

## What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us about having a home without having a house

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### Abstract

This paper aims to add to the research investigating how home is created from the perspective of those who live outside the norms of a conventional house. This research focuses on those members of the community who live in public spaces in self-built camps in the nearby bush lands surrounding Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads (Australia). This study identified what methods people use to control space and create their own space by cross-analysing the patterns that emerged from a questionnaire and mapping data. The research also used ground-up inquiry to validate the statement that every human experience needs to be understood, with the view that we cannot improve one's housing conditions without understanding the people who live in those conditions and their values. The study identified some of the challenges and opportunities that face these communities which will need to be addressed in order to respond in a meaningful way in the future.

**Keywords:** home, informal settlement, Byron Bay, mapping

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## Introduction

When a group of children in London were asked to draw a 'house', many drew a pitched roof, free standing house, despite all growing up in multistorey apartments (Rapoport, 1969). For many, the idea of house is tied with a world view of four walls and a pitched roof serving as a 'symbol of security' (Rapoport, 1969). If we move away from associating 'home' with 'house' in this typical sense, and focus instead on human vernacular, we can learn about how home is achieved through instinct. Instead of asking 'where is home?' maybe we should be asking 'what is home?'

When one member of Byron Shire's houseless community was asked 'where is home?' the answer was, "Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere." This answer alludes to the philosophical notion of home, a place that surpasses the physical structures of having a roof over one's head. It refers to a metaphysical place of belonging and thus questions: how do you have a home without having a house? In order to understand this question, we must first understand what constitutes the meaning of 'home'. This question suggests the idea of an ontological meaning encompassed in a multidisciplinary conversation between sociology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy (Mallett, 2004). There has been an abundance of literature adding to this conversation, with recurring ideas about the nature of home and its link to identity and belonging (Zuffery & Chung, 2015). Yet less has been written regarding 'home' in some specific context, such as bush settlements.

This paper will use the Byron Shire bush lands' informal settlements to examine the physical and metaphysical notion of 'home' and discuss how we belong. This paper aims to add to the limited research investigating how home is created and perceived from the perspective of those who live outside the norms of a conventional house. Further, this research investigates the invisible people of Byron Shire and the environment they constitute as 'home'. This paper focuses on those members of the community who live in self-organised, self-built camps in the nearby bush lands surrounding Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads, New South Wales, Australia. Some of these informal settlements have been inhabited for over four years and house a large portion of Byron Shire's informal community (Kinninment, 2005).

The term 'homeless' is questioned as this paper doesn't discriminate between community members who are homeless by circumstance or alternately community members who are homeless by choice. Byron Shire is a unique area in that both these types of 'houselessness' occur concurrently.

This paper is organised in three sections. The first section concerns the literature review posing the debate in its wider context. The second section encompasses the method in which the study will be conducted. The third section is organised as a case study discussing the strategies and human interventions evident in the mapping of Byron Shire's informal settlements. These findings will be analysed against a psychoanalytical framework that expose the relationship between spatial vernacular and belonging.

## 1. Literature Review

In recent years, Mallett has contributed largely to the conversation about home in her exploration of whether 'home is (a) place(s), space(s), feeling(s), practice(s) or state of being in the world' (Shelley, 2004). Some literature has linked home to a physical structure or dwelling, such as a house, flat, institution or caravan (Bowlby, Gregory &

Mckie, 1997; Giddens, 1984; Mallett, 2004). This physical concept of home compliments the research on the more obvious idea that the distinction between the inside and outside world is concerned with private space and public space (Wardaugh, 1999; Altman, Werner & Oxley, 1985; Mallett, 2004). Others investigated phenomenological aspects of being in a home, placing importance on routine and celebration as pivotal notions of belonging (Saile, 1985). Rapoport (1969) furthered this aspect of home as he investigated the building vernacular as an embodiment of human culture and desire that isn't necessarily a response to the needs for human shelter.

When discussing the phenomenological aspect of home, we are invariably also speaking to the significance of place, with its understanding rooted in notoriously conflicting ontological assumptions (Casken & Bernado, 2012). Despite its complexities, the interconnectedness between people and their environment has been established by many scholars (Casken & Bernado, 2012; Seamon, 1979; Malpas, 1999). Echoed by Casey (1997) that there is "no place without self and no self without place", Seamon (2015) reiterates this connection in his statement that bodily routines that are rooted in a particular environment impact on the significance of place in meaning and attachment. The conflated relationship between self and place encourages the idea that the physical environment can be an embodiment of human desires, thus spatially exposing what it is that makes us belong.

As these 'significant places' in question often situate themselves in public space, it is important to get a broader understanding into the research concerning the perception of public space. Amster (2004) investigated the socio-cultural aspect on the perception of 'space'. Although having an "open and egalitarian quality" (Amster, 2004), Amster draws from Mitchell (1995) that "[Public space] has long been a place of exclusion, no matter how democratic ideology would like to argue otherwise" (Amster, 2004; Mitchell, 1995). Further to this, there has been research that explains the long history of people's perception of their safety in the presence of homeless people (Baillergeau, 2014; Chambliss, 1964; Foucault, 1975). Zanotto (2012), interested in neoliberal urbanism, concluded that in the making of "private desirable streetscapes, we alienate those who use public space to meet basic needs". This raises the question, for whom is this public space?

There have been numerous examples of international literature that endorse the importance of mapping informal settlements (Hasan, 2006; Karanja, 2010; Brillembourg & Navarro-Sertich, 2011). Less is known about contemporary informal settlements in Australia. This is partly due to the fact that there are fewer of these types of settlements, and they are often located in less visible areas. In common with many other informal settlements the conversation between these residents and the broader community is often fragmented and contentious (James, 2016; Turnbull, 2016; Broome, 2016). It is through the research that we understand the impact that in depth consultation with community engagement has on meaningful places (Memmott, 2008; Brillembourg & Navarro-Sertich, 2011). Through the mapping of these informal settlements, this paper aims to open up a dialog with members of these marginalised communities in order to respond in a more meaningful way in the future.

Furthermore, there has been less written on the concept of 'home' from the point of view of the residents of these informal settlements. However much can be learned about how people make homes in unexpected places and which aspects contribute to their significance. The research of Dovey (2013) aims to distinguish between "A slum [which] is

a symptom of poverty; [whereas] informality is a transgressive practice through which residents manage the conditions of poverty.” Baan (2013) contributes to this topic through his photography that celebrates such opportunities. From a more historically perception, Rapoport (1969) contributed to this limited socio-environmental research as he highlighted the significance of place and identified the driving forces that contribute to its significance. It is through these that he revealed underlying human desires, that at times prioritise the symbolic nature of arts over the utilitarian functions of space (Rapoport, 1969). Human behaviour is unpredictable as the works of Baan (2013) demonstrate. This research demonstrated that many people use space differently to the architect's intentions. Despite this finding, there are still emerging patterns in human behaviour, such as the need to create spaces that we can control (Rapoport, 1969; Dovey, 2013). This study will aim to identify the methods people use to control space by analysing the patterns that emerge from the mapping data.

