

Research Agenda

National Housing Research Program

Research Agenda 2011

**Australian Housing and Urban
Research Institute**



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1 PURPOSE

AHURI's National Housing Research Program 2011 Funding Round offers exciting opportunities for conducting housing and homelessness research in Australia. There were significant changes in the policy environment in 2009, with the implementation of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the attendant National Partnership Agreements. The National Housing Research Program Research Agenda 2010 was restructured to reflect this shift to an integrated *whole of housing system* approach. The National Housing Research Program *Research Agenda 2011* (hereafter *Research Agenda 2011*) continues to emphasise the importance of establishing the links between the housing system and the broader social context.

The eight Strategic Research Issues reflect the strategic interests of the current housing policy reform agenda. These issues proved effective in permitting a broad range of research proposals to be developed for the 2011 Funding Round. AHURI seeks to continue to provide greater scope for the research community to explore innovative research questions, whilst maintaining a focus on those issues of strategic importance to the policy frameworks of government. To this end, the *Research Agenda 2011* details the research funding priorities of AHURI's National Housing Research Program. The overview of the policy context indicates the current policy priorities and provides guidance to researchers as to topics and issues that are of immediate relevance to policy makers. In addition to this, the *Research Agenda 2011* provides a brief overview of the existing evidence base pertaining to each of the Strategic Research Issues. Applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure that research proposals contribute to the development of this cumulative evidence base, and build upon the research already completed. A companion document to the *Research Agenda 2011* [catalogues AHURI funded projects](#) by theme.

Based on the positive response to the new research vehicles introduced in 2010, AHURI will consider proposals for Essays and Investigative Panels on topics within the scope of the Research Agenda in the forthcoming Funding Round. 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 structure of the National Housing Research Program Research Agenda was informed by the [2009 review](#) of previous Research Agendas by a leading international academic, Professor Susan Smith. The most significant outcome of this review was that the 2010 Funding Round offered more scope to the research community for innovation in devising research questions and selecting methodologies. The *Research Agenda 2011* provides a brief evaluation of the success of this approach on the basis of outcomes in the previous Funding Round. The research community is strongly encouraged to continue to explore new research designs and approaches in the forthcoming Funding Round. The *Research Agenda 2011* provides guidance to researchers on research approaches sought, including ways to identify current gaps in the evidence base in terms of research contexts, and methods and data sets to apply. The review is also available on the AHURI web site, and can be used as a reference in developing research applications.

The *Research Agenda 2011* should be read in conjunction with the *Funding Guidelines for Applicants*, including the *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Indigenous Research*. Applicants should use the templates provided on the AHURI intranet at: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research_agenda_funding/about_funding/

2 CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT—NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This section identifies key contemporary housing policy issues that should inform future research projects funded through the AHURI National Housing Research Program. The policy issues incorporate ideas gathered from discussion at the AHURI Research Agenda Review Workshop held on 20 May 2010. This workshop was facilitated by the AHURI National Office, and was attended by a panel of Australian and state and territory government representatives, independent academics and industry representatives.

2.1 National housing reform agenda

In 2010 the Australian and state and territory governments continue to focus on the implementation of the reforms introduced through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which has been in operation since January 2009. These activities provide a useful point of reference for housing research. This agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments integrates a range of policy initiatives designed to affect housing outcomes. An important feature of the NAHA is a whole-of-housing-system approach that is not restricted to social housing per se but acknowledges the interrelationship between different housing tenures. It also seeks to generate change by way of householders' social and economic participation. There is scope to further build on AHURI research exploring the inter-relationships across the whole of housing system.

The implementation of the NAHA has also generated an interest in research that develops a fuller understanding of the institutions of government and how they interact with one another, as well as the role of private and community organisations in the wider policy agenda and in the delivery of housing on the ground. The COAG reforms have led to a strong focus on a joined up approach to service delivery between institutions.

