



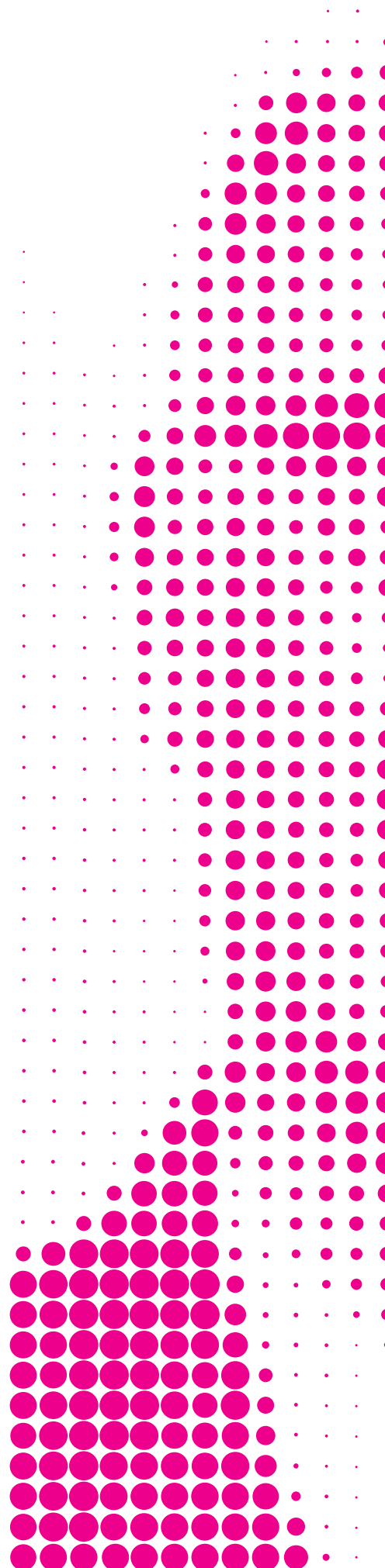
**Alastair  
Swayn**  
Foundation

# Papulu-Ku Nyinjjiki (Seeing Houses)

*Health and Housing in the Northern Territory*

By Wilya Janta | OFFICE

*Supported by a Design Strategy Grant from the Alastair Swayn Foundation*



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# PAPULU-KU NYINJJIKI

(Seeing Houses)

Health and Housing in the Northern Territory

Wilya Janta  
OFFICE



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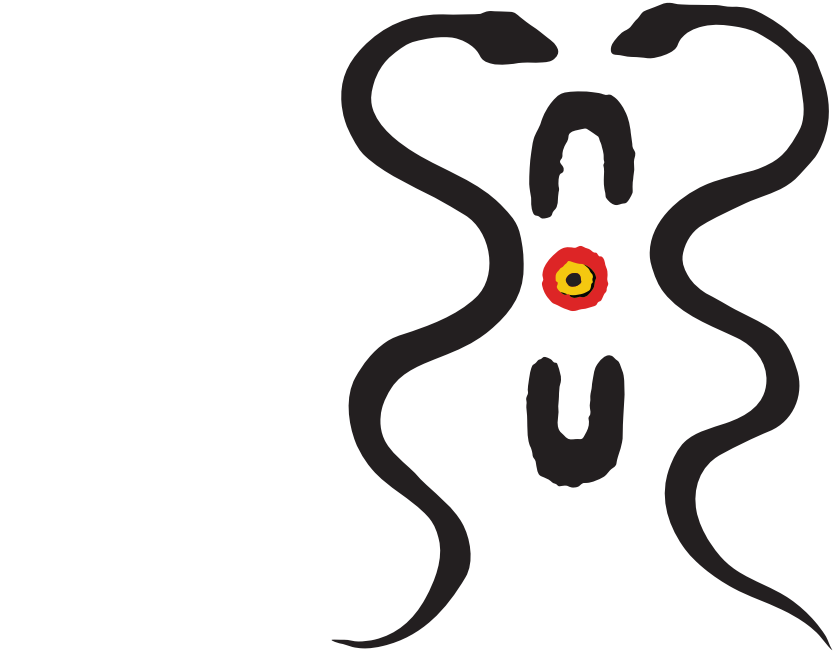
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Wilya Janta is an innovative Aboriginal not-for-profit cultural consultancy that promotes community agency in the design and construction of culturally and environmentally appropriate homes that allow First Nations communities to thrive. Wilya Janta recognises that Warumungu people retain deep knowledge of thriving in the Tanami Desert, and represents a truly bi-culturally innovative collaboration between Elders, architects and construction partners to demonstrate affordable, scalable sustainable housing models.

OFFICE is a not-for-profit multidisciplinary design and research practice based in Melbourne. Our projects span the intersections of built form, research, discourse and education. As a registered charity, the studio’s operations, processes and outputs are bound by a constitution to make projects for the public good.