In conclusion, there has been very little research that investigates the perception of 'home' from the point of view of houseless community in Byron Shire. There has been many newspaper articles referencing these communities with their loaded opinions and social commentary (James, 2016; Turnbull, 2016; Broome, 2016), some linking this type of living as more closely aligned with primitive and original peoples of the land (James, 2016). From this perspective, the work of Timothy O'Rourke (2015) is significant, adding to the limited historiographies of indigenous townships. Some writings, however, contributed to the fragmented research of pre-colonial societies in Byron Shire (Cook, 2017; Kerkhove, 2013) and others noted the connection between ecology and resilient living of the original peoples in the area (Gardiner, 2016). While these works provide a broader understanding to the opportunities of pre-colonial living as depicted through the original Australians in Byron Shire, we still know very little about our contemporary bush tent communities. Very little research has been conducted into the construction, mapping and spatial qualities that these communities create. Further to this, there has been no research on how these features affect the notion of 'home'. Mapping these settlements might provide a greater architectural and spatial perspective on the understanding of how these self-organised spaces encourage the term 'houseless' not 'homeless'.

## 2. Methodology

By understanding decisions and investigating the spatial language that inhabitants create in their self-organised settlements, we can learn about local cultural values that underpin people and their behaviour. Architectural atmospheres aim at speaking back to the inhabitant, revealing purpose in their actions (Perez-Gomez, 2015). In this sense, this research symbiotically investigates *how do you make architecture without architects*. It raises awareness into the ingenuity and adaptable nature of the human condition. It is the hope that this research will help to uncover the primitive conditions and socio-environmental forces that contribute to the design of these camps. The mapping will illustrate the place-making techniques and strategies that contribute to making a home. These human interventions will be discussed within the concept of home, making clear human values in the attempt to belong. In investigating these perceptions of home, this research will use a grounded theory method that allows a conceptual framework to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1998). Through participant surveys, this paper will uncover the meaningful attributes that people experience in their home. This data was cross-examined against the

mapping of Byron Shire's informal settlements to understand belonging from a socio-spatial perspective.

### *2.1 Data collection*

Using a mixed method approach, this research has used mapping and surveys to collect data. The mapping relies on the hypothesis that town centres act as great resources for those who depend on public space to survive. This study surveyed the nearby bush lands of the two largest coastal towns in the shire, Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads.

Carried out over a two-month period within a 1000m radius from the CBD of Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads, the mapping focused on the main areas of dense vegetation that are close to the CBD and are inhabited by many of Byron Shire's 'houseless' community. Two different types of maps were produced;

1. Organisational Mapping (1:100 scale): floor plans were drawn of existing settlements in the area. For settlements that are within a 20-meter radius of one another, access and the interconnections between camps were also mapped for analysis
2. Location Mapping (1:5000 scale): drawing of settlements and their relation to the CBD and other resources.

One important aspect of this research was the involvement of the people who live in these areas. Participants gave responses through a questionnaire. This aimed to gather data from people who live in a conventional house and also those who live outside of this norm. The main concept was that surveying these different demographics would give a broader perspective of what constitutes a home. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on the participants' perceptions of home and to gather data on how people use their created spaces. Questions 1 and 2 aim to give insight into participant perception of home. From these answers, an analytical framework was developed that synthesizes the perception of home and gives a list of parameters from which we can analyse space. For the people who live in a conventional house, this is the only part of the survey they answered. Question 3-7 targeted those currently living in an informal settlement. This section gave insight into how basic needs are met as well as the socio-environmental behaviours that are experienced in the camp. This complemented the mapping of the settlements and gave a better understanding into how people use the space.

The questionnaire was comprised of seven questions;

1. *Where is home?*
2. *What does home mean to you?*
3. *How long have you been here?*
4. *Where else have you lived and can you draw it?*
5. *Who else lives here?*
6. *Where/how do you sleep? eat/drink? socialise?*
7. *Are there any rules?*

### *2.2 Data analysis and limitations*

The data analysis was conducted on several levels. From the mapping, spatial analysis was performed, highlighting the relationships of settlement/town/natural environment. The spatial analysis contributed to categorise people's experiences and uses of space into several categories. An analytical table was then produced to capture the emerging

categories and allows for the comparison of the data. The comparison between the spatial analysis and the answers to the questionnaire helped to triangulate the findings. The main limitations concern the participation of respondents. From the 15 camps, all residents were asked to participate to the questionnaire. The full sample size was 39 persons. However, a limitation of this study concerns the fact that not all residents were willing to participate. Some feared for their safety or anonymity, others were not interested in participating. Only 14 responded to the questionnaire. Another limitation of the study is that not all respondents answered all of the questions. Again, some questions were considered too private or dangerous to answer. It is believed that a longer acquaintance with the residents might have resulted in a higher participation rate.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Mapping

Fifteen sites were visited. Initially, the location maps gave indications of the main patterns of settlement by showing the location of the settlements, their distribution and their relationship to the town centre (Figure 1 & 2). A primary finding shows the dependence of these settlements on the town centre. The access to resources, such as shower, toilets, has been prioritized where possible. This has been confirmed by assessing the longevity of these settlements: camps that are located closer to resources such as the community centre and water sources are the longer standing camps in the study.

