development of these girls as they journey through the rites of passage into womanhood if implemented in a nurturing, culturally sensitive and relevant environment.

A qualitative content analysis methodological approach was used to examine major issues, identify key concepts and analyse these concepts in order to develop deductively, propositions from which organising constructs could be derived and a model developed. This model could then be tested inductively and in a quantitative way that allows best practices to be determined, in future research.

The research indicated that although the majority of Supported Assisted Accommodation Program (SAAP) clients represent Aboriginal people, many Aboriginal people do not access the services for a host of reasons. These reasons include mistrust of welfare workers; a fear of abusive ‘ardent lesbianism’ in the running of the services; fear of racism; and cultural inappropriateness.

In conclusion the research shows that a therapeutic model can be developed, which gives lowana the opportunity to learn to know, love and accept
themselves; to be proud of their Aboriginality; to express their sensuality and sexuality in a confident, positive manner; and enhance integrity along with identity. The structure and process outlined in the model would be implemented in a culturally sensitive environment whereby the women would learn both Western and Aboriginal cultural applications where appropriate.

**Key Words:**

Christianity;
Institutionalisation;
Spiritual Homelessness;
Locus of Control;
Aboriginality.

* Aboriginal/Indigenous in this context refers to those who identify as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.
Chapter 1

RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

1. The Research Topic.

The research topic relates to the issues facing homeless young Aboriginal women living in assisted accommodation services. Evidence shows there is a need for service provision models to be restructured to provide culturally sensitive, nurturing programs to meet the developmental needs of young Aboriginal women. An educational program based on integrated Western and Aboriginal cultural mores is needed. A relevant and therapeutic model and program was explored that assists the development of the lowana into healthy, successful womanhood, and where life beyond the refuge is an expected outcome.

The following case example describes a typical lowana’s experience. This case was documented at the request of the client following the occurrence of the incident.

* For the purpose of this thesis the Aboriginal word lowana, meaning ‘young woman’, will be used when referring to ‘homeless young Aboriginal women/woman.’
1.1. Case Example

Leila, a 15 year old Aboriginal girl came from a dysfunctional family in a country town. She moved into the refuge and became firm friends with the other residents.

As she grew, her own sense of power internalised and she became strong. Instinctively she rebelled against the power wielded by staff members that limited and intimidated her in her Aboriginality.

With the realisation that a particular worker was losing her locus of control over the girls, a battle of wills transpired, resulting in Leila being expelled from the refuge. This occurred at 11.30pm on a wet, rainy night with $20 in her pocket and nowhere to go.

Leila alleged that she had felt violated after the worker had told Leila that she and her partner were lesbians. The same worker at a previous time had disclosed to Leila her sexual preference of being lesbian. Prior to her disclosure the worker had brought her partner into the refuge to give full body massage to the girls on a regular basis.

After meeting with a grievance counsellor, Leila took her grievances to the Coordinator of the refuge. Following the meeting she was restricted from outings and had to stay in house during school holidays. Leila was not allowed to stay at her auntie’s place for a few days during the holidays despite the fact
that she had a doctor's certificate saying that she was suffering anxiety
symptoms and needed rest and a quiet relaxed environment

Leila is now homeless, moving from one relative or friend to another, taking a
bed wherever she can (Salvatori, 2000).

1.1. Key Concepts and Definitions: Describing the
Context of Youth Homelessness

These concepts are operationally defined to ensure the concepts are grounded in
a culturally relevant manner.

1.3. Defining Homelessness

There appears to be difficulty in defining homelessness and there are many
interpretations in meaning. Homelessness has personal, social, economic, and
political aspects. The definition accepted in this thesis defines homelessness as:

... a state in which the core political institutions are unresponsive to the
needs of the most vulnerable in the community and are incapable of effective
intervention which will result in an equitable distribution of housing costs
and benefits throughout the country (Jarques & Cooper 1995:8).
1.4. Aboriginality

Operationally defined in Australian society, an Aboriginal person is someone who is of Aboriginal descent, identifies as an Aborigine and is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal (Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999).

1.5. The Subject Area

Homelessness for young Aboriginal women is a major issue in Aboriginal society. The subject area is significant because Aboriginal homelessness is a result of cultural contact and conflict over 200 years that resulted in cultural, social and family dysfunction. Without an understanding of Aboriginal life pre- and post-colonisation one would not truly grasp the full extent of the devastating impact colonisation has had on the original peoples of this land. Colonisation and dispossession contributed to the breakdown of Aboriginal culture traditionally, where no person was homeless, except under rare exceptions when exile was a judgement on those who transgressed the Law. Policies imposed on Aboriginal society since the invasion of 1788 has rendered Aboriginal people powerless and impoverished thus more at risk of becoming homeless. Aboriginal people, in general, have remained at the bottom rung of socio-economic standards; they have been over institutionalised; uneducated; unemployed; and rendered poverty stricken and homeless (Tatz, 1994).
For Aboriginal Australia, Christianity along with institutionalisation played a major role in the process of colonisation and cultural genocide. Aboriginal people lost their lives, their land and their way of life at the hands of the coloniser. Dispossession of land and culture was justified by Western theories grounded in Social Darwinism. Darwin theorised that humanity began with the lower forms of life, and in a slow process of competition, conflict and conquering, higher forms evolved (Beckett, 1988; Bulbeck, 1993; Lawler, 1991; Reynolds, 1982). As a result, Aboriginal people were colonised, denied access to traditional language, customs and cultural values and were herded into missions and onto reserves. Their traditional way of life was denigrated by the coloniser and was extinguished by racist policies and Christian religion.

Government policies and racist attitudes instigated the process of generations of Aboriginal children being stolen from their families and forced into an alien lifestyle. Stolen children and their families have been devastated by these acts of discrimination, which in many cases have led to loss of identity and self-esteem, difficulty in forming relationships and dysfunctional parenting skills (Beresford & Omaji, 1998; Cook, 1995; Gungil Jindabah 1994). Along with the intense suffering and anguish, Aboriginal people have developed a fear and mistrust of government authorities, policies and welfare workers (Cook 1995; Sykes, 1984).

* For the purpose of this thesis, when referring to Christianity, the researcher is not inferring that Christianity is 'incorrect'. The critical analysis is an analysis of the research of the concept and of historical outcomes accepted by Christians.
These factors have caused many Aboriginal youth to be left without a home or family, and they therefore end up living on the streets or in one kind of institution or another. The incidence of Aboriginal youth homelessness is on the increase while the over-representation of Aboriginal youth crime recidivism escalates (Beresford & Omaji, 1998; Dodson quoted in Ellis, 1996; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 1993).
Chapter 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

2. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the cultural appropriateness of healing and health remediation provision in accommodation services for female Aboriginal youth. The intention is to identify an implicit need for policy reform regarding the inclusion of Aboriginal spiritual and cultural therapies and practice services specifically targeted for Aboriginal people. An expected outcome of this study would be the identification of a research model upon which a trial program could be established and results documented.

The study aims, through the literature review, theoretical base and content analysis, to show that without spiritually and culturally valuing one’s Aboriginal identity, Aboriginal youth cannot realise their full potential as human beings. In this situation, young Aboriginal women often face failure in their lack of achievement in developing fulfilling lives in Aboriginal society and as well as in the broader Australian society and culture.

The literature in the area indicates a lack of concrete descriptions of what a culturally appropriate program for lowana really means. There does not appear to be a best practice model/s readily identifiable. The cross cultural literature
may be more fruitful and a meta-analysis of the literature historically may be appropriate in identifying key issues. Nor does there appear to be relevant material pertaining to the value of Aboriginal spiritual education for these homeless youth. Western models seem inappropriate in this context. As Pearce (1997) declares in her audiotape interview, Aboriginal identity is created by their spiritual interconnectedness of all things:

**Spirituality and identity are one thing, everything has Spirit, we are part of the whole environment. To Aborigines long ago, land (responsibility to each other) and spirituality (relation to the universe/body and soul) make identity** (Pearce, 1997).

It is this search for identity, important in the psyche of young females everywhere, which needs nurturance when family dysfunction or homelessness for any reason impacts on the girls at this critical stage of their development. This study attempts to identify by way of theoretical concepts, propositions and constructs (Cook, 1995) a theoretical model (Unruh, 1975) which is appropriate to rehabilitation of girls in this situation.

### 2.1. The Research Questions

This study investigates the following research questions:

i) Are assisted accommodation services for lowana providing the natural and nurturing process that allows them the opportunity to develop their
womanhood potential and maximise their lifestyle potential in a way that allows informed choice?

ii) Does the presentation of a culturally appropriate curriculum for lowana assist in the development of a positive approach to life that empowers them in terms of their choices?

iii) Are the services enabling the lowana to make informed choice, which includes culturally appropriate Aboriginal spirituality?

iv) Do the services provided offer lowana the degree of autonomy necessary to overcome negative aspects of contemporary society which affect identity and self-esteem as an Aboriginal person?

The research is important because services are not delivering to lowana independent living skills whereby they can go out into the world as confident, well-adjusted individuals.

Potential outcomes of the research include the construction of a culturally sensitive model whereby lowana will grow to understand their own culture as well as the positive aspects of Western society. The aim of the model is to help mould the characters, which will hold them in good stead for their on-going journey into womanhood and acceptance in mainstream society.
The topic is significant because there is not an adequate model in the services that promotes a healthy holistic lifestyle for lowana. It is relevant because the services are not culturally appropriate for these girls. Furthermore the research contributes to the body of knowledge in that this area has not been researched thoroughly.

It is important because if the issues are not addressed now, the problems can become transgenerational (Atkinson, 1994). The researcher acknowledges the progressive and inspirational work of feminism in the welfare arena. Although differing in perception there are many sections of feminism (Saulnier, 1996). The researcher has a feminist perspective in as much as she aspires to empower girls to know who they are and where they are going. However, ‘ardent lesbianism’ (Bennett, 1997) can propagate the rejection of men and this approach can be destructive in forming open and positive attitudes. Rejection of men is in opposition to Aboriginal culture, which considers balanced relationships between man and woman natural, normal and necessary for the continuation of Aboriginal culture.

The context is that lowana come from dysfunctional lifestyles before approaching the services for assistance. They come looking for rehabilitation, care and guidance, but are they receiving the required help? Care and protection of the child is the core reason for the existence of these services; it is of the utmost importance. Yet the question must be posed: are the services delivered meeting the requirements for the lowana’s best interest?
2.2. Background

As part of course requirements, the researcher worked in an assisted accommodation centre with lowana, aged between 12 and 18. The aim of this centre was to provide safe, secure, medium to long term accommodation to those at risk. The centre's philosophy was to provide these young women with a higher degree of self-reliance and independence so that the need for such services, are diminished in the future (Baulderstone & Scott, 1999).

The researcher has long been interested in the welfare and life-education of young Aboriginal women. For the researcher, gaining employment in this field especially highlighted the issue of homelessness for Indigenous women. Through involvement in youth services, anecdotal sources revealed conflict between the philosophies and policies of such organisations and the needs of the clients. Evidence supporting the hypothesis that organisations are not developing lowana who are able to cope and lead autonomous fulfilling lives upon exiting the services are explored through a number of key research questions. Such questions need to be explored qualitatively and deductively to ensure an essential dialectic is established which will lead to a more inductive approach where propositions are tested through empirical quantitative research. The former is an objective of the study. A critical review of existing policies and reported practices was conducted and from these findings grew an intent to establish an Indigenous homeless youth service model with the aim of establishing a valid holistic approach that is culturally appropriate for lowana.
In some cases there appears to be a gender specific political influence relating to women’s refuges (Nyland & Bradfield, 1998) that seems to take precedence over the well being and education of the youth. The lack of necessary skills, attitudes, values and knowledge to develop autonomy as Aboriginal women results in disempowerment. Although care and protection of youth is purportedly a key value of any refuge this value appears to become lost in issues of a gender related political agenda of those in positions of power in such organisations.

Figure 1 represents the researcher’s past ethnographic experience working in Indigenous youth assisted accommodation services; the current research study in Indigenous youth accommodation services; and future aspirations for culturally appropriate service delivery in Iowana’s accommodation services.
Observations In-Situ of Indigenous Assisted Accommodation Services

Investigating the Level of Commitment to Culturally Appropriate Indigenous Youth Service Structures and Processes through a Process of Content Analysis

Implementation of a Culturally Appropriate Service Model and Programs within Indigenous Female Youth Accommodation Services

Fig.1. Development Cycle for a Culturally Relevant Accommodation Service for Lowana
2.3. Area of Interest

The area of interest for this thesis lies in conducting a content analysis of the cultural appropriateness of philosophies and strategies currently utilised for addressing the needs of Iowana and how best they can be addressed. While the primary focus of this research are the questions posed on page 12. Other questions that will be considered include: What is current practice? Is it culturally appropriate in terms of outcomes? What evidence is there for the development of a culturally relevant model? What are the key elements of a culturally relevant model?

2.4. The Cultural Relevance of the Study

The female initiation rites are always related to biological changes such as menstruation, defloration, pregnancy and childbirth.... Life itself is the initiator for all women.... Her body and her state of mind undergo radical transformations and swings not only with the monthly cycle but also deep shifts in life roles.... Although female initiation is briefer and less elaborate than its male counterpart, it brings about equally and irreversible physical, psychological and psychic changes.... The kinship system, as demonstrated in the initiatic process, is based on a deep, immediate responsibility, not only for self and immediate family but for the whole society (Lawler, 1991:204).
For lowana the transition from childhood to womanhood, it is a time of great importance. Traditionally at this point young Aboriginal women would undergo an initiation commonly referred to as the rites of passage:

The important defloration ceremony begins with the girl’s first menstruation. ...
The older women visit her, instructing her about sex and the way she should behave when she is married (Lawler, 1991:205).

At this propitious time Indigenous people prepare their children for their future responsibilities. It was an integrated learning which taught the skills necessary for the continuation of the community and imparted a strong sense of identity (Lawler, 1991). With the loss of identity due to the dispossession accompanying colonialism, Aboriginal youth now suffer a lack of self-esteem and self-worth (O’Shane, 1995). In other words, they suffer external locus of control, lowered self-esteem and as a result lower achievement motivation (Cook, 1995). Learning self-acceptance and personal value within a relevant cultural context is as important as acquiring necessary skills for survival in modern society.

As an Aboriginal woman, the researcher is working with ‘women’s business’ and is therefore in a position to teach the girls culturally appropriate expression of sensuality and sexuality which protects and enhances their Aboriginality and womanhood.
Traditionally, sexual instruction was given by the girl’s aunty, as it is ‘... inappropriate for the ... parents to do so ...’ (Hunter, Fagan & Wilkes, 1998: 17). An ‘aunty’ is an influential older Aboriginal woman. In Aboriginal communities age is synonymous with respect and status and ‘... relate [s] to the respect that is attached to age and wisdom. It provides workers with an opportunity to legitimise their position’ (Lynn, Thorpe, Miles, Cutts, Butts, Butcher & Ford, 1998: 55).

