Research Agenda

National Housing Research Program

Research Agenda 2013

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

AHURi

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CONTENTS

1 PURPOSE

The AHURI National Housing Research Program (NHRP) Funding Round 2013 offers exciting opportunities for conducting housing and homelessness research in Australia. The NHRP Research Agenda 2013 is intended to provide direction in the development of AHURI's housing and homelessness research evidence-base. This will enable AHURI to actively contribute to national housing reform priorities such as the renegotiation of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the attendant National Partnership Agreements.

The Research Agenda 2013 is structured around five Priority Topics and eight Strategic Research Issues identified as high priority for housing policy development. This provides guidance as to specific topics of immediate relevance to policy development, while still offering scope for the research community to devise innovative research questions addressing emerging policy issues.

Section 2 describes the scope of research sought on Priority Topics 1–4 which have been developed by AHURI Limited in consultation with the AHURI Board, the Australian and state and territory governments and the Housing Research Panel. The Priority Topics also identify specific research questions to be investigated by research on these topics. Priority Topic 5 identifies existing housing data sets to be updated, with a critical approach to developing methodology and relevance to the current policy context.

Section 3 provides a summary of completed and current AHURI research against each Strategic Research Issue. The summaries also point to gaps in the evidence-base as identified by the Research Panel and through consultation with stakeholders. There may, however, be other gaps that are identified by researchers as warranting further research.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure that research proposals build upon the research already completed. A companion document to the *Research Agenda 2013*— *AHURI research catalogue 2000–2012*—catalogues AHURI funded projects by theme.

In addition to Research Projects, AHURI will continue to consider proposals for Essays and Investigative Panels on topics within the scope of the Research Agenda. These research vehicles offer an innovative approach to engaging policy-makers, practitioners and the research community in the exchange of ideas. The design of these research vehicles takes into account the requirement for a timely response to emerging policy issues.

The NHRP includes a capacity building component and will award one Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Funding Round 2013.

The *Research Agenda 2013* should be read in conjunction with the *NHRP Funding guidelines for applicants*, *Funding guidelines for Postdoctoral Fellowships*, the *Ethical principles and guidelines for Indigenous research*. Applicants should use the templates provided on the AHURI website at: http://www.ahuri.edu.au /research_agenda_funding/about_funding/.

2 PRIORITY TOPICS

This section sets out issues identified by the policy community as warranting priority research.

Index of Priority Topics

PT1 Targeting service provision by modeling future demand for homeless services

Overview

Priority Topic 1 will assist in identifying groups of people who are at risk of homelessness and inform the development of cost effective support services for prevention and early intervention. Based on the identified structural drivers of homelessness and demographic trends, research should focus on:

→ Modeling future levels of demand for homeless services.

→ Identifying appropriate areas for the location of services.

→ Identifying the types of services that may be required.

This Priority Topic will make a contribution to the existing AHURI evidence-base for Strategic Research Issue 1, *Housing and related systems that prevent homelessness and promote wellbeing and stable housing outcomes*.

Scope

The White Paper on Homelessness has set targets to reduce the level of homelessness, especially for rough sleepers, and to augment policies and programs that reduce the initial incidence of homelessness. The intention of this Priority Topic is to provide a basis for informing the design of housing support that is appropriately located and responsive to the changing composition of the homeless population. This will contribute to the success of early intervention approaches, and the extent to which they are cost effective.

This priority area aims to quantify and model demand for homelessness services at a population level by drawing on available quantitative data from the ABS, AIHW (e.g. the Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection), the Productivity Commission and other sources. The modeling should be based on assumptions about the structural drivers of homelessness including housing supply and labour market trends, as well as demographic drivers associated with homelessness among particular population groups. These groups include, for example: young people exiting state care; women and families leaving home due to family violence; and people experiencing homelessness in suburban areas.

The research will also make an assessment of the potential for early intervention and prevention strategies to generate cost savings for government by effectively addressing the needs of those who are at risk of homelessness. Quantifying these cost savings requires an understanding of the intersections between homelessness services and service delivery in other sectors such as housing, health, justice, education and employment services. Current strategies to take into account include reducing exits into homelessness from the housing, health and justice systems, and improving the connection of people experiencing homelessness with employment and education opportunities. Consideration should also be given to the potential impact of the national reforms of mental health and health systems and the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Questions

→ Which groups, and in which locations, are at most risk of homelessness due to the structural and demographic drivers of homelessness?

→ What services (including specialist homelessness services and other social support services) are required to provide cost effective prevention and early intervention for those groups at risk of homelessness?

→ What mix of services (including education, state care, and the justice and health system) are required in different locations to reduce the future demand for specialist homelessness services?

PT2 Comparing cost effectiveness and client outcomes in the multi-provider social housing system

Overview

Priority Topic 2 seeks to understand how the multi-provider social housing system can be cost effective for government and secure positive long term outcomes for clients. The research will encompass housing delivered by state housing authorities and community housing providers of varying scale and organisational structure. The research will include a focus on Indigenous housing providers. The purpose of this Priority Topic is to:

→ Examine the operational viability of different social housing providers.

→ Examine outcomes for clients in terms of sustaining tenancies, social and economic participation and wellbeing.

→ Quantify the relative cost of housing different client groups (of similar needs) for different providers.

A distinction should be drawn between direct housing costs and tenancy support as well as social support services provided by other agencies. A distinction should also be made between the costs borne by state and territory governments, the Australian Government and other providers.

This Priority Topic will make a contribution to the existing AHURI evidence for Strategic Research Issue 2, *Housing choice in a social/affordable housing system with diverse providers and increased supply*.

Scope

The Australian social housing system is now characterised by multiple providers from the public and community sectors. In particular, the growth of the not-for-profit housing sector is premised on assumptions about the sector providing better tenant outcomes and cost benefits for government.

It is expected that the research will critically review and build on earlier AHURI analysis of operating deficits for public and community housing including state owned and managed Indigenous housing. The research should update these findings and further develop the methodology to examine the diversity that now exists across the sector. Where possible the cost of providing social support in addition to housing support (including tenancy support) needs to be included. The analysis should also be based on the use of different demand- and supply-side subsidies, financing arrangements and stock profiles.

The financial analysis is to be supported by an assessment of tenant outcomes in terms of shelter and wellbeing as a key indicator of performance. Shelter outcomes include sustaining tenancies, the appropriateness of housing in terms of location and size, and satisfaction with housing. Wellbeing outcomes include social and economic participation, particularly in paid work, health and access to social services.

The extent to which such a comparison can be carried out using existing data sets should be considered. This will rely upon a framework for assessing wellbeing and shelter outcomes with consistent indicators that can be applied across state housing authorities and not-for-profit providers. Tenant outcomes and cost effectiveness must be compared across groups with similar levels of need.

A preliminary scoping study prior to the empirical research for this topic could include an assessment of the utility of existing data sets. It should also include a broad overview of the current state of social housing provision in each Australian state so as

to ensure a representative sample of housing providers that is consistent with the existing arrangement of housing provision.

Questions

→ What is the cost of supporting an individual tenant in different types of social housing?

→ Are cost efficiencies generated for state and territory governments and for the Australian Government (respectively) when housing is provided and managed by not-for-profit organisations, when compared with direct provision by State Housing Authorities?

→ What tenant housing outcomes (including sustaining tenancies, appropriateness of housing and satisfaction) are achieved by different providers of social housing?

→ What are the wellbeing outcomes for tenants (including participation in paid work and training and other forms of social participation and health) and how do these compare between public and community housing?

PT3 The impact of housing and labour markets on housing choice and workforce participation

Overview

Priority Topic 3 seeks to address the relationship between housing market trends and economic activity. This includes consideration of:

→ Interactions between macro level changes in housing and labour markets.

→ The contribution the housing market makes to broader economic outcomes, including trends in employment, training outcomes and economic productivity.

→ Housing and workforce choices and trade-offs made by households across all tenures.

This Priority Topic will make a contribution to the existing AHURI evidence for Strategic Research Issue 7, *Understanding and responding to the impact of systemic shifts upon structures within the housing system and housing outcomes*.

Scope

Previous AHURI research has explored links between housing markets and the broader macro-economy. For example, increased housing wealth is associated with higher consumer spending and increased aggregate demand. There are also well known multiplier effects of new housing construction on the patterns and trends in economic growth. Research under this Priority Topic is intended to understand the importance of the housing market on overall economic productivity.

In order to achieve this, it is critical to understand the mechanisms by which the housing market impacts on the macro-economy (e.g. in terms of rate of economic growth, employment, inflation or elements of aggregate demand). A related issue is whether funds directed towards housing investment - as a proportion of all domestic investments, are comparable to international benchmarks - might otherwise be directed towards other productive (e.g. industrial or commercial) investment uses.

Analysis of macro-economic issues should be supported by an understanding of the micro-economic relationships at a household level. Previous AHURI research has shown there is a geographical aspect to the interaction of housing and labour markets. This evidence reveals an increasing spatial polarisation of people on different income levels in Australian cities; people on lower incomes are constrained to living in outer suburban locations, and household mobility is curtailed.

Of particular importance are the housing choices and trade-offs made by individual households where there is a disparity between housing and labour markets. In particular, how do households adapt to problems such as unaffordable housing in metropolitan, urban and regional areas where they need to access employment? Factors to consider include: housing tenure and labour market participation; housing mobility patterns for different household types; the location of affordable housing for people of different income levels; and the location of jobs in relation to different types of housing.

Of particular interest is the experience of social housing tenants. This research, however, is intended to go beyond earlier AHURI research which has shown that housing assistance and income support settings can create disincentives for workforce participation. As a point of departure, research under this Priority Topic should focus on how social housing tenants might seek to transition from social housing to private rental or home ownership through increased workforce participation, with a view to understanding how this can be supported by government.

Questions

→ What is the relationship between the housing market and economic productivity in terms of consumer spending, labour market participation and household wealth?

→ How do the dynamics between the housing market and labour market play out differently in rural and regional areas as compared with metropolitan areas?

→ How do housing related taxes and benefits impact on economic productivity?

→ How do households adapt to housing markets while making decisions over employment and family circumstances?

→ Is there a role for government assistance or intervention in housing market processes?

→ How can current housing policies support transitions of social housing tenants to the private rental market or home ownership?

→ How can current housing policies generate initiatives to improve labour market participation?

PT4 The integration of housing assistance and social support

Overview

Priority Topic 4 calls for a broad overview of the delivery of housing assistance and social support in Australia. Here, social support refers to services such as mental health, disability and aged care services. This topic requires an investigation of those models that are already proving to be effective, as well as models that have the potential to be effective. More specifically this topic seeks to:

→ Identify examples and evaluate the effectiveness of integrating housing assistance with other forms of social support.