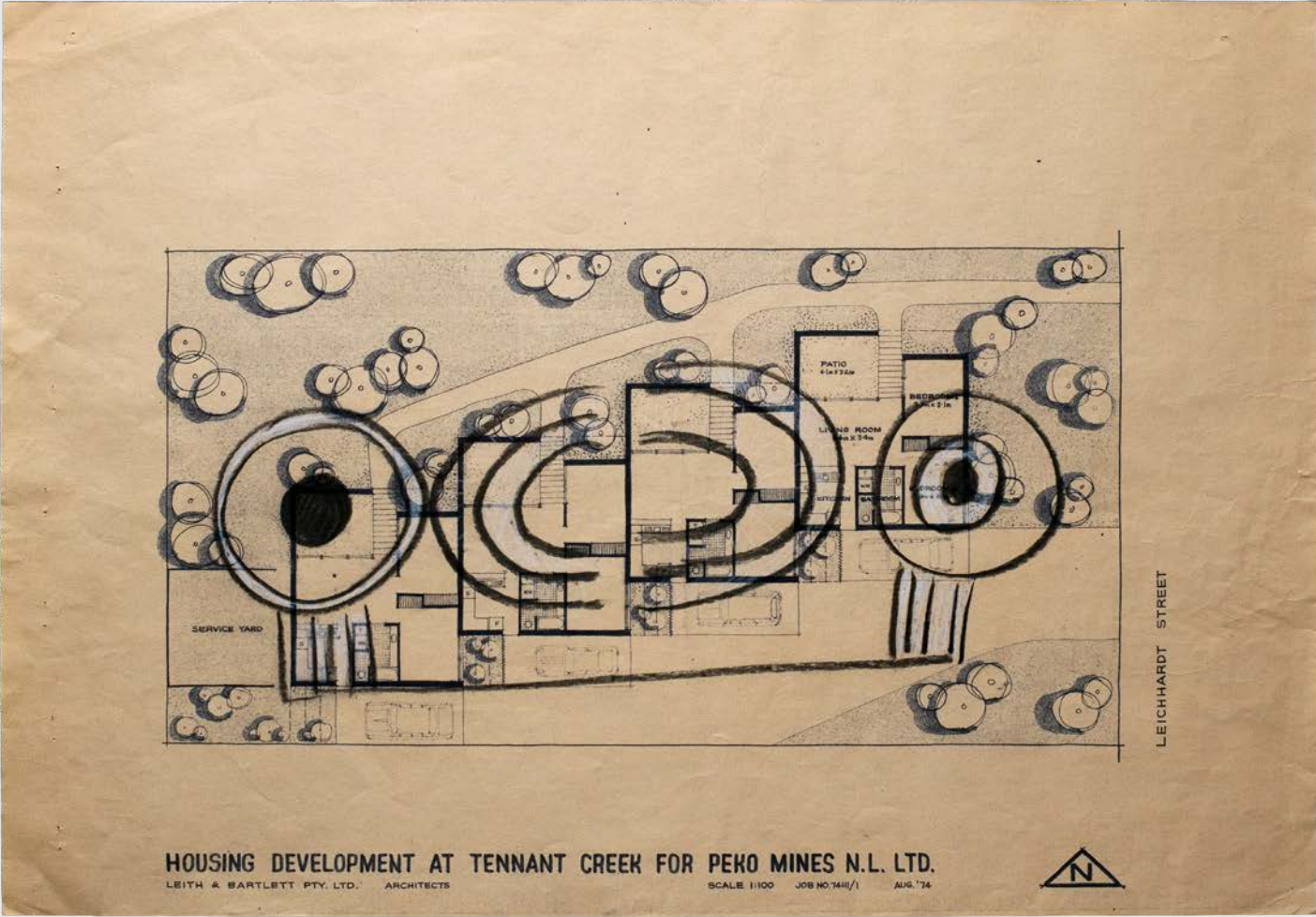


Acknowledging cultural protocol on Warumungu Land is explained through the story at the heart of our constitution, the story of Julawarra and Gilygi. Julawurra the python who was the gyirda (rightful boss) of Jurnkkurakurr our sacred waterhole, and Gilygi the snake that came without permission from the west.

Our Wingara (spiritual ancestral beings) created law to keep order on our Country. It was them that put these laws in place, and still today these laws keep harmony in our community.

These Warumungu laws and customs came from our spiritual ancestral beings, on our Manu (country). Today we still practice these protocols, and they need to be acknowledged and respected by both cultures, Wumpurrarni (Indigenous) and Papulinyi (non-Indigenous), for us to work together in harmony.





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**MY FATHER TOLD ME THIS STORY.**

**WHEN WHITE PEOPLE BEEN COME THROUGH THIS MANU,  
THIS COUNTRY  
YOU KNOW, LONG TIME AGO. FIRST MOB OF PAPULINYI  
THEM USED TO COME IN, THEY WOULD COME IN TENTS,  
LITTLE WHITE TENTS.**

**WELL, THAT STORY OF PAPULINYI, WHY IT'S CALLED  
THAT WAY. WUMPURRARNI, WE WARUMUNGU PEOPLE  
CALLED PAPULINYI, IS BECAUSE OUR PEOPLE, WHEN  
THEY FIRST SEEN PAPULINYI RIGHT BACK WHEN THEY  
FIRST COME TO JUNKURRAKKUR, THEY COME FROM A  
LITTLE WHITE TENT. PAPULU WENGI, BECAUSE PAPULU  
IS LIKE A HOUSE. IN THE OLD DAYS WUMPURRARNI  
PEOPLE MAKE A PAPULU LIKE A TENT, A BOUGH SHED,  
FOR SHELTER. FOR SUMMERTIME OR WET SEASON.  
WELL IT CAN STAY THERE FOREVER, A PAPULU, IT'S  
PERMANENT, NEAR A WATERHOLE OR SOMEWHERE NEAR  
A SOAKAGE. SOMETIME WHEN WUMPURRARNI MOVE  
ALONG, THEY MAKE A QUICK ONE, A NGUNTEL, JUST  
ENOUGH FOR A SHELTER. BUT A PAPULU, IT STAY THERE  
FOR NEXT TIME.**

**BUT WE DIDN'T LIVE IN THEM PAPULU, JUST FOR  
SHELTER SOMETIMES. WUMPURRARNI USED TO SLEEP  
OUT ON THE FLAT, JUST OPEN. FAMILIES, UNDER THE  
STARS, CLOSE TO MOTHER EARTH. WITH THEIR EARS  
ON THE GROUND.**

