



## **Housing and Urban Research Institute Western Australia**

### **November-December 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.

Every good wish for a happy and safe Festive season and a successful 2008.

#### **1. Trends in Australian Non-Metropolitan Housing Markets, 1991-2001**

M. Wulff, M. Reynolds, E. Healy, S. Legg & S. Baum, **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, Swinburn-Monash Research Centre.

This final report aims to quantify the nature and extent of changes in the decade 1991-2001 within non-metropolitan housing markets in Australia and, integral to achieving this first goal, to construct the first national non-metropolitan housing market database to hold empirical information on population, housing and labour markets for the census years 1991, 1996 and 2001. Approximately 30 original data sources formed the foundation for the non-metropolitan database.

Between 1991 and 2001, non-metropolitan dwelling stock grew by 21.6 per cent with the fast growth (25-36%) in the coastal and regional cities.

For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=50264\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=50264_fr)

\*\*\*

#### **2. Public Housing: Shifting Client Profiles and Public Housing Revenues**

Jon Hall and Mike Berry, **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre, November 2007.

This report documents and quantifies the recent historical impact of changing client profiles in South Australia and Victoria; forecasts public housing recurrent income given existing allocation priorities; assesses the long-term cost to State Housing Agreements of pursuing a policy of allocating to those 'most in need';

identifies the implications of policy changes for future recurrent income; and provides a quantitative modelling tool and relevant information for State Housing Agreements to inform current Commonwealth State Housing Agreement negotiations.

For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=30352\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=30352_fr)

\*\*\*

### **3. Operating Deficits and Public Housing: Policy Options for Reversing the Trend**

Dr Jon Hall and Professor Mike Berry, **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre, October 2007

Government-assisted or sponsored public housing represents a key component of affordable housing in Australia, yet at end of the 2005/06 financial year the total stock of public housing has again fallen well below that which applied in 2000/01.

The erosion in the level of public housing stock over this period is similar to that which occurred over the previous five-year period, recorded in our 2004 report, "Operating Deficits and Public Housing: Policy Options for Reversing the Trend".

A key constraint on the continued provision of mainstream public housing in Australia is that the net incomes after rebates received by housing authorities should at least pay for their operational costs (net of interest paid or received). If this is not the case, any addition to stock expands the funding required to pay for the growing deficit. If funding is not forthcoming, the only option for reducing or freezing the additional funding requirement is to sell stock and therefore reduce the number of households provided with longer-term assistance (Donald, 2001). The evidence is now mounting that it is this latter scenario that is happening.

The rate at which these deficits are growing, and the time at which deficits outstrip current real levels of grant funding are matters of critical policy concern.

The 2004 report was based on information up to and including the 2000/01 financial year. Consequently that report is now five years out of date. Mindful of the difficult issues facing public housing in Australia, and in need of more current information on operating deficits, the Housing Ministers Advisory Committee (HMAC) requested that AHURI to seek cooperation from the authors to update the 2004 report.

For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=30359\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=30359_fr)

\*\*\*

### **4. Risk Assessment Practices in the Private Rental Sector: Implications for Low-Income Renters**

Patricia Short, Tim Seelig, Clive Warren, Connie Susilawati and Alice Thompson  
**Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, Queensland Research Centre.

This paper provides the context, sets out the theoretical framework and outlines the research strategy underpinning a study into the factors influencing risk-assessment and tenancy allocation practices used by property managers in the private rental market.

The study builds on previous research demonstrating that a relatively large proportion of low-cost private rental accommodation is occupied by moderate- to high-income households.

However, this is occurring in an environment where the private rental sector is now the de facto main provider of rental housing for lower-income households across Australia.

For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=20346\\_pp](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=20346_pp)

\*\*\*

## **5. Housing Affordability and Financial Stress: Housing Affordability for Lower Income Australians**

Judith Yates, **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, Sydney Research Centre, Research Paper No. 6.

The purpose of this report is to provide a statistical analysis of the factors that contribute to financial stress. The key question addressed is whether housing stress (when the analysis is limited to lower income households) or high housing costs (when all households are included) contribute to financial stress.