Individualised existence and mature adaptation to life is attained through learning the essential life skills within society (Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1961; Bruner, 1960). The researcher’s in-situ field observations indicated that Aboriginal female youth needed help in learning appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to give them a better chance in life (Beresford & Omaji, 1998). The racist policies of colonisation (Reece, 1974) (Tatz, 1979; Hollinsworth, 1998) all but destroyed Aboriginal society (Parbury, 1986; Sumner, 1995) leaving Aboriginal people marginalised and socially disadvantaged (O’Shane, 1995; Reynolds, 1982; Pettman, 1992). The cumulative effects of cultural dispossession, institutionalisation, unemployment, poverty and removal of children from families over several generations has fractured Aboriginal social structures (Tatz, 1994). With the weakening of societal structures many Aboriginal parents lack the capabilities and knowledge required to teach their children the important social skills of how to live constructively in mainstream society (Gungil Jindibah, 1994; Beresford & Omaji, 1998). The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) (1997: 178) has observed that ‘... psychological and emotional damage renders many people less able to learn social skills and survival skills...’ As a
result many Aboriginal youth are not taught the most basic skills in communicating their needs effectively.

If Aboriginal children are not nurtured and assured of their self-worth and taught independent living skills they will find it increasingly difficult to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Beresford and Omaji (1996) poignantly describe the plight of Aboriginal youth in regards to their future state:

Aboriginal children are often not encouraged to develop fully their potential and to understand how this potential might relate to their future opportunities.... Aboriginal children are at a disadvantage in [the] acquisition or goal-oriented skills and broad social knowledge essential to a modern, industrial society (Beresford & Omaji 1996:47).

Traditionally in the nurturing of one’s potential, there were two values: the person or existence: and their role in the community (Lawler, 1991). At the present time there is no familiar passage for Aboriginal youth to follow through life. Butler (cited in Hunter, Fagan & Wilkes, 1998:18) ‘... noted that young Indigenous people have twice as much learning to do as they have two cultures to learn... ’ Although it would seem essential that Aboriginal youth learn to live in modern society, the problem arises of retaining the Aboriginal essence whilst in the process of taking on another culture (Fanon, 1967).
For these reasons the researcher believes strongly in addressing the needs of the lowana and seeking ways of identifying culturally appropriate approaches to implement into Aboriginal youth accommodation services. Past institutionalisation has left Aboriginal society shattered. The researcher’s aspirations are to accommodate Aboriginal youth in a homely service that is culturally appropriate, with people who genuinely care about them and their future. Urgent help is required in all areas of their lives, including the acquisition of spiritual and social values to assist in character enhancement and in steering them away from the oppression of the ‘hand-out mentality’ (Freire, 1972; Pearson, 2000).
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3. A Qualitative Approach

A qualitative content analysis approach is utilised to analyse the literature relating to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth homelessness.

Sarantakos (1998) outlines the qualities of content analysis as a research methodological approach. It may include a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Content is analysed as data in either apparent or veiled forms, or both. Apparent content is that which is visible in the text. Veiled content is the implied meaning or that which is hidden within the text. This study utilises both methods. In order to critique philosophies and policies the research aims to search for the messages hidden meaning and to look for the qualitative meaning behind statistical data.

3.1. Discussion of the Methodology Process for this Research

Questions asked within this research relate to: youth homelessness; comparisons with mainstream and Indigenous homelessness; policies and procedures in both
the government and non-government sectors; evaluating models in general, and specifically, in the terms of cultural appropriateness.

Contextual data, academic literature, government reports, statistical analysis, agency training information and annual reports in relation to homelessness, were reviewed.

The literature search was undertaken using key words, issues and recommendations obtained from key stakeholders in the field. The key stakeholders (experts in the field, for example DoCS) were consulted in order to establish key concepts, journals, reports and books, for they have not only knowledge and set the policies but control decision making directed to organisations.

In the utilisation of content analysis, themes or patterns are sought. With the recurrence of themes a way of interpreting ‘... individual or group values, sentiment, intention or ideologies...’ (Sarantakos, 1998:280) evolves. Given that qualitative analysis draws more upon subjective information, and quantitative methods examine ‘... time, frequency or duration of an event ...’ objectively tested (Eckhardt and Ermann, 1977: 280 cited in Sarantakos) or measurable data, a sound knowledge base is formed. Zubeer-Skerritt and Ryan (1987:144) asserts that literature reviews are ‘... a vehicle through which credibility is established...’ A content analysis adds rigour to a literature review by providing a methodology that is planned, rational and non-random.
Examples of content analysis are found in normal, everyday communications. The mind absorbs messages depicted in the particular media of communication, and interprets the hidden covert meanings as well as the overt messages conveyed. Through content analysis one may learn to examine how language may be constructed to manipulate the populace.

Categories emerge '... through constant comparisons of incidents and concepts...' (Glaser, 1992:18). The process of data gathering and making it lucid involves assigning additional categories to the core category. In this thesis the core category is Indigenous youth homelessness. Additional categories that arose during the research process were identified and are represented in figure 2 indicating how content categories and key concepts within them may be identified.

Fig. 2: Coding Core Concepts
A further process in content analysis is the use of coding. Coding (Glaser, 1992),
is a form of information management. It is an organisational tool whereby the
researcher organises textural material systematically. Coding is used in order to
draw together recurring themes. In the course of analysing the content of the text
themes, or conceptual areas, begin to emerge.

With the emergence of key concepts a coding system was designed based on
Glaser’s (1992) coding model. The researcher’s model on homelessness related
codes, directly relate to key quotes categorised and quantified for frequency. The
quotes were selected as being representative of key themes or categories as a
means of adding strength and clarity to the argument of this thesis. Upon this
model is built an information management system. Following is an example of
this model:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY AUTHORS</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council to Homeless Persons (1998; 1997/98)</td>
<td><strong>HOMELESSNESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>DISADVANTAGE-MENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>DISPOSSESSION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homelessness is on the increase.... In 1998, the Council to Homeless Persons Fact Sheet declared that “an estimated 147,000 people (of which 31% were children) used homeless services across Australia (Swanborough, Annual Report 1997/98:3).”</td>
<td>Attitudes and prejudices function to keep Aboriginal people at the margins of this society (disadvantaged).... Prejudices prevent Aboriginal people getting fair access to the private rental market (Hamann in Parity, 1998:20)</td>
<td>The historical legacy of dispossession...and its effect of powerlessness is at the heart of homelessness (Murray &amp; Ahern in Parity, 1998:21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (1999)</td>
<td>Family conflict and unemployment are important factors in youth homelessness (p.298)</td>
<td>Indigenous Australians experience high levels of social, economic, health and educational disadvantage. More immediately Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have significantly less access to affordable or secure housing than other Australians (p.286)</td>
<td>Indigenous Australians are especially vulnerable to homelessness as a result of displacement associated with European settlement and policies first of segregation and then of assimilation (p.286).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbury (1986)</td>
<td>...Survivors of the tribes lived mostly in fringe camps near the towns of their tribal territory, keeping in touch with their land (p.74). They were becoming homeless in their own land.</td>
<td>...in the 1960s....White Australians enjoyed one of the highest living standards in the world. On the fringes of this affluent society Aboriginal Australians endured one of the lowest living standards in the world (p.123).</td>
<td>Stifling the pangs of colonial conscience, Social Darwinism justified genocide, dispossession and neglect (p.81).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Concepts

#### Cultural Transition

Cultural transition issues...are increasingly impacting upon young Indigenous people...many young Indigenous people are increasingly exposed to, and attracted by non-Indigenous culture...which can place them in some difficulties in relation to their cultures (p.57).

Assimilation amounted to a denial of Aboriginality (p.34). Our own survey of Aboriginal youth shows that most of them have little or no knowledge of their cultures (p.37) [and]...are not likely to make a successful transition (p.20).

#### Incarceration (Detention or Imprisonment)

Pre- and post- (prison) release programs are sometimes ineffective, with the result being that some Indigenous people become homeless shortly after release from gaol. Some are released with...insufficient money to return home or...after the Department of Social Security office has closed so they cannot access their money (p.94)

A visit to almost any juvenile detention centre in Australia will show the disproportionate number of young Aborigines (p.15).

About 40% of children in corrective services were identified as Indigenous in the 1996 census (ABS& AIHS, 1999).

#### Family Violence

The breakdown in traditional ways of dealing with violence through family and networks was said by some people to be contributing to the homelessness experienced by women who are victims of domestic violence (p.38).

For Aboriginal families, the term family violence, as opposed to domestic violence, is preferred because it includes violence between adult relatives, neglect and sexual abuse of children, and elder abuse (p.45).

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey (ABS 1997) found that approximately 45% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 13 years and over perceived family violence to be a common problem in their local area (ABS & AIHW, 1999).
3.2. Concepts, Propositions, Constructs, Theory and Model Building

A concept is a key idea that allows a central organising series of thoughts to be labelled (Cook, 2000). The interrelationship of two or more concepts forms a proposition (Bruner, 1968). A construct is derived from two or more propositions. The constructs are the key elements of the theoretical model (Cook, 1995).

Following Glasser's (1992) coding model, key concepts are identified. Propositions are derived from the key concepts and a theoretical construct developed (Bruner, 1968; Cook, 1995; Unruh, 1968). In this way a theoretical model can be developed and tested. Following is an example of how constructs are developed from concepts and propositions in figure 4:

Fig.4. Example of Propositional and Constructual Development Based on Fig.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Propositions</th>
<th>Construct 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.1 Family</td>
<td>P.1. Aboriginal women are experiencing homelessness due to family violence</td>
<td>Traditional cultural values need to be re-established and strengthened within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.2 Violence</td>
<td>caused by the disintegration of traditional values.</td>
<td>Aboriginal communities to ensure that Aboriginal youth are able to break the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.3 Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>generational homelessness cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.4 Homelessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.5 Culture</td>
<td>P.2. Aboriginal youth are experiencing difficulty in making successful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.6 Transition</td>
<td>transitions and relating to their own culture caused by identifying too</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.7 Youth</td>
<td>strongly with non-Indigenous culture.</td>
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<td>C.8 Relationship</td>
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<td>C.9 Non-</td>
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<td>Indigenous</td>
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</table>
This methodological model building approach has been applied in the Aboriginal curriculum development context by Cook (1989, 1995) and is considered appropriate for this study. Figure 5 outlines the procedure for model building.

Fig. 5. Model Building Procedure

(Salvatori, 2000)
3.3. Stakeholders

Literature from a number of stakeholders was included in the analysis. They included:

- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), and the Department of Community Services (DoCS).

- Key organisations included: The St Vincent De Paul Society; The Sydney City Mission; and The Youth Accommodation Association (YAA).

- Key advisers included: The Council to Homeless Persons; The National ATSI Health Clearinghouse; The Australian National University (Discussion Papers), and The University of Melbourne (Youth Research Centre).

- Bibliographies were checked and authors whose names repeatedly appeared were noted. The literature search included current literature as well as historical text through accessing libraries, Internet and databases.

Utilising a content analysis methodology, and by applying this to the primary reading common themes such as poverty, racism and family violence began to emerge. Data that related to poverty for example was placed in the concept category 'poverty' and so on. Colour coding was used to help recognise particular themes or broader conceptual area to help make the organisation of data easier.

Depicted below is a model based on: Reflective literature searching model (Bruce, 1992:16 cited in Zuber-Skerritt and Ryan, 1998:150) a technique of content analysis.
Content analysis was used as a methodology because the examination of text allows existing data to be either inductively or deductively analysed for further testing. It is not restricted to the written word, but includes all forms of media. Content analysis has validity as a competent means of data collection and analysis (Sarantako, 1998). However, it is important to recognise the methodological ‘strengths’ and ‘weaknesses’.

Fig.6. Reflective Literature Search Model: A Content Analysis Process
The 'strengths' included:

i. content analysis generates data and affords access to readily available researched material for testing and re-testing;

ii. when compared with other methods of research, content analysis is relatively cost effective;

iii. given that text offers information in a neutral form, content analysis preempts less bias than other methods;

iv. as this research is not drawn from interviews it required no respondents and therefore eliminates researcher bias and problems often associated with interviewing respondents; and

v. as ethics approval is not required time spent is reduced (Sarantako, 1998).

The 'weaknesses' in content analysis included:

i. certain documents such as diaries or letters may not be accessible or be hard to acquire;

ii. documents are often not representative in the fact that the information therein relates only to a small percentage of people;

iii. unrecorded events cannot be examined via content analysis: it is therefore limited to what has been documented;

iv. the information can be biased and unreliable if documents are not complete; and

v. content analysis is open to coder bias (Sanantako, 1998: 286).
This research does not include interviews, yet talking with Lowana provides a greater understanding of the size of the problem, the attitudes they confront and the problems with which they have to cope. It is envisioned that further research be pursued in the process of evaluation of interviews and focus groups within Aboriginal services utilising the process of discourse analysis and qualitative research.

The information gathered from the available literature could be of benefit to other professionals in this field, as it provides a critique of philosophies and practices associated with youth homelessness.

Key concepts will be identified through a content analysis. Those concepts will have been defined in the literature review, and propositions will be developed which will be the interrelationship of two or more concepts to develop the proposition. The propositions will then be interrelated to form theoretical constructs that come from the interrelationship of two or more propositions. These constructs then will interrelate to develop a basic theoretical base from which a model for action is determined.
4. A Definition of Terms that Relates to the Key Concepts Underpinning Aboriginal Homelessness

4.1. The subject area relates to the examination of Aboriginal homelessness issues as illustrated in the key concepts below. For the purpose of this thesis the researcher’s definition of those key concepts are as follows.

4.2. Aboriginal Spirituality
Aboriginal identity has its roots embedded in the whole of the Aboriginal creative epoch that is commonly referred to as The Dreaming which is considered to be all pervasive, ever present; that which exists beyond the boundaries of time and space; that which is eternal and ever living. (Kneebone 1991; Lawler 1991; Stanner 1987; Suzuki 1997). Altjiringa, Aldjerinya, Ungud, Tjukurpa, Wongar and Bugari are some of the names given to the Dreaming by different language groups (Broome, 1982; Elkin, 1980). Aboriginal identity represents interconnectedness to the land, to culture, to all of creation, a sense of eternal
oneness; where there is no beginning and no end; from whence one comes and to whence one returns (Parbury, 1986). An Aboriginal spiritual perspective presented by Elder Eddie Kneebone avers that the same life-force imbues all creation. Human beings are a part of, not apart from, all that exists. ... *The Dreamtime brings the entire cosmos into our lives, making it a part of us, and us a part of it ...* (Kneebone, 1991:89).