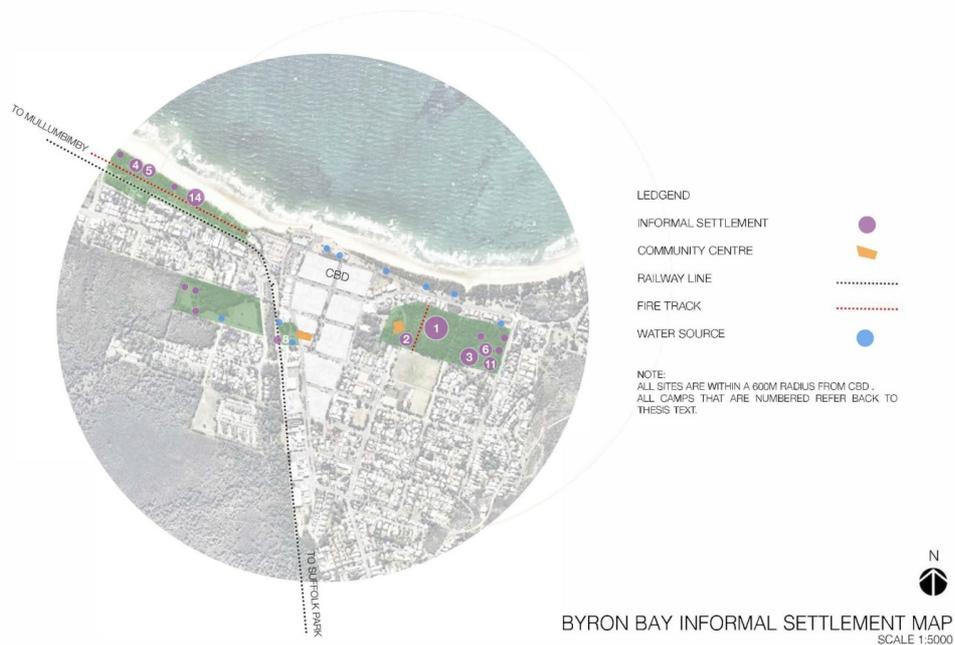


Fig. 1. Byron Bay Informal Settlement Map



Fig. 2. Brunswick Heads Informal Settlement Map

Another interesting finding concerns the settlement population, which also seems to be related to longevity of the camp. In broad terms, camps that have a shorter life expectancy are those that are located further away from resources and have fewer occupants. Examples of these are camps 4 and 5 (Figure 1), with life durations of only a few months; while the longer standing camps (2 years old for camp 1; 6 years old for camps 6 and 9) have three or more occupants, and are closer to key resources. The maps demonstrate the clear correlation between nature reserves and the location and distribution of informal settlements in Byron Shire. These nature reserves act as invisibility cloaks in which members can remain mildly anonymous whilst still maintaining access to town resources. Another finding concerns the use of the fire trails in both Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads. These tracks act as key access routes for inhabitants who use these areas of dense vegetation to live. This aspect will be developed further later, showing their significant role in connecting these members with the broader community.

There were some clear organisational features that emerged during the micro-mapping (Figure 3-5). For example, in almost every camp it was possible to identify boundaries, whether natural or made by the residents. Several layers of internal boundaries were also displayed, thus evidencing social strategies to deal with otherness and own security. Entrances and exits were also clearly delimited for almost every camp. Other identified commonalities are the use of the circular form within the camp, as well as the use of decorative or non-decorative elements to organise and embellish the camps. Overall, space has been used, appropriated and adapted to the specific needs of the inhabitants, despite the lack of a formal housing type. These maps also revealed the construction of social-spatial strategies that contributes to the individual well-being (building up a sense of home and a feeling of security for instance), as well as to the

individual social position within the group (e.g. creation of hierarchy). This results have been synthesised into several emerging topics (Territory, Security, Hierarchy, Privacy, Comfort, Symbolism and Connection, Table 1), which interestingly were triangulated with the questionnaire.

Table 1: Spatial strategies against emerging concepts

CAMP	PEOPLE	Territory	Security		Hierarchy	Privacy		Comfort				Connection		Symbolism	
		Edge	Physical	Psychological	Circle	Monitored	Searched	Formal Entry	Veneer	Shelter (sleep)	Shelter other)	<3 tier	>3 tier	Art	Fire
1	6	x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x
2	1	x	x		x		x			x		x			x
3	3	x	x				x			x	x		x		x
4	1	x				x				x		x			x
5	4	x				x				x		x			x
6	3	x				x		x		x	x		x	x	x
7	2	x			x	x			x		x	x			x
8	2			x		x				x	x	x		x	
9	7	x		x	x	x			x	x		x			x
10	1	x	x		x		x			x		x			x
11	2	x		x	x	x		x		x			x		x
12	1	x		x	x	x			x	x		x			x
13	1	x			x	x				x	x	x			x
14	4	x		x		x		x		x		x			x
15	1	x	x		x		x			x			x		x
	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>

### 3.2 Questionnaire

Twenty questionnaires were answered, fourteen by campers and six by those living in a formal house (blue colour, Appendix 1). From the campers, there were 8 male participants and 6 female participants, while there were 4 females and 2 males in the non-campers participants. Unfortunately, not all the questions were answered. This is a limitation in the research but it also reflects the sensitive aspect of the investigation, as well as the primary trust that needs to be present for some topics. Some participants were insecure about talking about their camp, not really being sure that the displayed information will remain anonymous (despite the ethics clearance).

To question 1 (where is home?), irrespective of where they live, most participants answered a location: 'here', 'the bush', 'Byron', 'Melbourne', 'Australia' (Appendix 1). Yet three had a more esoteric type of answer: "A place that is my own", "Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere" and "Where my husband and happiness is". For question 2 (What does home mean to you?), there is some discrepancy between those living in camps and those not living in camp (Appendix 1). For the first type of residents, 'independence' and 'family' are the main words that were returned the most often, followed by adventure, bush, security and comfort. Whereas for the residents of a formal house, 'family' and words around 'own space' were privileged. For example, "it's my place of sanctuary; my cave where I belong" or "it's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort". Overall answers were connected to the seven topics which emerged during the mapping (Table 1).

Question 3-7 were intended for campers only. Not all questions were answered by all the participants as some again felt threatened, preferred their camp location to remain anonymous, or did not want to display information about other residents (Appendix 2).

These limitations also reflect the security, privacy, and territory topics.

Question 3 (How long have you been here?) addresses the longevity of stays in the camp, which usually ranks from a couple of weeks to long-life situation (Table 3). This latter is an exception as most of the respondents were equally spread over the different periods (two weeks, one month, one year). For question 4 (Where else have you lived?), there was a high level of non-answer (almost 50%) and those who answered displayed a lack of specificity: "all over", "Sydney" "been mostly on the move, all I have is on my back". The question 5 (Who else lives here?) reveals solitary habits with the answer "I live alone" at the same level as group habits ("friends and family"). For question 6 (Where/how do you sleep, eat, drink, socialise?), the answers to the sleeping place were not very detailed, with only one respondent giving a precise location ("behind the pine tree"). One common element emerged: the fire as a place to socialise ("... we eat and socialise around the fire"). For question 7 (Are there any rules?), the answers are equally split between "no rules!" and some kind of rules ("protocols - anyone new must meet Lois first").

In summary, all the given answers to these questions also related to some extent to the topics identified during the mapping survey (Table 2) yet the process chosen clearly showed some limits. For example, several authors have already discussed how personal contact tends to increase response rate when administering the questionnaire (Edwards et al., 2002) but other works show that trust and the establishment of a long-term relationship might be needed to obtain such results (Charmaz, 2000). Another limitation concerns the difficulty to avoid interviewer bias (Hodgson, 2000, Clifford and Marcus, 1986). In the context of the grounded theory for which Glaser (1998) argues that 'all is data', the questionnaire was designed as an objective mean to obtain the most relevant information and an opportunity to include other various observations (site observation, participant observation, group observation, etc). However, in reality it sometimes proved difficult to ask one question after the other. As Ravenhill pointed out in her doctoral thesis (2014), 'ethnographic researchers inevitably become attached to some of the people they research'.

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Table 2: Quantitative categorization of answers to question 2 against emerging topics (female participants in red, conventional home residents in blue).