**BUT PAPULINYI, THEY LIVED IN THEM LITTLE WHITE  
TENTS ALL THE  
TIME, NEVER LEAVE. PAPULU MEAN HOUSE. WENGI  
MEAN FROM.  
PEOPLE FROM A HOUSE, THAT'S WHAT MY OLD PEOPLE  
CALLED THEM.**

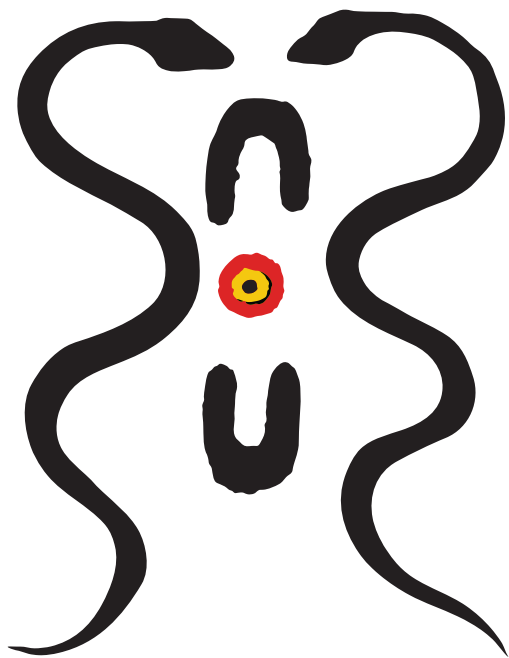


1. Wilya Janta

Two-ways of working

Wilya Ajjul Janta is guided by working two ways – Wumpurrarni (Indigenous) and Papulinyi (non-Indigenous). We acknowledge the ancient laws of Warumungu land, described by Wumpurrarni people in the above image which has been modified to convey these principles while concealing sacred elements. The story of cultural protocol and order in Tennant Creek today is a very old story about two snakes.

Right back in the dreamtime there was one snake been here all the time, sitting down at Jurnkkurakurr, the black headed python Julawarra who’d been sitting there all the time. He had a home there and it was his home, and he was a Warumungu man. And then a snake came from West, from Garu, he come all the way from Garu, he came across straight into that place, Jurnkkurakurr and he looked around and nobody was in the waterhole. So he thought, this is my place now. He told everybody that’s his permanent waterhole, this is my rockhole now. Nobody come here he was telling people, this rockhole belongs to me.



Wilya Janta logo as designed by Jimmy Frank Jupurrurla referencing the Warumungu Dreamtime story of the two snakes.

Then that old Julawarra got up and said to the snake, I’ve been here before you, this is my waterhole. I’m the real boss for this waterhole. I’m the Kirta, I’m boss for this country. I’ve been here before you. This is my place, this belongs to me and belongs to Jabanunga and Nabanunga. You are not you who you think you are. So then the two snakes have a big fight, they wrestle and fight in a few places, a few sacred rockholes.

When they was fighting that black-headed python Julawarra got too good and was winning, so the other snake burned black headed python with a fire stick on his nose, made him black. That’s why that python got a black head. He burned Julawarra with a buntali tree that you make a fire stick with. Buntali is a wild orange tree. That’s why Julawarra has a black head and an orange body. So Julawarra said righto, I’m going to burn you back now.

He burned that other snake, chucked hot ash, woupa, on him at a place called Woupa rockhole. Chucking hot ash all over him. The ash is white and burned him. He ended up getting white and badly burned all over. And it made him really cheeky. That’s why we call him gilygi, he’s a very cheeky snake. You try kill him today, he’ll try to get around you hiding in the grass and try and get back behind you. He’s very smart. The old black headed python made a very cheeky snake because he burned him with woupa.

Then after that, the cheeky snake realised he was in the wrong place, that gilygi. So he went back to West. He left, he didn’t come back again because there was a Kirta all the time there, there was a boss there all the time for Jurnkkurakurr. And he’s still there today.

That’s our cultural protocol. That’s our Dreamtime been put it there before white men came to this town. And that keeps order in our community still today. And that order, you can’t go into another man’s country and community and then making decisions without their order.

So that concept in the Dreamtime story should be practised today in the white men world and black men world. We live in a society today where these two need to be working together, following that cultural protocol that needs to be implemented in any agreement, to reinforce our culture. That gilygi, he didn’t follow protocol, he didn’t bring anything with him, he didn’t bring nyidgingirri, he didn’t send smoke from way off to let people know he was coming, didn’t send a message stick. He didn’t respect Warumungu ways.

We need to implement black man’s and white man’s protocols together. We will always follow our cultural protocol. It keeps order in our families, in our community and in our culture still today. Still this story keeps order in our community today.



A History of Housing in Northern Territory

Australia is a rich tapestry of First Nations cultures and languages spread across the continent. The expanding forces of colonisation have shaped Aboriginal communities in varying ways, with remote communities looking very different from those in the cities and suburbs of Australia.

Tennant Creek, in central Northern Territory, is a town forced onto Warumungu ancestral land. Surrounded by Crow and Snakedreaming, colonisation started with the overland telegraph station built in 1871, and the town followed in 1927 after the discovery of gold. It wasn't long before Aboriginal people were banned from living in the town. In 1956 the government then forced Warumungu people off their Country onto a newly created remote community of Ali Currung hundreds of kilometres south on Alyawarra Country.

By the 1970s, as 'progress' was made, Warumungu people were allowed back into Tennant Creek. No longer able to return to ancestral lands which were now allocated to pastoralists and miners, town camps developed. The houses built in these camps were initially traditional structures incorporating contemporary materials such as corrugated iron. Eventually communities built more and better houses and suburbs, though always with two steps forward and one step back.