Aboriginal people have an affinity with the land. This affinity is linked to the seasons, the cycles of life, fecundity and fertility rites for the preservation of the sacred heritage, and the continuum of the earth and its peoples into the future (Lawler, 1991).

4.3. Christianity

*The 1493 papal bull “Inter Caetera”... issued by Pope Alexander VI ... established Christian domination and called for the subjugation of non-Christians peoples (“barbarous nations”) and their lands.... Consequently, tens of millions of native peoples perished as a result of these actions. This papal edict ... has since become the cornerstone of the colonial system used against indigenous nations and peoples. (Castanha, 2000).*

According to O'Brien and O'Brien (1985), Christianity originated in a small community in the Middle East. It emerged from Judaism, a rigid, patriarchal, monotheistic religion. This sect formulated the very powerful concept of One God
and His chosen people (Gardner, 1999). The Christian view at that period of time was that intrinsically mankind was bad. Black people and those other than the ‘chosen few’ were seen as descendants of Ham, Noah’s cursed son, who had fallen from God’s grace (Brown, 1965; Bulbeck, 1993; Russell & Schofield, 1991). Black skinned people were classed as ‘cast out’ and ‘lesser than’, which gave rise to the concept of Christian’s having the God given duty to save heathens from their pagan ways. This gave rise to the view that the darker peoples were, less than heathen, or even worse ‘sub-human’ (Segal, 1997). Christianity, a male dominated religion, assumed control over all aspects of people’s lives, including sexuality. Christianity promoted expansionism (Bulbeck, 1993; Brown, 1965) the acquisition of land and wealth, and thereby sanctioned racism and culturalism, justifying exploits of conquering and dispossessing peoples of their land and culture (Bulbeck, 1993). The effect of this religion that started over 4,000 years ago in the deserts of the Middle East has impacted on Aboriginal Australia since 1788. The impact continues to resonate throughout contemporary Aboriginal society.

4.4. Cultural Dispossession

The ramifications of dispossession and institutionalisation experienced by Indigenous Australians are all encompassing and result in a myriad of complications. The core problem of Aboriginal ill health can still be linked to invasion and dispossession (Reid & Trompf, 1991; Saggers & Gray, 1991).
Problems still exist between black* and white Australians. The acquisitive, expansionist approach of Western society was in direct contrast to the traditional lifestyle of environmental functionalism (Bolton, 1994; Cook, 1995) experienced by Aborigines.

4.5. Reconciliation

There is dire need for reconciliation between black and white peoples of Australia. The problem stems from long term racism (Bolton, 1994) following the cultural contact and conflict which resulted with the arrival of Western culture in Australia (Cook, 1995). Reconciliation is the defining of a social, cultural and political process whereby social justice is attained for Aborigines and accepted by all Australians.

In the speech Corroboree, Dodson (2000) expresses the need for diversity in unity and compassion as the fabric that fortifies human needs. Dodson beseeches:

... I urge you to support the proposed Reconciliation Foundation, because going forward is also about remembering, and I beg you to listen to those whispers in your heart and let them bellow out for a better future, a future that’s steeped in the spirit of reconciliation. So let us begin this journey, a journey of healing, healing the body, the soul, our hearts and the spirit of our

* Black: The term has taken on more political connotations ... and now its usage implies solidarity against racism. The idea of 'black' has thus been reclaimed as a source of pride and identity (Bulbeck, 1992:142)
nation. It must go on telling the truth about Aboriginal history it must go on with fights against racism on the ground (Dodson, 2000:7).

### 4.6. Cultural Genocide

Cultural genocide refers to the deliberate extermination of Aboriginal culture of Indigenous Australia in an attempt to make Australia 'white' (Parbury, 1986). Dispossession of land and culture and the resulting disintegration of Aboriginal society are a recurring theme in Australia (Reynolds, 1982; Reynolds, 1987 (b)). Denial of land, traditional language, customs, hunting, gathering, and ritualistic lifestyle (Stanner, 1968; Rowley, 1972; Willmot, 1987) left the first peoples homeless and in a state of hopelessness (Tatz, 1994). They became fringe dwellers in an attempt to stay in their own traditional lands (Parbury, 1986). Traditional culture disintegrated and a gradual new culture emerged as the Aborigines tried to adjust to the new order of colonialism (Stanner, 1968), '... in the face of alcoholism, poor housing, poverty and the lowered self esteem of the people...' (Cook, 1995:18).

### 4.7. Institutionalism

Institutionalism refers to the process of subjecting a person to dependence whether through social security, or incarceration, which cause apathy; creates dependence; and if incarcerated, can result in death as can be verified by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) report. The year 1815 marked an historical precedent when the first government run institution
was established at Parramatta in NSW for Aboriginal children (Clark, 1962; Beresford & Omaji, 1998). Historically, Aboriginal people have been significantly over represented in institutional care (HREOC, 1997). This over representation is still occurring. Gungil Jindibah opines that the Department of Community Services (DoCS):

... recognises that it is one of a long line of state organisations which has attempted to reshape Aboriginal family life with limited positive outcome. The legacy of these welfare practices has been the fragmentation and demoralisation of many Aboriginal people, families and communities, as well as their culture, religion and lifestyle (Gungil Jindibah 1994:2).

4.8. Protectionism

Protectionism was a system of paternalistic, legalised control over the lives of Aboriginal people in order to protect as a dying race. It was a method for imposing restriction on Indigenous peoples in the guise of care and protection in an attempt to 'breed out' the Aboriginal race (Read, 1982). The year 1880 marked the beginning of Protection Policies in Australia (Cook, 1982 (d); Reece, 1974). During this time most Aboriginal people in NSW, being dispossessed of their land were forced to live on reserves, missions or stations. In 1909 the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board began the intentional removal of Aboriginal children from the influence of the camps. The Northern Territories Aboriginal Act 1910 gave legal guardianship over every Aboriginal and half-cast child up to the age of 18, to the proctor in his District. In 1915 an amendment was made to
the New South Wales's Aborigine's Protection Act which sanctioned full custody and control of any Aboriginal child to the Board. And in 1919, inspectors from the Victorian Aborigines Protection Board accompanied by police forcibly removed lighter skinned children from their parents (Gardiner-Garden, 1999; Gungil Jindibah, 1994). The legacy of protectionism is the fear of children being removed and the mistrust of authority and welfare institutions.

4.9. Dysfunctional Families

Dysfunctional families are the result of historical, social, and political processes which have impacted on Aboriginal people, especially those affected by forced removal, in the form of alienation from culture, heritage, and cultural identity. Out of this, parenting skills unique to Aboriginal culture which included nurturing and caring, kinship ties and extended family support were denied (HREOC, 1997). These processes have led to ‘difficulties in the role of parenting, a pattern of domestic violence and a lifestyle of material disadvantage’ (Beresford & Omaji, 1996:33) and therefore many Aboriginal children are living in ‘severely dysfunctional families’ (Thomas & Ellery, 1991:6).

4.10. The Stolen Generations

The stolen generation refers to the forced removal of ‘tens of thousands’ of Aboriginal children from their families (Willey, 1979) ‘... under past government policies effective up to 1970...' (Amnesty International, 1998;). According to Gungil Jindibah (1994), there can be no definitive estimate as to how many children were
stolen from their families for many records no longer exist. The HREOC (1997) report, 'Bringing Them Home' found that the sanctioned policies of the government of the day constituted genocide and 'systematic racial discrimination'.

4.11. Welfare Community

The welfare community refers to Aboriginal communities dependent upon financial aid received from a government agency or another source. Pearson (2000) postulates that the dysfunctional state Aboriginal society finds itself in today, and the deterioration of Aboriginal society over the past thirty years is due largely to the dependence on passive welfare. Dependence on welfare was at the instigation of the coloniser in which a vicious circle of dependence has been created and continues to spiral, keeping Aboriginal people in a perpetual state of subjugation (Beresford & Omaji, 1998). Freire (1972:26) holds that the oppressor '…rationalizes his guilt through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them in a position of dependence…'. In 1974, the late Senator Neville Bonner referred to present and past governments' allocation of monies to Aboriginal people as a 'form of charity' with implications of a 'handout mentality' (Bonner, cited in Clark, 2000).

4.12. Cycle of Poverty

Aboriginal people as a whole have suffered disadvantagement and have been relegated to the lower rung of socio-economic status, dependent on welfare, and
kept in a state of poverty as a result of government control. Commissioner Wootten (cited in Amnesty International, 1989:15) refers to the removal of Aboriginal children as preparation for ‘... a life as the lowest level of worker in a prejudiced white community...’ This living legacy keeps Aboriginal people locked in to a cycle of poverty of unemployment, poor education and greater risk of homelessness.
Part 2.

4.13. Coming to Terms with the Origin of Homelessness in the Indigenous Context

4.14. Colonisation

The British invaded Australia in 1788 and claimed Australia for the Crown (Reynolds, 1982; Reynolds, 1987 (b)). Ignoring the fact that Aboriginal peoples were the first peoples to inhabit Australia, the British declared Australia 'terra nullius' made camp, vanquished the first peoples and assumed status as the dominant ruling culture in Australia (Clark, 1962). Colonisation has left deep physical, mental, emotional and spiritual scars on the first peoples of Australia, scars that have not healed (Bolton, 1994; Dodson, 2000; Tatz, 1994).

The land is the source of life and meaning for Aborigines, their spiritual base. This was potently obvious to many non-Aborigines, as Stanner (1965:19) states:

When we look at what we call 'land' we took what to them meant hearth, home, the source and locus of life, and everlastingness of spirit. At the same time it left each local band bereft or an essential constant that made their plan and code of living intelligible. Particular pieces of territory, each a home-land, formed part of a set of constants without which no affiliation of any person to
any other person, no link in the whole network of relationships, no part of the complex structure of social groups any longer had all its co-ordinates. What I describe as 'homelessness', then, means that the Aborigines faced a kind of vertigo in living. They had no stable base of life; every personal affiliation was lamed; every group structure was put out of kilter; no social network had a point of fixture left.

Without knowledge of the history of Black Australia it is difficult to gain a true understanding of what homelessness means in the Aboriginal context. The legacy of homelessness in Indigenous Australian society can be traced back to the time of colonisation. Before colonisation, homelessness was not part of Aboriginal life except in the case of banishment. '... Punishments for specific transgressions ... were part of the means of social control in Aboriginal society ...' (Bolger, 1991:49). Excommunication with the camp resulted only with a serious act of crime. For this reason a person may be cast out of the community, but only in such a case could a person be considered homeless. Otherwise, homelessness was an unknown component of Aboriginal life. (Keys Young, 1998; Stanner, 1968).

The Director of Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria, Tony Cahir, was quoted in Parity (1999:9) as stating '... the extreme social and economic disadvantages experienced by Kooris...' is representative of the fundamental causes of Indigenous homelessness. The Federal Commissioner of Human Rights and Equal Opportunities at the National Conference on Homelessness in 1996, Chris Sidoti
was noted as saying: ‘Homelessness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is directly linked to dispossession’ (Sidoti, cited in Parity, 1998:5).

According to Sumner (1995) the fabric of Aboriginal society changed drastically with the arrival and settlement of the British invaders. Homelessness now became a way of life in the sense that Aboriginal land was taken from them and they were rendered subordinate and dependant upon the vanquishers (Parbury, 1986). Aboriginal autonomy, social structure and economy, that of hunting and gathering, collapsed under the pressure of land being taken from them for white settlement and development (Sumner, 1995). Hence, the Indigenous people were forced to assimilate into the dominant culture of Western society (Reid & Trompf, 1991). O'Shane (1995) aptly describes the legitimisation of these acts, which were seen by policy makers of the period as ‘protective’, but which were in fact bigoted and destructive to the Aboriginal culture. (Clark, 1995; Cook, 2000) The outcomes of these policies are still visible.

Dispossession was legitimised by legislation and formal government land policies under which those lands which were expropriated from indigenous peoples were alienated to other interests, very often wealthy, powerful, greedy, agricultural and pastoral land owners (O'Shane, 1995:25).

In order to understand homelessness in the Indigenous context it is necessary to begin by examining the Indigenous ‘... experience of over two centuries of dispossession, genocide, racism and disempowerment ... ’ (Keys Young, 1998:12). In the
light of these experiences it gives one an understanding of how communities have been shattered, disadvantaged and placed at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale; and hence, made vulnerable to homelessness.

Bulbeck (1993:122) describes Australia as being ‘... built on wholesale dispossession of the former occupiers from their land ... ’. The aftermath of dispossession with its offspring of policies designed to ‘Europeanise’, ‘Christianise’ and civilise black Australia (O’Shane, 1995; Sykes, 1984) is still impacting on the lives of Aboriginal people today. Indigenous homelessness is but one of the many social problems in which Aboriginal people continue to suffer as a result of past and present policies in regards to Aboriginal welfare. This homelessness is brought on by cultural disempowerment following cultural contact, and resulting in unemployment, poor education, poor housing and poor health (Cook, 1995).

4.15. Welfare Policies and Practices Impacting on Aboriginal Society

According to Beresford and Omaji (1998) the rhetoric of the assimilation policy was established to save Aboriginal children from a pitiful lifestyle. It was supposedly designed to provide Aboriginal people the chance of becoming part of white Australian society and enjoy the pleasures of being a white person. Evidence exposes the ‘façade’ of the assimilation policy by showing that it was a tool used to commit cultural genocide or what Cook (2000) refers to as ‘culture-centric determinism’ on the part of the Europeans. Aboriginal links with
traditional culture were extinguished, so that the Aboriginal nation would become extinct. This resulted in the elimination of the culture as it was even though the gene pool, though emancipated, survived. Supposition was that the Aboriginal person would become more white by marrying a white person and become more accepted within white Australian society. Albeit kept uneducated, impoverished; cast outs in Aboriginal country, and therefore pose no threat to White Australia (Beresford & Omaji 1998; HREOC, 1997; Read, 1980).

Nowhere ... does the destructive and contradictory nature of the assimilation policy become so apparent as in the area of the removal of indigenous children from their parents. The haphazard State legislation in this area in the late 19th and early 20th century gave way in the mid-20th century to systemised removal.... Application of general child welfare laws did nothing to slow the rate of forced removal and in some places increased it, with courts prepared to equate 'poverty' with 'neglect' and an indigenous lifestyle with 'uncontrollable' (Gardiner-Garden, 1999:4).

