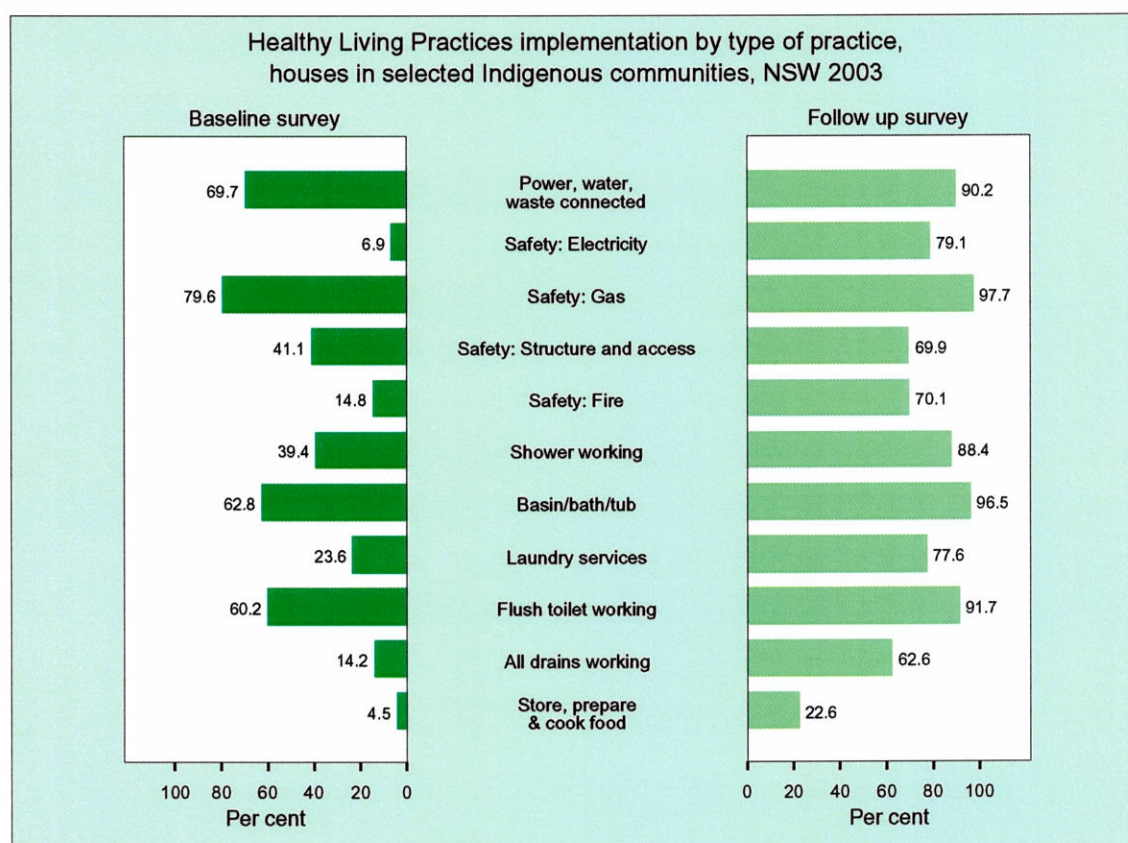


Report of the New South Wales Chief Health Officer

Environment

Healthy Living Practices in Indigenous houses



Healthy Living Practices implementation by type of practice, houses in selected
Indigenous communities, NSW 2003

	Baseline survey Number	Baseline survey Per cent	Follow up survey Number	Follow up survey Per cent
Power, water, waste connected	343	69.7	444	90.2
Safety: Electricity	34	6.9	389	79.1
Safety: Gas	70	79.6	86	97.7
Safety: Structure and access	202	41.1	344	69.9
Safety: Fire	73	14.8	345	70.1
Shower working	193	39.4	433	88.4
Basin/bath/tub	309	62.8	475	96.5
Laundry services	116	23.6	381	77.6
Flush toilet working	296	60.2	451	91.7
All drains working	70	14.2	308	62.6
Store, prepare & cook food	22	4.5	111	22.6

Note: Follow up survey (Fix2) is conducted 6-12 months after the baseline survey (Fix1). 492 houses were included in analysis. 88 houses had gas connected and were assessed for gas safety.

Source: Healthy Living Practices baseline (Fix1) and follow up (Fix2) Surveys, Environmental Health Branch, NSW Health Department.

A new indicator derived from data from the Housing for Health Program has been included in the Environmental Health chapter for the first time. The Housing for Health program aims to assess, repair or replace health hardware so that houses are safe and the occupants have the ability to carry out healthy living practices. It aims to improve the health status of Aboriginal people, particularly children. Housing for Health has been delivered to Aboriginal communities in NSW through the Aboriginal Communities Development Program. Between 1998 and 2003, 20 community projects have been conducted under this program.

Two surveys were conducted on 492 houses in remote communities in NSW six months apart. The first survey involved the simultaneous collection of data that identified problems in the key areas of Safety (electrical, gas, structural and fire) and Healthy living practices (including facilities for washing people, washing clothes, removing sewage and waste and improving nutrition) and on-the-spot maintenance. This was followed by a capital works program and follow-up survey to assess improvements and a further maintenance program.

Between the two surveys major improvements were demonstrated in houses in Safety: 20% improvement in power, water and waste connected; 71% improvement in electrical safety; just under 30% improvement in structural safety; and Healthy living practices: 30% improvement in flushing toilets working; more than 50% improvement in laundry services and 45% improvement in working showers. The worst area in both surveys were having functioning facilities to store, prepare and cook food adequately (4.5% of houses achieved the required standard in the first survey but only 23% achieved the standard in the second survey).

For more information: Pholeros, Paul; Rianow, Stephan; Torzillo, Paul. *Housing for Health: Towards a Health Living Environment for Aboriginal Australia*. Healthabitat: Newport Beach, 1993.

Department of Family and Community Services. *National Indigenous Housing Guide* (2nd edition) Canberra:Commonwealth of Australia, 2003.

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