



Stuck in the Heat:

Lived Experiences of Public Housing Tenants in the Kimberley

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KEY POINTS The extreme heat in the Kimberley is felt more by public housing tenants who face many barriers to coping with the heat. Tenants struggle to keep temperatures down in poor quality housing, are under financial stress as they try to afford air conditioners and power bills and they feel the impacts of heat stress on daily health and wellbeing. ***They are 'stuck in the heat'.***

Daily temperatures over **35°C** are dangerous to human health - it reaches 35°C **207 days a year** in Kununurra.

78% of respondents to the KCLS housing survey said their houses are too hot all of the time in hotter months of the year.

The homelessness rate in the Kimberley is **nine times the WA average**, meaning houses are overcrowded and hotter.



GROH Housing



Public Housing Tenants



Department of Communities manage Public Housing and Government Employee Accommodation (GROH Housing) in the Kimberley. GROH get air conditioners and an energy subsidy, public housing tenants do not.

Low-income households spend more than

10%

of their disposable income on electricity, compared to an average of 4% of spending for an average household.

In the three hottest climate zones in Australia

4.5% - 9.1%

of all deaths were associated with **heat related mortality**. There is currently no specific data for the Kimberley on heat related deaths.

Lived Experience Feedback from Tenants in the Kimberley

Keeping the temperature down inside is impossible: Tenants feel their housing is not built for the climate they live in. Tenants have outstanding maintenance issues that keep their houses hot. Tenants end up buying cheap, poor quality air conditioners and struggle to pay bills and stay connected to power.

Being exposed to heat has been found to cause stress and illness. Tenants told us they struggle to sleep, manage illnesses, and keep their kids healthy. They see more stress and conflict in the community.

What tenants said

I think the heat comes in through all the cracks. The house is dead old... this part, that thing is falling to bits.

You pay so much rent living in those houses, and it's so hot. You can't have the air conditioner on all day because your bill comes in. It's hard.

It's just so hot I just sweat all the time. I can't go outside otherwise I will start having fits with the heat.

The heat] makes me feel anxious and depressed. I start having psychosis during the heat, it makes it much harder to control.

What should be done



Improve access to air conditioning



Subsidise the cost of electricity



Deliver Solar Energy to ease financial pressure



Provide education and support to tenants



Address overcrowding - more roofs over heads



Improve liveability and energy efficiency of housing



Introduce minimum energy efficiency standards

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