According to Gungil Jindibah (1994:11), 1788 marked the time of invasion. Dispossession from land was followed by dispossession from the family. Children are recorded as being 'kidnapped' and used as 'guides for white agriculturalist', 'slaves', as 'domestic servants' being 'subject to sexual abuse and floggings'. The Centre's report states that in 1815 '... an historical precedent for the institutionalisation of Aboriginal children had been set'. This was the Aboriginal institute in Parramatta established to educate Aboriginal children perceived as
being intelligent (Cook, 1995; Parbury, 1986). From that date onwards, Aboriginal children have been periodically and progressively taken from their families and placed under the control of welfare under the guise of benevolence and care. As a result Aborigines suffered disempowerment and what has been referred to as the ‘welfare mentality’ (Pearson, 2000).

The Children (Care and Protection) Act was inaugurated in 1987. Child placement options for the child were constructed whereby preferences for the first three options were to ‘... keep Aboriginal children within the Aboriginal community’. The Act changed from a theoretical concept of ‘neglect’ to ‘behaviour that psychologically harms the child’ (Gungil Jindibah, 1994:9).

By equating ‘poverty’ with ‘neglect’, an indigenous lifestyle with ‘uncontrollable’, and ‘neglect’ now translating as ‘behaviour that psychologically harms the child’, poses a question. Can it be argued that language is manipulated to cast blame upon the victim and absolve the perpetrators of their injustices, in order to continue the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents? Words, according to Christie (1984:166), ‘... ingeniously used, will serve to mask the ugliness of naked facts’. The real issue here is that cultural difference is perceived as cultural deficit (Cook, 1995).

These policies, according to O’Shane (1995:27) were not developed in ‘innocence’ or by the ‘uninformed’, but rather, ‘... they were the calculated, and knowing, policies
and practices of thinking, intelligent, human beings, who deliberated at length, and with care ... ’ to control and subjugate Aboriginal people.

Beresford and Omaji (1998) share the same beliefs in regard to policies having been rigorously constructed with the intention of ultimately wiping out the Aboriginal nation, in an act of racism, which can be identified the following statement:

Such a draconian act demands the most thorough explanation of the motives behind the removal of thousands of children.... An essential part of the racial theory behind this policy was to culturally transform these children into whites – albeit, marginalised ones (Beresford & Omaji, 1998:20).

4.16. Racism

Racism is behaviour manifested as discrimination, oppression, abuse or aggression, directed towards people because they belong to a different group of people either ethnically or racially (Bryant, 1994). It is a belief that races have distinctive cultural characteristic determined by hereditary factors which bestows some peoples with an intrinsic superiority and other peoples with an intrinsic inferiority (Bryant, 1994; Tatz, 1979). ‘Racism is an ideological justification for white rulers’ exploitation of the peoples of colonised nations’ (Bulbeck, 1993:122).

Racist attitudes that continue today started within Australian society over 200 years ago. Examples include the White Australian Policy, the Stolen Generations
and racial violence including police brutality (Hollinsworth, 1998; HREOC, 1997). Everyday Australian life is full of racist acts either conscious or unconscious. Many non-Aboriginal people believe that they behave in a positively motivated way towards Aboriginal people. An example of this can be seen in the placing of Aboriginal children in ‘white’ homes so that they could become more like the ‘whites’ as this was considered better for them (Beresford & Omaji 1998). This in itself is inherently racist because it judges Aboriginal culture as inferior.

As Cook (2000) indicates, some of the most racist, most ethnocentric peoples in the world are Western Christians because of the seminal notion that they are the chosen people who have the God given right to save others. Echoes of these sentiments are given voice in Kath Walkers poem:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Racism}

\textit{Stalking in the corridors of life}

\textit{Black, frustrated minds}

\textit{Scream for release from Christian racist moulds.}

\textit{Moulds that enslave Black independence.}

(Walker, cited in Cook, 2000)
\end{quote}

According to Bulbeck (1993) by the 18th Century much of the previously unknown world was under the dominion of British and European rule. Great social changes emerged as capitalism, colonisation and slavery flourished whilst Indigenous peoples lost their lives, their land, their culture, and their freedom to
the marauding invaders. ‘... In the high age of imperialism, Britain saw the world in terms of races: rulers and ruled, masters and servants’ (Beckett, 1988:195).

Contemporary thinkers are cognisant of the fact that the term ‘race’ is a social construct, used to oppress the ‘lesser-than races’. Hollinsworth (1998) and Tatz (1976) attest that early western civilisation coined the word ‘race’ which enabled them to gain a foothold of superiority and dominance over peoples unlike themselves, people who were not of European stock. The term ‘race’ fabricated by the Europeans in an attempt to hold the seat of power, gained momentum and with it, universal acceptance of the concept of superior and inferior peoples separated by biological differences. A hierarchy, known as the ‘Great Chain of Being’ (Lovejoy, 1964 cited in Hollinsworth 1998:36) emerged which postulated the theory that higher races forged forward while the lesser races, conforming to the laws of nature, died out. This intrinsic superiority attitude of the colonising culture and its belief in the natural selection of the Law of Nature justified in their eyes the genocide they perpetrated on the ‘inferior races’ (Hollinsworth, 1998:29). This was the concept of the ‘manifest destiny’ notion that the inferred ‘superior races’ would naturally dominate irrespective of intervention (Cook, 1995). Intervention, therefore had a justification, and ‘thought lead to deed’ and implicit acts of disempowerment were perpetuated against the culture being ‘culturalised’ (Cook, 2000).

The process of colonisation continues today with new forms of racism emerging. Describing a new form of racism, Goldberg (1993) affirms:
A more subtle and silently sophisticated racism, is assumed away as it orders social formations anew.... It is contradictorily celebrated as multicultural diversity just as it rationalizes hegemonic control of differences, access and prevailing power. In short, liberal meliorism – whether that of modernity or postmodernity – blinds itself to the transformation in racist expressions, in racist culture (Goldberg 1993:8).

Racism is now couched more in terms of benevolence and care rather than in the segregation policy of the past. According to Cowlshaw (1997) racism pervades society but is most evident in the upper echelons of government, bureaucracy and egalitarian institutions. This is known as institutional racism. The form racism takes is masked behind terms of equity and justice for all. Political rhetoric is an attempt to hide the racist attitudes fostered within the guise of democracy while racism flourishes and Aboriginal people continue to suffer.

A tapestry of inhumane and what must be considered intellectually, as racist theft of Aboriginal children from their parents, legitimised officially through the policies of segregation and assimilation has been woven into the history of Indigenous people since the forced dispossession of their land. The consequence of these dehumanising, racist acts has resulted in cultural genocide and is unequivocally linked to Indigenous homelessness (Murray, 1999).
4.17. Culture and Loss of Culture

... I wish I had never been taken out of the bush, and educated as I have been, for I cannot be a white man; and I cannot be a blackfella... (Bungaree, J. quoted in Reynolds, 1990:111).

Aboriginal youth no longer know where they fit in (Bryant, 1994; Dominelli, 1997). They find it increasingly harder to find them selves, to know their identity (Beresford & Omaji, 1996; Keys Young 1998). A sense of inferiority, self-doubt and self-destruction is seared into the inner recesses of their souls as a consequence of colonisation (Vander-Kyup, 2000). Colonisation gave birth to racism and discrimination, '... institutionalised violence and racism throughout the years has left a psychological scar on Aboriginal Australians...' (Bolton, 1994:14). Indigenous people were shamed and declared inferior by the assumed 'superior' white culture. An inferiority complex was stamped upon the black-identity as it was stripped of its cultural and spiritual practice (Bolton, 1994). Indoctrination and ethnocentric (Cook, 1995) attitudes in the education system, government, welfare and the media extinguished the existence or right of an Indigenous identity (O'Shane, 1995). As Fanon (1967) attests:

Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose sole an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation: that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is
elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle (Fanon, 1967:18).

Unless Aboriginal youth can take pride in their heritage and develop a sense of personal worth in the ‘... state of being (Aboriginal)...’ then it seems more than likely the problems shall persist (Fanon, 1967:15).

Today’s youth are in a vulnerable position in coming to terms with who they are and accepting their Aboriginality (Bryant, 1994; Dominelli, 1997). Many come from severely dysfunctional families and subject to over crowded homes, family violence, sexual abuse and drug abuse (Thomas & Ellery, 1991). Their survival instinct urges them to escape the depression and mistreatment by moving away from home and into the streets, sometimes sleeping in the open, sometimes with relatives or friends and over a period of time they become homeless (Paulson, 1999; Thomas & Ellery, 1991).

Due to the violent changes in Aboriginal lifestyles since colonisation, many Aboriginal parents are found wanting in parenting skills (Gungil Jindibah, 1994; Beresford & Omaji 1996) and, faced with the compounding issues that poverty brings, despair as to how best to raise a family. In consultation with several Aboriginal communities, Thomas and Ellery (1991:6) concluded from the meetings that Aboriginal women believed that in order to ‘... parent properly people have to be able to look after themselves; they have to know their own values and to
have their own identity... The women were concerned about family violence and alcohol consumption within the communities, and blamed these issues for much of the youth homelessness. It was noted that at that period in time ‘... 40 – 60% of Aboriginal youth were in institutions at any one time ...’ (Thomas & Ellery, 1991:6).

Women reported that young boys were learning abusive behaviour in an effort to dominate and project a powerful image whilst young girls were submerging themselves in abusive, violent relationships. Aboriginal women cherished their children as being:

... Their most important asset because they are the future, representing the survival of a unique people. Yet Elders are afraid to pass on knowledge to young people because they feel there is no-one they can trust with it (Thomas & Ellery, 1991:6).

The women were despairing to see the way their children were behaving and expressed that they wanted their children to learn the ways of ‘... their people’s culture so that they can develop self-esteem and pride in who they are’ (Thomas & Ellery, 1991:6) and hence, live happy lives.

The HREOC (1997) found that the Aboriginal experience of enforced removal of children from their families and racial abuse correlates with the gross over-representation of Aboriginal youth incarceration and deaths in custody.
A visit to almost any juvenile detention centre in Australia will show the disproportionate number of young Aborigines … experiences which have not only lead to detention centres, in some cases, also to death, are so common that they become a rite of passage into adulthood (Beresford and Omaji. 1996:15).

The above mentioned rites of passage described by Beresford and Omaji (1996), and the previously depicted rites of passage (Lawler, 1991) exhibit two conflicting ways of life. On the one hand, the old ways prepared youth for their future responsibilities through initiation rites (Lawler, 1991:204). On the other hand, according to several authors (Beresford & Omaji, 1996; Bryant, 1994; Dominelli, 1997), youth are creating their own rites of passage in the form of a sub-culture of crime in an attempt to boost their self-esteem and to flaunt authority.

Rites of passage of old, in the here and now, are rarely practiced. Concern about the absence of these practices has been expressed in Gungil Jindbah (1994:118): ‘… Children need to know their culture, it is important to know who you are so you know where you fit in…The young boys and girls should be put through initiation’.

According to Roberts (1983) cited in Duffy (1995:7) ‘… subordinate groups almost invariably take on the values of the dominant group … ’ In regards to the rites of passage, no matter in what way it is viewed, it can be determined that this is a crucial time in the youth’s development. Guidance is integral for a successful transition into adulthood; and without guidance Aboriginal youth are more than likely condemned to an impoverished, defeatist lifestyle.
Values nowadays are those of acquisition of material possessions and achievement (Beresford & Omaji 1996; Suzuki, 1997). It would appear that unless Aboriginal children are educated in both traditional and modern ways, they face failure as a real consequence. Aboriginal Elder, Willie Gordon, questioned the idea '... that the acquisition of new ways was equated with losing old ways ... ' and emphasised '... the importance of respecting and preserving old ways, but of being capable of relating both ways ... ' (cited in Hunter, Fagan & Wilkes, 1998:13). Spiritual and social education is vital for maintaining the essence of Aboriginality and there is a need for this education to be included in assisted accommodation programs in Aboriginal homeless youth services.

The implied message is not for the abandonment of the dominant culture. Rather, the message to Aboriginal youth is to reclaim their power through gaining knowledge of Aboriginal spiritual and cultural belief systems. In so doing, an understanding of how and why they came to be in their current context, would assist them psychologically to gain internal locus of control with its well researched benefits of increasing self-esteem and achievement motivation (Cook, 1989; 1995). Aboriginal youth are urged to take pride in their Aboriginal heritage; to stand solid in their own culture whilst embracing the dominant culture without losing their own identity; to accomplish this, according to the Elders, education in both cultures is imperative.

Nowadays, the absence of the practice of embracing spirituality is sorely lacking. The incidence of sickness in Aboriginal communities is evidence of being cut off
from cultural practice. A letter from Millingimbi Women’s Centre (cited in Atkinson 1990 in Bolger, 1991:15) depicts a community that is living in harmonious conditions due to identifying with their culture. The letter reads:

On the question of violence, we are happy to say we have none. Why is this? Our people have made a law to forbid alcohol in our community. We govern our own affairs. We have our own land, language and identity. Our culture is intact. We hope that the government will take notice of these things so that they are not lost in other places.

According to Lawler (1991) for the health of Aboriginal society ritual played an integral part, it made communities strong. Aborigines in the past based their whole existence on spiritual rites. Their whole life encompassed spiritual, cultural, physical, mental and emotional balance. Thus, interconnectedness with all these elements resulted in strong, healthy communities. Colonisation accompanied by dispossession and institutionalisation has a left a legacy of shattered communities and broken lives for the Indigenous nations. Aboriginal Elder, Maureen Watson (1999, audio-tape interview) so succinctly sums up the situation in expressing:

Conquering was a disease - disease became a way of life.... If the human spirit is not happy dire consequences are felt.
Programs designed to facilitate that which was traditionally considered vital to social wellbeing are beginning to emerge. A quantum leap forward for Aboriginal people would be in the development of more culturally appropriate programs that engage in the integration of all aspects of Aboriginal life.
Part 3

4.18. Defining Homelessness in the Aboriginal Context

Research shows the lack of response of governments to meet the needs of the lower income earners with affordable, safe housing. The private rental sector continues to rise along with housing market forcing people on the lower socio-economic level into homelessness. The rate of homelessness has grown to such high proportions that many people sleep without a roof over their heads because the supply does not meet the demand. (Dibblin, 1991; SAAP 111, 1999; AIHW, 1999).

The Council to Homeless Persons Australia (1998) refers to a homeless person as one who is:

Without a conventional home and lacks the economic and social supports that a home normally affords. She/he is often cut off from support of relatives and friends, she/he has few independent resources and often has no immediate means and, in some cases, little prospect of self-support.