The reform program specified in the NAHA and associated National Partnership Agreements are shaping housing policy for the short and longer term, particularly in the areas of homelessness, Indigenous and social housing.¹ Governments have committed to:

- Improve integration between the homelessness service system and mainstream services to reduce concentrations of disadvantage that exist in some social housing estates.
- Improve access by Indigenous people to mainstream housing, including home ownership.
- Enhance the capacity and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector.
- Introduce planning reforms for greater efficiency in the supply of housing.²

Each of these areas of policy reform are significant in their own right and hence are discussed in more detail in sections below.

The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan (known as the stimulus package), together with the NAHA, generated an unprecedented intensification of reform activity and government expenditure in the area of housing.

¹ See also the National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan: Building Prosperity for the Future and Supporting Jobs Now, for policy direction in social housing construction and reform.

² Council of Australian Governments' meeting, 29 November 2008.

http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-11-29/attachments.cfm#attachmentc

Policy and program evaluation as a focus for future housing research is consequently particularly important. This does not imply that these areas of the NAHA reform agenda are the only issues of focus in the *Research Agenda 2011*. However, given the breadth and importance of the NAHA it remains an important reference point for future housing research. An important overlay in understanding the housing system is the need to make comparison between urban and regional housing markets and to better understand the operation of rural housing markets.

2.2 The changing role of the private rental system

Traditionally, private rental was seen to be a stepping stone for households leaving the family home before continuing on a housing pathway to home ownership. Given the increasing housing affordability problem in Australia, private rental is emerging as a permanent housing tenure for many households, including many on low incomes. Previous research by AHURI, (e.g. NRV2 on *21st century housing careers* and NRV3 on *Housing affordability for lower income Australians*), has demonstrated that this housing career progression is no-longer the norm, and as competition for the limited housing stock intensifies, shortages of affordable housing is most acute for low income private renters. This shift necessitates a reconceptualisation of the rental system in Australia, particularly the private rental housing market and its interaction with other tenures, and the way private rental accommodation becomes available to different segments of the market.

Research on the private rental market would help policy makers identify opportunities to intervene and better support households to secure appropriate housing. Research of this nature would need to focus on the operation of geographically defined private rental submarkets. While private rental among low income households is of particular relevance to the current policy context there is a need for a broad understanding of the way the private rental market operates, and how it might affect those who rent. In particular there would be interest in understanding more about the effects of longer term renting on a range of non-shelter outcomes including economic and social participation.

The supply side of the private rental market is also important, and there is interest in understanding more about how these sit within broader supply side responses. Policy makers have partially recognised the need to address inadequate affordable rental supply with the creation of new programmes such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Research is needed into the institutional factors shaping the investment into, and supply and regulation of, private rental accommodation that includes the perspectives of financiers, industry and government. From a whole of housing perspective, research could usefully document the dynamic relationship between low cost private renting and government and community owned forms of social housing. Interaction with housing tenures such as boarding houses, caravan parks and rooming houses should also be given consideration. There is a need to better understand how the private rental system can operate as a substitute for social and public housing to address housing needs. Research of this nature could provide insight into approaches that have worked internationally and in Australia, such as the success of brokerage programs (agencies placing low income tenants in more affordable or appropriate private rental accommodation instead of public or community housing).

2.3 Concentrations of disadvantage

One aim of the National Housing Reform Agenda is to reduce concentrations of disadvantage that exist in some social housing estates and other parts of metropolitan

and regional Australia, as specified in the NAHA³ and associated partnership agreements. Previous research by AHURI has shown that concentrations of low income households can develop in the private rental market and not just in social housing estates ([Project 70217](#)). The research literature in this field currently lacks a broader insight into how housing variables contribute to the concentration of disadvantage.

To investigate this topic further, an Investigative Panel has been established by AHURI to determine the scope, design and the research feasibility of a multi-year research investment into concentrations of social disadvantage. The Investigative Panel includes representatives from the policy and research communities. However, other research may be warranted through the AHURI National Housing Research Program into specific aspects of concentrations of disadvantage such as the community or neighbourhood level benefit of achieving a diverse income and tenure mix. Another policy issue of interest is an understanding of the vehicles for achieving estate renewal and regeneration in line with UK examples such as the Housing Action Trusts, and the design of other place-based management models in achieving positive housing and non-housing outcomes. Consideration can also be given to the possible linkages between concentrations of disadvantage and the issue of housing supply and affordability. A related policy issue is the impact of de-concentration and tenure mix on social housing residents, both for those who remain in the renewed areas as well as for those who relocate to other areas.