But with the NT Intervention in 2007 the government took over, and the

progress in housing design stopped. Current houses being built in Tennant Creek and remote communities all over the NT are a testament to these ongoing failures.

Though this is the unique historical context of Tennant Creek and Warumungu people, it is also the story of many remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Over the past 15 years, there has been negligible systemic progress in building better houses, and in fact the opposite is true. The latest design guidelines used by the Northern Territory Government focus almost entirely on making these dwellings maintenance-free and indestructible in order to reduce ongoing costs, leaving an extreme deficit in design considerations. With no meaningful cultural consideration or community engagement in design, the result is that new remote houses being built today are devoid of cultural considerations, of appalling thermal performance, and unnecessarily expensive.

The difference in design priorities for houses built for Indigenous compared with non-Indigenous people is evident in comparing the NT Remote Indigenous Housing Design Guidelines with the same department's Remote Government Employee Housing Guidelines. The difference in standards, within the very same communities, is stark.

Diane Stokes Nampin outside the donga where she lives with her family on the edge of Tennant Creek. Diane has no mains power or running water. Photo by Andrew Quilty. [



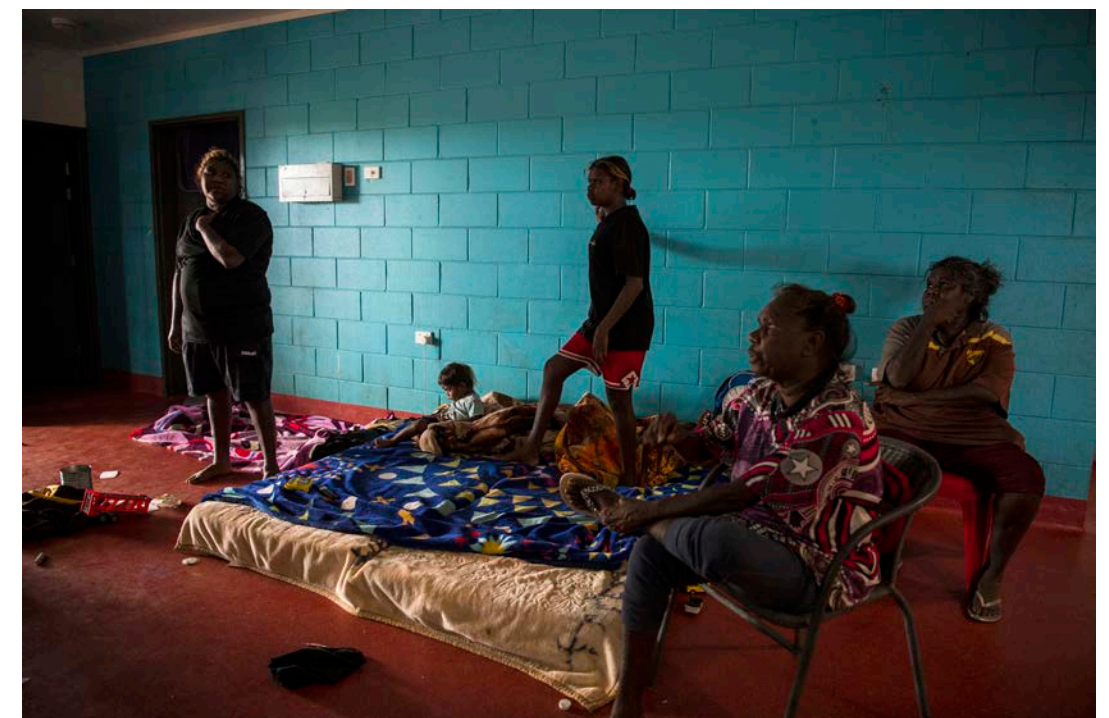
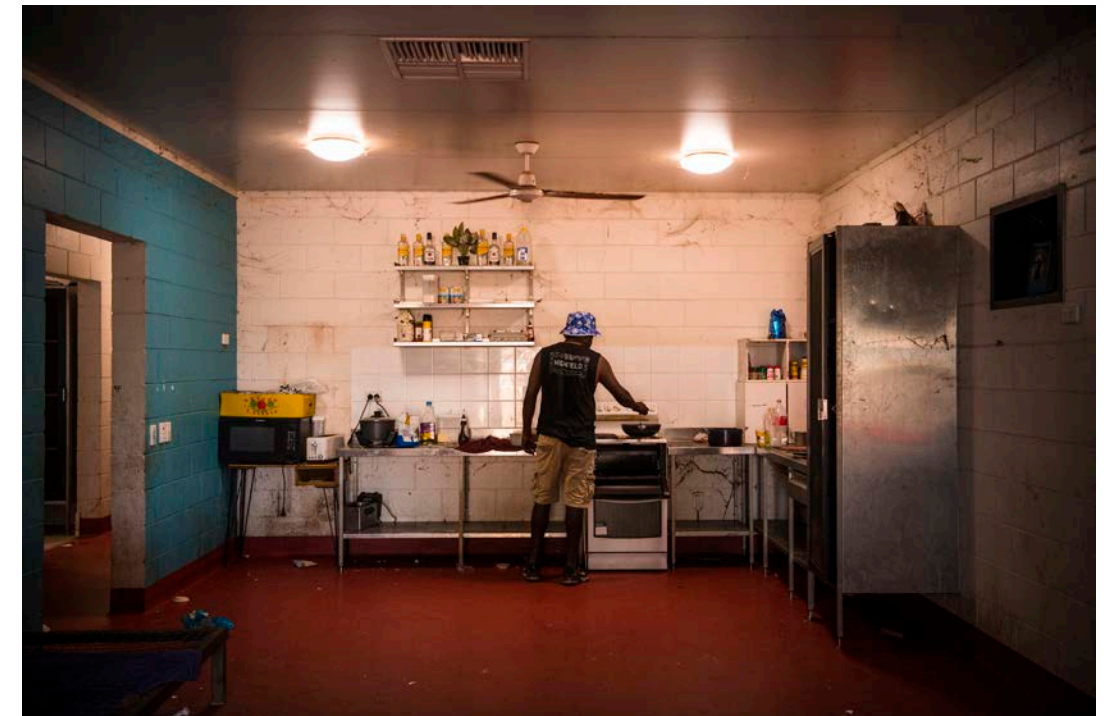
Mattresses outside Steven Camfoo's house at Drive-In Camp in Tennant Creek. Steven and his family have no running water or mains power. Residents have moved their beds outside to escape the heat. Photo by Andrew Quilty.