→ Identify examples and good practice in the integration of support services across sectors and in allied fields, for example health, disability and aged care.

This includes looking at the provision of personal support and community amenity for both individuals and families.

This Priority Topic will make a contribution to the existing AHURI evidence for Strategic Research Issue 8, *Understanding and responding to the effects of non-housing policies and programs upon housing outcomes and wellbeing.*

Scope

Housing and support services in Australia are currently provided and funded in varying combinations across three sectors (private, public and community) and three levels of government (local, state and Commonwealth). The current mechanisms for integrating housing provision and social services should be examined, with particular attention given to those cases where work is being undertaken across sectors and levels of government.

The analysis should take account of the role of government, not-for-profit organisations and the market in allocating housing and housing assistance. Particular issues for consideration include: the capacity for co-funding between individual households and government; and the flexibility of purchasing models to adequately express consumer choice.

This topic also lends itself to an examination of different modes of service delivery in allied fields such as aged care, disability, mental health, drug and alcohol services, healthcare and others that place a premium on the personalisation of services and market driven purchaser and provider responses. Effective models of service delivery that can be transferred to housing and assist in sustaining tenancies should be identified, for example, case management approaches that have proved successful in the provision of health services. In particular, funding and purchasing arrangements should be examined, including the funding of portable support.

Questions

→ How is the provision of housing and housing assistance currently configured between the state, the market and the third sectors in Australia?

→ How does this configuration compare with the provision of other social services such as disability, aged care, mental health and health services?

→ Given the current configuration of service delivery, what are the options for improving the integration of housing assistance and other forms of social support?

→ Are there effective models of service delivery in other areas of social policy that could successfully be applied to the provision of housing assistance to sustain tenancies?

PT5 Housing data updates

Overview

A key objective of this Priority Topic 5 is to provide a comparative analysis of housing data from different years to reveal patterns of change over time. This Priority Topic seeks to:

→ Update data on key features of the housing system.

→ Build on previous AHURI research and analysis.

→ Further develop conceptual frameworks and methodologies to understand these housing issues.

Analysis of these data requires a critical engagement with any recent developments in methodology and a critical awareness of the current policy and practice context. It is possible that the analysis of updated data will be achieved within the context of a broader Research Project.

The distribution of housing subsidies in Australia

The release of the Survey of Income and Housing in September 2011 for the 2009–10 period offers the opportunity to update previous AHURI research about the level and distribution of housing subsidies in Australia.

AHURI research in 2001 estimated that $21 billion was provided to owner-occupiers in Australia through direct and indirect subsidies. In 2006 it was estimated that there was $46 billion of indirect assistance to owner-occupiers consisting of: capital gains tax exemption on the family home; the non-taxation of imputed rent; the exemption of imputed rent from GST; and an exemption from state-based land taxes. Investors received a further $5.4 billion, which included the capital gains tax discount to individual investors and tax deductions from negative gearing. In contrast, only $2.8 billion in indirect assistance went to renters from the non-taxation of imputed rent and exemption of rent from the GST. The distribution of assistance did not only vary by tenure, but also by age and income quintile.

Changes in the supply of and demand for low rent housing in Australia's private rental market

The release of 2011 Census data from June 2012 provides the opportunity to update previous AHURI research on changes in the supply and demand for low cost private rental housing.

Earlier AHURI research showed that between 2001 and 2006, Australia's private rental market grew by 11 per cent. Despite this growth, shortages of affordable rental housing for low-income households worsened. This was exacerbated by the number of lower cost rental dwellings occupied by higher income earners.

The duration of housing affordability stress

The availability of new waves of Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey data provides an opportunity to update previous AHURI research on the duration of housing affordability stress.

The original AHURI project on housing affordability stress investigated the dynamics of housing affordability in Australia over the period 2001–06. It did this by tracking the housing affordability trajectories of a nationally representative sample of Australians across the six year period, using the HILDA survey. The availability of new HILDA data allows for the study of these housing affordability trajectories to be extended.

The research found that most Australians living in housing affordability stress escape within a year. However, there is a small number of Australians for whom housing affordability stress is a more permanent feature. Even for those who exit unaffordable housing circumstances, there is a high chance of return. Most Australians who were already living in affordable housing by 2001 tended to remain in affordable housing for a spell of approximately five years. A minority of those living in affordable housing in 2001 later dropped into housing affordability stress but managed to quickly return to affordable housing circumstances.

Residential moves made during spells of living in unaffordable housing tended to alleviate housing cost burdens by 'trading down' in the housing market. Renters were much more likely to move and, hence, they had better chances of escaping housing affordability stress than home buyers, who tended to be less mobile. Precarious housing affordability circumstances were particularly evident among younger couples with dependent children, as this is a stage in the life cycle that is associated with pressing spending needs.

3 STRATEGIC RESEARCH ISSUES

Below are the eight Strategic Research Issues that derive from the current policy environment for housing. Research responding to these strategic issues will advance national housing policy development. Diverse research activities are sought on the following Strategic Research Issues. The potential outputs of these activities could include Essays, Investigative Panels and Research Projects:

Index of Strategic Research Issues

SRI1 Housing and related systems that prevent homelessness and promote wellbeing and stable housing outcomes

SRI2 Housing choice in a social/affordable housing system with diverse providers and increased supply

SRI3 Housing and neighbourhoods that generate social inclusion, economic opportunities and wellbeing

SRI4 Housing opportunities for Indigenous people that support improved amenity, wellbeing and economic sustainability

SRI5 Structures within the housing system, including finance, support services, and tenure arrangements that enable households to access housing as their needs change over time

SRI6 Efficient land and housing markets that meet demand (affordably and appropriately), enable labour market and other mobility, and support productivity gains in the economy

SRI7 Understanding and responding to the impact of systemic shifts upon structures within the housing system and housing outcomes

SRI8 Understanding and responding to the effects of non-housing policies and programs upon housing outcomes and wellbeing

SRI1 Housing and related systems that prevent homelessness and promote wellbeing and stable housing outcomes

Overview

AHURI has completed 19 projects on homelessness since the year 2000 and 8 projects are in progress. Priority Topic 1, *Targeting service provision by modeling future demand for homeless services,* will make a contribution to this Strategic Research Issue.

The AHURI Research Panel has identified gaps in the evidence-base warranting further research. These include:

→ The cost effectiveness and whole-of-government cost offset effects for the provision of specialist homelessness services.

→ The nature and size of emerging groups of people who are at high risk of homelessness, such as older women, young people exiting care and families.

→ Evaluations of programs that are effective in providing stable housing to people who have experienced homelessness, with particular attention to how international approaches can be transferred to the Australian context.

→ An examination of existing administrative data (including but not limited to the Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection) and opportunities to link data about the type, duration and costs of service use across multiple service systems.

AHURI research to date

Early intervention is cost-effective

AHURI research has found that it is cost-effective to intervene early to address homelessness (through programs such as the previous Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and the Supported Housing Assistance Program) because it leads to savings in other areas of public expenditure such as justice and health services. Current AHURI research is updating and broadening this understanding of cost-offsets and will include public costs associated with child protection and employment services.

Effective remedies integrate housing and support

Adequate and appropriate housing along with social support is necessary in the prevention and reduction of homelessness. Social connection is also critical in reducing the risk of homelessness and the ability to break the cycle of homelessness. Current research is examining the integration of homelessness services with mental health and drug and alcohol services. It also tests the proposition that service integration can improve access to housing, assist in sustaining tenancies and address personal, social and health needs.

Understanding pathways into homelessness is critical to targeting policy interventions

For example, AHURI research on the housing pathways of young people leaving state care found that the majority exit into transitional accommodation and that the process of leaving care could either facilitate good housing outcomes or result in chronic housing instability and homelessness. A holistic or *joined up* approach to service delivery that provides individuals within a range of supports from different service systems is important in supporting care leavers to find stable housing and avoid homelessness. Current AHURI research is examining the inter-generational aspect of homelessness and the implications of early experiences of homelessness on subsequent episodes.

Marginal housing forms such as boarding houses and caravan parks can be understood either as a form of homelessness or as a preventative measure

Whilst some marginal housing forms—especially boarding houses—can be classified as a form of tertiary homelessness because of their substandard living conditions, marginal housing nonetheless provides accommodation that can reduce levels of rough sleeping. Research on housing risk among caravan park residents found that the extent to which caravan parks are being used by crisis accommodation agencies for the homeless is indicative of a severe shortage in the supply of low cost housing, especially for people in urgent need of accommodation. However, caravan parks could often exacerbate existing problems or tensions due to cramped living conditions, lack of privacy and various practical difficulties.

Effective approaches to tackle homelessness need to be tailored for particular groups such as Indigenous people

Indigenous people face particular issues in being sustainably housed, including difficulties in accessing private housing (ownership or rental), high rates of overcrowding, and kinship and cultural practices that affect mobility. Overcrowding, as a consequence of secondary homelessness, has implications for health and wellbeing amongst Indigenous people. The provision of culturally appropriate service delivery is an essential part of addressing homelessness for Indigenous people.

Young people facing or experiencing homelessness in rural Australia have very different experiences to their urban contemporaries

The Foyer Model is one response that could help young rural people establish themselves, without relocating to cities away from their support networks. Once independent living is established, these residents are able to concentrate on their education and training needs.

AHURI research has also examined the needs of a range of different groups at high risk of homelessness including; older people, people with mental illness, newly arrived migrants, women and children who have experienced domestic violence, heroin users, ex-prisoners, and young people—including those leaving care and in rural locales. This research consistently finds that addressing homelessness requires more than the provision of a house and highlights best practice approaches in working with these groups. Current AHURI research is developing the evidence-base about first time homelessness amongst older people.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

30655 Homelessness and 'Housing First': issues for Australian policy and practice (Essay) (Mar 2012)

30540 Improving housing outcomes for young people leaving state out of home care (Apr 2010)

40526 Improving housing policy responses to Indigenous patterns of mobility (May 2011)

80306 The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of homelessness programs (June 2008)

20607 The role of 'assertive outreach' in addressing primary homelessness (Jan 2012)

AHURI research in progress

50602   Homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence: innovations in policy and practice
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

21005   Preventing first time homelessness amongst older Australians
(PP available second quarter 2013, FR available first quarter 2014)

30699   Marginal rental housing and marginal renters: a typology for policy
(PP available third quarter 2012, FR available second quarter 2013)

70686   The role of community housing in meeting the housing and support needs of homeless people (PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

50682   The role of informal community resources in supporting independent housing for young people recovering from mental illness
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

20640   Overcrowding for Indigenous households in non-remote areas
(PP available, FR available third quarter 2012)

82014   The cost of homelessness and the net benefit of homelessness programs: a national study (FR available first quarter 2013)

82013   Homelessness and services and system integration
(PP available, FR available first quarter 2013)

80516   Intergenerational homelessness and the use of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue:
http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI2 Housing choice in a social/affordable housing system with diverse providers and increased supply

Overview

AHURI has completed 30 projects on social and affordable housing since the year 2000 and 7 projects are currently in progress. Priority Topic 2, *Comparing cost effectiveness and client outcomes in the multi-provider social housing system,* will contribute to this Strategic Research Issue.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel has identified gaps in the evidence-base warranting further research:

→ An understanding of the motivation of tenants and the conditions that support positive transitions from social housing.