Despite the use of the many and varied definitions, assessing who are homeless, presents a difficult task. Many homeless persons are not accounted for due to the
fact of the hidden side of homelessness, those who don’t ask for assistance and those who are turned away because of shortage of space within the services.

Identifying homelessness from an Indigenous perspective presents one with a myriad of complex issues, some similar and others dissimilar to mainstream homelessness, which in turn makes it more difficult to define, as Millsom (1998:5) attests:

*A definition of homelessness for Indigenous people is ... a vexed question. What can be said definitively is that homelessness for Indigenous Australia is a complex situation, encompassing the past, present and future policies of Governments, dispossession, lost culture, marginalisation, violence and bigotry.*

According to the Keys Young research group (1998:5) homelessness in the Indigenous context ‘... is generally considered to be a multi-layered and multi-dimensional concept which differs from non-Indigenous homelessness in a number of ways ...’ Keys Young describes the causes and experiences of Indigenous homelessness to be ‘fundamentally different’ to that of the non-Indigenous population. The reason being that the problem of homelessness is greater for Indigenous persons because of the ‘ ... higher proportion of Indigenous people affected by it...’ and because of ‘... a broader issue, in that it is experienced not only by individuals, but also by families, and even communities’
(1998:5). The report confirms that there are five distinct forms of Indigenous homelessness, these being:

*Spiritual homelessness; overcrowding or hidden homelessness; relocation and transient homelessness; escaping from unsafe or unstable home; and, lack of access to any stable shelter, accommodation or housing* (Keys Young 1998:22).

4.19. **Spiritual Homelessness**

One outcome of homelessness is referred to as spiritual homelessness. Spiritual homelessness relates to separation from traditional land or from family (Keys Young, 1998). According to Stockton (1995:84) ‘... the individual has an unbreakable tie ... to specific country.... While much of their culture has been lost, its spiritual core persists, and in place of country a homesickness or yearning remains’. Stanner (1968) referred to Aboriginal homelessness as a constituent to the current state of ‘alienation’. For most contemporary Aborigines, the tie to ‘country’ has been severed and a sense of spiritual homelessness pervades the soul (SAAP 111, 1999; Turner, 1999).

4.20. **Overcrowding: a Hidden Form of Homelessness**

*Implications which camouflage homelessness both chronic and crisis situations include issues relating to the extended family situation ... and a sharing of resources based on their value system which is different to European or Western society* (Newey, 1998:19).
A number of authors (Cahir, 1999; Keys Young, 1998; Millsom, 1998; Paulson, 1999, Turner, 1999) define overcrowding as a hidden form of homelessness. Researchers Smith and Daly (1996) assert that Indigenous families experience multiple forms of economic hardship arising from the size and make up of families and households. Indigenous households are more likely to have more than one family in residence than other Australian households and are more likely to be multi-generational. Older Indigenous people are more likely to be living with their children, grand children and great grand children all under the one roof. Even though they have a roof over their heads, most of the household could be considered homeless.

Traditionally Indigenous people took care of the older generation and family members who moved between families within the community (Moore, 1998). As a carry over from these times the extended family situation continues to grow, placing pressure on family relations arising from the radical changes in life style from past to present. Altman and Hunter (1997:7) cite Brown, Hirschfeld and Smith (1974:24, 44-6, 59) as concluding: ‘... low-income extended family households lived in overcrowded dwellings due to economic necessity rather than choice’.

Aboriginal people living in severely overcrowded situations are exposed to a vast range of social, health and other problems. The spiralling effects of these problems often result in disagreements, family violence, sexual assault, alcohol and other drugs abuse, lack of food, entrenched poverty, ineffectual parenting,

*These factors are often found in greater incidence amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which often place them at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness when compared with non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.*

### 4.21. Relocation and Transient Homelessness

This phenomenon results in temporary, intermittent and often cyclical patterns of homelessness due to transient lifestyles. In the Aboriginal context perpetual states of homelessness are particularly marked due to fluctuating cycles whereby Aboriginal people move in and out of homelessness. Depending on a host of variables, one type of homelessness leads to another as Aboriginal people drift from unstable housing, to living with relations, in hostels, refuges, in parks or on the streets. Often when they come from rural areas into the larger cities for medical reasons or cultural obligations they become stranded without money and get caught in the homelessness cycle waiting for the next pension cheque to arrive (Hamann, 1999; Keys Young, 1998).

### 4.22. Escaping an Unsafe or Unstable Home

Family violence is one of the most common reasons for seeking refuge. SAAP agencies providing support for women escaping domestic violence were the
‘largest group (22%)’ (SAAP NCDA, 1997-98:13). Indigenous battered women often have to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness; and often face violent repercussions wrought by family and community. (Bolger, 1991; Keys Young, 1998; Thomas & Ellery 1991).

4.23. Lack of Access to any Stable Shelter, Accommodation or Housing

Many authors confirm that the lack of adequate housing continues to be a major issue in Aboriginal communities. Racist attitudes prevent fair access to the private rental sector due to stereotyping Aboriginal people. As a result many Aboriginal people literally have nowhere to go (Hamann, 1999; Keys Young, 1998; Millsom, 1998; Paulson, 1999; Thomas & Ellery, 1991).

Many Indigenous people [were] living in impoverished dwellings. For example, in the North-West Statistical Division of New South Wales, 20 per cent of Aboriginal people lived in impoverished dwellings – a shed, tent, garage or humpy (Henderson 1975:263 cited in Altman and Hunter 1997:7).

4.24. World View

Homelessness and its causes are deeply embedded in our social, political and economic systems. It is about people affected by those systems – by today’s methods of ‘doing things’ in communities, government and industry. It is not ‘created’ by its victims, nor wanted by them (Wilcox, 1995:1).
From the research undertaken for this thesis it is evident that homelessness is a fast growing, ever increasing problem worldwide. In the not too distant past homelessness conjured up images of vagabonds, gypsies or the ‘swaggie’ or swagman of the days of the depression. These images are now referred to as ‘romantic’ notions of homelessness and in light of the data researched these notions do not relate to the complexity of homeless in modern times (Keys Young, 1998).

These days the stark reality is that homelessness is endemic, spreading far and wide throughout all nations. When looking at the international profile of homelessness The National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP 111, 1999) report provides statistical evidence that the problem of homelessness within certain groups of society throughout the world is on the increase. The National Evaluation team cites Kothari (1997) as affirming:

_The most recent estimate suggests that some 1.2 billion people, almost one-quarter of the world’s population, live in housing conditions that are unhealthy and precarious. Of these it is estimated that some one hundred million quite literally do not have a roof over their heads_ (Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, 1992:24).
4.25. Homelessness Impacting on Youth, Young Women and Children

The NCH Fact Sheet 1 (1999:1) states that: ‘... forty percent of persons living in poverty are children; in fact the 1997 poverty rate of 19.9% for children is almost twice as high as the poverty rate for any other age group’. According to Russell (1991:111) ‘... single women with children are acknowledged by service providers to be the largest growing segment of the homeless population’. The (SAAP 111:22) report points to the fact that:

*The face of homeless is changing to include females with dependant children and youth, the fastest growing homeless sub-groups in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.*

Research undertaken by Dibblin (1991) asserts that in Britain the number of homeless young women is on the increase with the younger women under 18 years being the most disadvantaged because of lower benefits being paid to those under 25 years. She depicts young women as being ‘... the most hidden and most unrecognised of all homeless people’ (Dibblin, 1991:9).

Homelessness reaches out and touches a high proportion of society, much of which is not accounted for. According to the NCH Fact Sheet 2, (1999:1) it is impossible to accurately measure the precise number of people who experience homelessness. The report says that because of its very nature, underestimates of
homelessness are inevitable and are the result of not being able to count people who are:

> Often referred to as 'the unsheltered' or 'hidden' homeless. A national study of formally homeless people found that the most common places people who had been literally homeless stayed were vehicles (59.2%) and makeshift housing, such as tents, boxes, caves, or boxcars (24.6%). ... This suggests that homeless counts may miss significant numbers of people who are literally homeless, as well as those living in doubled up situations.

The SAAP 111 National Evaluation Team (1999) parallel the paths that lead to homelessness with the research carried out by their international counterparts. Their report identifies social and economic factors such as lack of affordable housing, family poverty, unemployment, sexual abuse, family conflict, domestic violence, physical ill health, substance abuse, social dislocation and social values. These issues are indicated to be interconnecting reasons as to why a large percentage of youth are homeless.

4.26. Poverty amidst Affluence

Homelessness is not restricted to the poorer countries, but is also highly prevalent in affluent countries. According to Sidel (1986) statistical data has highlighted the plight of millions of women across America who fight a daily battle in an attempt to secure the barest of necessities. Sidel attributes the struggle of these women to the breakdown in the traditional family unit; the emergence of women as the
breadwinner; discrimination against women; unemployment; and major cutbacks in government support systems.

In America, the National Law Centre on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) (2000:1) reported that: 'Over the past two decades, over 2 million men, women and children were homeless'. The National Coalition for the Homeless, NCH Fact Sheet 1 (1999:1) blames the rise in homelessness on the lack of affordable housing and the concurrent escalation in poverty. Poverty and homelessness are described as being 'inextricably linked'. As a result of decreasing wages and the unequal distribution of the benefits of economic growth, many people in the workforce in America are entrenched in poverty. Factors such as '... lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, mental illness and addiction disorder...' are all included as part of the complexity of homelessness.

Canada, for example, has very high levels of poverty, unemployment and homelessness. Its accountability for maintaining and respecting human rights has been shown to be highly questionable. In 1998, The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights listed a number of principle subjects of concern in regards to poverty, homelessness and severe cut backs in social assistance. Two of these concerns being:

(i). The committee is gravely concerned that such a wealthy country as Canada has allowed the problem of homelessness and inadequate housing to
grow to such proportions that the mayors of Canada’s ten largest cities have now declared homelessness as a national disaster (1998:2), and

(ii): The committee is concerned at the crisis level of homelessness among youth and young families.... Over 90% of mothers under 25 live in poverty. Unemployment and under-employment rates are also significantly higher among youth than among the general population (1998:3.)

According to Porter (1999), Canada was again under scrutiny and subject to more condemnation from a United Nations human rights monitoring body regarding issues of unabated poverty and homelessness in the midst of affluence ’ (Porter, 1999:1).

In the ‘midst of affluence’ it may appear incongruous to find poverty and homelessness yet the evidence irrefutably proves the existence of such appalling conditions. In light of the research undertaken on homelessness, it is strongly suggestive that governments throughout the world are not fulfilling their responsibility in addressing the needs of the average person. Contrary to the rights of every human being, inequality, unequal distribution of wealth and unequal opportunities proliferate the system. Poverty is rife due to the inadequacies of financial support filtering down to the most disadvantaged groups in society. Homelessness is increasing daily with the issues of homelessness impacting on and reinforcing each other in a spiralling trend of destitution and desolation, with women, children and youth being the ones most
vulnerable and therefore forced into a state of homelessness, albeit, in prosperous
countries.

4.27. Australian Homelessness Profile

The extent of homelessness among young people.... has moved beyond one of
numbers .... Many thousands of young people in Australia are homeless or at
risk of becoming homeless, and that this is now a persistent phenomena
(Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce 1996:6).

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (1999:295),
‘... homelessness is a complex and multi-dimensional issue ... ’ The issues contributing
to homeless in Australia follow the same pattern as those internationally; that of
poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, mental
illness, substance abuse and so forth.

Difficulties arise in determining how many persons are experiencing
homelessness. Usual statistics only includes those persons who have approached
agencies for support, and those whose need for accommodation goes unmet, due
to lack of availability of beds (SAAP 111. 1999). Figures assessed on homeless
people are based on the service usage ‘... the estimate implicitly assumes that all
‘homeless’ people contact SAAP services. It is known that this is not the case ...
(AIHW, 1999:299).
The number of persons who were provided support during 1997-1998, through SAAP agencies has been estimated by the AIHW to be at least 110,260 (ABS, 2000).

SAAP agencies provided support to more female clients (54%) than male clients (46%) did. Clients aged between 15 – 19 years inclusive were the single largest age grouping, accounting for 20% of all clients.... Female clients in particular were heavily concentrated in the younger age groups (SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 98-99:27).

In this ever changing, fast revolving world of modern times, the face of homelessness has changed with the inclusion of youth and females as the single largest age grouping. Over the past 20 years values have changed in regards to the family unit. In days of old there would be the support of the family to carry one through the rough times. In these days, money, space and time are not so readily available to cope with extra burdens, such as assisting unemployed youth or young mothers with children. Robinson and Robinson (1997:12) reports that a high number of homeless youth come from families that are financially disadvantaged, and state that ‘... the extra pressure of supporting a young adult is felt disproportionately by the poor’.

4.28. Indigenous Homelessness Profile

In examination of the incidence of Australian Indigenous homelessness, The National Data Collection Agency (1997) shows that 12, 500 Indigenous
Australians used SAAP services in the year 1996/97 across Australia, representing 12% of all SAAP clients (The Council to Homeless Persons 1998).

Based on the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people assisted by SAAP compared to the rest of the population, 13% (6,123) of clients who received support were Indigenous Australians (19% of female clients and 9% of male clients). This can be compared to the percentage of Australians who are Aboriginal, approximately 2%. This figure shows that twice as many females as males being supported.

Data from the Australian Council for Social Service collection indicated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples form 11% of the total emergency relief client group (Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services Annual Report 1996/97).

The above figures of 5%, that is 12,500 people out of 250,000 Indigenous persons are shown to be homeless. Considering that Indigenous Australians account for approximately 2% of the population the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous homelessness is highly contentious. Hidden homelessness within the Indigenous population is a major problem coupled with the fact that not all-homeless Indigenous people use SAAP services. Various factors such as; culturally inappropriate services, inherent racism in services and a history of colonisation and dispossession are behind Indigenous people not accessing SAAP
services (Keys Young, 1998). In the light of this it must be concluded that these figures represent a gross under-estimation of Indigenous homelessness.

In comparison with both Australian and world figures the Indigenous figures compare badly. However, the International figures belie the fact that Aboriginal Canada suffers youth homelessness. Chairperson Virginia Dandan of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1998:1) expressed concerns about Canada not complying with the Covenant whereby she affirmed:

*We are concerned about the high disparity between aboriginal people and the majority of Canadians, in terms of inadequate housing, high unemployment rate, the high rate of suicide and lack of safe and adequate drinking water, and the dispossession of their lands.*

Aboriginal people in Canada are subject to a similar level of social and economic disadvantage as Australian Aborigines. Which leaves one to ponder: Why is this so? Why is there such dissonance between the rich and the poor? Why is there such a disproportionate distribution of wealth amongst peoples, especially in prosperous countries? One could conjecture that the reason is greed and racism with the underlying emotion being fear.

