



Housing and Urban Research Institute Western Australia

February 2007 Newsletter

The Housing and Urban Research Institute undertakes research and conducts consulting work for a range of potential clients which include the private and public sectors, academic institutions and NGOs regarding housing and urban issues. If you wish to discuss a piece of research regarding housing or urban and regional issues you need conducted, please contact Professor Fiona McKenzie at the Housing and Urban Research Institute of Western Australia on 9266 1087.

1. How can the Benefits of Housing Regeneration Programs be Sustained?

AHURI Research & Policy Bulletin Issue 86.

One of the major challenges faced by state housing authorities engaged in housing estate regeneration/renewal programs is to sustain the benefits that accrue from an initial injection of resources. Research undertaken in the UK (Fordham: 1995) suggests that the most effective strategies are those that establish a set of exit or forward policies to consolidate and build upon achievements after a funding program has formally expired. Exit or forward strategies is the term used to describe the set of policies and practices that can be deployed by housing departments to sustain regeneration at the end of a specific program.

Physical renewal initiatives, tenure diversification and community participation schemes are all examples of practices now being deployed by state housing departments (SHAs). However, since funding arrangements for renewal/regeneration programs are often fixed for a limited period, it can be difficult to keep momentum going or prevent problems returning once the regeneration program has expired. Whilst each exit strategy must be individually designed to deal with the specific issues that arise in any program, studies undertaken in the UK suggest that most successful exit

strategies are in place at the start of the program or shortly after its inception.

This project sought to develop an evidence base by exploring the utility of exit strategies and developing appropriate models that can be deployed in Australian regeneration projects. The aims of the research were: To establish the practices currently deployed by Australian state housing authorities to secure sustainability once housing renewal/regeneration projects have been completed. To explore the utility of exit strategy models as a vehicle for assisting long term sustainability in the Australian context. To develop appropriate exit strategy models for housing renewal/regeneration programs that can assist state housing authorities to secure the longer term benefits of renewal activity.

Click the link http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap_issue_86 to download Research and Policy Bulletin: Issue 86: *How can the benefits of housing regeneration programs be sustained?*

2. Australian and Urban Research Institute Positioning Paper: **The Costs and Benefits of Using Private Housing as the 'Home Base' for Care for Older People: A Systematic Literature Review**

This paper outlines research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute University of Sydney Research Centre into the relationships between the costs and benefits of using private housing as the "home base" for care for older people.

Project: [Costs and benefits of housing as the 'home base' for older people](#)

Theme: [Care and Support Services](#)

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/search.asp?sitekeywords=60313&CurrentPage=1>

3. Australian and Urban Research Institute Positioning Paper: **Aboriginal Housing Careers in Western Australian Towns and Cities**

The aim of this project is to provide a qualitative and retrospective understanding of the housing careers of Indigenous urban households. It is surmised that the housing careers of Indigenous urban households differs from Non-Indigenous households, and the research project will elicit these differences by understanding the influences, motivations, experiences, decisions, and choices made by Indigenous urban households; to identify access issues and barriers; and the affect of household formation, economic participation and family and community responsibilities on housing careers.

Project: [The Housing Careers of Indigenous Urban Households](#)

Theme: [Indigenous Housing](#)

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/search.asp?sitekeywords=housing+careers&CurrentPage=1>

4. **AHURI POLICY BULLETIN #85 Housing Assistance And Disadvantaged Places**

Lyn Luxford

With the exception of recent regeneration activities on some public housing estates, housing assistance policies and programs in Australia have not explicitly considered their effects on disadvantaged places.

This research synthesis bulletin considers some of the unintended consequences. The bulletin also reviews evidence of the geography of disadvantage arising from the targeting of housing assistance to those most in need. It examines the interaction between people and place. It examines the eligibility, targeting, allocations, asset management and regeneration policies and programs of State Housing Authorities (SHAs).

It examines the geographic outcomes of the Australian Government's Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) program.

The socio-spatial effects of these policies and programs are considered under three headings:

1. places of disadvantage,
2. place-based stigma, and
3. physical access to employment

For more information, go to:

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=rap_issue_85 to download the policy bulletin

**5. AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin, Issue 84:
Financing Affordable Housing: A Critical Comparative Review Of The
United Kingdom And Australia**

Private investment in social and affordable housing has increased significantly in the United Kingdom over the past thirty years. The reverse is true for Australia.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/10309>

**6. The Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness Of Homelessness
Prevention And Assistance Programs (Positioning Paper)**

This project provides an analysis of the incremental benefits and whole-of-government budgetary costs of both providing and not providing assistance to homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. The study is focused on Western Australia, and involves collaboration with various government departments in analysing administrative source data.

For more information, go to:

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/80306_pp

**7. The Implications of Loss of a Partner For Older Private Renters
(Positioning Paper)**

This project seeks to understand the housing consequences of divorce, separation or the death of a partner on older private renters on income support. A person on income support experiencing loss of their partner

might as a consequence experience a drop in the amount of household income they receive.