→ The targeting, duration and cost of housing assistance and support services along a housing continuum from homelessness specialist services, private rental brokerage through to full home ownership.

→ An examination of the options for growth of community housing and the effect of changes in government regulation, access to subsidies and tax status on the sector.

→ The implications of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the recent Australian Government aged care reforms for the multi-provider social housing system.

→ An assessment of future opportunities for private sector investment in and provision of affordable rental housing in light of the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

AHURI research to date

There has been a decline in the relative size of the public housing system over the past thirty years

This has been precipitated by two significant factors: the decline in capital and operational funding for public housing up to 2005–06 and the impact on the supply of dwellings, and the declining rental revenue base because of increased targeting to low-income and very-low-income tenants. These factors have had a range of negative affects including the stigmatisation of residents and reduced financial viability leading to operational deficits.

The supply of public housing in particular areas is not always appropriate for local demand

Analysing demand for public housing by sub-markets has the potential to improve delivery of appropriate public housing in the locations where it is most needed. For example, the shortage of appropriate social housing stock in regional areas impacts disproportionately on Indigenous people.

The not-for-profit housing sector is recognised as an important means of increasing supply and choice of affordable housing, and is growing rapidly

The not-for-profit housing sector has demonstrated the capacity to develop financially viable affordable housing projects. In 2009 around forty not-for-profit organisations were identified across Australia with recent experience in producing affordable housing for lower income households and aspiration to expand this function. Within this group, there were 11 leading not-for-profit developers with well-established capacity that reported a collective 220 per cent growth between 2004 and 2008. At the end of 2007/08, those providers owned over 5440 affordable

housing dwellings with a net asset value of just under $1.3 billion (2007/08). Growth was achieved through a combination of strategies including; the development of new dwellings, purchase of existing dwellings, transfers of existing social housing from state housing authorities and organisational mergers.

The change in this sector has been rapid. In 2005–06, most community housing providers were small scale organisations with high levels of volunteer labour and ageing stock. Their financial viability was underpinned by reduced costs through volunteer labour and lack of provision for depreciation. Since then, capacity has been built in the sector in a range of areas including skill levels in governance, development financing and project management.

Stock transfer between State Housing Authorities and community housing organisations has taken place across Australia, to varying degrees

Good strategic asset management of public and community housing stock is most frequently practised at technical, operational levels where issues like maintenance, condition assessments and capital budgeting for new works dominates thinking and practice. There may be benefit in working jointly with private sector practitioners and greater use of shared services with other authorities to develop skills and provide further education and training and better knowledge management.

Private sector finance is needed to grow the not-for-profit sector

All models for achieving growth require a stream of subsidy support, a mechanism for delivering that support and a marketable set of financial instruments for investors to acquire in order to finance the housing. The packages need to satisfy criteria of equity, efficiency, capacity to generate large sums of private finance, and financial and political feasibility.

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) has been able to facilitate institutional investment in affordable housing

This has been assisted by an injection of capital by government and a flexible approach to program delivery. Continued success has also relied on asset management strategies that involve developing at scale, large maintenance contracts that drive down average costs, significant trading of stock over time and robust design guidelines that assist them to acquire and develop appropriate housing.

Housing Supply Bonds have been identified as one suitable mechanism to channel private investment towards affordable rental housing

However, if this is to work government involvement is critical. Low-cost private finance needs to be coupled with risk reducing measures—such as, public collateral, repayment guarantees, adequate levels of assistance and well regulated providers. A proposal for Australian Housing Supply Bonds has been developed, with recommendations covering an appropriate financial intermediary, marketable terms and conditions for a suite of bond instruments, regulatory requirements and complementary reforms.

A diverse range of models for public private partnerships in the delivery of affordable housing are emerging

However, partnerships involving private finance initiatives have been limited to date, reflecting the complexity and lack of expertise in managing these arrangements in the community housing sector. Most existing partnerships are structured around traditional contractual arrangements. Successful partnerships are responsive to local institutional contexts, market conditions and different community needs and expectations.

Access to appropriate sites is a key determinant of the financial, social and environmental outcomes of not-for-profit affordable housing projects

In some cases the costs associated with delays in achieving planning approval may threaten the financial viability of developments. Inflexible planning practices and restrictions, or resistance from local residents can also cause delays. Third party objections and appeal rights may significantly affect the delivery of developments, particularly high density housing. Understanding local opposition to affordable housing projects and finding ways to address these concerns is essential in ensuring the supply of affordable housing. Improving the appearance of housing so that it blends in with the local area, increasing public awareness of the need for affordable housing and reducing stigma are proposed ways of dealing with this.

National regulation of the not-for-profit housing sector is a necessary condition for the expansion of the community housing sector

The key challenge in introducing a regulatory system is balancing the interests of housing providers, investors, non-government organisations representing tenants' interests and existing regulatory bodies. Regulation serves four main purposes; accountability, risk reduction, investor confidence and protection of tenants. It has also been suggested that regulators should provide greater oversight of ongoing affordability, appropriate location, tenant mix and a diverse range of housing types to strengthen social outcomes including economic participation.

There is a continuing need to improve access to the social housing system and to improve choice and mobility for tenants

International evidence indicates that integrating waiting lists has reduced double counting and therefore improved efficiency. To ensure the needs of groups of people with high or complex needs are met. However, there is a need to develop additional programs that address a wider array of housing needs in different ways.

Adopting a 'sustaining tenancies' approach can reduce the incidence of eviction in social and affordable housing

The growth in the number of tenants with complex needs and demanding behaviours has warranted changes in management practices by State Housing Authorities. By adopting practices of systematic and close support of tenants, authorities can assist tenants to adapt their behaviour in appropriate ways and sustain their tenancies.

The data available on client outcomes of tenant support programs suggests positive results in relation to sustaining at-risk tenancies. Indigenous clients who receive support through tenant support programs, are more likely to sustain their tenancies, are linked to external support programs to meet their non-housing needs and avoid homelessness. Strong linkage with outside agencies is a key factor of success. Tenant support programs must not only address the immediate tenancy-related issues that led to referral to the program, but also the underlying needs of clients such as mental health concerns, drug and alcohol dependence issues, and strengthening family relationships.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

70617 How sustainable are Australia's contemporary affordable housing projects?
(Feb 2012)

70569 Service integration and Indigenous housing
(Aug 2011)

40561 What future for Australian public housing? A critical analysis
(Sept 2010)

40586 The drivers of supply and demand in Australia's rural and regional centres? (Mar 2011)

70588 Partnership working in the design and delivery of housing policy and programs (Feb 2011)

40600 The stigmatisation of social housing: findings from a panel investigation (Apr 2011)

40559 Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not-for-profit housing sector (Jan 2011)

70575 Lessons of Defence Housing Australia for affordable housing provision (Oct 2010)

30652 Housing Supply Bonds: a suitable instrument to channel investment towards affordable housing in Australia? (May 2012)

70615 Pathways and choice in a diversifying social and affordable housing system (May 2012)

50366 Good practices for managing Australia's public housing assets (Jun 2010)

AHURI research in progress

70689 Understanding leadership, strategy and organisational dynamics in the not-for-profit housing sector (FR available first quarter 2013)

30678 Resident third party objections and appeals against planning applications: implications for medium density and social housing (PP available, FR available third quarter 2012)

71008 Public housing stock transfers in Australia: past, present and prospective (FR available third quarter 2013)

71007 Understanding and addressing local opposition to affordable housing projects (FR available third quarter 2013)

71006 Understanding decision making in the not-for-profit housing sector: longitudinal and comparative components (FR available third quarter 2013)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI3 Housing and neighbourhoods that generate social inclusion, economic opportunities and wellbeing

Overview

AHURI has completed 42 Research Projects that address this topic and there are currently 9 relevant projects underway. There is also the Multi-Year Research Project on *Addressing spatial concentrations of social disadvantage*, which commenced in mid-2012.

Applications for this Strategic Research Issue will **not** be sought in the 2013 Funding Round as there is sufficient research currently underway.

AHURI research to date

There has been renewed emphasis in housing research and policy formulation on the role of structural processes that affect individuals and households. This includes research on how best to ensure housing markets and programs enable social inclusion, economic opportunities and wellbeing.

Safe, stable, secure and affordable housing enhances wellbeing

The location of housing affects a number of aspects of social wellbeing. The stigmatisation of living in a poorer area, the lack of access to health and education services and low housing affordability are all linked to reduced wellbeing.

Housing assistance can significantly improve social inclusion for disadvantaged households

Housing assistance programs can have lifetime benefits for individuals, such as improved access to education, employment and income support. Benefits that far outweigh the cost to governments. The location and urban form of an area can also affect an individuals' participation in society. This needs to be a focus of housing provision for different groups (e.g. Indigenous people and refugees).

The location, cost and type of housing can have a significant impact on economic participation

Housing costs vary by location and the location of affordable housing affects access to jobs, transport choices and travel time. There are, in some cases, advantages to living in public housing. For example, location may support workforce participation but there may also be less obvious restrictions, such as reluctance to leaving children at home if a neighbourhood is seen as unsafe.

The connection between living in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage and wellbeing outcomes is complex

For example, there is no clear link between densification and an increase in social disadvantage. However, there is a perception that high-density housing leads to concentrated social disadvantage. This is largely due to the historical investment in high rise public housing. Area based initiatives can improve place outcomes in relation to crime and safety, housing and the physical environment, and community outcomes, but the impacts on wellbeing outcomes for individuals (e.g. in health, education or employment) are unclear. Reducing crime in public housing areas through community renewal requires social as well as physical interventions. This involves intense inter-agency and whole-of-government approaches with locally based housing management and community policing work.