A measure of financial stress is derived from the deprivation and financial stress indicators reported in the 2003-04 Household Expenditure Survey.

For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=nrv3\\_research\\_paper\\_6](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download.asp?ContentID=nrv3_research_paper_6)

\*\*\*

## **6. Public Housing: Shifting Client Profiles and Public Housing Revenues**

Jon Hall and Mike Berry, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

This report documents and quantifies the recent historical impact of changing client profiles in South Australia and Victoria; forecasts public housing recurrent income given existing allocation priorities; assesses the long-term cost to SHAs of pursuing a policy of allocating to those 'most in need'; identifies the implications of policy changes for future recurrent income; and provides a quantitative modelling tool and relevant information for SHAs to inform current CSHA negotiations.

\*\*\*

## **7. Older Persons in Public Housing: Present and Future Profile**

Sean McNelis, **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, Swinburne-Monash Research Centre.

The challenges of an ageing population in Australia are well documented (Olsberg et al. 2004; Olsberg and Winter 2005; Minister for Ageing 2001; House of Representatives 2005; Treasurer 2002). These cultural, social and economic challenges include:

- the role of older people in the community;
- their expectations of personal growth and development and of participation in the decisions that affect their lives;
- an ageing population will impact on the health care system, on community care and on a range of other services that older people will require to age in place;
- an ageing workforce will need to adapt to changing economic demands;
- an ageing population will require changes in the income system to support retirement; and
- the design of our physical infrastructure (transport, housing and other buildings) will need to adapt to the needs of older people.

The Australian and state/territory governments have invested significant resources in planning for a future with many more older people (65 years or more), and have jointly undertaken a National Strategy on an Ageing Australia (Minister for Ageing 2001). The Australian government's Intergenerational Report 2002-03 has highlighted the impact of ageing on future budgets. Most states/territories are actively changing their approach to older people developing new policy frameworks (e.g. Victoria. Parliament 1997; New South Wales. Ageing and Disability Department 1998; Tasmania. Department of Premier and Cabinet 2005; Queensland. Department of Families, Youth and Community Care 1999; Australian Capital Territory 2006). This changing approach will have an impact on the housing options for older people.

Notwithstanding the many publications on the ageing population, Australia still lacks 'a comprehensive and coordinated approach to housing and older people' (Jones et al. 2004), such that community care programs will achieve good outcomes not only for owner-occupiers but also for vulnerable older people who rent (McNelis and Herbert 2004).

It is in this context that SHAs face particular challenges with an ageing population. For more information, go to:

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/50318\\_rp](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/50318_rp)

\*\*\*

## **8. The Regional Impact of Housing Costs and Assistance on Financial Disadvantage**

J. McNamara, R. Tanton and B. Phillips, for the **Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute**, RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre.

It is widely acknowledged that substantial spatial differences in economic well-being exist across Australia. There is a growing body of Australian literature examining aspects of disadvantage at a small area level, and substantial research into the impact of housing costs on financial disadvantage at a national and broad regional level. However, differences in the impact of housing costs on financial disadvantage at a small area level have not been examined to date, due to an absence of adequate data at a sufficiently disaggregated geographical level.

This study uses spatial microsimulation techniques to estimate at a small area level the impact of housing costs on spatial differences in financial disadvantage, and the actual or potential effect of housing assistance in reducing disadvantage.

The specific research questions that the project addresses are as follows:

- What is the nature of the relationship between housing assistance, housing costs and financial disadvantage at a small area level? Which regions are affected? Are metropolitan areas more financially disadvantaged because of higher housing costs?
- Which types of households are affected by the inclusion of housing costs? Household types analysed include those with different tenure types, different home equity and house value, different sources of income and different life cycle stages.
- What would the impact on financial disadvantage at a small area level if the upper limit for Commonwealth Rent Assistance were removed? What are the implications for government?
- What is the impact on financial disadvantage of people going from renting to purchasing housing? What effect do mortgage subsidy policies have on this impact?