For more information, go to:

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30315_pp

8. Levers to Promote Affordable Housing in the Northern Territory Shelter NT

Access to appropriate, secure and affordable housing is considered to be the right of every Australian however over the last decade many are finding themselves struggling to find affordable and appropriate housing.

NT Shelter recently commissioned SGS Economics and Planning to investigate options to expand the supply of affordable housing in the NT – especially in relation to the lower end of the market for low income to moderate householders hoping to rent or buy.

Recent national trends show;

- Average house prices have doubled
- The proportion of first home buyers has fallen by 20%
- Average monthly new loan repayments have risen by 50%
- The proportion of low rent properties has reduced by 15%
- Opportunities to rent public housing have fallen by 30%
- Rents are rising and vacancy rates are the lowest in decades
- At least $\frac{3}{4}$ million lower income households have housing costs above the affordability benchmark of 30% of household income and are thereby deemed to be in 'housing stress'.

In the NT:

- Median house prices in Darwin have increased 114% over the past 6 years and in Alice Springs by 75% over 6 years (REINT September 06)
- Our proportion of home ownership in 2004 was 42% compared with 66% Australia wide and is dropping
- From the 2001 census our rate of homelessness at 288 per10,000 population was the highest in Australia and almost 4 times higher than the next highest state (Qld)

- At the 2001 census approximately 64% of lower income households were considered to be in 'housing stress' which is 50% higher than the national average of 43%.

NT Shelter President John Nai Smith said "The increasingly unaffordable nature of the private market is putting unprecedented pressure on low income households and the already stretched public housing system."

"This research is important for the Territory in that it has evaluated a number of levers and strategies that could be brought to bear to influence housing market efficiency and increase the supply of Affordable Housing for the future."

NT Shelter Executive Officer Toni Vine Bromley said "With a buoyant NT economy, housing costs in the Territory are increasing with median house prices in Darwin at \$385,000 and median weekly rents between \$300 and \$400."

"Similar trends interstate have all States and Territories now looking to implement Affordable Housing strategies.

"With funding from Territory Housing, NT Shelter commissioned this research to investigate what levers and actions might be considered appropriate for the Territory with particular reference to our scale and unique characteristics".

"The report is stage 1 in a process investigating what could work for us here in the Territory and particularly points to initiatives like fast tracking the development of non-government Housing Associations in the NT, possibly by franchising successful Affordable Housing Companies operating interstate. Also, looking further into our NT Planning Act to incorporate inclusionary zoning within a holistic definition of environmental sustainability which when applied would support more cost effective housing development".

"The report launched today offers a starting point for further examination and NT Shelter looks forward to the NT Housing Minister's consideration of the report and to working with the NT Government to develop the ideas further through a detailed feasibility study."

“NT Shelter thanks our research partners in this project, who have included Territory Housing, NT Treasury, the TIO, the Department Family and Childrens Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Local Government Association of the NT (through Darwin City Council), Charles Darwin University and the Top End Association for Mental Health (representing NT community housing providers), and SGS Economics and Planning”.

For more information, go to:

http://www.ntshelter.org.au/data/62da5a6d47be0029801ba74a17e47e1a_Df2fG3Sc53ss3fG3Sc53SsvL_Affordable%20Housing%20Report%200107.pdf

9. Affordable Housing Explained

Shelter WA Newswire

The release of Shelter’s State of Affordable Housing in WA research paper at the end of last year induced renewed debate about housing affordability in WA. The research was used to a significant degree by the State Liberal Party Affordable Housing Taskforce to highlight what they see as key housing policy failures in WA.

Unfortunately the Taskforce Report failed to recognise social housing as a tenure which has the potential to address the chronic shortage of low cost housing in WA. Nonetheless Shelter WA commends the State opposition for putting together an Affordable Housing Paper.

With all the talk about affordable housing in the media and political circles, Shelter decided to put together an Information Sheet to explain the definition of affordable housing to the public. In the future affordable housing will play a key role in housing a growing number of Western Australian households. And Shelter WA has and will continue to take a central role in developing affordable housing policy. So what is Affordable Housing? It is:

- Housing which is targeted at or reserved for people who are unable to compete effectively in the existing private housing market.
- Affordable housing options for low income households include shared equity homeownership schemes and private rental accommodation where low

income households are provided with assistance so that they pay no more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Who are the affordable housing target group?

- Households with incomes in the bottom 40% of the income distribution (equal to or less than \$51,716 per annum).

The Information Sheet showed that the concept of affordable housing is difficult to tie down and highlighted the distinct differences between social and affordable housing. It also provides evidence demonstrating a large number of low income working families do not have the capacity to enter the homeownership market in WA and are encountering housing stress in the private rental market (i.e. paying more than 30% of income on rent).

The Information Sheet provides an educational resource about evolving housing policy in WA. Shelter views this as making a valuable contribution to aiding the public understanding of changes to the housing system. Future Information Sheets will keep abreast of any new advancement in the social housing system and affordable housing policy.