Households in housing stress are clustered in disadvantaged areas lacking quality services and access to opportunities for social and economic participation

In this respect there is a link between housing costs and household wellbeing with low-income households having no choice but to live in low socio-economic status areas and experience housing stress. Nevertheless, housing affordability, when using the 30:40 measure is not correlated with household wellbeing.

Older Australians and those with a disability or other health impediments prefer to live independently, actively engage in their communities and in the case of older people age-in-place

Older people appreciate flexibility of options and home modifications which allow them to remain in their chosen dwelling longer. Outdoor and indoor space—such as a private garden or an extra bedroom—is important as people tend to engage in more home-based activities with age.

People with disabilities are more likely to live in public housing and are less likely to own their own homes

However, there is a shortage of housing appropriate for people with disabilities whose needs may vary according to the type of disability. Housing should be appropriately designed, well located, accessible to public transport and services, and amenable to support services—including those delivered in the home and those that the individual travels to access. Such housing must also take account of the need for additional disability-related space requirements which needs to be captured in social housing allocations processes, as well as through housing assistance measures such as Commonwealth Rent Assistance. A focus on sustaining tenancies for people experiencing disabilities is also required.

Housing also affects psychological wellbeing, such as companionship, happiness, depression, morale and ability to cope with life, as well as flow on effects for general health

The connection between health and mental state is reinforced by recent research on loneliness, which identifies older people as a key group who are at risk. People who are lonely report being twice as unhealthy as people who are not. Because housing plays an important role in developing social bonds, there are different rates of loneliness for people living in different tenures. Loneliness is particularly high among people living in single person dwellings, public housing and private rental housing. Certain groups such as divorced or separated men, single parents and older people are particularly vulnerable.

There are strong links between housing variables and child development outcomes

The factors shaping child development and wellbeing are complex and often interrelated. As a result, housing can impact on children's development and wellbeing through both direct and indirect mechanisms. For example, the inability to afford housing is linked to frequent moves, shared housing with other families, crowding, or even homelessness. However, there are trade-offs with potentially positive neighbourhood effects. Aspects of homes that can impact on children's development include environmental allergens, toxicants, cleanliness, housing disrepair and safety, building height and opportunities for outdoor play, crowding, housing affordability, home ownership, frequent residential moves, homelessness and neighbourhoods. The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children provide access to data that will assist in understanding these connections.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

40600 The problem of social housing stigmatisation and innovations that can minimise its effects (Investigative Panel) (Apr 2011)

40601 Loneliness, housing and health in Australia (Essay) (Feb 2011)

40585 Housing assistance, social inclusion and people with a disability (Nov 2011)

40548 The housing impacts of neighbourhood change: gentrification, affordability and displacement (Jan 2011)

50566 Housing, public policy and social inclusion (Oct 2011)

80551 Housing and developmental outcomes for children: a scoping study (July 2010)

50382 Housing and income inequalities in the city (Nov 2010)

50514 The advantages and disadvantages of home ownership for low-moderate income households (Oct 2010)

50515 Public housing and employment: challenges and strategies (Nov 2010)

70392 Dwelling and land use by older home owners (Mar 2010)

AHURI research in progress

70691 Affordable housing, urban renewal and planning: emerging practice in NSW, South Australia and Queensland (FR available third quarter 2012)

30678 Resident third party objections and appeals against planning applications: implications for medium density and social housing (PP available, FR available third quarter 2012)

50599 Social inclusion and housing: a household and local area analysis (PP available, FR available second quarter 2013)

70704 Multi-Year Research Project: Addressing spatial concentrations of social disadvantage (FR1 available second quarter 2012, FR2 available first quarter 2013, FR3 available second quarter 2013, FR4 available third quarter 2013, FR5 available early 2014, FR6 available mid 2014)

80650 Housing stress and household wellbeing in Australia (FR available second quarter 2012)

51003 Changing spatial distribution of lower income housing: understanding and responding to transport disadvantage (PP available third quarter 2013, FR available first quarter 2014)

53001 Wellbeing outcomes of low-income renters: a multi-level analysis of area effects (PP available first quarter 2013, FR available first quarter 2014)

82015 Refugees, housing and social inclusion in Australia (FR available third quarter 2013)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI4 Housing opportunities for Indigenous people that support improved amenity, wellbeing and economic sustainability

Overview

AHURI has completed 21 Research Projects on Indigenous housing with a further 7 projects currently underway. The Indigenous Multi-Year Research Project on *Aboriginal lifeworlds, conditionality and housing outcomes* has just commenced and will generate a body of evidence over the next three-years.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel has identified the following issue for further research:

→ The emergence of hybrid tenure forms in the provision of social housing for Indigenous people in remote communities, whereby state housing authorities and community organisations have a mixed role in the management of housing.

AHURI Research to date

The tenure pattern of Indigenous people in Australia is substantially different to that of the non-Indigenous population

Indigenous people are less likely to own their own home, more likely to live in social housing and experience homelessness at greater rates. The housing occupied by Indigenous people is more likely to be in poor condition, particularly for those households renting from community housing associations and living in remote areas. There are strong connections between Indigenous mobility, crowding and homelessness. Housing service delivery can be improved by responding to and recognising the particular needs of Indigenous clients in different contexts.

While a high proportion of Indigenous people live in social housing compared with non-Indigenous people

Mainstream housing policy settings and service delivery practices are not necessarily responsive to the needs and preferences of Indigenous clients. There is scope to adopt an intercultural approach to the delivery of social housing that involves mainstream and culturally specific housing services working together. An intercultural approach would improve client outcomes as it allows for greater adaptation of policies and local flexibility to allow for cultural values, preferences and lifestyles.

Indigenous people aspire to owning their own homes

One study found that approximately half of the 86 people interviewed had investigated home ownership, this did not vary between people who lived on community title land and those who did not. Home ownership among Indigenous people living in urban areas remains lower than non-Indigenous people, though has been growing. Indigenous people value the opportunity to leave a house to younger generations and the sense of stability and security home ownership offers more than the wealth building opportunities it provides. However, home ownership was often considered to present financial burdens.

Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are one model that provides for a hybrid tenure form. The CLT model can support the desire to retain community control over land held under community title. CLTs can mean the land and property are separated and offer intermediate tenure forms that address housing affordability by retaining subsidies in the valuation of the property, thereby maintaining affordability across resales and

inheritance. The potential to develop a model of CLT in New South Wales and the Northern Territory is being explored in a current project.

The high mobility of Indigenous people significantly impacts their housing arrangements and need

Indigenous people travel for a variety of reasons. Travelling to visit relations is a critical part of Indigenous culture and it should be distinguished from mobility that may result from severe and prolonged housing shortage. Types of mobility can be distinguished according to whether travel is voluntary and the length of time spent away from home. The risk of homelessness is likely to increase with the length of absence and the degree to which the travel is voluntary. Housing and other services need to be planned and delivered in a way that assumes ongoing mobility along existing patterns. There is scope to better adapt housing policy responses to mobility (e.g. providing for temporary mobility within the social housing sector and providing temporary accommodation in regional centres).

Indigenous people's understanding of homelessness and response to housing need is shaped by kinship obligations

While culturally sanctioned visiting may result in short-term crowding, it can have positive benefits. However, long-term crowding is linked to household breakdown and eviction because it can result in tenancy breaches, damage to houses and other negative consequences for children. Managing crowding in Indigenous households living in social housing requires recognition of the high levels of secondary homelessness among Indigenous people. Practitioners and homeless people agreed that overcrowding acts as both a hedge against primary homelessness and a force that can result in more people becoming homeless. Research into crowding is currently exploring these issues.

Housing design is crucial to improving housing amenity and Indigenous involvement in planning and design can improve the functionality and lifespan of housing

AHURI research identifies significant liveability issues resulting from a lack of concern for core cultural issues, inappropriate settlement planning, lack of functionality of internal and external spaces and ineffective management of the housing process. The evidence shows that housing in remote Indigenous communities requires increased design diversity, should include integrated community planning and must avoid expediency measures because these only shift costs to the future.

The way that housing is delivered on the ground and the design of housing is central in securing good social and economic outcomes as well as housing outcomes

Housing procurement—the contractual arrangements for construction and management of new housing projects—presents opportunities for economic and community development in remote Indigenous communities. Best practice in procuring housing can play an important role in enhancing or creating positive social and economic outcomes such as employment, education and community capacity building.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

70569   Service integration and Indigenous housing (Aug 2011)

20583   Remote Indigenous housing procurement and post-occupancy outcomes (May 2011)

40526   Improving housing policy responses to Indigenous patterns of mobility (May 2011)

80368   Indigenous homelessness: place, house and home (Mar 2010)

70639   Community Land Trusts and Indigenous housing outcomes (Mar 2012)

AHURI research in progress

Indigenous Multi-Year Research Project: Aboriginal lifeworlds, conditionality and housing outcomes

80516   Intergenerational homelessness and the use of homelessness services (PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

82013   Homelessness and services and system integration (PP available, FR available first quarter 2013)

20640   Overcrowding for Indigenous households in non-remote areas (PP available, FR available third quarter 2012)

80651   Housing and children's development and wellbeing: evidence from Australian data (FR available third quarter 2012)

72010   Community Land Trusts and Indigenous communities: from strategies to outcomes (PP available third quarter 2013)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue:
http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI5 Structures within the housing system, including finance, support services and tenure arrangements that enable households to access housing as their needs change over time

Context

There have been 39 projects completed on this topic, including the National Research Ventures 1 and 2 on *Housing affordability for lower income Australians* and *21st century housing careers and Australia's housing future*, and there are a further 12 Research Projects currently in progress.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel has identified gaps in the evidence-base warranting further research:

→ A review of shared equity schemes in Australia and internationally, and their application to the Australian context.

→ An examination of multi-unit residential trusts as currently provided in the UK and USA and identification of their application for Australia.

→ An exploration of motivations for tenants to exit social housing and how transitions to the private rental market or homeownership can be facilitated.

AHURI Research to date

The changing nature of people's housing transitions across the life course

Australian housing careers no longer follow a traditional linear housing career path

Due to major demographic and socio-economic change such as young people leaving home later, reduced ability to maintain home ownership due to increased divorce rates and the increase of house prices to the point where few renters have sufficient savings for a deposit. These changes are connected with a rise in the number of multi-generational households.

The loss of a partner through bereavement, separation or divorce significantly impacts housing affordability and disrupts home ownership aspirations

In one study, home ownership rates reportedly fell from 69 per cent to below 50 per cent within two years following divorce or separation.