*Uncertainty or inability to read other cultures is translated into a notion that subjected people are inherently ‘evil’; which is however a projection of the white man’s fear of himself, a projection of his own worst attributes (Bulbeck, 1993:126).*
This thesis argues that the problem of hidden homelessness and under usage of these services by Indigenous Australians is a far greater problem than it is for the non-Indigenous population.
Part 4

4.29. Issues Relating to Accessibility of SAAP Services for Indigenous People

According to the Keys Young report (1998:99) the majority of people accessing SAAP services are Indigenous people. However, their report states that: '... Indigenous people continue to face a number of barriers in accessing SAAP service'. In relation to Aboriginal women not using SAAP services because of certain cultural barriers, then, it only stands to reason that this, in itself, is indicative that the services are not culturally appropriate. Some major barriers identified were as follows from 4.30 - 4.36:

4.30. Cultural Appropriateness

Aboriginal health workers advocate the necessity of a culturally sensitive approach when working with Aboriginal people in the process of healing and counselling within accommodation services. Yet, '... culturally-different approaches are generally treated as 'add-ons' to largely unchanged dominant practices...' (Lynn et al, 1998:6). For these very reasons Aboriginal people stay away from services and miss out on much needed support. Employing Aboriginal workers in mainstream services helps, however, '... if Aboriginal employees are to be successful in changing the nature of services, then their mere presence is not sufficient, and consideration must be given to the policy and practices which direct their activities' (Sykes, 1984:4). Many
Indigenous people are reluctant to use mainstream services '... because of its policies and attitudes' (Thomas & Ellery, 1991:5).

4.31. The Shame and Stigma of Being Homeless

Many Aboriginal people feel ‘shamed’ when homeless without family support and therefore forced into the position of having to ask for help. The shame factor stops many Indigenes from accessing mainstream services (Lynn et al, 1998).

4.32. No Indigenous Co-Workers and Fear of Racism

Sykes (1984:2) depicts people working in welfare services as having ‘... been known to be contemptuous towards Aboriginal people socially ...’ SAAP 111 (1999:xv) also makes assertion to discrimination within the services: ‘... discrimination practices can sometimes still be found at the “grass roots” level of the program ...’ According to Gevers (1987) Aboriginal youth avoid service usage and would rather sleep rough rather than ‘... risk rejection or face racism from mainstream services ...’ (cited in Maas & Hartley, 1988:65).

4.33. Fearful of Undergoing Assessment and Counselling

Many factors contribute to the fear of accessing services when assessment and mainstream counselling are part of a service’s program.Traditionally, advice was sought from Elders in times of trouble, so to talk with strangers could be deemed as inappropriate (Department of Human Services 1998:18). For Aboriginal people who have suffered at the mercy of welfare policies for the past two centuries,
assessment represents an uncomfortable, threatening experience. ‘... Personal questions are seen as very intrusive and because of an understandable fear of white authority Aboriginal youth shy away from mainstream services ... ’ (Maas & Hartley, 1988:65).

Youth refuges...our kids won’t access or use them because they have to be involved in programs and counselling. (Senior Indigenous Government Officer cited in the Keys Young 1998:100).

4.34. Fear of Removal of Children
According to Cook (2000) a psychology which might be described as a form of non-disclosure behaviour, has developed in a generation of Aboriginal people as a result of previous bad experiences with welfare agencies and government policies for the removal Aboriginal children. Fear and mistrust has lead to some instances of abuse to be hidden.

Memories of the destruction of the Aboriginal communities and families by government departments are not abstract concepts to the Aboriginal people (Sykes, 1984:2).

Aboriginal communities’ perspective on welfare is one of distrust, hostility and fear. These emotions stem the fact that welfare has been used under the guise of protection and charity to remove children from their parent’s custody, in an
attempt to Christianise and Europeanise ‘... each successive generation of Aboriginal children ... ’ (Sykes, 1984:2).

4.35. Cultural Conflict: Feminist Values and Aboriginal Women’s Concerns

Several authors have researched the feminist framework and have shown that it has a lot to offer social welfare practice and human services (Baldock & Cass, 1983; Lucus, 1998; Pettman, 1992; Saulnier, 1996).

Feminist’s views are as varied as there are branches of feminism. For instance, a radical feminist will approach welfare work differently to the way a lesbian or liberal feminist does. The way a particular service operates, is dependent on what form of feminist thought prevails within that service (Saulnier, 1996).

Whilst feminism may pursue varying paths, the aim of all feminists is ultimately directed towards ‘... understanding and eliminating women’s subordination’ (Pettman, 1992:150). Human nature being as it is, maximum performance is difficult to achieve, no matter how idealistic the common purpose may be. According to both feminist and non-feminist black women, white women commit the offences that they accuse the men of committing. Amongst the number of things they wished to disclose, was:
... exclusion of other women through language, practices, definition of interests and exercise of power. They pointed to white women universalising their own experiences as “women’s”... (Pettman, 1992:158).

Hooks (1984) tells of the oppressed becoming the oppressor. For example, lesbian feminist thought renders itself in opposition to men and the patriarchal system, and sees man as the oppressor – the enemy. Lesbian feminist thought differs vastly to the way Aboriginal women view male/female relationships.

For instance, a number of Indigenous SAAP workers cited in the Keys Young (1998:101) report indicated that many Aboriginal women would not use the services because many of the programs are administered by ‘ardent feminists’. They have been reported as saying:

A lot say they [the refuges] are basically run by lesbians ... that they hate men. The women are not into that ... even when they are escaping domestic violence. Some would sit on the street before they would go into a refuge.

According to Keys Young (1998) this presents cultural conflict between feminist views and the way Aboriginal women think. Aboriginal women in many cases prefer to stay with their partners for many reasons such as responsibility to family, community and kin (Bennett, 1997). Indigenous women around the world are fearful of the dire consequences if legal action were to be taken against their partners in cases of family violence (Keys Young, 1998; Saulnier, 1996).
Lesbian feminism dominates many sectors in welfare and expresses itself in opposition to men (Saulnier, 1996). Aboriginal women on the other hand are more inclined to view men and women as equals. In many cases this presents a problem to Aboriginal women who do not blame their men for family violence but rather sees the issue of family violence and breakdown as a problem for the community resulting from the process of colonisation. According to Pettman (1992:26) ‘... Aboriginal women’s readings of their own role in traditional and contemporary society challenge some core concepts of some feminist analysis...’ Dispossession along with colonisation not only impacted on Aboriginal women but also on Aboriginal men, hence, the problems are not considered to be a gender issue between male and female, but more an issue of racism (Bennett, 1997).

Saulnier (1996:127) advocates special attention needs to be taken into account when designing services for abused women, for:

A woman of colour who reports battering to the police is more likely to have her partner mistreated while in custody. Service providers need to be aware that the consequences may be different for men of colour than for white men.

In light of the over-representation of Aboriginal prisoners in custody and the evidence presented by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) the fears Aboriginal women experience are justifiable. All refuges are obliged to record personal details about a client’s stay. This includes information
about the client's partner in order to enable the police to take action against the offending partner (Bolger, 1991).

The current role of ardent feminists being in control of administration, policy and procedures in childcare and women's refuges (Saulnier, 1996.) presents concern for two reasons:

1. In view of cultural conflict of feminist ideals and intervention, many Aboriginal women won't use the service in fear of what will happen to their partners. This blocks the assistance urgently needed by lowana.

2. In the position of youth worker one automatically becomes a role model. This being the case, such questions arise:
   
i) Is stereotyping occurring in the services?
   
ii) Are the lowana being groomed to become future ardent feminists?

   iii) Does this benefit the lowanas?

   iv) Does this constitute cultural appropriateness?

Stereotyping of males could present major problems for the development of youth. For instance, the lowana being mentored in this manner may not be receiving a balanced perspective regarding relationships. In light of this and the research undertaken by the Keys Young (1998) team a need arises for more research to be undertaken in this area.
4.36. Discipline Rules and Attitudes

Factors such as strict rules and disciplinarian attitudes are also shown to dissuade Aboriginal women from accessing SAAP services (Keys Young, 1998). Research on homeless women in America showed that ‘... the lives of homeless women are controlled and regulated to a great degree by the agencies that provide them with services...’ (Russell, 1991:108). Another study, conducted in the USA by Williams (1996:75) asserts:

... shelters and their stringent regulations reveal the ways in which homeless shelters serve as institutional spaces for government intrusion and surveillance of low-income and homeless people.

The subjugation of Aboriginal people via institutionalisation has left many with a fear and resistance to accessing these services which may ‘... result in a feeling or perception on the clients behalf of being institutionalised ... ’ (Turner, 1998:24). Since the early 1800s Aboriginal people have been herded onto missions and institutions and treated in most inhumane ways (Gungil Jindibah, 1994; Parbury, 1986). Reluctance to enter voluntarily into a situation that could be a duplicate of the past may well keep Indigenous people from accessing mainstream services.

The majority of Aboriginal people interviewed by the Keys Young (1998) research team preferred to stay in Aboriginal Hostels because of a suitable lifestyle in regards to cultural appropriateness. These services are managed by Aborigines who provide a family oriented environment in which relaxed attitudes towards
rules and regulation prevails as opposed to the more stringent restrictions in mainstream services.

In the light of what Keys Young (1998) has reported, it can be determined that the majority of people accessing SAAP services are Indigenous people representing 12% of all SAAP clients. And, given the fact that a large number of homeless Indigenous persons are *not* accessing SAAP services the Keys Young (1998) report, in effect, highlights Indigenous homelessness as a massive problem. Hence, the question arises: Just to what extent are Indigenous persons homeless and how much worse are the true figures relating to Indigenous homelessness?

In respect to Keys Young (1998), the extent of Indigenous homeless presents as an enormous problem. The fact that the number of Indigenous people who are homeless is disproportionate to the number of non-indigenous persons homeless presents a need for major reform in service provision for Indigenous persons. These reforms are especially needed in the area of increased culturally appropriate accommodation services, targeted specifically for Indigenous people and administered by *qualified* Indigenous people. Clearly, if Indigenous people are not accessing the services for the reasons stated then it must be deemed that they are in essence culturally inappropriate.

According to Sykes (1984) what constitutes appropriateness in Aboriginal services can only be conceptualised by Aboriginal people. If significant change is to emerge, then policies and practice need to be adjusted in terms of moving from


policies and practice that strongly reflect the models and values developed based on mainstream needs to policies and practices based on the needs of the Aboriginal community (Lynn et al, 1998). Therefore, Aboriginal ownership/management is crucial in forging successful change to policy and practice and improved service for Aboriginal clientele.

A model such as Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) is outstanding in its success and expansion which exemplifies the fact that Aboriginal people are capable of self-management and self-determination. AHL is a unique company in that it is the only government funded organisation that owns and provides a national hostel accommodation service for Indigenous Australians. AHL’s policy is to promote Indigenous self-management and self-determination through the employment of 80% of Indigenous staff (Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) Pamphlet, undated; Keys Young, 1998). Aboriginal Management and Cultural ownership is a prime requisite for the success of the model presented in this thesis.
Part 5

4.37. Rhetoric and Reality: Access to Cultural Education
Indigenous and Western

Altjiringa - The Dreaming:
The western scientific perspective of the Dreaming grew out of Christian and related religions; likewise contemporary Aboriginal culture grew out of Aboriginal spiritual roots. The personal and social tragedy of colonisation is the de-culturalisation of a whole people. Traditionally, Aboriginal spirituality has been orally transmitted through the generations. Inaccessibility to Spiritual Law since colonisation is the real tragedy, because it leaves a cultural chasm, which results in loss of identity.

Altjiringa, the all pervasive, ever present, that which exists beyond the boundaries of time and space, that which is eternal and ever living is regarded by Australian Aborigines as the eternal Dreaming (Broome, 1982; Elkin, 1980; Lawler, 1991; Stockton, 1995).

According to Elkin (1980) the realisation of Altjiringa is essential to Aboriginal medicine-men that undergo rigorous training in fasting, meditation and initiation into sacred rituals by high initiates within their group. In the process of training, many occult practices such as fire-walking, appearing and disappearing, climbing
into the sky via a hair cord, communing with spirits and the deceased, healing and killing are learned. This was an important belief system for traditional Aboriginal society, no less important than the resurrection for Christians, the Old Testament for Judaism, or the world of the Torah and Allah for Muslims (Cook, 2000).

The ‘making’ of a medicine man takes many years and is considered an essential element for the continuation of Aboriginal existence. Rituals are the backbone of traditional Aboriginal society. Ritual brings cohesion to the community, enhancing union and simpatico. The purpose of ritual serves to impress upon the group the realisation of Altjiringa and the ‘sacredness of their heritage’. The intensity of ritual awakens within ‘all the sanctity and authority of traditional behaviour’ (Elkin, 1980:14).

The need for community and its rituals is an ancient need. It has been built into the human psyche over thousands of generations and hundreds of thousands of years. If it is frustrated, we feel “alienated” and fall prey to psychiatric and psychosomatic ills (Stevens cited in Suzuki 1997, p.172).

Such deep psychological needs are met culturally through belief systems, which bring meaning and satisfaction. They may not be scientific in their explanation, but offer deep meaning and purpose in life.
4.38. The Decline of the Traditional Healer

Traditional knowledge has been one of the victims of the current age:

In the lifetime of our Elders in Australia, the United States or Canada, we have gone from a life of rural simplicity to one in which transoceanic phone calls, spacecrafts ... computers, jets and oral contraceptives have become standard elements of our society. Each innovation has transformed the way we live forever and rendered the old way of life extinct. ... Each innovation erodes the authority and value of traditional knowledge acquired over a long life of action and reflection (Suzuki, 1997:172).

Elkin (1980) states that with the escalation of white occupation the practice of the 'Doctor-Blackfellow' decreased. He refers to Stanner as having reported that by 1966, ' ... almost all of the more easily identified "clever men" were dead, and the number of "marginal ones" was diminishing...' (Elkin, 1980:162).

As white occupation infiltrated Aboriginal land, traditional healing values were undermined and swept aside as the modernised world of technology brought in its wake, TV, planes, telephones and the wireless. Modern technology was used to diagnose illness whilst the surgeon's knife was used to remove the sickness within. To the mind of the 'clever men', technology represented the physical manifestation in the white man's world of what 'clever men' experience through the Dreaming. (Elkin, 1980).
Elkin (1980) attests that ‘clever men’ don’t need TV screens to examine X-rays, instead they use their ‘strong eye’ to see inside the ailing person. They climb into the sky world via their hair cord or send their totem or spirit assistants to retrieve messages from the ether at the swiftness of thought. Altjiringa represents reality to the ‘clever men’ and is more significant to them than man made machines such as X-rays and the like. It needs to be understood that Elkin is speaking phenomenologically here, he is not speaking ‘scientifically’, but is accurately reporting a world-view and explanation, as Aboriginal people perceive it.