For more information, go to: [http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30295\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30295_fr)

\*\*\*

**9. Supporting the housing of people with complex needs**  
 Michale Bleasdale, **Australian and Urban Research Institute**  
**UNSW/University of Western Sydney.**

People with complex needs encounter additional barriers in accessing and maintaining stable housing. Good local partnerships and collaboration between housing and support providers create much better outcomes for people with complex needs, regardless of their type of disability.  
 Project: Supporting the tenancies of people with complex needs: applying best practice models in the Australian context

For more information, go to:  
[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap\\_issue\\_90](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap_issue_90)

*Housing policies and programs*

No. 109: The regional impact of housing costs and assistance on financial disadvantage  
 (Final Report) [http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30295\\_fr](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30295_fr)

This study uses spatial microsimulation techniques to estimate at a small area level the impact of housing costs on spatial differences in financial disadvantage, and the effect of housing assistance in reducing disadvantage.

*Issue 89: The financial impact of welfare targeting in public housing*

Adobe PDF file, 170 Kb (Research and Policy Bulletin)  
[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap\\_issue\\_89](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap_issue_89)

Greater targeting of housing and greater access to concessional rents cost public housing authorities around \$200 million in 2004/05 compared with the mid-1990s.

### *Issue 92: How do housing and housing assistance relate to social cohesion?*

Adobe PDF file, 138 Kb (Research and Policy Bulletin)

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap\\_issue\\_92](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/rap_issue_92)

Social cohesion has three key dimensions: social connectedness, inequality and cultural environment. Many aspects of housing, including tenure type and location, affect the level of social cohesion within a community.

#### **Feature event**

**5<sup>th</sup> National Homelessness Conference, Adelaide Convention Centre**

**21-23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008.**

**Practice, Research and Emerging Issues**

**Call for Abstracts and Registration Is Now Open, full details available [www.homelessnessaustralia.com.au](http://www.homelessnessaustralia.com.au)**

Email: [nhc@confco.com.au](mailto:nhc@confco.com.au)  Phone: 02 6292 9000

\*\*\*

#### **Feature event**

##### **NATIONAL HOUSING CONFERENCE UPDATE**

The 5th National Housing Conference will provide an opportunity to discuss and debate the future directions of Australia's housing system.

Covering the most crucial housing issues, the National Housing Conference 2008 provides a platform for discussing the latest research, strategic directions, initiatives and housing reform.

Highlights include:

- A two day conference program featuring international and local housing industry and social leaders as key note speakers. "Meet the Speaker" sessions will be open to delegates – subject to speaker availability.
- Release of the latest Australian housing research.
- Over 30 concurrent sessions to showcase housing policy, practice and innovation.
- A choice of four site tours which focus on local housing initiatives in the Sydney metropolitan area on the day before the formal conference program.

## Invited Speakers

### **Hugh Mackay** *NEW*

Australian psychologist, social researcher and writer. From 1979 to 2003, he published the quarterly research series The Mackay Report, which now continues as The Ipsos Mackay Report. Hugh is also the author of four novels and seven non-fiction books, and writes regularly for several major Australian newspapers.

### **Olga Havnen** *NEW*

Coordinator of Combined Aboriginal Organisations of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Organisations. Olga has worked with the Fred Hollows Foundation and is a former principal policy advisor to the NT Government.

### **Kendal Marsland** *NEW*

BioRegional Development Group, UK

### **Professor Rachel Bratt**

Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University, USA.

### **Professor David Mullins**

Housing Policy, University of Birmingham, UK

### **Mr Hamish Macdonald**

CEO, Becton Property Group, Australia

### **Professor John Doling**

Social Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK

## Program

The conference program will include formal presentations, interactive panels and practical workshops based on the three sub themes of:

- Pathways and People.
- Organisational Systems and Structures.
- Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts.

### **Download the conference program**

[http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/nhc/NHC\\_2008\\_Program.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/nhc/NHC_2008_Program.pdf)

\*\*\*

## Housing information

Visit our [Housing Data](#) page for regularly released national housing data, freely available from a range of sources. This information includes data on housing finance, house prices and building activity.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has scheduled the release of the following information in October:

- Building Approvals Data
- Housing Finance Data
- Building Activity Data
- Lending Finance Data
- Consumer Price Index