Mortgage default is usually related to personal circumstances such as accidents, illness and divorce

Better access by borrowers to financial advice and mortgage relief assistance, as well as stricter lending standards and better consideration of illness and hardship by lenders, would reduce rates of default.

Home ownership

It is getting progressively harder for low-moderate income households to purchase a home and avail themselves of the potential financial and other benefits of ownership

A recently completed AHURI Essay examined whether high rates of home ownership can be sustained into the next century and the optimal policy settings to enable people to access and retain ownership of their homes. If the purchase patterns of the last decade are sustained into the future, overall rates of home ownership will continue to decrease. Furthermore the scale and intensity of mortgage stress (as

measured by the 30:40 ratio of mortgage expenditure to household income) was considerably greater in 2007–08 compared to 1981–82 for low-moderate income purchasers. This particularly affects households with children, with limits placed on the allocation of income to housing costs due to other living expenses. Those that are able to purchase are often pushed into outer suburban areas.

Home ownership can provide real or perceived wealth that can facilitate choice for older Australians about how and where they age and provides older people with a greater sense of self determination

One study found that high rates of home ownership among the elderly has underpinned success in government policy on retirement incomes and that increasing numbers of asset-poor older renters could challenge this. This study also found that those who fall out of home ownership are more likely than renters to require housing assistance. Home equity withdrawal and downsizing by older Australians is the subject of current research.

Government assistance can effectively assist older people to remain in their home as they age

AHURI research has found home modification and maintenance support can facilitate independent living and that it is more cost-effective to modify houses that are built according to adaptable design guidelines than to retrofit non-adaptable designed homes. Well-integrated housing and support services facilitate the best outcomes for older people or those with additional needs.

Research using Australian and international data shows that whilst preferring to age-in-place, greater frailty can force relocation in order to receive care

This can, in turn, increase demand for care-enriched housing by older people; the provision of this care to older people who are asset poor and on low-incomes is a key challenge.

Public and private rental

More Australians are relying on private rental accommodation for significant periods or all of their lives

However, Australia appears to have the weakest provisions for secure occupancy in the private rental sector of any of the jurisdictions studied.

Secure occupancy for renters could be enhanced in Australia

More stable and long-term tenancies for rental housing could be achieved by encouraging greater private investment in the social rental sector (as in Austria and The Netherlands). Australian housing policy could foster a more integrated private rental sector with a range of investment, ownership and management options that promote more choice for renters. Some changes to regulation could be considered to improve secure occupancy for tenants, including initial tenancy provisions that can convert into longer term tenancies if successful (as in Ireland and Flanders). The option identified in the Henry Tax Review of enhancing Commonwealth Rent Assistance, could also assist vulnerable households to access rental housing and sustain their tenancies. For best effect, this would link the provision of additional rent subsidy to achieving more secure tenancies for low-income households.

Key groups at risk of housing eviction include people with substance abuse problems, women escaping domestic violence, people living alone, young people, sole parents and older people

In contrast to home owners, older private renters (especially women) are reportedly more fearful for the future. This can be largely attributed to their lack of wealth and security of tenure—both factors perceived to be important to living well in old age.

Evictions not only have detrimental effects for those evicted but lead to increased costs for governments. The circumstances warranting eviction can often be prevented through counselling and education programs for key at risk groups.

Housing affordability problems can push people into more marginal forms of housing such as caravan parks and boarding houses

The experience of low-income families excluded from the private rental market is currently being investigated. AHURI research has looked at different aspects of marginal rental housing sub-markets including caravan parks, boarding houses and the lower end of the private rental market. AHURI research currently underway is examining the nature of the marginal sub-markets as a whole.

Finance

Reverse mortgages and home equity withdrawal may assist in supporting home ownership

Reverse mortgages can provide a source of income and greater financial independence for older people and can potentially reduce the burden on long-term aged care and retirement facilities by funding necessary home modifications. However, there is a need for increased regulation, better advice to consumers, reduction in break fees and continued monitoring of the situation of reverse mortgage holders given the nature of the product and of the client group. Current research is exploring the financial risks and benefits of home equity withdrawal for older people.

Shared equity products and Community Land Trusts may offer models

There is a preference for schemes that allow the consumer to *staircase* to full ownership and choose their own house in the private market (rather than be limited to particular stock) and to capture equity gains by selling in an open market.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

70688 Multi-generation households in Australian cities (Essay) (Feb 2012)

70589 Age-specific housing markets and housing and care for low to moderate income older persons (Sept 2011)

50565 Secure occupancy in rental housing: conceptual foundations and comparative perspectives (July 2011)

30563 Other countries' policy initiatives to meet the housing needs of asset-poor older persons: implications for Australia (Nov 2010)

70392 Dwelling and land use by older home owners (Mar 2010)

20287 Integrating housing, support and care for older people: a national and international analysis (Jan 2010)

70512 Reverse mortgages and older people: growth factors and implications for retirement decisions (May 2010)

30529 Mortgage default in Australia: nature, causes and social and economic impacts (Mar 2010)

30653 Sustaining home ownership in the 21st century: emerging policy concerns (Essay) (April 2012)

70639 Community Land Trusts and Indigenous housing outcomes (Mar 2012)

70695   Moving home: the role of housing policy in responding to and promoting mobility (Essay)

70615   Pathways and choice in a diversifying social and affordable housing system (May 2012)

AHURI research in progress

81004   Housing equity withdrawal: uses and risks of alternative options for older Australians? (PP available first quarter 2013, FR available third quarter 2013)

21005   Preventing first time homelessness amongst older Australians
(PP available, FR available third quarter 2012)

53011   The edges of home ownership
(PP available first quarter 2013, FR available first quarter 2014)

70687   Downsizing amongst older Australians
(PP available second quarter 2012, FR available first quarter 2013)

80651   Housing and children's development and wellbeing: evidence from Australian data (FR available third quarter 2012)

30674   The housing security consequences of underemployment
(PP available third quarter 2012, FR available first quarter 2013)

30699   Marginal rental housing and marginal renters: a typology for policy
(PP available third quarter 2012, FR available second quarter 2013)

50683   Changes in the private rental system and the effects of long-term private rental (PP available final quarter 2012, FR available third quarter 2013)

20610   Bridging the divide: the experiences of low-income households excluded from the private rental sector in Australia
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue:
http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI6 Efficient land and housing markets that meet demand (affordably and appropriately), enable labour market and other mobility, and support productivity gains in the economy

Overview

AHURI has completed 13 projects on land, housing and labour markets since the year 2000 and 10 projects are currently in progress.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel has identified gaps in the evidence-base warranting further research:

→ Developing a multiple measure methods to determine housing need.

→ The effectiveness of the planning system such as rezoning and 'as of right development' to support the supply of affordable housing.

→ Incentives and barriers to the uptake of innovative approaches to affordable housing products by private developers.

AHURI Research to date

Australia, like many western economies, has a housing affordability problem

The available evidence suggests a number of contributory factors:

→ A demand for more housing prompted by the simultaneous increase in the number of households and the proportion of households with fewer occupants, creating more competition within the housing market.

→ Gentrification has significantly impacted on the supply of affordable housing in Sydney and Melbourne.

→ Wages have not kept pace with rising house prices.

→ An array of government subsidies, taxation concessions and other incentives disproportionately favour home ownership, meaning low-income renters are at a relative disadvantage.

→ Overall housing shortages and increasing competition in the rental market meaning that affordable properties are not necessarily occupied by low-income households.

The residual income measure of housing affordability highlights affordability thresholds for different household types

This approach calculates the amount of household income available for housing costs (mortgage or rent) after relevant expenditure items for different household types are taken into account. While the overall results are not dissimilar to the current benchmark method for estimating housing affordability stress (i.e. the 30:40 rule), the residual income measure (using the Low Cost Budget Standard) shows there is a much higher incidence of housing affordability stress (33.6%) for the bottom 40 per cent of households compared to the 30:40 method (23.9%). Conversely, the residual income measure shows there is much greater capacity to purchase or rent above a certain income point compared with the 30:40 approach.

There has been persistent market failure at the affordable end of the private rental sector

The persistent shortage of stock available for low-income private renters has led to affordability problems for a significant proportion of low-income earners. In 2006, the shortage for low-income private renters (those with the lowest 40% of household incomes) was acute, with almost two-thirds missing out on affordable rental housing.

This was even more acute for very-low-income private renter households (those with the lowest 20% of household incomes) with nearly four-fifths of such households not accessing affordable housing.

In the same period very low-income private renters faced a total shortfall of 211 000 affordable dwellings. This shortage was exacerbated because 73 000 low rent dwellings were occupied by higher income households. The greatest shortages, both in absolute and relative terms, in affordable private rental dwellings were observed in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Supply shortfalls in rural and regional areas—especially in the rental market—were also acute because of a shortage of investors and inappropriate planning regulations.

The private rental market in Australia is largely made up of individual investors

This contributes to a volatile rental market as the decisions of these investors are largely unpredictable.

Poor housing affordability has led to residential mobility, but has not yet resulted in labour shortages

Before 2001 there was little direct evidence that housing affordability problems were heightening labour shortages, as low-income jobs moved to low cost suburbs and those jobs in the inner city—such as hospitality or retail jobs—were filled by young people who were more likely to share housing costs in group households. Several AHURI studies have tracked the labour market participation of those receiving housing assistance and show that stable housing allows public housing tenants to participate in the labour market. Income support recipients also had high levels of tenure stability, less than 20 per cent experienced multiple and complex tenure transitions. Changes in tenure over time are driven by a range of factors, with change of income level being only a minor or secondary consideration in many cases.

The planning system can contribute to housing affordability outcomes

Planning system complexity, uncertain timeframes, inconsistent planning requirements and a lack of adequate resources at the local government level have all been identified as barriers to achieving affordable housing. These are of greater concern to developers than, for example, fixed charges or infrastructure contributions. Poor affordability has also occurred because developers have passed on to consumers the holding costs incurred as a result of delays in the planning process.

Current urban planning measures to foster social and environmental sustainability of cities are ineffective

The impact of planning policy on the outcomes in the housing system is limited, with planners expressing frustration about their inability to enforce strategic policy and bring about desirable changes in terms of the range of housing sizes and types available. The urban growth boundary was not linked to changes in land prices.

Governments can influence and shape affordable housing supply outcomes through more effective planning policies

Planners can improve affordability through addressing land supply and assembly and planning approval processes. Overseas evidence (from Europe and North America) suggests that governments can use mechanisms such as inclusionary zoning, density bonuses and affordability targets for new developments to increase the supply of appropriate and affordable housing.