	What does 'home' mean to you?	Territory	Privacy	Security	Comfort	Hierarchy	Symbolism	Connection
						Equal/Not Equal	Ritual/Ceremony	Country/People
1	Byron Bay has been my home for over 22 years.							x
2	I was brought up next to the ocean. I'm not homeless I choose a life of adventure. I have a different perspective.							x
3	The Bush							x
4	Independence.	x						
5	Home is family, a place of safety and love.			x	x			x
6	Safety, family and friends, to feel like you belong by contributing equally. Having a connection to those you live with.			x	x	x		x
7	Security, comfort, somewhere I can relax. This land called me in.			x	x			x
8	It's my place of sanctuary. My cave, where I belong.	x		x				
9	It's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort.				x			
10	Family and Security knowing its always there, Familiarity is important.			x				x
11	Sense of connection with place or/and people. Recipe. A place I can be totally at peace.							x
12	The view of my backyard.	x						
13	Somewhere its private and my own space.	x	x					
14	Somewhere I can be myself.				x		x	
15	Home is more a state of mind, it's a comfortable state of mind.				x			

16	A place where we gather around a fire.						x	
17	Family.							x
18	Familiarity.				x			
19	Childhood roots where you come from. The family house.							x
20	A place I feel loved.							x

## 4. Discussion

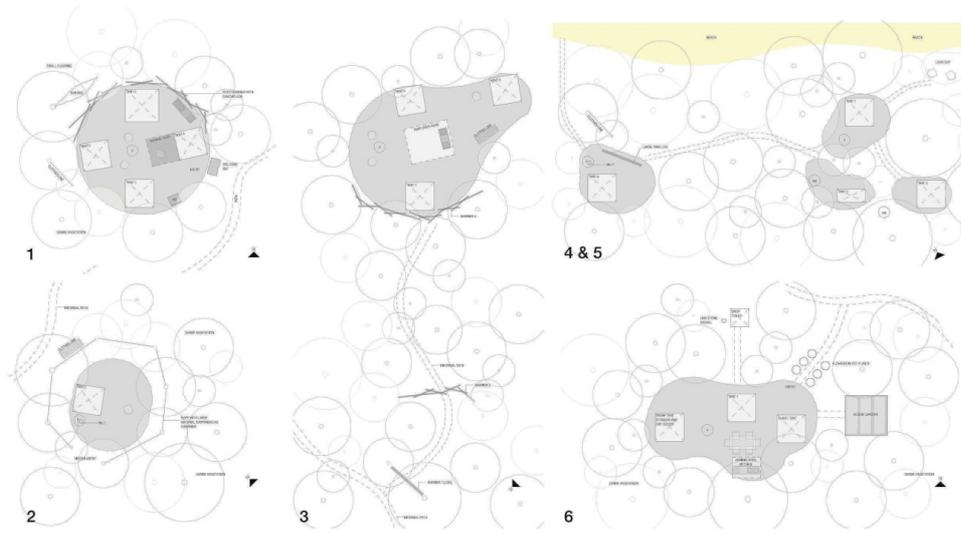
### 4.1 Territory

To understand territory as a production of space, it has to be emphatically considered against the relationship between person and programme. As literature has explained, art or practice (performing programme) that is linked to a specific space encourages a sense of ownership (Brighenti, 2010; Blomley, 2015). Thus the subcategory of territory was derived from answers that infer a sense of ownership of space. For example, when asked the question ‘*what does home mean to you?*’ one respondent answered ‘*A place that is my own.*’ This respondent did not own the land she lived on, yet she considered it as hers. Thus it triggered the following question: *How do you feel ownership without owning land?* Interestingly, the Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines territory without the notion of ownership but rather as “an area in which one has certain rights or for which one has responsibility with regard to a particular type of activity.” This definition underlies the relationship that is being established between people and programme in connection to a defined area.

A key component of territory is to define the land which person and programme sit within. The idea of constructing/identifying an ‘edge’ and a ‘clear space’ is a common strategy in achieving this land definition and sense of ownership. This strategy is demonstrated in all bush camps in this study (Figure 3-5). Therefore the bush and shrub clearing that is evident in all plans acts as a consistent determinant for territorialisation. This behaviour creates an edge but also a cleared space: an inside and an outside world. Once a space is defined, it is clear that occupants take pride and ownership in these spaces. Camp 6 is an example of residents who regularly raked the floor to achieve this edge and clear space with one resident explained “we liked to keep the place tidy, you know, looking good.” Another resident in Camp 5 similarly regularly rakes twigs, leaves and shrubs to create an edge and clear space, which has the additional effect of removing any rubbish. Notably he only removed the rubbish that was inside this defined area. The clearing of bush and the defining of usable clear space have a direct link to how they belong, because it defines an area in which they have more control. All camps that have used this strategy in the territorialisation of space present some functions that are inward facing from this edge, with important functions sitting within the edge and less important functions sitting outside of this edge. This is exemplified in Camp 2 with the location of the clothes line and Camp 1 with the location of the sunbed. In other instances there are programmes that sit outside the defined edge that require a completely different environment. For example Camp 6 locates the toilet outside of this edge, not because it is less important but rather because it requires a different condition to be comfortable. The

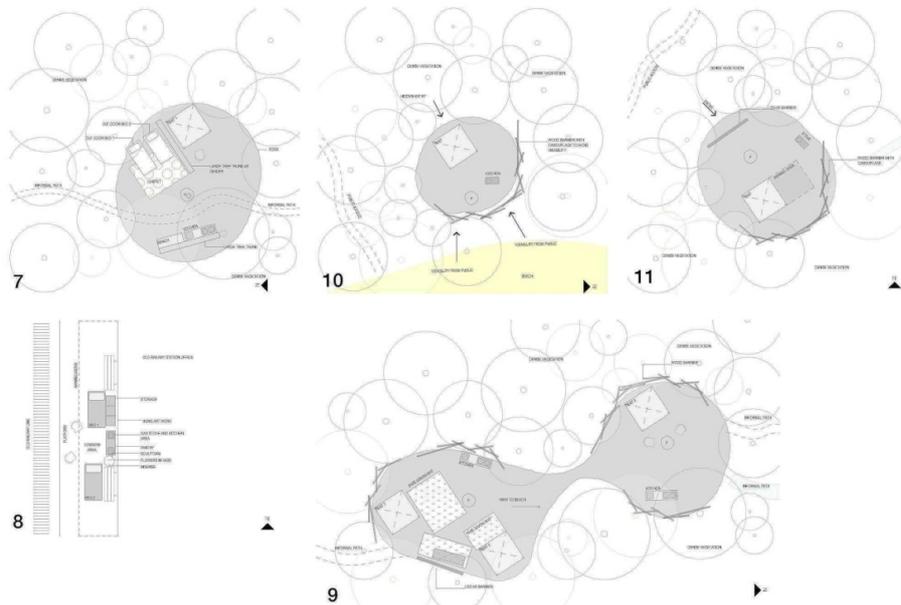
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edges act as parameters in which we can achieve a certain condition, a condition that is usually better than outside this edge.



FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1:100

Fig. 3. Camp 1-6



FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1:100

Fig. 4. Camps 7-11

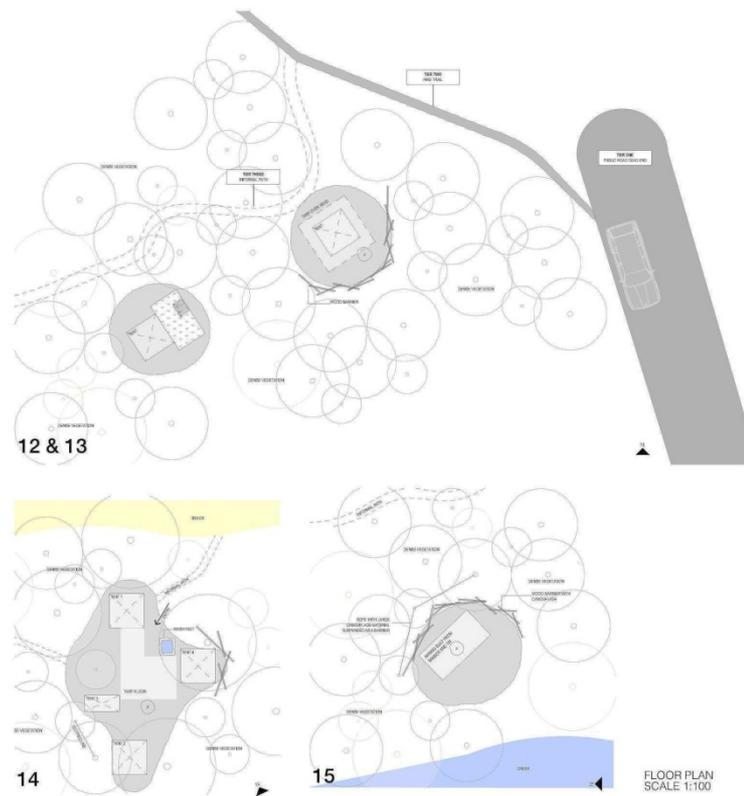


Fig. 5. Camps 12-15

Despite the few instances where programmes sit outside of the edge, it is clear that programmes usually sit inward facing from this edge, ensuring a border between functions and the outside world. There is one instance where this border is penetrated by the outside world as demonstrated in Camp 7 (Figure 4). The occupant has made clear space with an edge, defining territory in a typical sense as previously discussed, however has also allowed a public path to penetrate this territory. The public path divides the kitchen and sleeping zones. Camp 9 shows this relationship to the path as well, rather than sitting to the side, the path penetrates the territory. In this sense, it has a more open conversation with the broader community, with a more outward facing programme. It is perhaps an example of people who feel they do belong, not fazed by the passive surveillance of the broader community.

Even with these outliers in the data, there is an overwhelming evidence of bush and shrub clearing in defining territory. The answer “*the view of my backyard*” given by a conventional home resident, helps understand the results as typically a defined edge to our land contributes to our sense of territory. For this participant, large trees line the backyard defining his territory, ensuring all of the programme is inward facing from this edge.

#### 4.2 Security

It is important to distinguish between those who design for security and those who design for a sense of security. “Walls protect people not from barbarians, but from anxieties and fears, which can often be more terrible than the worst vandals.” (Bradatan, 2011). This

section discusses how barriers contribute to physical security in deterring people but also in contributing to the psychological feeling of sanctuary embedded in the symbolic nature of a wall. Physical and nonphysical aspects have been specifically examined.

The strategy of using man made barriers is a common determinant in achieving security demonstrated in Camps 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 (Figures 3- 5). Investigation reveals that these barriers help distinguish between those who value *being* secure and those who value *feeling* secure (Schneier, 2008). Camps 3, 10 and 15 demonstrate the physical determinant of *being* secure. For instance, Camp 3 utilises barriers in an anti-arrival strategy (Figure 3). There is a true defence mechanism at work here that not only aims to exclude authorities but also deter the general public. Human-made interventions, such as barriers made up of fallen timber and logs, are strategically placed in the path attempting to deter people from finding the camp. This illustrates three levels of defence to achieve security. Each stage is getting more robust with more engineering integrity. Unsurprisingly people who live in this camp were not interested in interviews.

Camp 15 also demonstrates the anti-arrival sequence, with no clear access route leading to the camp and multiple layers of defence. Another example of this physical deterrence is evident in Camp 10 (Figure 4), where the barrier precludes views from the public beach. Additionally, the camper uses the strategy of deflating his tent during the day to avoid people finding his location.

Paths and access routes play a large role into the security of a camp as many of these are illegal and depend on people not finding them. Lefebvre (1972) in his analysis of the production of space and its link to state explains that “the state uses space in such a way that it is in control of places.” Lefebvre alludes to the prohibited nature of place-making in state owned land. This is one of the largest social forces that impact on the security risk for these camps. Authorities retain the right to remove many of these camps and the inhabitants stand a chance of getting a fine, therefore anonymity is crucial. This strategy attempts to combat the physical security needs of anti-human interaction. Perhaps this is evidence of people who feel they don't belong? These barriers attempt to satisfy a material need for being safe, but what of feeling safe?

Schneier (2008) explains that the reality of security and the feeling of security, although being related, are certainly not the same. Previously this paper has discussed how people attempt to physically deter danger. Schneier (2008) suggests that this may contribute to the feeling of security but not absolutely. How one achieves a sense of security rather than physically being secure is demonstrated in the barriers of Camps 1, 9, 11, 13 and 14 (Figure 3- 5). Camp 1 for instance is one of the most obvious camps, making little attempt to conceal its entry. If its residents were to follow Camp 3's strategies then they would put barriers up towards the path to avoid people entering but that is not the purpose. The barrier curves overhead creating an enclosed feeling defining the back of the camp compared to the openness of the front; it is here that one can sit with their back to a wall and focus attention toward the entry. This psychological feeling of security can be attributed to the theory of prospect and refuge. This theory describes “why certain environments feel secure and thereby meet basic human psychological needs” as these environments allow people to “observe (prospect) without being seen (refuge)” (Dosen & Ostwald, 2013). The curved barrier focuses attention toward the only entry and exit providing more control over who enters and exits.

To put it simply, people like to have their backs to a wall. To do this, a front and a back need to be defined. The effect this 'wall' has on the feeling of security can be

demonstrated in the placing of vulnerable functions against these barriers. This is evident in Camps 1, 9, 11, 13 and 14, where sleeping areas are located adjacent to walls with less emphasis on the protection of the entry. The only time this psychological determinant isn't used is when the physical need for security trumps the psychological need for sanctuary. As this method is more common, it can be learnt from this behaviour that *usually* people place importance on the psychological feeling of security rather than the physical need of deterring danger.

#### 4.3 Hierarchy

There is an interesting relationship between spatial reality and authority. How architecture can be read to interpret social behaviour has been noted by Rapoport (1969) in his reference to hierarchy and the furniture arrangement of a courtroom: a room can be read from the position of the defendant to the power of the prosecutor (Rapoport, 1969). As such, spatial arrangements such as floor plans are useful to understand the hierarchy being implemented. The hierarchy criterion was investigated through the analysis of floor plans, using the organisational mapping.