Reality is in the eye of the beholder. The ‘clever men’ faced a different phenomenon than that in modern medicine, which they could not compete with ‘scientifically’. The result was that much spiritual knowledge and spiritual healing power appeared to be lost.

Research shows that Hawaiian and Asian philosophies are similar to those of Aboriginal ‘men of high degree’. The power of thought is conceived to be behind all forms of ‘manifestation’. According to Stone (1976) ‘... where your conscious goes, energy goes’. A simple example of such could be, in the making of a chair, before it is made ‘manifest’ someone has thought about, or imaged the making of the chair. Or, another example may be, when one harbours a negative self-image eventually the physical will manifest these thoughts in the form of an unkempt appearance, illness or self-defeating behaviour. Sivananda describes thought as the most powerful force on earth and further explains:
The world is the Primal Idea made manifest. This first thought became manifest as a vibration issuing from the eternal Stillness of the Divine Essence.... All forces are ultimately resolvable into a state of pure vibration...
(Sivananda, 1980:10).

In one sense this is quite a scientific concept. In another, it reflects that thought controls a great deal of our reality. Humans are finally psychological beings. Our thoughts affect our physical well being. Internal locus of control (see Cook, 1995) for example, is highly correlated with higher self-esteem and achievement motivation. King (1994:73) in describing Hawaiian philosophies on healing states:

The outer world is merely a reflection of thought. The emphasis is on unification and integration of Spirit, mind and body for the purpose of self-mastery, with the implication that self-mastery is the key to a mastery of life.

Elkin (1980:165) quotes one of the ‘clever men’ as saying: ‘... all a same wireless...’ Similarly, Sivananda (1980:136) deliberates: ‘Behind all discoveries and inventions, behind all religion and philosophies, behind all life saving or life destroying devices is thought’.

The above quotes all present the same idea that thought is behind all creation and that the power and manipulation of thought is understood and practiced by these various cultures, which in essences links them to a similar belief system.
Thought and the power of thought was an important control mechanism in Aboriginal Australia. Reid (1986) spent many months in Arnhem Land with the Yolngu people of the Yirrkala community where she studied the impact of social change on the Yolngu medical system. In time she became a trusted member within the community. As Reid’s trustworthiness grew, she was extended the privilege of learning the tenets of Yolngu medical customs whereby she gained insight into the Yolngu perception of illness and death.

Reid (1986) found that the Yolngu conceived that sorcery played a major role in sickness and death and that the power of the marrnggiti (healer) could cure illness (Cawte, 1996; Rose, 1992). Reid quotes Warner (1956:193) as writing:

> There is a profound belief in magic. The effects are twofold: it can harm and destroy, or it can benefit and cure... The “black” magician [sorcerer] can injure or kill his victim and the “white” magician can cure him or restore his lost faculties.

It is said that the power used by both sorcerer and healer is the same power. This power comes from the same source ‘morally neutral’ source (Reid 1986:35) and can be utilised for either malevolent or healing purposes. The decision as to how the power is used lies in the hands of the practitioner.

In Huna (Hawaiian spiritual philosophy) tradition the same principles apply. King (1994:73) describes how power can be harnessed to heal or harm when he states ‘... the only difference between psychokinetic healing and psychokinetic...’
destruction is the intent of the practitioner'. From these descriptions it appears that both Kahuna (Hawaiian High Priest) and ‘clever men’ manipulate energy in much the same manner.

Elkin (1980) concluded in order to understand the Aboriginal spiritual system, it must be viewed as being comparative to that of the Orient and not interpreted from a Western intellectual view point. Cook (2000) considers the Aboriginal spiritual system to be non-scientific and belief orientated in much the same way as phenomenologist, state that reality is a function of the perceptions of the perceiver.

Elkin (1980) believed Aboriginal spirituality to be historically linked to the Orient and paralleled it to Tibetan and Hindu practice of the occult and yoga, and the Amerindian ‘men of power’. He continually stressed the great importance of the role of Aboriginal ‘men of high degree’ as being vital to the well being and continuation of Aboriginal society. His admiration of these high initiates of Aboriginal Law is revealed in his statement:

Aboriginal men of high degree are a channel of life ... specialists in the psychology and social system of their own people and a media of spiritual power to them (1980:66).
4.38. Resurgence of Spiritual Rites

Kingsley (cited in Suzuki, 1997:189) proposes that for the continuum of the sacredness of the land Aborigines need to keep alive the traditions of old. He states:

Contemporary ... Aborigines have the responsibility of perpetuating the sacred character of the land by re-creating it, or remembering it, using the same songs, handed down through the generations.

However, the difficulty lies in the ability of having access to education to fulfil this responsibility both in terms of the original knowledge and a method and process of importing it in contemporary society. As the infectious disease of racism spread through Aboriginal culture many youth became 'shamed' of their heritage and wanted to put away the old customs. Hence the inevitable happened, '... none of the young men wanted to learn the things their fathers knew because they think these things are all past now' (Lamilami, 1974 cited in Elkin 1980:175). Many of the young declined to assume their cultural duty and thus, broke a link in the chain of inherited and learned spiritual rites, so important, as we know, in fostering identity and a positive and spiritually uplifting sense of cultural well being.

However, Elkin (1980:173) noted that in the 1970s more 'clever men' and women healers were beginning to emerge. A number of European health services began to recognise the vital role of the traditional healer and bi-cultural treatment was made accessible, an important nexus between the 'medicines' of two peoples, one
spiritual with physical manifestations, one bio-medical with basically only physical manifestations. The real need for Aboriginal society lay in the combination of both medical practices in treatment to the communities. During this period the Department of Health acknowledged traditional healers to be fundamental in Aboriginal health services. Elkin was proposing the development of a conducive psychological approach where the two cultures could meet.

Along with University education Elkin (1980) recommend that Aboriginal youth be educated in the ways of the Elders. He prescribed either initiation before entering University or for Universities to include ‘social and cultural anthropology’ in their academic studies in medicine. He was concerned that in the process of Western education the youth may become ‘... estranged from social and psychological conditions and values of their own people’ (p.170), yet lack of Western education would hamper the young initiate’s chance of becoming a qualified doctor.

Along with the above mentioned recommendations Elkin (1980) envisioned an inter-tribal meeting arranged by The Department of Health of ‘influential old men’ to discuss the future of the role of the medicine-man in Aboriginal health services. He concluded that acknowledgment by Western medical practitioners needed to be forthcoming in regard to the essential role played by traditional healers whether a meeting eventuated or not.
Elkin visited Hawaii in the early 1930s and witnessed what he thought was a harmonious blend of different cultures. He believed that if this could happen with the Aborigines it would be of great benefit to them. Upon returning to Australia, even though he had a deep understanding of Aboriginal life, he was behind the push for Assimilation. A generation later Kath Walker aka Oodgeroo Nuunucal (1973) saw integration, as being better than assimilation as stated in her poems ‘Assimilation – No! and Integration - Yes!’ Time changes perspective. Both Aboriginal and the broader society of today, reject integration in favour of separate development (Clark, 2000; Gardiner-Garden, 1999).

Elkin’s intentions may have been for the benefit of Aboriginal people, but the effect of the Assimilation policy upon the Aboriginal population has been devastating. Had the Assimilation policy been stilled and the process of nurturing the merging of two cultures been fostered, how different might things have been? Would the passing on of knowledge by traditional healers be more accessible? In this age where more people are eager to learn the secret science of the initiates of old, would Aboriginal youth be more open to learn and take pride in their heritage?

*Children need to know their culture, it is important to know who you are so you know where you fit in...The young boys and girls should be put through initiation. Learning to be proud of what we are will help us to improve our social standing, our rights to freedom of religion and language and ensuring*
that Australia realises that we have a black history  (Gungil Jindibah,

The advent of colonisation in Hawaii prohibited psycho-spiritual practice. Long
(1948) recounts that Huna is a 'science' that was used by the Hawaiians for
psychological, physical, spiritual, social and economical healing. Most of this
ancient healing method was put into hiding with the arrival of white man. It was
classified pagan and evil by the Christian missionaries, and in the 1880s was
made illegal (King, 1994; Long, 1948). However in recent years there has been a
resurgence of their spiritual belief system. The Kahuna (spiritual teachers-
keepers of the ancient secrets of the Universe) continued their practice in secret
and their psycho-spiritual system lived on. Today, Huna is practiced throughout
the world.

According to Long’s (1948) account of the Hawaiian Kahuna, it would appear
that they utilise this same source of power that of the mind, and perform similar
feats of magic as do the Australian Aborigines. It is claimed that the Kahuna can
send spirits to kill a victim. The victim finally expires after paralysis sets in by
slowly ascending the body from the feet to the lungs. Likewise Aboriginal
sorcerers are known to cause the soul to leave the victim’s body by ‘... singing a
dangerous song and piercing his footsteps with a spear... ’ The sickness moves from
the feet to the lungs and eventuates in death (Reid. 1986:43).
It should be noted that by drawing upon the same ‘morally neutral’ power both Kahuna and Aboriginal healer can reverse the death prayer and save the patient. An example of such a feat is mentioned by Elkin (1980:168) when he observed, ‘... he had passed through an actual experience of being sung, and on the verge of physical death, and then being saved, made alive, by a Man of High Degree’.

The late David Kaonohiokala Bray, cited in Yardley (1991:65) assures us that some Kahuna misused the power, but most used it beneficially in the service of humankind.

King (1994:29) recounts the curator of The Bishop Museum, Honolulu, W.T. Brigham as having devoted years in attempting to unravel the mysteries of Huna and having had:

... personal experience with fire-walking, healing and the telepathic death prayer and was convinced beyond a doubt that some knowledge highly important for humanity was still waiting to be tapped.

Whether this is a scientifically valid explanation is not the point: the positive effect of belief as a cultural healing process is, for ‘what the patient believes is a decided factor in the outcome’ (Cawte, 1996:17). Indigenous peoples of the world all appear to acknowledge a spiritual force which inter-connects to Spirit, mind, body and all creation, and ritually celebrate life. The Aboriginal spiritual system lives; perhaps soon it will resurrect itself to its true potential and be given the recognition and acceptance it rightfully deserves.
In the meantime, Aboriginal spiritual teachings may not be readily accessible to teach the youth. However, many Oriental secret teachings of the ancients are being revealed and made accessible for everyday use. Teachings such as: meditation; self-hypnosis; mind-power programming; spiritual and psychic healing and mental telepathy. In essence, all these teachings are of the same source, and differ only in the language used by the different peoples. Huna teachings are readily accessible to all those wishing to learn or experience this healing method.

Aboriginal teachings parallel the teachings of the Orient and Hawaiian Huna. To enlighten and empower Aboriginal youth who do not have the advantage of getting close to their own spiritual teachings, resources close at hand can be employed. Awareness of available resources offers freedom to practice the spiritual system of choice. Freedom of choice is empowerment in itself.
Chapter 5

CONTENT ANALYSIS

5. CONCEPTS, PROPOSITIONS, CONSTRUCTS, THEORY AND MODEL BUILDING

5.1. Key Concepts

Key concepts identified and defined in the literature, which impact on Aboriginal women's homelessness are identified in Figure 6. Each concept has been labelled with a term generally used in the literature to describe the phenomenon being discussed. For example, Christian-Judaic religious philosophy and practice that has become a part of the Western cultural heritage, its values, cultural practices and influence in political affairs. It has been numbered C.1 for concept 1. Concepts are then clustered in terms of the degree to which they are related. Key concepts of the content analysis are detailed in Figure 7. Each cluster of concepts (eg. C.1 – C.4) interrelates to form a proposition. Propositions (P.) are then grouped theoretically to form theoretical constructs; the clustering blocks for putting theory into practice.
Fig. 7. Concepts in Detail

C.1 Christianity  
C. 2 Colonisation  
C. 3 Dispossession  
C. 4 Racism

C.5 Homelessness  
C.6 Assisted Accommodation Services  
C.7 Culturally Appropriate  
C.8 Womanhood  
C.9 Aboriginality

C.10 Fear and Paternalism  
C.11 Welfare–Institutions  
C.12 Stolen Generations

C.13 Government Control  
C.14 Disadvantagement  
C.15 Lower Socio-economic status  
C.16 Poverty

Construct. 1

Construct. 2

P.1

P.2

P.3

P.4

99
C.17 Lesbianism custodial Abuse
C.18 Culture Conflict

C.19 Cycle of Homelessness
C.20 Transgenerational

C.21 Education
C.22 Independent Living Skills
C.23 Parenting Skills
C.24 Sexual and Personal Development
C.25 Spiritual Healing
C.26 Therapy

C.27 Protectionism
C.28 Cultural Disempowerment
C.29 Initiation Rites of Passage
C.30 Locus of Control
C.31 Self-Esteem
C.32 Achievement Motivation
C.33 Potential for Self Actualisation
5.2. Propositions Developed from Concepts

The concepts outlined, and discussed in detail in the literature interrelate to form propositions. These include a number of concepts and are outlined in figures 8–19.

**Fig. 8. Dispossession**

Concepts

- C.1 Christianity
- C.2 Colonisation
- C.3 Dispossession
- C.4 Racism

**PROPOSITION 1**

The Christian world perspective, through a process of colonisation and dispossession of Aboriginal people in the face of racist attitudes, caused a cycle of poverty to develop for Aborigines.
PROPOSITION 2
Culturally inappropriate assisted accommodation service practices cause lowana to not develop their sense of Aboriginality and self-worth adequately.

Fig.10. Fear of Government Agencies and Authority

PROPOSITION 3:
A deep sense of fear and mistrust of governmental welfare institutions was caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families, which was paternalistic and developed the self-concept of Aborigines.
PROPOSITION 4:
As a result of government control over all aspects of Aboriginal life Aboriginal people have been kept in a state of disadvantagement at the bottom of the socio-economic level, and dependent on welfare. This caused Aboriginal people to experience a state of poverty that leads to a greater risk of homelessness, poor education and a cycle of poverty.

PROPOSITION 5
Ardent active feminist based administration in welfare services where it occurs causes conflict for young Aboriginal women under such mentor-ship resulting in inappropriate cultural coping behaviour.
PROPOSITION 6
Difficulty in accessing quality services with quality outcomes in terms of opportunities cause the cycle of homelessness to become transgenerational.