The redevelopment of greyfield precincts in cities is identified as an important strategy for addressing affordable and sustainable housing supply in Australia

New planning and policy frameworks and infrastructures will need to be established to reduce the level of risk and uncertainty associated with larger-scale redevelopment in the middle suburbs. Governments are increasingly looking to improve the sustainability of new residential subdivisions and master-planned communities, whilst maintaining affordability by increasing densities including using smaller houses. Current research is exploring the implications of housing and transport disadvantage in cities.

Understanding how to influence housing supply requires a greater understanding of the financing and construction of new housing in Australia

Current research is underway to understand the housing sector labour force, the subcontracting system of housing construction and the broader context of financing residential development.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

20605   Exploring the use of residual measures of housing affordability as an alternative to the ratio approach (Essay) (Jan 2012)

50597   Residual incomes in Australia: analysis and implications (Oct 2011)

50593   Towards a new development model for housing regeneration in greyfield precincts (Investigative Panel) (July 2011)

40586   The drivers of housing supply and demand in rural and regional centres (Mar 2011)

40548   The housing impacts of neighbourhood change: gentrification, affordability and displacement (Jan 2011)

50514   Low-income home ownership (Oct 2010)

50502   Australia's private rental market: changes (2001–2006) in the supply of, and demand for, low rent dwellings (May 2011)

30521   Movements in and out of housing affordability stress and dynamic modelling of initiatives to improve the supply of affordable housing (June 2009)

70695   Moving home: the role of housing policy in responding to and promoting mobility (Essay) (June 2012)

30653   Sustaining home ownership in the 21st century: emerging policy concerns (Essay) (April 2012)

AHURI research in progress

50683   Changes in the private rental system and the effects of long-term private rental (PP available final quarter 2012, FR available third quarter 2013)

30634   Understanding the patterns, characteristics and trends in the housing sector labour force in Australia
(PP available third quarter 2012, FR available first quarter 2013)

30643   Current labour processes and management of subcontractors: impacts on productivity in the housing construction industry
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

30670   Cost-effective methods for evaluation of neighbourhood renewal programs
(PP available second quarter 2012, FR available third quarter 2012)

80649   Delivering diverse and affordable infill housing development (Investigative
Panel) (FR available third quarter 2012)

52012   Processes for developing affordable and sustainable medium-density
housing models for greyfield precincts
(PP available first quarter 2013, FR available mid 2014)

81009   The financing of residential development in Australia
(FR available final quarter 2013)

70694   Quantifying planning system performance and the national housing reform
agenda (Investigative Panel) (FR available third quarter 2012)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please
refer to the AHURI research catalogue:
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SRI7 Understanding and responding to the impact of systemic shifts upon structures within the housing system and housing outcomes

Overview

AHURI has completed 9 projects and 2 projects are currently underway. Priority Topic 3, *The impact of housing and labour markets on housing choice and workforce participation,* will make a contribution to this Strategic Research Issue.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel has identified the following issue warranting further research:

→ Understanding the impact of intergenerational wealth transfer on housing outcomes.

AHURI Research to date

Challenges to creating a sustainable and desirable housing system in Australia include impacts of the Global Financial Crisis, declining affordability and constraints on supply

The Investigative Panel concluded there are real constraints to creating a sustainable and desirable housing system due to current market failures and policy fragmentation and embedded inequalities in income and wealth. One way of ensuring greater stability and security is to underpin the home ownership market with a safety net and reviewing housing taxation and transfers.

The existing housing system is fiscally unsustainable and inter-generationally inequitable

Australia has a long-term structural housing affordability problem caused by house prices growing faster than incomes over the last half century. The amount spent on housing costs has been gradually rising across all households. Currently around 15 per cent of all households pay at least 30 per cent of their income in meeting their housing costs. The burden of paying high housing costs disproportionately affects lower income households.

Although the overall home ownership rate in Australia increased marginally between 1996 and 2006, this disguises lower rates of ownership among some demographic groups and higher rates of indebtedness

Two key groups experienced large falls in ownership—middle-upper income 25–44-year olds and low-income 45–64-year olds. By contrast, home ownership rates improved for singles, single parents, de-facto couples and those living in remote areas. Home ownership rates could be increased for key groups by addressing Australia's chronic imbalance between supply and demand to moderate–high housing prices, and redirecting subsidies to those that need assistance most.

Polarisation in income distribution is spatially distributed in Australia's major cities

As the difference between high and low-income earners' wages has increased, so too has the difference in housing costs in high and low cost suburbs. This has considerably restricted the residential choices for low income households. Gentrification of suburbs pushes out low-income and disadvantaged households, eroding affordability and the quality of accessible housing stock in metropolitan housing markets for lower and moderate income households. This socio-spatial polarisation of low-income households in cities may result in transport disadvantage which limits access to opportunities for social and economic participation.

Housing affordability problems will especially affect younger generations

The lack of affordable housing in particular areas may affect access to employment opportunities and create a generation unable to purchase homes so widening income and asset inequality.

Worsening housing affordability is a specific issue for older households, especially for renters

There is growing concern about the decline in home ownership which is critical to housing policy for older Australians. Demand for public housing by older Australians is projected to significantly increase due to affordability issues in the private rental market. A recent project assessed the state of the age-specific housing market in Australia, its potential growth and attractiveness for low- to moderate-income older persons.

The resources boom and consequent two-speed economy has resulted in bifurcated housing markets in some rural and regional areas

One segment of the market is focused on high-income, often temporary workers in the resources sector; while the established population working in ancillary industries, or not working at all, are forced to compete for less expensive properties at the bottom end of the housing market.

The sub-prime crisis in the US has starkly illustrated the connection between housing and the broader economy

In Australia, mortgage stress has become more visible in the wake of the long boom in housing markets, especially capital cities. Strong demand for housing, its limited supply, and easily accessible credit have seen household debt levels rise over the last decade, as housing affordability has dropped. This leaves many Australian households vulnerable to interest rate rises and unemployment, or underemployment. The global financial crisis has left many lower and middle income households exposed. The number of households in severe mortgage stress, (that is, in arrears, trying to sell or refinance, or facing foreclosure) will depend on how much unemployment/underemployment increases and how high interest rates rise.

Research currently underway is exploring the relationship between housing security and underemployment in Australia.

House price inflation is correlated with higher consumption and this can serve to promote economic growth. However, there are concerns that it might also create volatility

In 2006, on average every $100 000 increase in housing wealth results in an increase in consumption of between $1000 and $1500 per annum by Australian households. This is because increased housing wealth helps to relax borrowing constraints on home owners facilitating increased consumption. This is greatest for middle aged home owners. House and rental price instability has significant consequences for the broader economy by impacting on household spending patterns and generally reinforcing economic volatility.

Immigration and relocation within Australia have implications for housing and housing support services

Early AHURI research found that many immigrants to Australia aspired to home ownership. Access to decent, affordable housing was seen as one of the benefits of settlement. Immigrants who had recently arrived in Australia made considerable use of government and other services. The use of services varied considerably by tenure, with home owners and home purchasers having the least recourse to assistance, and public and private tenants the greatest. Other research found that refugees established themselves in the housing market following a number of moves

in the first year of settlement. Based on the cultural definition of homelessness, at least one-third of respondents had been homeless at some stage since their arrival in Australia. Research underway is examining the housing careers of humanitarian refugees, investigating their access to suitable long term housing and whether specialist housing and other services are successful in facilitating settlement.

Early AHURI research looked at the motivations of, and tradeoffs made by, low-income households who chose to relocate from metropolitan cities to rural and regional Australia. It found that a geographic mismatch between where housing was affordable and where jobs were available was a key driver of welfare recipients moving between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

30637   Investigative Panel on a socially sustainable housing system for Australia (June 2011)

30529   Mortgage default in Australia: nature, causes and economic impacts (Mar 2010)

40503   Housing implications of social, spatial and structural change (Sept 2010)

AHURI research in progress

82015   Refugees, housing and social inclusion in Australia (FR available third quarter 2013) (FR available third quarter 2013)

30674   The housing security consequences of underemployment (PP available third quarter 2012, FR first quarter 2013)

51002   Tall tales and true: housing stories from ABS data (FR available final quarter 2013)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

SRI8 Understanding and responding to the effects of non-housing policies and programs upon housing outcomes and wellbeing

Overview

AHURI has completed research on the relationship between housing and wellbeing, health, taxation, income support, environmental policies, and the integration between housing and community services. Priority Topic 4, *The integration of housing assistance and social support,* will also contribute to this Strategic Research Issue.

The AHURI Housing Research Panel is **not** seeking further research on housing and environmental policies in the 2013 Funding Round. However, the following issues warrant further research:

→ The impact of housing subsidies on house prices.

→ An examination of the likely consequence of major reforms in aged care, health and disability (i.e. the National Disability Insurance Scheme) for the provision of housing.

AHURI Research to date

Connections between housing and wellbeing

Four projects examining the relationship between housing and health have been completed.

While housing and health are connected the causal relationship is unclear
Renters are more likely to report poor health than home owners. For public housing tenants, reduced housing costs, increased residential stability, reduced crowding and more socially diverse neighbourhoods have been shown to benefit educational outcomes for children, the health and wellbeing of tenants, and reduce health costs for government. There are links between health outcomes and loneliness, and a connection has been established between loneliness and housing, particularly for older people.

Integration between housing and community services

AHURI research has examined the intersection between housing policy and the delivery of community services including mental health, health, disability and aged care services with 19 completed projects and a further 5 projects currently underway.

The integration of support services with housing contributes to better wellbeing outcomes for people experiencing mental illness
People with mental illness may struggle to maintain housing and be at higher risk of becoming homeless. With appropriate housing and support however, people with significant psychiatric disabilities can maintain stable housing. Critical success factors include:

→ Provision of housing that is suitable for the management of their disabilities or manifestations arising from their mental illness.

→ Support, medication and/or treatment provided by trusted people.

→ Clear identification of issues that may place their housing at risk.

Current research is analysing the housing policy interventions that help young people in recovery from mental illness and achieve other outcomes such as social inclusion, employment, and better health.

Well-integrated housing and support services facilitate the best outcomes for older people or those with additional needs

Additional services can greatly enhance tenant wellbeing and can sustain tenancies. Better coordination between the community-based aged care support sector, the residential aged care sector and housing policy will be needed to meet the needs of older Australians.