Regardless of when it was built, the average NT remote Indigenous house quality – thermal performance, cultural appropriateness, lack of ongoing maintenance on aging infrastructure – is very poor. Many houses are hotter on the inside than out on very hot days, of which there are many. Poor thermal performance outcomes exacerbate heat related stress, a lack of ventilation worsens this heat, wash facilities commonly fail. Combined with severe overcrowding this contributes to the highest rates of Streptococcus, renal failure and rheumatic heart disease in the world.

As a result residents are often forced to retrofit air conditioners onto poorly insulated buildings, leading to expensive energy bills. Affording a fridge or an air conditioner for a very overcrowded house can be just as financially challenging as the ongoing costs of electricity to run it. Pre-paid power purchasing means households disconnect from power every time money runs out, and with it, air conditioners switch off. With high levels of chronic illness in these communities, residents are often forced to choose between paying power bills or buying food. Taking regular medications is not a priority when there is no food in the fridge. Some households don't even have running water. Going to school or getting a good nights' sleep can seem like a privilege.



Nicole Frank's home in Tennant Creek. Approximately 20 people live in this three-bedroom house, with family members sleeping on mattresses in the living room. Photo by Andrew Quilty.





**THEM  
GOVERNMENT  
HOUSES  
NOT  
BELONG  
TO MY  
COUNTRY,  
IT'S NOT  
MADE FOR  
MY  
CLIMATE.**

Norman Frank Jupurrurla



# Wilya Janta Housing Collaboration

## Key to success

The key to success of Wilya Janta to date is iterative cross-cultural collaboration around the right place, right design and right construction of future homes. The project team comprises of local Warumungu people with strong cultural and climate understanding, and non-Indigenous experts to provide legal, technical and design expertise; an innovative first in remote NT.

Aboriginal people in remote areas have never been asked how they would like to live in their homes, so the first step was empowering the community to have agency in the location and design of their homes, while building trust across Aboriginal and non-Indigenous members of the team.

The project team undertook a series of iterative design workshops, which covered high level tenure, cultural and climate considerations, as well as specifics of spatial arrangements and finishes. Key cultural protocols are integrated into the concept design, including that Warumungu people sleep with their head to the east, and the home will need to be regularly smoked to cleanse it of spirits. By working closely with the future residents, the design outcomes are culturally and climate appropriate.

We have engaged pro-bono legal expertise from King & Wood Mallesons and Clayton Utz who are advising on the formation of Community Land Trusts (CLT) that will enable people to choose where their homes will be. Tennant Creek is surrounded by thousands of hectares of Warumungu Land Trust land, but until now people have had no legal precedent of how to access this to construct their homes. We have secured a 47 acre lease and are in the process of implementing a CLT to allow for real estate

to provide an avenue to collective wealth creation and security of tenure.

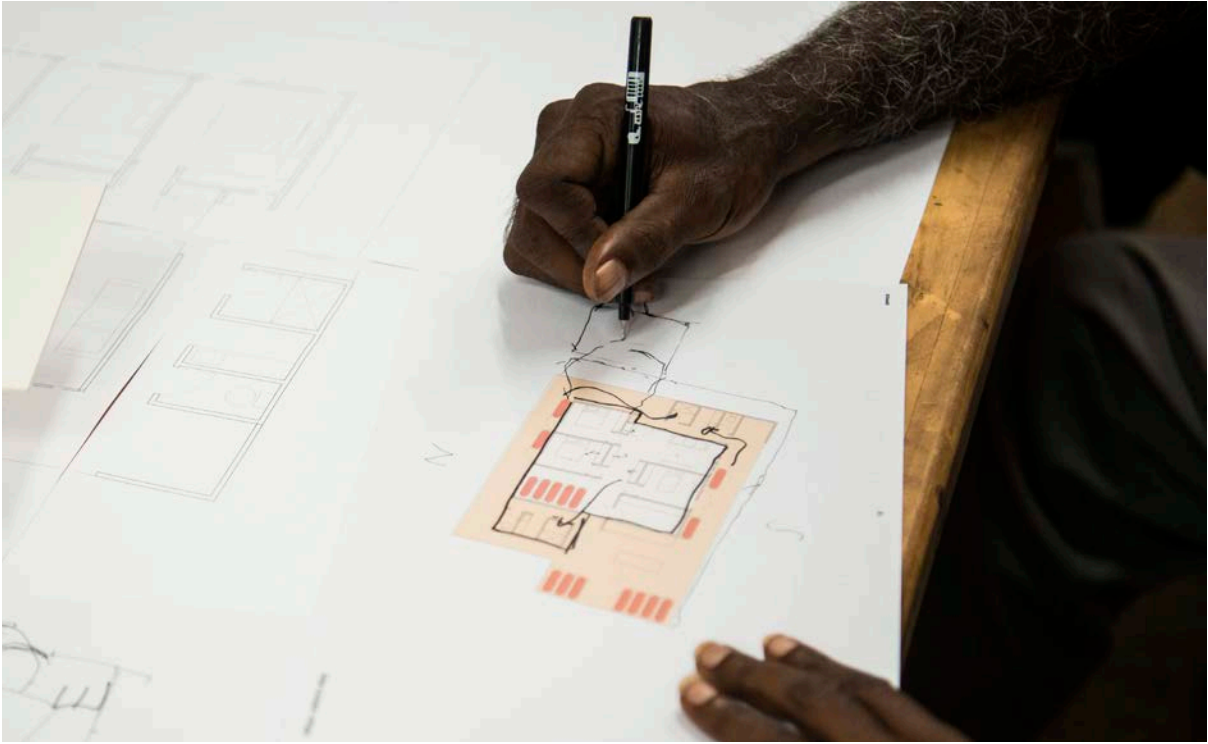
The design team has visited the site regularly over the last year, working with the community to establish the location of the buildings, and its relationship to the surrounding landscaping. This will ensure that the building is designed for the climate, as well as being situated to make the most of the existing landscape conditions. As the residents live outside for large amounts of the time, a focus was placed on outdoor cooking areas as well as landscaping to make the most of the surrounding natural environment.