2.4 Homelessness

The Australian Government's White Paper on homelessness has elevated the issue of homelessness reform to a national level. The White Paper outlines three related areas for attention: prevention; improving and expanding services; and breaking the cycle of homelessness. Homelessness is also a significant work area for all governments as part of the NAHA. The intent is to improve integration between the homelessness service system and mainstream services. Different states and territories have also developed homelessness strategies and implementation plans. These developments complement the activities of the Australian Government and build on current initiatives with the non-government sector.

The changing policy environment on homelessness requires research that reflects the focus on prevention and early intervention and how to provide responses to different disadvantaged groups. This includes how to support and promote resilience and to build people's capabilities so to avoid homelessness in people who may experience circumstances that are understood to trigger homelessness such as mental illness. A better understanding of these triggers would also support the development of policy in this field. An important emerging topic is the drivers of the recent increase in family homelessness.

The development of new homelessness policies and programs would also be supported by research that provides insight into the links between the homeless specialist service system and other systems; and building up the evidence base on homelessness assistance program delivery in Australia. Rigorous evaluative studies are needed to respond to the enormous change taking place in the current system. Such studies should include further research on the cost-effectiveness of programmes and how best to break the cycle of long-term homelessness and to promote wellbeing and stable housing outcomes. The evidence base in this field could be supplemented by quantitative approaches to research to complement a qualitative approach to researching homelessness. There is great potential to make use of available administrative data sets held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare,

³ National Affordable Housing Agreement, reform 13

including by exploring data linkage keys. Administrative data could provide useful insights into measuring client outcomes, exploring new ways to count and define the numbers of people affected by homelessness, and better understanding how homeless people cycle through the system.

Any additional research in 2011 through the AHURI National Housing Research Program needs to be cognisant of other research on homelessness being undertaken across the country. The Australian Government has initiated a National Homelessness Research Agenda which has established three research partnership agreements, and 16 stand-alone research projects to date, which are funded through FaHCSIA. AHURI aims to fund research that will complement and augment the cumulative evidence-base.

2.5 Housing supply

An emerging policy issue for 2011 has been the question of housing supply. Adequate housing supply to accommodate the projected growth in Australia's population is an issue of growing significance, particularly against the backdrop of increasing housing affordability issues. The demand for new housing is outstripping supply, with the industry unable to keep pace with demand. Access to finance for new residential developments was negatively affected by the impact of the global financial crisis in 2009. The National Housing Supply Council released its first *State of Supply* report in April 2009. The follow up report, released in April 2010, indicates that underlying demand for housing supply grew by an estimated 205 900 households in 2008–09 which is much higher than projected in the first report. The 2010 report has updated projections of the gap between underlying demand for land and housing supply over 20 years from 2009 to 2029. It focuses on the challenges of building infill housing, the efficiency of the housing market and the implications of the ageing of the population for the housing market.

Australian Government initiatives contained in the National Partnership Agreement on Social and Affordable Housing, and the Nation Building and Jobs Plan have provided funding for the construction of more than 18 000 new dwellings. Further initiatives such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and the Housing Affordability Funds are aimed at providing support for the construction of more new affordable housing. The establishment of the Cities, Housing and Planning Unit by Federal Treasury highlights the ongoing commitment by the Australian Government to consider the urban context for housing affordability issues.

Accordingly, housing research needs to go beyond the household and individual level to accommodate the impacts of policy interventions for communities, cultures, neighbourhoods, institutions, and the state. There is also a need for further research on the operation of the housing industry within the current policy framework. There is a strong interest in research that investigates the role of institutional investment in promoting housing supply, including in relation to taxation regimes. Also of interest for policy development is a better understanding of the supply chain for affordable housing and the role of private investment in this area, following on from the NRAS initiative. One option is to consider the implications for attracting private investment in rental housing through NRAS, within a context of potential risks arising from uncertainty about legal, financial and taxation status, and the provision of CRA. The role of metropolitan governance and the relationship between local, state and Australian governments in promoting supply has come to the fore in response to recent policy reforms and initiatives. Research that examines international best practice in this space, with a focus on topics such as NIMBYism, brownfield and greyfield land assembly, and the strategic integration of land use, transport and infrastructure plans would contribute strongly to policy development.