One of Byron Shire's Indigenous houseless community members yelled to one visitor "What have I told you, about crossing the middle of the circle. Go around the circle boy." In indigenous culture the yarning circle is a space of equal rights among members, a place people can listen and be heard equally (Roth, 1897; Memmott, 1979; Long, 2005). To ensure no dialogues are broken, one must go around the circle, not through it. One of the most common floor plans evident in the bush tent communities is the circle-shape plan, and the centralised plan with ceremony in the middle. Camps 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 all demonstrate these features with the circular 'edge' and programme within. Camp 1 is an example of private zones radiating off a central ceremonial zone. Even camps that don't adopt the circular 'edge', still use this radial shape in the organisation of programme as demonstrated in Camps 3, 6 and 14 (Figure 3 & 5). As with many cultures, including the Indigenous culture, the circle in social setting provides equal hierarchy to its members. It contributes to the idea of belonging as it encourages equal rights for all. There are also examples of decentralised plans in Camps 4 and 5 (Figure 3). It was found that they conveyed other meanings influencing the feelings of belonging. Primarily, hierarchy can only exist if people are from the same group. In order to be ranked within an organisation, one must be part of it. The members in Camps 4 and 5 are individuals, thus not fitting within the previous model. Yet, without taking on the circle plan, these members still achieve a sense of equality as they distinguish themselves from each other ensuring hierarchy cannot occur. This dissociation undermines any attempt at authority. It was also observed that the role of guests within the social structure of a space can be read from the plan. In the case of Camp 8, there are always seats available for guests, exclusively intended for the visitor and never for the host. By simply observing how chairs are laid out, a clear sense of hierarchy can be divined. Rapoport (1969) made this evident in his example of the position and style of two chairs in a psychiatric room. It is clear from this who is the patient and who is the therapist. If we can read what role we play from simply looking at two chairs, what does this mean for Camp 8? It was observed during social intercourse, that the two men sit on their mattress which is considerably lower and doubles as a seat that faces the common area. The two chairs that are offered to the visitors sit considerably higher and help define the common area in the middle.

One could suggest that this setting reflects on the humbleness of the hosts, showing the importance one has in socialization over personal comfort.

#### 4.4 Privacy

Privacy can be understood through two lenses as described by Lessig (1998). Firstly, through the parts of anyone's life that are *monitored*, secondly through parts that can be *searched* (Lessig, 1998). To be *monitored* is simply to be seen walking down the street, passive surveillance of person and programme in the public realm, while to be *searched* involves the surveillance of programme in the private realm. As these communities attempt to create private space in the public realm, this section will discuss how private spaces are *monitored* and how private spaces are *searched*.

The two lenses that describe space's relationship to privacy can be understood as camps that are *monitored* to breach privacy and camps that would need to be *searched* to breach privacy. There is a clear correlation between the physical determinant for security and the *searched* component of privacy, as demonstrated in Camps 3, 10 and 15. It can be understood that strategies that are designed to deter public vicariously address the issue of public surveillance and create private spaces that would need to be *searched* to be breached. This encourages the more obvious thought that the more secure the space, the more private it is. Similarly, it can be noted that those who design spaces using the psychological determinant for security have more public campsites, less concerned with the passive surveillance from others as demonstrated in Camps 1, 9, 11 and 13. These camps are examples of life being *monitored*.

*Monitoring* usually infers a transient passage where a person performing a certain function can be seen and then shortly forgotten (Lessig, 1998). For those camps adjacent to paths, more frequent opportunities of short lived monitoring of life are enabled. This is evident in 11 out of 15 camps. However, there are outliers in this data. For example, despite Camp 2 being located along an informal path, there is a clear strategy being implemented to avoid monitoring and it would need to be *searched* in order to breach privacy. Colourful sheets are used to create a barrier between the inside and the outside world, conversely their colourfulness does little to hide the fact there is a camp, in fact they are the main identifiers for the camp's existence. The use of these large spanning sheets results in little visibility into the programme from an outsider's perspective. These sheets successfully create a visually private space in the public realm. It must be noted that this camp also shows a cleared space with an edge, which the sheets sit outside of this defined territory, thus emphasising their purpose of creating privacy. With the proximity to the path, it can be hypothesized that the camper is primarily concerned with visual protection. Recent literature, however, also suggests that "dense wooded areas, may not be restorative, "as they can evoke a sense of fear of getting lost, or being attacked and they may require concentration to find one way around" (Gatersleben & Andrews, 2013). It is, therefore, also possible that the visual barrier might be for the occupant's sense of psychological well-being, rather than symbolising a restriction for others. Regardless, this is a humble camp with evidence of minimal programming, yet great emphasis has been put into creating a sense of privacy. It is clear that visual privacy is a contributing concept into how people create home without having walls.

#### 4.5 Comfort

Baan's photographs provide great insight into the architectural choices that contribute to human comfort. In one example, he depicts a family who has self-built their dwelling using masonry as their construction material for walls, to which they apply a pattern of masonry wallpaper (Baan, 2013). Many of these informal settlements show great effort being put into the condition of the homes, creating surfaces that are clean and consistent. This is particularly evident in Camp 9 and 12. Like many others mentioned before, these camps' residents have raked a clear space and created an edge, ensuring the removal of all dune grasses and unwanted vegetation. After this, Astro turf (a kind of fake plastic grass) has been laid. The removal of grass, then its replacement with 'fake grass' or by the application of 'fake bricks' on a brick wall, shows the importance that these veneers have on human comfort. Not only they are more manageable as a material but they also act as layers in which people can achieve a condition that is closer to perfect with a smaller amount of effort.

Another aspect within the comfort category concerns the method of access and exit from one's place. As previously discussed, the idea of prospect and refuge can lead to one way entry and exit into camps which in turn helps define and front and a back but also gives occupants more control over people who might visit. Entrances and exits also act as symbolic thresholds between two worlds. The arrival sequence and how one can feel welcomed by a home contributes to that relief of arriving home. Camps 1, 6, 11 and 14 demonstrate a formalised entry. In Camp 6 there are pots of flowers aligned in a row, marking the entrance into the camp. Camp 1 shows a similar strategy with a welcome mat to mark the entrance. For Camp 11, there is a log to distinguish this threshold: to step over the log would be to enter into *their* space. Entrances historically hold significant meaning in defining a passageway from one place to another. Defining the entry encourages the thought that one is traveling from a space into a *place*. Not only does it define the space, but it shows how it has been appropriated.

Resilience and ingenuity have been observed to improve comfort. For example, the two residents of Camp 6 are striving for self-reliance to minimise dependence on town resources with a composting toilet and productive veggie garden. One camper explained: "It took two years to get this camp like this, we don't get much so when we had a little [money] we would invest it back into the camp, slowly, slowly we could buy a tent then another and so on." These gentlemen lived here for over five years. The investment back into the living condition instils a sense of permanency, and it contributes to a self-sustaining environment. It also contributes to the sense of comfort as it makes services such as toilets and food resources more readily available. On a less obvious note, the investment into sanitation and food supplies add to the legitimacy of the camp, thus increasing the feeling of comfort.

