



Housing and Urban Research Institute Western Australia

July-August 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.

Note to all Housing and Urban Research Institute of Western Australia researchers

If you are planning to submit an application for the 2008 Australian and Urban Research Institute round, please note that Roger Guinery from the Department of Housing and works has offered to preview all applications at a workshop at Curtin on the 21st September. **PLEASE** let Fiona Mckenzie know if you intend to participate.

All FINAL DRAFT applications should be forwarded to Fiona McKenzie no later than 5.00pm 26th September for sign-off and final checking prior to submission.

1. Approaches to the Evaluation of Affordable Housing Initiatives in Australia

AHURI National Research Venture 3: Housing affordability for lower income Australians

Authored by Vivienne Milligan, Peter Phibbs, Nicole Gurrán and Kate Fagan, New South Wales

This report presents the outcomes of a project to develop an evaluation framework and to propose evaluation techniques that would be suitable for application to existing or new affordable housing programs and initiatives in Australia.

The project forms one part of a National Research Venture (NRV)¹ titled Housing affordability for lower income Australians, which is a three year program of research funded by AHURI Ltd and intended to provide the evidence needed to develop policies that will address housing affordability problems for lower income Australians (Yates et al. 2004a). Research for the NRV is being undertaken alongside complementary policy analysis and development of programs by a

range of jurisdictions, focused on finding specific solutions to affordability problems.

This project on evaluation contributes directly to the NRV's concern with providing a framework for considering the best ways to address affordability issues identified through research. The main purpose of the project has been to develop a feasible proposal for assessing the achievements of and lessons about different affordable housing models that operate currently in Australia, or that may be introduced in future.

As described in the plan for the NRV, this entails identifying and seeking endorsement to the broad objectives and outcomes being sought; proposing evaluation criteria; selecting and describing suitable evaluation methodologies; testing and refining preferred approaches using real cases; and advising on their further application and use (Yates et al. 2004a).

The project has been timed so that relevant project outcomes, i.e. a suggested model for evaluation, can be applied to any current or new delivery and financing models for affordable housing and implemented without unnecessary delay. AHURI's commitment to and support for this project is consistent with their broad role in making available a strong evidence base for housing policy development in Australia.

Evaluation studies provide a crucial source of information for evidence-based policy making. As well as benefiting individual programs and projects, (for instance, by identifying ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency), a sound evaluation framework establishes the foundation for systematic and ongoing appraisal of overarching policy efficacy. For these reasons evaluation research is now a standard element of housing policy and program development in the United Kingdom and in North America. In Australia however, evaluation of housing programs has been intermittent at best, and to date evaluative research has not made a significant contribution to policy development or review processes.

At a time when program evaluation has not been to the fore in Australian housing policy, new approaches to housing affordability and the release of a new Framework for National Action on Affordable Housing in 2005 create the impetus to build into these initiatives from the outset a high-standard evaluation approach.

Click on the link

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=NRV3_Research_Paper_7

2. Indigenous housing

[No. 102: An audit and review of Australian Indigenous housing research](#) (Final Report)

Authored by Stephen Long, Paul Memmott & Tim Seelig, Queensland Research Centre

This report provides a policy and research resource by documenting the thematic foci and gaps in Australian Indigenous housing literature.

3. Housing markets

[Issue 88: Where do low-income private renters live?](#) (Research and Policy Bulletin)

Authored by Bill Randolph and Darren Holloway, University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney

Overall, geographic concentrations of low-income private tenants have declined in Melbourne and Adelaide, reflecting moves towards the outer suburbs. In Sydney overall concentrations have remained constant, because of moves to locations with already high concentrations such as the western suburbs.

The release of the Framework for National Action on Affordable Housing in 2005 demonstrates the commitment of policy makers to expand affordable housing initiatives in Australia. Building in evaluation strategies from the outset will be an important task for housing policy makers. This report provides an overview of ideas in evaluation theory and methods and applies this to affordable housing policy and practice, including a worked example of how to evaluate a particular affordable housing project.

4. A Sustaining Tenancies Approach to Managing Demanding Behaviour in Public Housing: A Good Practice Guide

This Guide takes as its starting point the principle that appropriate, affordable and secure housing is a fundamental human right and an essential ingredient for individual well-being and community harmony.

It is concerned with a group of public housing tenants whose behaviour makes them vulnerable to eviction. Changes in the profile of public housing tenants in recent decades have seen growth in the number of tenants with complex needs. Research suggests that many tenants who engage in demanding behaviour fit within this category (Crane & Warnes 2000).

These tenants are especially susceptible to the cycle of homelessness, and its damaging effects.

The public housing sector is in a unique position to break this cycle by integrating a sustaining tenancies approach into routine housing management practice. The evidence is that systematic and close support of tenants can be highly effective in enabling tenants to change their behaviour and remain in their homes (Nixon et al 2006).

This means incorporating into policies and practices a range of initiatives such as early intervention and multi-agency working. A sustaining tenancies approach is also sound housing management since improving housing stability reduces the social and financial costs associated with failed tenancies.

Click on the link

http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=40327_fr

5. Top Australian and Urban Research Institute Downloads for July



Top 10 Downloads from www.ahuri.edu.au July 2007

Downloads	Months in Top 10*	Title, Project & URL	Author(s)
1,119	NEW	Rent assistance and the spatial concentration of low income households in metropolitan Australia (Project 70217) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/70217_fr	Bill Randolph and Darren Holloway
499	NEW	An audit and review of Australian Indigenous housing research (Project 20281) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/20281_fr	Stephen Long, Paul Memmott and Tim Seelig
480	2 (-)	Flexible guidelines for the design of remote Indigenous community housing (Project 30354) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30354_pp	John Fien, Esther Charlesworth, Gini Lee, David Morris, Doug Baker and Tammy Grice
354	NEW	Approaches to evaluation of affordable housing initiatives in Australia (National Research Venture 3) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/NRV3_Research_Paper_7	Vivienne Milligan, Peter Phibbs, Nicole Gurrán and Kate Fagan
334	3 (-)	Sustaining tenants with demanding behaviour: a review of the research evidence (Project 40327) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/40327_pp	Rowland Atkinson, Daphne Habibis, Hazel Easthope and Dan Goss
258	3 (-)	Housing and social cohesion: An empirical exploration (Project 50300) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/50300_fr	Wendy Stone and Kath Hulse
222	5 (-)	AHURI Annual Report 2005-2006 http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/AR/AHURI_Annual_Report_2005_2006.pdf	AHURI Ltd
194	8 (-)	AHURI Annual Report 2004-2005 http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/AR/AHURI_Annual_Report_2004_2005.pdf	AHURI Ltd
158	NEW	Urban '45' Summit brochure (Event Information) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/2007_events/urban45.pdf	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and University of Tasmania
144	3 (-)	Rental housing provision for lower-income older Australians (Project 20170) http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/20170_fr	Andrew Jones, Martin Bell, Cheryle Tilse and George Earl

* from July 2006, (+) or (-) indicate whether the number of downloads is higher or lower than last month