In 2010 AHURI commissioned research on a number of aspects of housing supply with a particular focus on: tax and housing supply; residential infrastructure provision; land supply; type of dwelling supply; housing construction; industry structure; and metropolitan planning and governance in relation to affordable housing supply. While further research on these topics is not precluded, it should supplement the research currently underway.

2.6 Taxation and housing

Taxation helps shape the way landlords, households, welfare organisations and developers act in the housing market. Reform to taxation (such as to land tax) has potential to change financial incentives and risks and thus housing choices over the coming years. The Henry Tax Review provides an important reference point to consider the institutional and taxation arrangements to support the current housing system. For example, consideration needs to be given to the perspectives, intentions and possible future actions of prospective investors in rental housing. The bulk of private rental providers remain small scale investors who experience their own set of risks and costs for a form of investment that can potentially result in high costs and relatively small returns, other than capital appreciation. Policy makers also continue to be interested in the development of the not-for-profit housing sector, including the role of taxation regimes to support sector growth. A topic that has emerged in light of the Henry Tax Review is the current settings for charitable concessions and the potential effects of expanding or removing these from the current taxation regime.

2.7 Housing, economic performance and participation

Whilst the worst effects of the global financial crisis seem to have abated, ongoing changes in the economy will still affect many Australian households and their housing prospects, especially those households that are marginally attached to the labour market. Rising interest rates are likely to have a flow-on effect on housing demand and will place financial pressure on those households at the greatest risk of housing stress. The potential generation of negative equity amongst home purchasers could put home ownership at risk. The consequences of these pressures for housing affordability, housing markets, the construction and allocation of social housing and demand for housing linked support programs as well as the prevalence of financial and social stress will require further study.

Of research interest is the need to identify the changing position of housing in relation to the wider economy. This refers both to the macro-economy of the Australian nation, states and territories and to the micro-economy of households.⁴ For example, research is warranted on housing and employment outcomes with a particular focus on those participating in labour market programs such as those provided nationally through Jobs Services Australia.

The new economic context requires a broader research focus that encompasses the housing impacts of non-housing policy (including links with financial regulation), and a more explicit attendance to policy synergies beyond housing. Previous AHURI research demonstrates that housing policy interventions have non-housing effects, however the far reaching housing effects of non-housing interventions are yet to be fully documented.

2.8 Closing the Gap

Equality of access for Indigenous Australians to housing services and opportunities cuts across each area of future policy activity under the housing policy reform agenda. Ambitious targets have been set by the Australian Government for *Closing the Gap*

⁴ Smith, S. *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*, AHURI, March 2009, p.8

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians living in urban, rural and remote areas. This includes *Closing the Gap* in the areas of housing, health, education and employment outcomes. 'Healthy homes'⁵ are identified as a strategic platform in achieving these targets and there is scope for future research to analyse the impacts of housing interventions upon these targets. The AHURI evidence base relating to housing for Indigenous Australians should be expanded through the adoption of a whole-of-housing-system approach.

The COAG commitments under the NAHA, specifically the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing have a focus on rural and remote areas and previous AHURI research has also focussed on these areas. While this is in part because of the severe housing need in remote and regional areas, further research is also needed on the housing circumstances of Indigenous households in urban areas who also face challenges in the housing market. This research will need to take account of the diversity of experiences for different groups of Indigenous people in different locations. Approximately 75 per cent of Indigenous people live in cities and regional areas and there is a sense that urban Indigenous housing markets operate independently of non-Indigenous housing markets in many areas. The experiences of Indigenous people in the private rental market is an area of concern since it is the dominant tenure for Indigenous households⁶ and research that focuses on tenant perspectives would be valuable.

