



# Housing and Schooling in Alice Springs: Lessons from Strengths-based Research

MRS VANESSA DAVIS, MRS DENISE FOSTER, DR RACHEL HENDEREY AND DR LOUISE CRABTREE

**DATE**

Wednesday 26 October

**TIME**

1.30pm – 3pm

**VENUE**

EA.G.32, Parramatta (South) Campus

**RSVP**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Alice Springs Town Camps have an almost exclusively Aboriginal population that varies greatly in language groups and kinships, and are under different land tenure arrangements to the rest of the Alice Springs region. Tangentyere Council supports 17 Alice Springs Town Camps, providing a wide range of services including construction, research, employment, aged care, family services, financial counselling, and tenancy support. Tangentyere Council researchers Vanessa and Denise have worked with Western Sydney University on two research projects focused on housing experiences and aspirations, and on schooling issues of concern to Town Campers, whose lives and communities have been impacted by the Intervention. Over the course of the projects, the team has also started to explore the role of digital technology in research and community capacity building. Future work will build on this to involve, engage, and train younger Camp residents as the next generation of researchers. This seminar will present research findings and discuss the underlying strengths-based research approach that focuses on mutual respect, collaboration, and importantly, ways to strengthen individuals and communities.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Vanessa Davis** has over 14 years of experience in social research work, evaluation and data input and analysis. She has the language, cultural knowledge and expertise to conduct respectful and in-depth research in Aboriginal communities. She has developed as an Aboriginal cultural broker and as a researcher while employed at the Research Hub. Vanessa works to sensitize other researchers to the importance of doing things the right way with Aboriginal people. It is important that when working together, time be respectfully given according to our environment and culture.

Vanessa is also an advocate for working in partnership. Building up our relationship with other academic researchers from universities and other organisations strengthens our work and creates new opportunities for the future.

**Denise Foster** is a Tangentyere Council researcher. Western educated in Alice Springs and traditionally educated to the north of Alice Springs, Denise has lived and worked with Town Camp residents for many years, undertaking many different roles and responsibilities. It was her dream to see her people conduct sound research, giving the people being studied the opportunity to design the research, collect and analyse the data, and return the information to those who gave their time and part of themselves to help make the lives of the Town Camper better. She succeeded.

**Louise Crabtree** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Culture and Society and the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Engagement & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership. Louise's work focuses on urban sustainability and housing affordability; on complex adaptive systems theory in urban contexts; and, on the interfaces between sustainability, property rights, institutional design, and democracy. Increasingly Louise works in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and researchers, focusing on strengths-based approaches to research.

**Rachel Hendery** is the Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities at Western Sydney University. Her research focuses on language contact and change, particularly in Australia and the Pacific, and how new digital tools and techniques allow us to explore these in new ways. She has carried out fieldwork in the Cook Islands, Indonesia and East Timor, and archival research in Australia and the Cook Islands.