Through this ongoing iterative engagement the team was made aware of a brick and tile making machine owned by the Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation that has been out of use for the last 20 years. The Wilya Janta team has received grant funding to employ local community members to repair this machine and produce a test run of bricks to use in the Wilya Janta homes. This will quite literally embed Country into the homes, whilst providing local employment opportunities in Tennant Creek.

Neeshan Morton, Serena Morton Napanangka and Norman Frank Jupurrurla discussing the design of their home. Photo by Andrew Quilty



Norman Frank Jupurrurla marking up concept design plans for the first Wilya Janta home. Photo by Andrew Quilty





## Reflections on Engaging with Aboriginal Lifestyles and Housing

Professor Paul Memmott

When I began visiting Central Australian communities in the mid 1970s, several striking observations concerning the sensory behaviour of Aboriginal residents stuck in my mind. One was that in the middle of the day in summer, it was common to see old people wearing woolly pullovers and beanies, no matter how hot it was. It seemed they were most comfortable in this apparel whereas I might be most comfortable in a light t-shirt.

The other was the difficulty I had seeing kangaroos, emus and turkeys when travelling in cars on hunting expeditions. On one trip I was accompanied by a white friend who owned a rifle and was a good marksman. When the Aboriginal passengers indicated he should shoot the kangaroo, he likewise had difficulty seeing the animal in the landscape.

Sleeping behaviour was another significant factor. Certainly, when travelling with parties of old men working on land rights claims in the summers of the 1980s, they insisted on having a comfortable 'dinner camp' to not only eat but rest and snooze in the shade. And on cold nights (down towards zero), when sleeping in bedrolls in the open, a windbreak was built, and all slept close to fires. But if the firewood depleted in the early hours of the morning, it was common practice for a leader to wake the whole party and start a bout of singing the Country, with songs maintained till the sun rose. Then all returned to sleep in the sun until about 9 or 10 am.

People were used to sleeping in spells rather than on constant nocturnal cycles and I speculated that such patterns arose from the necessity to practice nocturnal

hunting for particular species that only came out at night, and at times linked to lunar cycles as well as dusk and dawn watering behaviours of animals. Also, to the conduct of nocturnal ceremonies that involved all-night singing with theatrical shifts of action cued from observation of stellar positions and constellation movements.

In short, customary lifestyles were externally oriented, with regular monitoring of the cultural and physical landscape, weather, and stars, as well as all social comings and goings, and subject to variable sleep patterns to accommodate nocturnal practices.

Even though most people were living with either tin sheds or humpies, viz that most of the diurnal lifestyle was outdoors, including cooking on open hearths, and that gendered behaviour was predominant with men's and women's groups temporarily forming - nuclear families re-emerged for nocturnal behaviour. The traditional architectural components of windbreaks, shades and enclosed night-time shelters were all clearly visible. Architectural researchers began documenting these lifestyles, especially when families adapted to living in government-provided, standard rental houses, making transformations to their technologies.

At the time these sensory responses of Aboriginal people suggested significant cultural differences. In the case of seeing game, it seemed acute visual scanning skills were developed with experience. But it may also in part be a case of what Norm Frank describes as 'gwarda' as described in a paper published in Lancet Planetary Health



that explores why Aboriginal people are remarkably resilient to extreme climates, a type of sensory absorption and synthesis of all environmental conditions resulting in an intuitive deductive sense of the likely presence of game.

Customary behaviours have remained persistent in many parts of Central Australia including the Barkly region. By the early 2000s, architects had devised a number of distinct house design paradigms. One was culturally appropriate design, based on the approach sketched out above, and the premise that a poor fit between lifestyle and house design could potentially generate stress. A second paradigm was the Environmental Health Design approach, based originally on the work of Nganampa Health in the APY Lands and developed by Healthabitat. Based on analysis of the relation between household functions and disease propagation, it prescribes 9 Healthy Living Practices to minimise the risk of environmental health threats, centred around the provision and maintenance of functioning house hardware and yard landscaping. A key problem here is the adverse impact of large, crowded households on the health infrastructure of two- and three-bedroom houses.

The third design paradigm is the housing-as-process philosophy which positions housing procurement and dwelling in the context of the community’s economic, governance and housing management goals and growth capacities for sustainable housing. All of these three design approaches are ideally needed to be

brought to bear in a co-design approach with communities and households, such that they all should receive relevant and balanced consideration and design input. There are nevertheless conundrums and necessary compromises and trade-offs as household priorities and budget limitations are realistically examined. Such is the situation we encounter in the current housing project for a small group of clients in Tennant Creek.