In 2010, AHURI is seeking to commission research on two key policy issues: community land trusts and Indigenous housing options; and overcrowding for Indigenous households in non-remote areas. Additional research is still warranted on Indigenous home ownership as well as the effects of housing on non-shelter outcomes for Indigenous households. A further area of policy interest is the provision of emergency/transitional housing in remote Indigenous communities and the outcomes achieved.

2.9 Not-for-profit housing associations

An integral part of the provision of affordable housing options is the prospective expansion of the not-for-profit housing sector alongside the traditional public housing provision. A developing evidence-base is required to match the growth in this sector. In light of the broad scale of reform in this area, an institutional focus is warranted. Policy development is currently focussed on promoting growth, and the mechanisms which may achieve this, including fostering private investment. Research in this field would take account of the existing NRAS program and any issues that may have emerged through its implementation.

From a policy perspective, Housing Ministers have agreed to develop a large scale community housing sector in Australia that will represent 35 per cent of all social housing by 2014. Work has commenced on developing parts of the framework that will support the not-for-profit community housing sector such as regulatory frameworks. Recently, the Australian Government released a discussion paper on the *Regulation and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector*. The discussion paper puts forward options for potential reforms of community housing in Australia, looking at ways to better support and sustain the future growth of the sector. This includes measures to address the shortage of housing supply through growth in the not-for-profit housing sector; for forms of regulation that protect the interests of government, tenants and providers; and mechanisms to attract private investment into the sector.

⁵ Closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage: the challenge for Australia, February 2009
Commonwealth Government, Canberra, p.20

⁶ Biddle, N. (2008) *The Scale and Composition of Indigenous Housing Need, 2001–06*. CAEPR working paper No. 47/2008. Canberra: Centre of Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, p.v

2.10 Housing, population growth and changes in household composition

The issue of housing supply and the growth of our cities has been cast into relief by the increased prominence given to issues of population growth, overseas migration and internal migration across the nation. The recent creation of a Federal Minister for Population highlights the need to focus on the long term effect that population growth and changes in household composition will have on housing demand. Impacts will be felt in terms of affordability, density in cities and demands on transport systems and infrastructure.

Previous research by AHURI ([Project 10014](#)) on the intergenerational effects of population ageing on housing provided one perspective on this policy debate and usefully complemented work by the Productivity Commission on the economic effects of population ageing⁷. However, further research may be warranted into the way overall population growth will affect housing demand in different areas of Australia, including the impact of Indigenous population growth. Longitudinal research on the effects of migration on housing sub-markets would contribute to the future development of policy in this field.

In the context of the ageing of the population, policy makers will continue to have an interest in the housing preferences of older people, and the outcomes (both shelter and non-shelter) of their housing choices. There are also policy concerns about the location, costs and social consequences of residential moves in old age. These questions need to be considered in the context of the increasing diversity of the older age cohort especially in terms of income. There are continued policy concerns about the outcomes of supporting older people in social housing as they age in place.

2.11 Housing, neighbourhoods, wellbeing and social inclusion

The aspirational objective of NAHA is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.⁸ Research that informs this objective explores the role of housing as a social policy instrument for responding to, and effecting, social transitions.⁹ The dimensions of wellbeing (e.g. social and economic participation, health and financial security) are increasingly being recognised by all levels of Australian government as a measure against which to gauge the success of national and local policy interventions within and beyond the housing reform agenda.¹⁰

This is complemented by a whole-of-government focus on social inclusion which is expressed in the recently released Social Inclusion Agenda as well as the formation of the Social Inclusion Unit within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Australian Social Inclusion Board. This focus on social inclusion is also expressed throughout the Australian Government's social and affordable housing initiatives. Many of the reforms to which the states and territories agreed, through the NAHA and the supporting measures, are conditional on meeting and reporting on social inclusion outcomes. The Social Inclusion Unit has recently released guidelines on quantifying social inclusion/exclusion baselines and impacts as a result of extensive research by

⁷ See Productivity Commission (2005) *Economic implications of an ageing Australia*, <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/ageing/docs/finalreport>

⁸ *National Affordable Housing Agreement*, clause 5

⁹ Smith, S. *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*, AHURI, March 2009, p.8

¹⁰ See for example, the terms of reference for *The review of Australia's tax system* (Ken Henry), which seeks recommendations to enhance overall economic, social and environmental wellbeing with a particular focus on ensuring there are appropriate incentives to facilitate access to affordable housing. <http://www.treasurer.gov.au/DisplayDocs.aspx?doc=pressreleases/2008/036.htm&pageID=003&min=ms&Year=2008&DocType=0>

the Social Inclusion Board. At present, a National Action Plan on Social Inclusion is being developed by the Australian and state and territory governments, and locational disadvantage is an area that has been agreed to as a priority.