PROPOSITION 7
Young women's sex education, and life skills were traditionally taught by the girls aunty, or Elders, depending on appropriateness in a therapeutic healing context, based on natural remedies within a spiritual and ritualistic cultural framework. Therefore, Western parenting skills, which do not incorporate the
Aboriginal context, cause young Aboriginal women to be at risk through inappropriate role modelling.

Fig. 15. Disempowerment

**Concepts**

C.27 Protectionism
C.28 Cultural Disempowerment
C.29 Initiation Rites of Passage
C.30 Locus of Control
C.31 Self Esteem
C.32 Achievement Motivation
C.33 Potential for Self Actualisation

**PROPOSITION 8**

The imposed protectionist period denied Aboriginal people access to their own language and practice of spiritual rites and culture causing cumulative effects of denial and subjugation which resulted in the development of external locus of control, poor self-esteem and low achievement motivation.
Aboriginal family dysfunction necessitates the need for the development of a curriculum specifically designed which relates to "cultural patterns of Aboriginal society" (Cook, 1995) as well as contemporary Western cultural patterns.

Aboriginal youth's atrophied development of locus of control, self-esteem, achievement motivation and identification stems from a lack of access to suitable Aboriginal role models to emulate (Coombs, 1972 cited in Cook, 1995).

According to Bruner (1968) identification with a role model is an essential motivational tool for achievement. Without bi-cultural education Aboriginal youth remain in a state of social, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual impoverishment and disempowerment.
Fig. 17. Holistic Educational Perspective

**Concepts**
- C.37 Holism
- C.38 Informed Choice

**PROPOSITION 12**
A holistic educational perspective is needed to provide the youth the freedom of informed choice.

Fig. 18. Homeless Service Delivery Reform

**Concepts**
- C.39 Service Delivery Reform
- C.40 Access to Quality of Service
- C.41 Quality of Outcomes - Equity

**PROPOSITION 13**
A culturally non-relevant service delivery model for lowana causes them not to develop appropriate behaviours necessary to enable them to enjoy equality in outcomes when they leave the homeless context.
Fig. 19. Aboriginal Autonomy

**Concepts**

C.42 Aboriginal Management

C.43 Aboriginal Ownership

**PROPOSITION 14**

Mainstream policies and attitudes cause many lowana to reject services because of cultural inappropriateness.
5.3. **Theoretical Constructs Developed from Concepts and Propositions.**

Propositional statements are interrelated as causal statements in order for theoretical constructs, or building blocks for policy action, to be developed. These constructs are detailed in figs. 20 – 25.

**Fig.20. Culturally Appropriate Assisted Accommodation Services**

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Proposition 1
The Christian world perspective, through a process of colonisation dispossessed Aboriginal people and in the face of racist attitudes, caused a cycle of poverty to develop for Aborigines.
+
Proposition 2
Culturally inappropriate assisted accommodation service practices cause the lowana to not develop their sense of Aboriginality and self-esteem adequately.
```

**CONSTRUCT 1**

Culturally appropriate accommodation is needed for the lowana under the mentorship of mature, caring Aboriginal women and a culturally relevant health and cultural education program.
Proposition 3:  
A deep sense of fear and mistrust of government welfare and institutions was caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families, which was paternalistic and developed the self-concept of Aborigines.

Proposition 4:  
As a result of government control over all aspects of Aboriginal life, Aboriginal people have been kept in a state of disadvantage, at the bottom of the socio-economic level, and dependent on welfare. This causes Aboriginal people to experience a state of poverty that leads to a greater risk of homelessness, poor education and a cycle of poverty.

CONSTRUCT 2
Lowana need a nurturing environment and health education curriculum, which empowers their womanhood and Aboriginality in such a way that the cycle of homelessness is broken and doesn’t become transgenerational.
**Proposition 5**

Ardent active feminist-based administration in welfare services where it occurs causes conflict for the lowana under such mentor-ship resulting in inappropriate cultural behaviour.

*Proposition 6*

Difficulties in accessing quality services with quality outcomes in terms of opportunities cause the cycle of homelessness to become generational.

**Construct 3**

Lowana need an environment free from the philosophies of ardent and active feminist policies, which destabilise the Aboriginal women and limit the development of broad culturally relevant life skills.
Proposition 7
Young women's sex education, and life skills was traditionally taught by the girl's aunty or Elders depending on appropriateness in a therapeutic healing context, based on natural remedies within a spiritual and ritualistic cultural framework. Therefore, Western parenting skills which do not incorporate the Aboriginal context, cause the girls to be at risk through inappropriate role modelling.

Proposition 8
The imposed protectionist period, denied Aboriginal people access to their own language and practice spiritual rites and culture causing cumulative effects of denial and subjugation which resulted in the development of external locus-of-control, poor self-esteem and low achievement motivation.

CONSTRUCT 4:
Assisted accommodation services for lowana require greater autonomy with a combination of education of Aboriginal spirituality and culture delivered with contemporary Western culture would ensure development of internal locus of control for the young woman which promotes self-esteem and achievement motivation, and a greater potential for self-actualisation.
Fig. 24. Educating for Spiritual and Cultural Balance

**Proposition 9**
Aboriginal family dysfunction necessitates the need for the development of a curriculum specifically designed which relates to ‘cultural patterns of Aboriginal society’ (Cook, 1995) as well as contemporary Western cultural patterns.

**Proposition 10**
Aboriginal youth's atrophied development of locus of control, self-esteem, achievement motivation and identification stems from a lack of suitable Aboriginal role models to emulate (Coombs, 1972 cited in Cook, 1995).

**Proposition 11**
According to Bruner (1968) identification with a role model is an essential motivational tool for achievement. Without bi-cultural education Aboriginal youth remain in a state of social, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual impoverishment and disempowerment.

**Proposition 12**
A holistic educational perspective would provide the youth the freedom of informed choice

**CONSTRUCT 5**
A curriculum is necessary which fosters internal locus of control, higher self-esteem and achievement motivation which includes education in Aboriginal spirituality and culture as well as Western cultural patterns; and identification with successful, professional Aboriginal role models such as barristers, lawyers, actors, singers and dancers to enhance positive Aboriginal identification.
Fig. 25. An Appropriate Aboriginal Management Structure

**Proposition 13**
A culturally non-relevant service delivery for the lowana cause them to not develop appropriate behaviours necessary to enable them to enjoy equality in outcomes when they leave the homeless context.

**Proposition 14**
Mainstream policies and attitudes cause many lowana to reject services because of cultural inappropriateness.

**CONSTRUCT 6**
A model is needed which is based on Aboriginal values and has a relevant curriculum, which improves and skills the participants in Aboriginal, and Western cultural values.

5.4. **Model Development: Basic Constructs for the Development of a Model for Lowana**

Constructs are concepts developed through propositional statements into theoretical building block for policy development.
Figures 26 – 30 outlines six basic constructs that need to be utilised in policies designed to assist lowana in operational programs.

**Fig: 26. Based on propositions 1 & 2, construct 1 is identified.**

**CONSTRUCT 1: Cultural Appropriateness**

Culturally appropriate accommodation is needed for lowana under the mentor-ship of mature, caring Aboriginal women and a culturally relevant health and cultural education program.

**Fig.27. Based on propositions 3 & 4 construct 2 is identified.**

**CONSTRUCT 2: Social Justice in Accessing Homelessness Support**

Lowana need a nurturing environment and health education curriculum, which empowers their womanhood and Aboriginality in such a way that the cycle of homelessness is broken and doesn’t become transgenerational.

**Fig.28. Based on propositions 5 & 6 construct 3 is identified.**

**CONSTRUCT 3: Aboriginal Femininity**

Lowana need an environment free from the philosophies of ardent and active feminist policies that destabilise the girls and limit the development of broad culturally relevant life skills.
Fig. 29. Based on propositions 7 & 8 Construct 4 is identified.

**CONSTRUCT 4:**

Autonomous Aboriginal Assisted Living for Lowana

Assisted accommodation services for Lowana require greater autonomy with a combination of education of Aboriginal spirituality and culture delivered with contemporary Western culture would ensure development of internal locus of control for the young woman which promotes self-esteem and achievement motivation, and a greater potential for self-actualisation.

Fig. 30. Based on propositions 9, 10, 11 & 12 construct 5 is identified.

**CONSTRUCT 5: Cross-Cultural Curriculum**

A curriculum is necessary which fosters internal locus of control, higher self-esteem and achievement motivation which includes education in Aboriginal spirituality and culture as well as Western cultural patterns; and identification with successful, professional Aboriginal role models such as barristers, lawyers, actors, singers and dancers to enhance positive Aboriginal identification.

Fig. 31. Based on propositions 13 & 14 construct 6 is identified.

**CONSTRUCT 6: An Appropriate Aboriginal Management Structure**

A model is needed which is based on Aboriginal values and has a relevant curriculum, which improves and skills the participants in Aboriginal, and Western cultural values.
Chapter 6

DISCUSSION:

TOWARDS A THEORETICAL MODEL


6.1. Assisted accommodation services for lowana need to be based on a culturally appropriate model.

Aboriginal people are purported to be the highest number of people accessing assisted accommodation services. Reform in service delivery needs to be addressed so that cultures do not conflict. To allay fear and mistrust and help cater for the hidden homeless, the services must be Aboriginal controlled.

Feminism with its many sectors has paved the way for the betterment of women in general. However, the contribution of the lesbian feminist perspective in welfare services does not always appear to be in the best interest of Aboriginal female clients as gender based issues differs greatly. Further research needs to be undertaken in this sensitive area. Research often brings enlightenment and henceforth change that could benefit both parties by establishing an understanding and respect for both cultures.
Assisted accommodation services require greater autonomy. A combined education of Aboriginal spirituality and culture along with contemporary Western culture would ensure internal locus of control for the young woman. Internal locus of control promotes self-esteem and achievement motivation, which in turn allows greater opportunity to activate the source of one’s potential for self-actualisation.

Consideration must be given to the re-emergence of Aboriginal culture. For, as traditional cultures give way to time, new cultures emerge. A resurgence of Aboriginal culture is now being defined by contemporary Aboriginal people based on traditional, and contemporary Aboriginality, absorbing whatever is believed to be of value from contemporary cosmopolitan culture.

A new culture is dawning out of the vestiges of the old. Lifestyles have adopted new ways. Spiritual healing stories have been created around the four-wheel drive. A television station in the central desert is Aboriginal owned. Contemporary bands have included electric guitars in their performances. Yet, the kinship ties and the spiritual link to Mother Earth are ever strong. This taking on of a new culture whilst embracing the essence of the old heralds the emergence of an Aboriginal culture that is contemporary by modern standards.

These constructs are the stem, the building blocks for designing an appropriate Management Model.
Towards a Curriculum Model

6.2. Fig. 32. outlines a basic curriculum for lowana in assisted accommodation.

Fig. 32. Principles of the Yarning Circle: Listening, Learning and Sharing

Prerequisites for child motivation achievement are needs comprising of psychological, belongingness, love, esteem, knowledge, self-actualisation and safety needs. Safety needs include '... security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from anxiety and chaos, need for structure, law limits; strength in the protector; and so forth ...' (Maslow, 1970:39)
An Operational Model

Lowana's Accommodation Services

Accommodation services for Lowana need to be administered by mature Aboriginal women who have a knowledge and understanding of both Aboriginal and Western cultural mores. These women need to be endowed with a strong sense of personal worth and know how to encourage and foster a sense of belonging, safety and security in order to ignite a sense of self-worth and identity within the girls.

As self-esteem builds within the psyche of the girls, achievement motivation will begin to form. Once achievement motivation is activated future life career goals can be set and worked towards actualising.

When the girls leave the service and go out into the world they would have already started on the path of direction they wish to travel. They would have already begun their journey, so that when they leave they would not be left floundering, in a state of dependence not knowing what to do or where to go – except back into another institution.

This being the case there would be less likelihood of homelessness recidivism. The girls would exit the service as self assured young Aboriginal women, knowing who they are, what they want and where they are going. In essence: young Aboriginal women with a strong sense of identity and aspirations for a promising future.
6.4. Figure 33 identifies, based on the constructs identified in the research, a management structure for implementing a management structure model.

Fig.33.

**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE MODEL**

- Funding Bodies
  - Aboriginal Hostels Limited
  - Department of Community Services (DoCS)

- Community Board

- Management Committee

**STRATEGIES**

- Curriculum Accommodation Client Management
- Aboriginal Culture Management Program
- Western Culture Aboriginal Hostels Ltd. Life maintenance
- Self Concept Non-Government Careers
- Aboriginality Aboriginality Office
- Femininity Femininity Therapy

Client Management Program
- Life maintenance
- Careers
- Formal Education
- Therapy
6.5. Figure 34 identifies the principles of procedure (Stenhouse, 1975) which need to be implemented in association with the constructs.

Fig. 34.

Management Process

Principles of Procedures

- Community Board to consist of an Aboriginal majority.
- Aboriginal Contemporary culture will provide a context of relevance.
- An Aboriginal designed Healing Curriculum will be implemented.
- Aboriginality in the context of broader culture will provide a basis for operations.
- Aboriginal femininity will be the basis of developing the self-concept of the girls.
- The process of education and healing will focus on developing internal locus of control for the girls.
- The girl’s achievement motivation will be explored and developed.
- The self-esteem of the girls will be central to the process.
A theoretical Dreaming pathway into the future for lowana who are disadvantaged — down and out — and have no place to call home.

Likened to a Dreaming stream of ideas dealing with Aboriginality and its outcomes of Aboriginality as it intertwines with Western culture.

A misunderstanding of an ancient culture by those who stole Aboriginal land has lead to a dispersal of many of the first peoples traditional ways and has left its youth in a state of not knowing their identity.

Yet, despair not, for the Aboriginal spirit is strong. The Dreaming lives, and out of the essence of the ancient Law, a new culture emerges. New foundations are being laid for the formation of programs that will teach things of the Spirit as well as things of the social order. Lowana shall rise above the repression of life chances into a future full of promise. Just as the phoenix that takes flight from its ashes, so too, shall lowana.
6.7. CONCLUSION

In summary, following the research identified and analysed in this thesis it has been concluded that:

1. The research indicated clearly that a culturally appropriate model is needed in developing effective accommodation services for the lowana.

2. Key concepts or organising ideas can be identified, which can be formed into testable propositional statements supported in the literature.

3. Theoretical constructs can be developed as the building blocks of a theoretical model for implementing lowana’s accommodation services.

Further research is needed in the implementation process and effective management of such organisations. After undertaking this needs analysis I feel motivated to implement these strategies in a real environment. This implementation has potential to form the basis of an ongoing research of the success of the model, and is the obvious next step.
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