Home-based care for older people has been found to be more cost-effective than existing forms of residential care

Both formal and informal care costs increase with age and do not significantly vary according to geographic differences. Tenure, however, does matter, with public housing tenants recording the highest care costs and owner-purchasers recording the lowest care costs. Whilst a causal link remains unclear, the evidence indicates that it is not related to differences in care needs as residents across the different tenures reported similar rates of medical conditions, cognitive impairments and similar degrees of severity of these impairments.

Younger people experiencing disability are more likely to be living in the community than older people experiencing disability

One critical factor for successful community living is appropriate and accessible housing with support services to meet the complex needs of residents. However, trends towards deinstitutionalisation have not typically been matched with adequate resources. There is an increasing emphasis on the community housing sector in meeting the needs of people experiencing disability or mental illness.

Programs to assist Indigenous people to sustain tenancies are most effective when there are strong linkages with outside agencies

These programs are most successful when they address the underlying needs of clients in areas such as health, mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, urban life skills and family relationships as well as immediate tenancy-related issues.

Strategies to prevent homelessness work best by combining housing and other support services

Integration between homelessness support services and mental health and health services is particularly effective. For example, social reintegration for prisoners and social participation for heroin users is facilitated by access to stable housing. There are whole-of-government savings particularly in the health and justice system that can be realised through effectively addressing homelessness. The community housing system has a role in meeting the housing and support needs of homeless people.

Taxation

The AHURI-3M housing market model can be used to test the impact of changes in income support and taxation settings on housing supply. Four projects have been completed using this model, including the National Research Venture 1. Two current projects are examining changes in patterns of home ownership and the financial risks and benefits of home equity to supplement retirement incomes.

Governments can influence housing supply and affordability through taxation mechanisms

Modelling of two sets of proposed changes under the Henry Tax Review shows that proposed changes to negative gearing and land tax arrangements can result in a reduction in house prices and rents in more expensive housing markets. Replacing stamp duties with a broad based land tax could present a cost neutral way of

improving access to home ownership for lower income workers and making private rental investment more attractive to investors.

Taxation in Australia is a form of indirect housing subsidy because home ownership is exempt from capital gains tax and other income taxes

In addition to direct subsidies to first home buyers (the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG) was $1 billion in 2001), the value of indirect subsidies to owner-occupiers in 2001 was estimated to amount to $21 billion. This comprised the tax concession to owner-occupiers of not taxing capital gains ($13 billion) and the tax concession to owner-occupiers of not taxing imputed rent (net value of $8 billion).

Income support

The impact of income support has been examined in ten completed AHURI projects with a primary focus on the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). Other research has addressed the pertinence of child support payments showing how a combination of child support, other government income support and housing assistance has assisted separated parents to secure better quality housing.

Regional differences in the cost of private rental interact with Australia-wide settings of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to result in regional variations and variable impact on rental affordability

Nevertheless, CRA greatly increases the number of households in affordable housing in the private rental market, taking the proportion in affordable housing from one-third to two-thirds. While CRA may decrease labour market attachment for some recipients, it can also have a positive effect on education participation. This later outcome was particularly important for those from remote and rural locations and for secondary students living independently.

Environmental policies

Home owners have higher energy consumption than renters

This finding is supported by two studies and is consistent irrespective of household size or dwelling type. This is despite home owners being more likely to have energy saving devices installed and being more able to adapt their homes. With housing being a key site of energy consumption, the carbon tax is likely to affect households differently depending on household size, housing type and tenure. Meeting environmental sustainability objectives also has implications for issues of housing supply, affordability, housing design and the urban form within which housing is located.

Recently completed AHURI research (since 2010)

30563 Other countries' policy initiatives to meet the housing needs of asset-poor older persons: implications for Australia (Nov 2010)

40560 The environmental sustainability of Australia's private rental housing stock (Dec 2010)

70589 Age-specific housing markets and housing and care for low to moderate income older persons (Sept 2011)

20287 Integrating housing, support and care for older people: a national and international analysis (Jan 2010)

80647 Modelling the impacts of the Henry Review tax recommendations on housing supply and affordability (Sept 2011)

70619 The health impacts of housing (Investigative Panel) (Aug 2011)

20550 Household attitudes and behaviours in relation to environmentally sustainable resource use (Oct 2010)

AHURI research in progress

82013 Homelessness and services and system integration
(PP available, FR available first quarter 2013)

50682 The role of informal community resources in supporting independent housing for young people recovering from mental illness
(PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

70686 The role of community housing in meeting the housing and support needs of homeless people (PP available, FR available final quarter 2012)

81004 Housing equity withdrawal: uses and risks of alternative options for older Australians (PP available first quarter 2013, FR available third quarter 2013)

53011 The edges of home ownership (FR available third quarter 2013)

For a full list of AHURI projects relating to this Strategic Research Issue, please refer to the AHURI research catalogue:
http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/resources/.

4 RESEARCH APPROACHES

4.1 Contexts

Researchers are encouraged to see how their research fits into a broad framework for understanding housing and homelessness research. It is important to capture how housing issues may impact (or be impacted by) other outcomes and to consider the context at which the impact might be felt—at the individual or household level, or at a community, institutional or national level. For example, the impact of mortgage defaults might be felt very acutely amongst those households affected, but may also (as we have seen in the United States) impact on the macro-economy at a national, or even international, level.

4.2 Methods and research vehicles

AHURI supports the use of a wide range of innovative research methods, provided they are appropriate to the research question and data source chosen. In specifying the proposed research methods, researchers should show a clear appreciation for data sources, methodology (see Table 2), and measurement models. Research that utilises innovative or mixed methods is encouraged. For example, a Research Project might involve quantitative analysis of longitudinal data and qualitative analysis of housing and household biographies to gain a stronger understanding of what is happening over time. Alternatively, researchers might devise a data set capable of generating both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Table 1: A matrix of methods

		Approaches	
	Quantitative	**Qualitative**	**Mixed methods**
Literature and data review methodologies	Systematic or structured review	Snowballing (key works/ bundling/ scoping) and meta-analysis	Limited examples as yet, but wide scope
Scenario building	Modelling	Expert (and lay) deliberation of alternative futures	Straightforward combination
Interventions and experiments	Variant of randomised control trial using 'natural' experiments	Case study comparisons	A variety of experimental designs and participatory methods
Original analyses of cross-sectional data	Secondary use of existing survey resources; new household surveys (whole instruments or new questions)	Semi-structured and open-ended interviews, focus groups, group interviews, home and neighbourhood tours, ethnographic studies	New data resource? A combined qualitative database (individual projects, plus core, perhaps drawn in a sift from a major survey)
Original analyses of longitudinal data	Panel/ cohort survey analysis	House biographies Housing pathways	

*(Left margin label spanning the table rows: **Data resources**)*

Source: Smith 2009 *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*

AHURI encourages the use of the newer research vehicles—Essays and Investigative Panels—alongside Research Projects. These are intended to promote innovative thinking and problem solving, engagement between researchers and policy-makers, and importantly to enable research outputs to be completed in timeframes of less than 12 months. Research Projects are typically centred around one or two key research questions and typically involve primary methods of data collection and consequently often extend beyond 12 months.

Through the forthcoming NHRP Funding Round, applications for Essays, Investigative Panels and Research Projects will be accepted.

Essays

The aim of the Essay is to compose a logical argument directed at emerging policy issues. Essays are designed to foster debate around the conceptual or practical issues underpinning the future development of policy. It is important to note, however, that they are presented as Essays, not in the typical AHURI Final Report format. Essays are intended to focus on a particular policy research issue and bring together secondary evidence, innovative thinking and debate lead by a position or argument from the researcher. Where suitable, the AHURI National Office may engage appropriate discussants from the research and policy communities and other experts in the field. Discussants may be asked to provide a written commentary on the original Essay and to participate in an AHURI Research Seminar with the author(s). The responses would be published alongside the original Essay on the website, along with a short response from the original author.

Investigative Panels

Investigative Panels are designed to bring about direct engagement between experts from the research and policy communities (and potentially practitioners from industry and community sectors) to interrogate a specific policy or practice question. The Investigative Panel process will draw on the experience and expertise of the members of the Investigative Panel, who will meet to discuss a research question of immediate practical relevance to policy development. Typically, Investigative Panels will involve some literature or data review and some scenario building. Care needs to be taken to focus and capture key findings from the discussion and to explain how the Investigative Panel process supports the findings and generation of new knowledge.

Research Projects

A Research Project involves the conduct of research on a contained research topic. Research Projects may vary in scale, and can range across discrete secondary data analysis to major primary data collection exercises. AHURI encourages innovation in the publishable outputs that result from Research Projects, and these are expected to vary in accordance with what is suitable to each project.

4.3   Engagement

Engagement with the policy community and practitioners is central to AHURI's aim of providing an evidence-base for policy development.

AHURI encourages the development of innovative and meaningful engagement in Research Projects. Each Research Project needs to incorporate an appropriate approach to engaging with the policy and practice community. Engagement activities are provided to the policy community by AHURI and a request for nominations for interested participants is submitted. AHURI also reports back on engagement activities and outcomes. There are a number of engagement strategies currently used to ensure that Research Projects are policy relevant and that the implications of research findings for policy development are fully explored.

User Group Meetings

User Group Meetings are organised by AHURI. They are teleconferences between policy-makers and research team leaders at different stages of the research process. Meetings offer policy-makers the opportunity to provide feedback (comments, criticisms or questions) about the research, but also provide opportunities for researchers to be brought up to date about recent policy developments or potentially to arrange further collaborations (e.g. around data sources or other input to the research).

Reference or Advisory Groups

These are organised by the Research team, are incorporated into the project and funded as part of the Research Project. They usually involve AHURI staff and incorporate a feedback mechanism to AHURI as there remains a reporting requirement to the Policy community through AHURI processes. They are meetings between the research team and policy-makers, practitioners and other expert advisors (e.g. from non-government organisations), at appropriate stages of the research process. They also offer policy-makers the opportunity to provide feedback about the research, and provide opportunities for researchers to be brought up to date about recent policy developments or potentially to arrange further collaborations. These are tailored to the Research Project and are likely to involve face to face meetings and a more active engagement in the ongoing development of the project.

AHURI Policy Roundtables

AHURI Policy Roundtables are face-to-face meetings between a small number of (usually senior) policy-makers and research team leaders in a Roundtable format. The Research team may decide to include a Roundtable in the project and therefore organise and fund the activity within the Research Project. AHURI will also organise roundtables usually in collaboration with the policy community. Roundtables may serve to determine policy priorities or outputs or occur near the end of the research process aimed at providing a short summary of key research findings followed by a facilitated discussion around the findings of the research and their implications for policy.