This research has previously mentioned comfort from a design perspective and how it helps achieve psychological wellbeing. We have learnt of the physical interventions that contribute to these feelings of comfort but have yet to mention shelter, despite this being a fundamental element of habitation. All settlements have used shelter in some form or another within their camps. It is one of the most identifiable aspects of creating place as it helps meet basic needs for survival. There is a clear relationship between vulnerability and shelter, exemplified in any natural disaster where the erection of emergency shelter is a priority for civilians. Despite this not one person from the houseless community mentioned anything about the physical necessity for shelter and its impact on the essence

of home, despite us knowing the critical relationship shelter has with habitable space. This echoes the ABS (2017) definition of homelessness as one can have a roof over one's head and still be homeless, further questioning shelter's role in the concept of home.

This study has demonstrated that the most common use for shelter is for the sleeping zones with 14 out of 15 camps showing the clear relationship between sleep and shelter. If using shelter is separated as a determinant for sleep, it can be more easily understood which other aspects of the programme make people feel most vulnerable. When one camper was asked *Why don't you sleep in the tent?* he explained "how else do you see the stars?" Camp 7 uses shelter to protect dry goods and food rather than sleep. This demonstrates that for this particular resident, food is valued as a more vulnerable aspect of his programme compared to the act of sleeping. Similarly, in camp 15, the occupant has used shelter to cover the fire. The idea of using shelter to protect parts of the programme that are vulnerable provide great comfort since it satisfies the inherent attitude to protect aspects that are weaker or more important.

#### 4.6 Symbolism

Regarding the question, *what does home mean to you?* some answers are harder to categorise in an architectural sense because they refer to ontological meanings of home and feeling such as freedom or happiness. How then to analyse spatial organisation and evaluate whether this space achieves freedom or happiness for instance? Previously these notions have been discussed through the key physical interventions, such as defining edges, maintaining clear space, construction of barriers and how they give control to the user. These feelings have been discussed as a by-product of controlling the environment. Yet there is also a contributing factor that sits outside the realm of environmental control. Literature has demonstrated when primitive man built, it wasn't necessarily the climate, technology or materials that governed its form (Rapoport, 1969). Mumford suggested this idea as he explained that humans made symbols before making tools (Rapoport, 1969). In 1772, when a castaway Eskimo was found,

*"she had produced art objects, decorated her clothing and so on while the Eskimo has had to reduce life to the bare essentials, art and poetry are still an essential part of that life."*  
(Kepes, 1966; Rapoport, 1969)

True memorable space is one that holds significant symbolism, and reflects part of who we are. This is not necessarily derived from basic needs for shelter or privacy for instance. This section will look closer into the residents' behaviours to identify how symbolism plays a role in place-making and how this can be read from the architecture of the camps.

Camp 8 exemplifies the significance of symbolism on place-making. This camp is located in the most public location, yet there has been no attempt at defining space, creating barriers or privatizing. One section of the old existing building is covered in hung art works. Below is a large pot with incense burning with flowers in a vase, sculptures and more art. The plan area of the camp is far less developed than what has been discussed in the bush tent communities. However it is in its furnishing that the idea is encouraged that symbolism through art is essential, even with the bare minimum, as this camp demonstrates.

A large part about being home is associated with being in a space that is designed primarily around your habits. Habits and routine make up part of the behavioural component that contributes to the idea of 'being home'. In Camp 8, there is evidence of this routine with the lighting of incense upon the arrival of guests. Camp 15 demonstrates the significance of ritual in the arrival sequence in the camp. The entry is marked with a sunken pit lined with a plastic tarp that is filled with water. As members of this camp enter, they wash their feet to avoid bringing in any sand. This is the equivalent of taking your shoes off in a conventional house. Other rituals can be noted in plans such as Camp 5 attention to vegetable garden and Camp 4 ability to check the surf from the look out. Habits and rituals are verbs. It's the person regularly *performing* programme that gives place significance and contributes to the familiarity and comfort of home.

The fire is a sacred element in Australian Indigenous culture. It is a symbol of togetherness, acting as key focal point around which people gather and share knowledge (Roth, 1897; Memmott, 1979; Long, 2005). Both non-Indigenous and Indigenous members in this study gave great emphasis on the fire beyond its utilitarian purpose. All bush camps in this study use fire as a determinant for place-making. While some camps demonstrate its utilitarian use for cooking as illustrated in Camps 2 and 4, all others use fire for its symbolic nature in social gatherings. The separation of cooking space and fire space emphasis this difference in programme as demonstrated in Camps 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. While kitchen areas often get placed around the edge of camps, fire is often located in the centre, the heart of the circle. Although the kitchen and fire are technically very similar, the symbolic significance of the fire can be read in the planning of these informal settlements. The circular clear space surrounding the fire can allude to the type of behaviour that is expected, people gathering.

#### 4.7 Connection

This study has focused on a group of people who live outside the norm of a conventional house. In many ways, these people are seen as marginalised community members who upon first glance appear to seek isolation. Mapping these communities demonstrated, however, that a clear pattern emerges in the location of these camps that defies this preconceived idea of disconnection. For example, in Camp 12 and 13, like many other camps, it is evident that there are three tiers of access that govern the placements of camps. First tier is via any public road with full access and high amounts of foot traffic. The second tier diverts off this main road and consists usually of a track or informal path that sees a small amount of foot traffic. This second tier usually has a limited purpose such as fire trails with less people using the space. The third tier is an informal track, usually made by occupant or by others before. This track sees very little foot traffic with no reason for people to use it other than the occupant getting to their camp. It is in this tier that people often place their camps. Out of 15 camps reviewed 10 showed to be in this threshold. Whilst still maintaining a reasonable distance to town, these camps could bury themselves deeper in the bush and avoid all connection, another 4 or 5 tracks deep perhaps. Out of 15 reviewed only 4 were located in this deeper threshold. Therefore, most camps locate themselves *just* out of sight, whilst still maintain a connection to town. This threshold of course demonstrates the dependence on town for resources but less obviously teaches us about human beings inherent need for social connection, even at the risk of being found. This demonstrates that people value connection to community more than they value the security and anonymity of their camp.

## **5. Conclusion**

In North Africa, at some point in history the French piped water to a series of villages. This caused dissatisfaction among the Muslim women as their only chance to socialise had been taken away. They were kept inside mostly and the daily trip to the village well was their only chance to see others and socialise. The Muslim women valued their social connection over the advances in technology (Rapoport, 1969). Similarly, this research has revealed that we cannot assume that human values are the same and that research acts as a contributor to unveil the less obvious nature of the human condition. Home remains a structured place consisting of habits and physical features, even when the approach is least conventional.