For more information see the full report on www.shelterwa.org.au

Job Opportunity

Senior Research Fellow/Senior Lecturer

Full-time 1.0 Tenure track

Academic Level C \$74,777 - \$86,225

This is a research and teaching position located in the AHURI-RMIT Research Centre and the Environment and Planning discipline in the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning. The incumbent will be required to take a leading role in expanding the centre's research program, initiating new research projects and developing collaborations with academic staff in the School. In the teaching role the successful candidate will contribute to the development of teaching programmes at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Further information about the position is available from Professor Gavin Wood on +61 3 9925 9885 (email gavin.wood@rmit.edu.au) or Barbara Norman on +61 3 9925 2702 (email barbara.norman@rmit.edu.au)

For application details and to obtain a copy of the Position Description, please visit www.rmit.edu.au/pc/jobs and quote reference number.

The 2nd Australasian Housing Researchers' Conference

Reshaping Australasian Housing Research

Call for Abstracts and Launch of Website

The 2nd Australasian Housing Researchers' Conference is being held at Customs House, The University of Queensland's conference facility located in Central Brisbane on Wednesday 20th – Friday 22nd June 2007. This conference follows the highly successful inaugural conference of housing researchers held in Adelaide in June 2006, and we invite housing academics, other housing researchers and post-graduate students, and users of housing research to this second conference.

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts are now invited from researchers, students and others in the housing or related fields who wish to present on their research, or on perspectives relating to a specific topic area or the broad theme of the conference. For information about the themes and submission process visit the conference website. If you would like to submit an abstract, please use the pro-forma (also available from the conference website).

Abstracts should be sent by email to: housingconference2007@uq.edu.au

Abstracts must be received by 31 March 2007. Papers and presentations will be required by 15 June 2007.

Launch of Conference Website

The conference website is now up and running:

<http://www.uq.edu.au/housingconference2007/>

The website contains an outline of the conference theme and research areas, further information about the conference including key dates, costs and how to register, details on the draft program and how to present a paper, and contact details of the conference organisers.

The best way to guarantee being kept informed of any developments with the conference is to join our conference mailing list. Simply email us your contact details (name, mailing address, email address and telephone number):

housingconference2007@uq.edu.au

Feel free to forward this email onto others you may think will be interested in presenting at or attending the conference

[Authorised by Dr Tim Seelig, Conference Co-convenor]

***** Feature Event**

New Perspectives n Federal-State Relations in Housing Policy

Melbourne, ZINC 19 April, 2007

This Australian and Urban Research Institute conference will investigate new demands being placed upon Federal-State housing policies and the opportunities that exist for reinventing inter-government collaboration to secure affordable, accessible and appropriate housing for all Australians.

The program for this one day conference has been designed by AHURI to provide participants with a constructive, evidence-based contribution to housing policy debate in Australia.

The key phases of the conference program will cover:

- the latest research evidence on the outcomes of current Australian housing policy
- an examination of housing system reform in a range of international settings

- a comparative and strategic analysis of Federal-State policies in education, health and housing
- consideration of the implications of participatory decision making and local democracy for the provision of public services such as housing assistance
- perspectives on reinventing inter-government collaboration from the point of view of consumers, developers, State/Territory and Federal housing policy departments.

Speakers

Mr Tom Bentley Executive Director, Policy and Cabinet Group, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, and Director, Australia and New Zealand School of Government, The University of Melbourne. Tom is the former Director of UK think tank Demos.

- Dr Vince Fitzgerald Chairman, The Allen Consulting Group.
- Dr Vivienne Milligan Director, AHURI Sydney Research Centre.
- Mr Hamish Macdonald Chief Executive Officer, The Becton Property Group.
- Associate Professor Judith Yates AHURI Sydney Research Centre.
- Dr Jeff Harmer Secretary, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Government.
- Dr Owen Donald Director of Housing, Office of Housing, Department of Human Services, Victoria.
- Professor Julian Disney AO University of New South Wales and spokesperson for the National Affordable Housing Summit.

Conference Downloads

Conference Program

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/2007_Events/Housing_Policy_Relations_Program.pdf PDF File 70Kb

Information on speakers topics and conference running times

Conference Flier

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/2007_Events/Housing_Policy_Relations_Flier.pdf PDF File 251Kb

Conference information in a printable format

Venue

ZINC is situated on the banks of the Yarra River in Melbourne's Federation Square, corner of Flinders and Swanston Streets.

Parking is available in the Federation Square carpark, off Russell Street.

Federation Square is easily accessible by public transport, trains to Flinders Street Station and trams to Swanston Street are the closest.

ZINC is a short walk from the Rendezvous Hotel.

Accommodation

Special accommodation rates are available at the Rendezvous Hotel, Melbourne for 18 & 19 April 2007. Bookings must be made before 3 April 2007.

Contact the Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne on (03) 9250 1888 or toll free 1 800 060 786. Quote AHURI Reference Number: 681