The approach I have outlined, although having been well documented and accepted by both communities and professionals alike, and subject to some implementation during the ATSIC era, is seldom now encountered. Unfortunately, it was largely curtailed during the mainstreaming era of the Howard Liberal Government when economic assimilation became a dominant policy prescriptive. However, this policy approach has seen the Closing the Gap targets stall and reverse, and an increasing call for community-controlled housing provision and maintenance. The current project is thus of high significance in demonstrating the implementation and outcomes of a more appropriate procurement approach at a time when there remains a gross under-supply of Aboriginal housing in the NT, accompanied by widespread socioeconomic disadvantage, household overcrowding and infectious disease transmission (Strep A, scabies, rheumatic heart disease, etc). In my view, the vision and value of the Wilya Janta project as a pilot housing exemplar for remote Aboriginal Australia in the 21st century, is to be commended and vigorously supported.



Sunset at “The Block” where the first Wilya Janta homes will be built. Photo by Andrew Quilty.



A Trip to Barapunta

Dr Simon Quilty

The Papulu-ku Nyinjiki (Seeing Houses) Travelling Forum inspired this exhibition. Two years ago I was visiting Central Arnhem Land with my friend Ben Lewis who has worked with the Mimal Rangers for over a decade. Ben invited me along as a doctor on a traditional burning and rock art survey to Bumdiboo at the headwaters of the Blythe River which spews out crystal clear water from a deep hole in the earth seemingly out of no-where, although I wasn't sure how I could help if someone got bitten by a snake 800km from Darwin.

On this trip the Dalabon and Rembranga people took me to Barapunta, or Emu Springs, to show me the houses they had built with Peter Berry, a whitefella builder, about 40 years ago. They were truly extraordinary, beautifully thermally designed with deep cultural acknowledgement in every aspect of the structures, and after 40 years of throbbing build-up heat and tropical monsoons, still standing strong like the day they were built. After that first trip and on my way back home to Alice I stayed the night with Norman Frank in Tennant Creek and showed him the photos I'd taken. Let's go see then he reckoned, and so we started planning.

Lots of Warumungu people wanted to come, my friend and Quandamooka Public Health academic Veronica Matthews raised \$20,000 through the HEAL network. I told

our partners at Aboriginal Housing NT about our travel plans and they also threw in \$15,000, and introduced me to Paul Haar who helped people at Mt Catt to plan and construct the first house of what turned into about another 30 in the 1980s thanks to Peter Berry's community collaborations.

In June this year we set off in a 4WD bus with over 20 Warumungu people, a mob of architects, engineers, academics and my cousin Andrew who has visited both Norm and I in the NT multiple times over the past 15 years. Paul Haar also came along, his first time back to Arnhem Land in over 30 years.

Rembranga Elder Alfred Rixon hosted us, Jimmy Frank Jupurrurla presented him with an amazing coolamon that his father had taught him how to make. This was nyintjingirri, a cultural gift of reciprocity when Warumungu people stand on another tribe's land.

We sat under the stars around those beautiful buildings, imagining how good it will be when Warumungu people are in charge of their own homes, chewing on buffalo meat that Alfred had prepared earlier that day in a traditional bush oven. The cooking fire was out though, ancient spirits are attracted to the smell of cooking meat after the sun sets. Just smaller fires cooking billy tea, late into the night. Our spirits were high, and they still are.

Barapunta house, with two bedrooms at each end divided by a shared open living space.  
Photo by Andrew Quilty.



Construction of a two room cabin at Mt Catt outstation in the mid 1980's. Photo by Peter Berry.





The First Wilya Janta Home

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The design for Norman and Serena’s home has evolved over the last year through ongoing conversations about how they currently live and would like to into the future; this is something no one has ever asked them, nor any other Aboriginal person in Tennant Creek. They tell us that the building needs to follow a cultural standard and respond to the climate.

A deep veranda around the home protects the rooms from the harsh summer sun while also ensuring you don’t bump into poison cousins (strict cultural avoidance relationships).

In the balmy evenings Norm and his family will move their mattresses out to enjoy the cooling night temperature. When cultural events or the footy finals are on guests will also sleep out here. We are told that there should be at least two bathrooms, one accessed from the outside and the other from the inside, this will help when the relatives come to town and maintain privacy.

A good summer veranda is to be on the south side of the house, which coincides with their preferred view to watch the road trains roll by and the fireworks explode over the town for Territory Day. In winter they want to be able to sit next to a fire on the west side of the house, this will get the afternoon sun and be protected from behind a low windbreak wall.

A large breezeway, lined in locally made mudbricks (anthill and spinifex), can be

opened up to draw wind through the house, with living areas and bedrooms on either side. The beds are all orientated east/west, as Norm explained, Wumpurrarni always sleep with their heads to the east and their feet to the west. If not you’ll wake up ‘warunga (mad), your bearings will be all wrong.’

There are two kitchens, one indoors with an oven, stovetop and large table to sit around. The other is outdoors, where freshly caught roo will be prepared and placed straight onto the fire. This is where the family will spend a lot of their time and cook most meals. A large stone windbreak protects this area from the ‘Barkly Breeze’- a cold dusty wind that blows from the east in winter. This same breeze will ensure smoke from the fire blows through the home, keeping the jangalkki (long-fingernailed spirit that hurts children) away.

Ramps, accessible bathrooms and wide doors make the home suitable for ageing in place, allowing the old people the ability to remain on Country and not have to move into town.

Around the home, Norman and Serena have plans to build a bough shed and grow ‘mile-a-minute’ vines up and over it, a lookout under a tree to the north, a dammed area to make a pond where they will have ducks, a grassed area for the kids to play on, and a veggie patch to grow their own food.