This focus fits with the recent launch of the National Compact between the Australian Government and the Third Sector in March 2010. The Government is committed to pursuing its Social Inclusion Agenda through, amongst other things, a strong relationship with the Third (or non-profit) Sector, based on collaboration and respect. The Compact will provide a framework for building the capacity of non-profit and other non-government community organisations to improve community wellbeing.

From a housing research perspective, a stronger focus on housing and neighbourhoods is warranted, and would have a number of applications for policy. As identified in the Smith Review, in future AHURI's evidence base can be expanded by more research being undertaken at the community/neighbourhood level. There is, for example, a lack of research that provides an understanding of how public/social housing impacts occur at a community/ neighbourhood level. This would complement existing studies on tenant outcomes which focus on the household. Research of this sort would contribute to the development of strategies for urban renewal. Understanding how to distinguish between redevelopment and gentrification, and the housing and non-housing implications for local communities and neighbourhoods of neighbourhood renewal would also directly contribute to the development of policy instruments to achieve urban renewal. An international perspective on best practice or evaluative research would be of use in this area.

A related consideration is how improvements in existing infrastructure may attract new households to deprived areas, thereby reducing concentrations disadvantage while improving housing and employment outcomes for social housing tenants. Also of policy interest are the perspectives of private purchasers who may be reluctant to move to socially mixed developments. It seems that mixed developments have been difficult to achieve in practice; suggesting that the concerns and perspectives of private purchasers need to be understood in order to increase the likelihood of success.

The issues that may emerge as a result of the ageing population are also relevant to research concerned with housing, neighbourhoods, social inclusion and wellbeing. While there is a substantial body of research on housing and ageing by AHURI this focuses at the household and individual level. Research that examines the spatial distribution of the older population, and takes account of socio-economic status and the diversity of this population and the neighbourhood level effects of ageing in place on neighbourhoods and communities is warranted.

2.12 Environmental change

Environmental issues remain an ongoing policy challenge. Approaches to addressing housing supply, affordability and the urban form all have implications for environmental sustainability. The Australian Government has an ongoing commitment to tackling the problem of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions. While the Copenhagen Conference did not deliver the outcomes sought by Australia and many other countries, the issue of reducing carbon emissions and the development of environmentally sustainable practices remain present.

Climate change and governments' policy responses to carbon emissions abatement have ongoing relevance to housing policy. There is a need for high quality research that tracks the impact of the carbon emissions trading scheme on the production,

quality and condition of housing across the whole of the housing system, including home owners, public and community housing across jurisdictions.¹¹

2.13 Housing and human rights

Australia is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified December 1975) which states that every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes the right to adequate housing (ICESCR, article 11). Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have both enacted human rights legislation in recent years. The new focus of the NAHA on improving social and economic outcomes for all Australians through the provision of housing, and emphasis upon the integration of housing services with other social services reflects the renewed emphasis on human rights in homelessness policy frameworks. There is scope for Australian research using a rights based analytical approach to build on approaches developed overseas and local experiences. Research would be aimed at improving understanding of how a rights based approach may have contributed to better housing and homelessness outcomes, and the implications of applying such an approach for homeless specialist services as well as the way that human rights may underpin the supply of and access to affordable and secure housing.