For instance, by analysing where campers put barriers, it was discovered that people more often value feeling safe over actually being safe. By analysing access routes, the research showed that these people value connection to community, despite running the risk of being discovered. This was also evident in the defining of entries and how formalising these thresholds contribute symbolically to the sense of home. This research also showed that usually people value social connection over personal comfort as read through the hierarchy of chairs in camps sheets hanging. Perhaps an even less obvious value was noted in the camps that contained the bare minimum but endeavoured to decorate space with art despite the lack of utilitarian purpose in doing this for survival. This research also revealed some obvious traits of the human condition. For example bush clearing and edge defining stand as a consistent determinant for the spatial territorialising. This edge and clear space are usually in the form of a circle with radial planning and ceremony in the middle. This suggests an egalitarian use of space between members. Knowing this definition of an 'inside' and 'outside' world, it clarified how people attempt to achieve a condition that is closer to perfect with smaller amounts of effort and means. This is demonstrated in the application of veneers and how settlers condition space.

Although the vulnerability of programme is varied, the use of shelter for protection is consistent. This is demonstrated in the correlation between shelter and sleep. There is also a clear correlation between privacy and security, with those who use the physical determinant for security having more private spaces and those who used the psychological determinant for security have less private spaces. The patterns of the bush techniques provide a language that helps us understand what people value and what it is to belong.

This ground up research aims to validate every human experience. Maybe the final finding from this research is that we cannot improve these conditions without recognising the people who live in them and understanding their values. By understanding human values, we give designers and architects more of an opportunity to design in a meaningful way in the future. In tackling the homelessness crises in Australia today, many efforts are focused on providing the physical need for shelter. Whilst this is an admirable and important challenge to address, we must also consider belonging from a more holistic view. This research has revealed human values that often surpass the physical need for shelter, therefore as architects we need to reevaluate our concept of home, one that can sit outside of four walls and a pitched roof. The most important lesson from this study is the need for in depth consultation with members of the communities as to not assume these values. It has become clear that belonging more often sits outside the realms of physical shelter and the challenge for architects is to address home from the perspective

of those who use public space to survive. It is disrespectful to assume we know how people should live and this could inhibit efforts made to improve the lives of these people. In conclusion, this research highlighted the integrated relationship that the community members who were included in the study have with public space, and the importance of town centres to provide sustainability to these community members. The claim by community members for freedom or adventure is easily denounced by our wider society, so further investigation needs to be conducted to determine to what extent one can be nomadic and accepted as such, among other questions.

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## Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Table of the answers to question 1 and 2  
(female participants in red; conventional home residents in blue).

Questions/ respondents	Q1- Where is home?	Q2- What does home mean to you?
R1	<i>Byron bay has been my home for over 22 years</i>	<i>Repeated above</i>
R2	-	<i>"I was brought up next to the ocean. I'm not homeless I choose a life of adventure. I have a different perspective.</i>
R3	<i>The Bush</i>	<i>The Bush</i>
R4	<i>Been in Byron 13 years</i>	<i>Independence</i>
R5		
<b>R6</b>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Home is family, a place of safety and love</i>
<b>R7</b>	<i>Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere</i>	<i>Safety, family and friends, to feel like you belong by contributing equally. Having a connection to those you live with</i>
<b>R8</b>	<i>Here</i>	<i>Security, comfort, somewhere I can relax. This land called me in</i>
R9	-	<i>Home is more of a state of mind, it's a comfortable state of mind</i>
R10	-	<i>A Place we gather around the fire</i>
<b>R11</b>	-	<i>Family</i>
<b>R12</b>	-	<i>Childhood roots, where you come from. The family house</i>
R13		<i>A place I feel loved.</i>
<b>R14</b>	<i>A place that is my own</i>	<i>Somewhere I can be myself</i>
<b>R15</b>	<i>Where I am at the moment</i>	<i>It's my place of sanctuary. My cave, where I belong.</i>
<b>R16</b>	<i>Melbourne</i>	<i>It's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort</i>
R17	<i>Melbourne, where my family is</i>	<i>For me it such a significant home because I grew up there, that's where my address is, Family and security knowing its always there, Familiarity is important. My memories are there. Before it was renovated, you could recall more memories." It's still home but that's not where the memories were made.</i>
<b>R18</b>	<i>Where my husband and happiness is</i>	<i>Sense of connection with place or/and people. It's a Recipe. A place I can be totally at peace.</i>
R19	<i>Australia</i>	<i>The view of my backyard</i>
R20	<i>Byron and England I suppose</i>	<i>Somewhere its private and my own space</i>

APPENDIX 2: Table of the answers to questions 3 to 7 (female participants in red).

	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
R1	<i>In this camp, only a month or so. I have lived in other camps for over 5 years. Had the whole set up behind the youth centre</i>	<i>Behind the youth centre.</i>	<i>Sam* Been living together for years, Lived together in the camp behind the youth centre as well</i>	<i>Sleep here hang out here mostly. Buy food from town and cook it on our stove. We get water from taps around town but many have had their tops taken off. Wash at the laundry matt, I know the guy, lets us do our cutlery as well. Monday at the Community Centre we can have proper showers.</i>	<i>When we lived in the camp behind the Youth centre, we had a gust tent, for back packers and so on, if I invited someone and Sam* didn't like his vibe then the person would have to leave. Both of us had to be okay with the new member of the group.”  “We kept the place clean as well, raked up leaves always had fresh flowers on the table, We want to place looking nice you know?”</i>
R2	<i>Whole of my adult life, I have been moving around heaps within the area.</i>	<i>No been mostly on the move, all I have is on my back</i>	<i>I live alone</i>	<i>I have a little set up in the bush at the moment, I have a little gas cooker I can cook and boil water. I come into town to see people or go to the beach to wash.</i>	<i>No rules, that's why I live how I live.</i>
R3	<i>I live behind the youth centre, been there for a year or so</i>	<i>Yeah Sydney.</i>	<i>Live alone, sometimes with others.</i>	<i>Sleep wherever, Get water from taps that haven't had the tops taken off. See people in town, Live in the bush</i>	-
R4	<i>Two weeks in this spot</i>	-	<i>Live alone, but I got mates who live in these bushes close by, I can't tell you where though</i>	<i>Mostly people come to my car here and we have parties. Then they go back to their tent, I need to get a new battery because everyone comes here to use my power.</i>	<i>No, that's why I am here!</i>
R5					

What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us

<b>R6</b>	One month	All over	-	My tent is behind the pine tree, we eat and socialise around the fire	Protocols- anyone new must meet Louis first.
<b>R7</b>	Don't live here, but I used to	-	Louis Cook and those who have followed her	I had a little tent, we eat and drink and socialise around the fire. We get water from town. Get groceries that are either donated or bought from town	The fire is sacred in indigenous culture
<b>R8</b>	One year	-	Friends and Family	Currently my Hob house is getting built so I will have a permanent place I can settle into	The fire is sacred in indigenous culture.