# Moving Forward

## Wilya Janta Model

Wilya Janta is an Warumungu-led initiative that is based on deep trust between community and expert professionals in design, construction, business and management. This trust is based upon long-standing and expanding true friendships between Wumpurrarni (Aboriginal) and Papulinyi (non-Indigenous) people that honour cultural protocol in contemporary and real ways. All directions taken are Warumungu-led with close support to navigate the challenges of running a start-up constantly communicated between our team to ensure true community sovereignty in where we go. It doesn't matter what aspect of remote Indigenous inequity our community faces, all roads lead to colonisation and the resulting broader state of 'homelessness' that needs to be resolved - a tin shed or a prison-like blockwork structure is not a home. Families want a safe home to raise their children and to live their lives. So this is where we are coming from.

### The Problem

The current model for remote housing development does not appropriately engage the tenant (community) in the design phase of the construction lifecycle. Houses designed without consultation are not fit for purpose and are negatively received by community. Current design objectives are principally to reduce ongoing maintenance costs through use of very sturdy and robust materials. Thermal performance is a low priority with the NT Government having the lowest thermal efficiency standards in Australia. The remote building industry in the NT is not competitive and fails to incorporate best practice construction methodologies or innovation.

### The Challenge

For the Wilya Janta pilot to provide a suitable scalable alternative to the existing remote housing model, it must prove that it is feasible to invest in appropriate community consultation at the design phase of the construction lifecycle whilst meeting a price competitive overall construction budget that is comparable to the current remote housing model. By operating in an unconstrained national design and construction industry space, Wilya Janta can embrace best practice and innovative, scalable construction

methodologies that can demonstrate better industry paradigms, better value for money, and most importantly better houses that are responsive to culture and environment and resilient to increasing environmental heat.

### Iterative Business Model

The Wilya Janta business model follows a lean startup methodology. It favours experimentation and innovation over established guidelines, community and industry engagement and feedback over presumption, and iterative design over traditional 'design up front' development. The key difference to our approach is that we put community at the centre of the lean startup process loop. We seek to build, measure and learn with community at the centre of all that we do.

### Sustainability

The Wilya Janta team notes that the new model's viability relies on being price competitive with the current Northern Territory Government housing model. There seems little point in creating a new housing model that is loved by the community, however, not financially viable. When comparing the cost of the two models, Wilya Janta is confident it can build better community directed housing that is price competitive to the current model. This will be achieved by offsetting the additional direct costs of community consultation (labour) and improved building performance with cost savings in the construction phase of the building project.

### Core Principles

Wilya Janta's core principles operationally address the problems and challenges of remote housing at every stage.

• Listening to community to design better cultural living space.

- Our founders had never worked directly with architects before, and it is clear that no Wumpurrarni person has ever been asked how they want their homes to be.
- For most Australians, shaping a home involves reading Home Beautiful magazines, checking out display homes, and exerting agency in shaping

PAPULU-KU NYINJJIKI (Seeing Houses) exhibition held at OFFICE in Melbourne. Photo by Andrew Quilty



Norman Frank Jupurrurla, Serena Morton Napanangka and Neeshan Morton, discussing the design of their home during a Wilya Janta workshop held in Tennant Creek. Photo by Andrew Quilty







Norman Frank Jupurrula, Serena Morton Napanangka and Neeshan Morton, discussing the design of their home during a Wilya Janta workshop held in Tennant Creek. Photo by Andrew Quilty



(Left to right) Diane Stokes Nampin, Simon Quilty, Norman Frank Jupurrula and Nina Frank reviewing documentation of the design and construction process of the Mt Catt homes. Photo by Andrew Quilty.

their homes around their families and their lives. For our founders and their ancestors since their lands were stolen, such opportunities have never existed, until now.

- Our team of architects and designers are learning from our founders who have deep knowledge of how to live in hot and arid climates, and this collaboration is shaping engagement processes in design that are replicable and scalable in other remote communities.

#### • Engaging industry partners to improve efficiencies in construction

- We have an exciting team of non-Indigenous people with a rich diversity of experience in design, construction and story-telling.
- Wilya Janta is engaging in high-level commercial, construction and strategic relationships with industry partners who see the opportunity and are hungry for innovation and for Housing Justice for First Nations people.

#### • Embedding high thermal performance and climate resilience into the new housing model

- We are working with Warumungu Elders with deep knowledge of how to live well in a very hot climate, and leading industry partners and research institutions to develop highly thermally performing and climate resilient housing in cost effective ways.

#### • Ongoing evaluation and iterative design

- Many Aboriginal people express frustration at being subjected to too much research which usually makes no difference to the challenges they face, and this opinion is shared by our founders. We know that deep reflection and learning is very important to create better ways, and are embedding community-led evaluation that uses meaningful scientific and technical experts but is founded upon deep Wumpurrarni knowledge, mukunjungu.
- Wilya Janta is committed to learning and re-learning as we go, and placing community at the heart of these learnings so that they are the ones in control of the knowledge that is gained.
- Wilya Janta is committed to formal training and we plan to develop Local Design Experts with each future project we are invited to contribute to, to leave communities with expertise in design engagement for all future proposed projects.



Warumungu Karti dancers from Tennant Creek perform as part of the Papulu ku Nyinjiki (Seeing Houses) exhibition held at OFFICE in Melbourne.  
Photo by Andrew Quilty



(Left to right) Simon Quilty, Nicole Frank Nakamarra, Patricia Frank Narrurlu, Linda Turner Napanangka, Norman Frank Jupurrula and Alfred Rixon speaking at the National Gallery of Victoria. Photo by Andrew Quilty.







PAPULU-KU NYINJIKI (Seeing Houses)  
Health and Housing in the Northern Territory

Wilya Janta - [www.wilyajanta.org](http://www.wilyajanta.org)  
OFFICE - [www.office.org.au](http://www.office.org.au)