2.14 A whole-of-housing-system approach

Underpinning the AHURI Research Agenda for housing research is a whole-of-housing-system approach. Issues of particular housing tenure, dwelling type, location, financing and the like are all interrelated. As shown by previous AHURI research, problems of housing supply and affordability in the private rental market, for instance, have an inevitable flow on effect across other tenures. The whole-of-housing-system approach is supported by the current housing reform agenda. Steps to improve housing affordability and prevent homelessness in Australia cut across the tenure divide and the NAHA extends the reach of housing assistance beyond the traditional focus on social housing provision and private rental assistance. For example, as part of the new agreement, governments have committed to improving housing affordability through direct grants based assistance for affordable home purchase. Also being considered are shared equity schemes, and new models of land tenure that facilitate home ownership for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities.

To continue to generate evidence that supports the breadth of contemporary housing policy and related policy areas, the National Housing Research Program must reflect a whole-of-housing-system approach. This entails broadening the predominant focus of past AHURI research on housing assistance for vulnerable households to encompass a cross-section of the Australian population, their tenure choices and associated financial and other risks. A spread of housing research is needed that assesses the impacts on, and of, housing policy for individuals, households and properties, on the one hand, and communities, neighbourhoods, regions, institutions and the state on the other.

¹¹ Smith, S. *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*, AHURI, March 2009, p.7

3 STRATEGIC RESEARCH ISSUES

Below are eight Strategic Research Issues that derive from the new policy environment for housing. Research responding to these strategic issues will advance national housing policy development. Applications for funding are invited in response to these Strategic Research Issues. Keeping in mind the policy context outlined in the previous section, applicants are requested to:

- design a research question addressing a Strategic Research Issue, or aspect thereof
- articulate the policy relevance of the research question they are proposing
- specify the potential contribution to policy development of undertaking the research.

Diverse research activities are sought on the following Strategic Research Issues. The potential outputs of these activities could include Essays, Investigative Panels and/or Research Projects:

1. Housing and related systems that prevent homelessness and promote wellbeing and stable housing outcomes.
2. Housing choice in a social/affordable housing system with diverse providers and increased supply.
3. Housing and neighbourhoods that generate social inclusion, economic opportunities and wellbeing.
4. Housing opportunities for Indigenous communities that support improved amenity, wellbeing and economic sustainability.
5. Structures within the housing system, including finance, support services, and tenure arrangements that enable households to access housing as their needs change over time.
6. Efficient land and housing markets that meet demand (affordably and appropriately), enable labour market and other mobility and support productivity gains in the economy.
7. Understanding and responding to the impact of systemic shifts (e.g. global financial crisis, social transitions, environmental change) upon structures within the housing system and housing outcomes.
8. Understanding and responding to the effects of non-housing policies and programs upon housing outcomes and wellbeing (e.g. health, education, land use planning, aged care, labour market programs, tax, carbon pollution reduction, water use etc.).

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

3.1.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Defining homelessness accurately is important because the way we understand homelessness shapes prevention strategies.
- Addressing homelessness is cost effective for governments.
- Adequate and appropriate housing along with support services that address non-housing needs is critical to preventing future episodes of homelessness.

3.1.2 Homelessness prevention and achieving stable housing outcomes

Defining homelessness accurately is important because the way we understand homelessness shapes prevention strategies. In Australia, there is broad agreement in research and government policy that homelessness is not simply people sleeping on the streets. A commonly used definition includes three categories¹²:

- People without conventional shelter such as rough-sleepers or squatters.
- People who are constantly moving between temporary accommodations such as emergency shelters or family and friends' couches.
- People who have long-term accommodation without access to private cooking facilities or bathrooms, and without any security of tenure. One example of this type of homelessness is boarding house residents.

In addition, AHURI research examining Indigenous homelessness finds that the definition above does not necessarily reflect Indigenous understandings and that homelessness could be better redefined as losing one's sense of control over, or legitimacy in, the place where one lives. Three broad categories of Indigenous homelessness emerge from the research:

- public place dwellers
- those at-risk of homelessness
- spiritually homeless people ([Project 20168](#); [Project 80368](#)).

Addressing homelessness is cost effective. AHURI research finds that homeless people with complex needs impose a greater cost burden on support services compared to clients in stable, secure housing with similar needs. Further research indicates that homelessness programs are cost-effective as they produce positive outcomes for clients. For example, those at-risk of becoming homeless when they lack support will overwhelmingly sustain their tenancies with support ([Project 80306](#)).