Investigative Panels and Essays

Investigative Panels can be used as a form of engagement within a broader Research Project, thereby allowing expert advisors from the research and policy communities (and potentially practitioners from industry and community sectors) to participate in the research process directly.

4.4   Dissemination

Research dissemination is coordinated by AHURI National Office, and is included in the budget of each research application. The dissemination budget covers AHURI Research Seminars and publications and in some cases other activities appropriate to the project and current policy priorities. AHURI runs an annual series of Research Seminars presenting AHURI Research. Conferences such as the biennial National Housing Conference and the new National Urban Policy Conference are supported by AHURI. AHURI has also initiated a Homelessness Research Conference (2012) and the Beyond the Current NAHA conference (2011).

AHURI Housing Research Seminars

AHURI Research Seminars involve face-to-face presentations of the results of research by the research team leader to a large number of attendees. Typically the audience would comprise public servants responsible for housing policy at both senior and junior levels, but it may also include staff from non-government

organisations or members of the general public. AHURI Research Seminars are facilitated by the AHURI National Office staff and typically involve discussants from relevant housing policy areas. Some may be tailored for a specific topic (e.g. an Essay or they may be themed to include two or three Research Projects).

Conferences

Conferences are face-to-face presentations of the results of research by the research team leader to a number of attendees at an AHURI or other housing or social policy related conference. The audience would comprise a range of interested parties including policy-makers responsible for social welfare policy.

Other Activities

In some cases rather than a seminar or conference presentation project leaders or team members may participate in roundtables or workshops where their research is presented to a targeted group for discussion.

4.5   Publications

AHURI Research Reports

AHURI's published research outputs Positioning Papers, Final Reports and Research Papers are published on the AHURI website. There is a Positioning Paper journal series and a Final Report journal series which are double blind peer reviewed by two peer reviewers. These journal series are included on the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Ranked Journal List 2012. Researchers retain the intellectual property from the research and may on publish in other academic journals but AHURI Limited holds the copy right to the AHURI Research Reports.

AHURI Research and Policy Bulletins

Research and Policy Bulletins (RAPs) are produced by AHURI Limited and published on the AHURI website. These are also published in hard copy and distributed to policy-makers. They provide summaries of the key findings from completed research and indicate the potential implications of the research findings for policy development.

5 INDIGENOUS HOUSING RESEARCH

AHURI has commenced a new Indigenous Multi-Year Research Project (IMYRP) on housing. As a large-scale, longer-term, Research Project on Indigenous housing, it will involve conducting a sustained research effort that will meaningfully contribute to the development of Indigenous housing policy. This investment will also include a proportion of funds allocated to postgraduate capacity building

The research is titled, Aboriginal lifeworlds, conditionality and housing outcomes.

A key consideration in the research is the way housing assistance is used to foster certain social norms and associated behaviours. This 'conditionality' mirrors the general use of reciprocity arrangements or obligations in social policy generally and specifically in social housing provision. This study considers how conditionality in housing policy and management contributes to positive housing outcomes and what modes of conditionality are most effective and in which contexts.

Of critical importance is the role of Indigenous cultural and social norms—including kinship obligations and reciprocity—in developing social capital and improvements in housing outcomes, and whether they are in harmony—or conflict—with conditions informing housing assistance. A key hypothesis to be tested is that for positive outcomes, an 'intercultural recognition space' is required involving mutual recognition of the moral relationships of duty and care between housing administrators, Indigenous community leaders and tenants.

The study will comprise five case studies, staged over three years, covering remote, regional city and metropolitan settings, and involving data collection and analysis of four project variables (conditionalities, social capitals, recognition spaces, and housing outcomes). A key feature of the study is active engagement with the policy community and provision of findings to inform policy and programs. There will also be active engagement with the different Indigenous communities in the case study areas including the dissemination of findings to Indigenous community organisations and government housing personnel at the regional, state and national levels.

AHURI encourages the submission of applications for projects with an Indigenous focus in the NHRP Funding Round. Furthermore, it is expected that research proposals will incorporate the Indigenous aspect of any topic, and will be budgeted accordingly. Applications that do not include an Indigenous component should specify why the research topic precludes it.

5.1 Ethics of Indigenous research

All research must adhere to appropriate principles and protocols as specified in the NHRP Guidelines for applicants. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous housing issues must adhere to appropriate research ethics as specified in *Ethical principles and guidelines for Indigenous research*. These principles and protocols apply to all stages of the research—including development of the proposal, assessment of the proposal, conduct of the research, and dissemination of the research findings. An important element is the need for consultation with Indigenous people at key stages throughout the research process.

6 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

International collaboration is an integral feature of the activities of AHURI, and it is a growing feature of the National Housing Research Program. AHURI Limited has formal agreements in place with OTB Delft in the Netherlands, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the United Kingdom, the Centre for Housing Policy at York University in the United Kingdom and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at City University of Hong Kong. AHURI is a member of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) and the Asia Pacific Network of Housing Research (APNHR).

Housing researchers are encouraged to explore prospective collaborative and comparative research activities with international partners. Research applications through the NHRP Funding Round 2013 will be considered favourably where international collaboration relevant to the proposed research topic is included.

International collaboration should aim to meet the following objectives:

→ Leveraging NHRP funding by securing additional resources (cash and in-kind) by international partners.

→ Adding quality to research through international comparative analysis by experts in other countries.

→ Building research capacity by creating international exchange and professional development opportunities.

→ Building the profile of AHURI as an institute of international standing.

→ Enabling AHURI to present and participate in international research events.

→ Supporting AHURI events programs by encouraging international experts to visit Australia.

7 NHRP FUNDING ROUND

7.1 Funding mechanisms

The National Housing Research Program consists of:

→ The annual NHRP Funding Round driven by the publication of the *Research Agenda 2013* which calls for research funding proposals.

→ The annual NHRP Funding Round capacity building component which consists of one Postdoctoral Fellowship for 2013.

→ Larger scale Multi-Year Research Projects which are integrated suites of projects that extend over 3 years, and tackle research questions that are complex and/or longitudinal in nature.

→ Research Briefs which are used to commence particular research activities that have emerged as critical issues.

→ AHURI also funds research via research capacity building activities, primarily through Top-up Scholarships to postgraduate students and an annual postgraduate symposium.

7.2 NHRP Funding Round 2013

Table 2: NHRP 2013 dates

	Opening	Closing
NHRP Funding Round	Monday 9 July 2012	Friday 31 August 2012, 12 noon AEST
Postdoctoral Fellowship	Monday 9 July 2012	Friday 31 August 2012, 12 noon AEST
Top-up Scholarship	Monday 9 July 2012	Wednesday 30 April 2013

Applications for funding must not duplicate existing research from AHURI or elsewhere. It is therefore vital that all applicants familiarise themselves with the findings, aims and foci of completed and current research in this document and the companion document that catalogues a description of AHURI funded projects since 2000. These documents provide guidance about the extent to which each topic is being addressed in the existing AHURI research program.

Funding applications should identify which Priority Topic and which Strategic Research Issue the proposal addresses. The policy context that informs each research area is quite distinctive and applicants must ensure that it is clear how the proposed research will contribute to addressing policy objectives. One Postdoctoral Fellowship will be awarded based on the excellence of the candidate, the capacity of the Research Centre to support and mentor the work of the Fellow and the contribution to the National Housing Research Program Agenda.

All research proposals, Postdoctoral Fellowship and Top-up Scholarship applications must be submitted using the appropriate AHURI funding application pro-forma; these are available on the AHURI website. The pro-forma is used for automatic data entry.

An AHURI Research Centre Director must submit all applications for funding and a submission form signed by an AHURI Research Centre Director must accompany each application. Details of all AHURI Research Centre Directors can be found on the AHURI website.

Strict word limits apply to all research proposals. Any application that does not fall within these word limits will not be accepted for consideration. For further details about how to apply for AHURI research funds see the NHRP Guidelines for applicants, also available on the AHURI website.

Research Briefs

Where the NHRP Funding Round has not been successful in eliciting appropriate research proposals to meet Priority Research Topics, the AHURI Limited Board may choose to approve issuing a Research Brief. Research Briefs might also be issued to respond to emerging issues of policy relevance. Applications would be submitted to the AHURI National Office within a defined period of time to answer the brief. Applications are assessed through the same process and need to conform to the relevant requirements provided under the NHRP Guidelines for applicants.

Research capacity building

Research capacity building aims to develop the skills and resources of the housing researchers involved in AHURI research in Australia. Research capacity building is funded through the conduct of all AHURI National Housing Research Program research as well as by discrete activities such as the AHURI Postgraduate Top-up Scholarship program, and the annual postgraduate symposium. Guidelines and application forms for Postgraduate Top-up Scholarships are available on the AHURI website and the timeline differs from the NHRP Funding Round. The Postdoctoral Fellowships are released with the National Housing Research Program Research Agenda. All research done through research capacity building needs to conform to the Strategic Research Issues in the *Research Agenda 2013*.

8 MORE INFORMATION

8.1 AHURI Research Centre Directors

Applications for funding through the annual AHURI National Housing Research Program Funding Round are invited from participant researchers through the AHURI Research Centres. The participating universities in the AHURI housing research network now operate as stand-alone single Research Centres.

For further information about applying for the research funding, please contact the AHURI National Office (03 9660 2300 or information@ahuri.edu.au) or contact the relevant Research Centre Director:

AHURI Research Centre—Curtin University
Dr Steven Rowley

AHURI Research Centre—Monash University
Professor Shane Murray

AHURI Research Centre—RMIT University
Dr Robin Goodman

AHURI Research Centre—Swinburne University of Technology
Professor Terry Burke

AHURI Research Centre—University of New South Wales
Professor Hal Pawson

AHURI Research Centre—University of Queensland
Professor Andrew Jones

AHURI Research Centre—University of Tasmania
Associate Professor Keith Jacobs

AHURI Research Centre—University of Western Australia
Professor Paul Flatau

AHURI Research Centre—University of Western Sydney
Professor Peter Phibbs

> For contact details for each of these Research Centre Directors, please go to http://www.ahuri.edu.au/about/research_centres/.

8.2   State Liaison Officers

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 Phone: (07) 3227 7859
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Victoria
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AHURI Research Centres

AHURI Research Centre—Curtin University

AHURI Research Centre—Monash University

AHURI Research Centre—RMIT University

AHURI Research Centre—Swinburne University of Technology

AHURI Research Centre—University of New South Wales

AHURI Research Centre—University of Queensland

AHURI Research Centre—University of Tasmania

AHURI Research Centre—University of Western Australia

AHURI Research Centre—University of Western Sydney