Adequate and appropriate housing along with support services that address non-housing needs is critical to preventing future episodes of homelessness. This is consistent with the policy focus on both preventing and breaking the cycle of homelessness once it does occur. Location is also important to sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness as access to familiar services and social networks can reduce social isolation for people.

AHURI research has been conducted with a variety of different groups – older people ([Project 70135](#)), people with a mental illness ([Project 70072](#)), newly arrived migrants ([Project 40006](#); [Project 40048](#)), ex-prisoners ([Project 70068](#)), Indigenous people and young people in rural areas ([Project 40160](#)) and young people ([Project 70020](#); [Project 30156](#)) young people leaving state care ([Project 30540](#)). It consistently finds that addressing homelessness requires more than the provision of a house.

AHURI research that examined integrated housing and support for tenants with complex needs finds that successful integration requires ([Project 70311](#); [Project 20336](#)):

- Leadership at both strategic and operational levels.
- A shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- A shared appreciation for partnerships and an understanding of how they can better deliver outcomes for clients.

¹² Chamberlain, C. and Mackenzie, D. (1992) Understanding contemporary homelessness: issues of definition and meaning. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 27(4), pp.274–297

- Accountability to these outcomes.
- Strong relationships between different service delivery organisations.

A number of current projects are underway. As the AHURI evidence base in relation to housing and homelessness is relatively mature, the focus of these projects has shifted to the examination of specific approaches or specific population groups. For example, one project is examining the role of assertive outreach in addressing primary homelessness ([Project 20607](#)), another is examining how well and to what effect homelessness services link with mental health and drug and alcohol services ([Project 80568](#)), and a third project is examining intergenerational use of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) ([Project 80516](#)).

Two projects are examining homelessness in relation to particular population groups. The first is looking at improving housing outcomes for young people leaving state care ([Project 30540](#)) and the second is looking at homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence ([Project 50602](#)).

Additionally, one AHURI project currently underway is contrasting the cost of homelessness with the net cost of homelessness programs ([Project 80604](#)). This is built on an early study on the costs of homelessness to government ([Project 80306](#)).

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

3.2.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Our current housing system does not provide adequate supply or choice for low-income households, resulting in high and growing levels of housing affordability stress.
- Australia needs an increased supply of affordable rental housing for low-income households.
- Real investment in public housing stock has declined over the last decade.
- The private rental market fails to provide adequate supply at the low-end of the market.
- Governments must commit to an ongoing capital and recurrent operating subsidy in order to build a strong and sustainable social/affordable housing system with diverse providers and increased supply.
- Growing the not-for-profit housing provider sector through financial, regulatory and capacity building interventions internationally has proven successful and cost-effective.

3.2.2 Our current system does not provide adequate supply or choice

The AHURI National Research Venture 3 (NRV3) has found that housing affordability is a structural, long term problem in Australia:

- The amount spent on housing costs across all households has risen from around 11 per cent of household income in the mid-1970s to just over 15 per cent in 2003–04 ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- The decline in house purchase affordability is a structural problem caused by house prices growing faster than incomes over the last half century. Between 1960 and 2006 real house prices increased at an average of 2.7 per cent each year compared to 1.9 per cent growth in real incomes ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- Currently around 15 per cent of all households pay at least 30 per cent of their income in meeting their housing costs. This percentage has remained relatively stable over the past decade ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).

- However, the burden of paying high housing costs is not equally distributed: the proportion of lower-income households paying high housing costs is 28 per cent, almost double the average, and has risen from 24 per cent over the last decade ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).

The AHURI National Research Venture 3 found that 862 000 lower-income households in 2002–03 were in housing stress and nearly half of these households (417 000) were paying more than 50 per cent of their gross income on housing. In addition, another 164 000 moderate income households were also paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs ([NRV3 RP3](#))¹³.

The 2002–03 analysis found that almost 40 per cent of all households in housing stress (326 000) were lone person households, while another 354 000 were households with children in housing stress ([NRV3 RP3](#)).

Real investment in public housing has declined over the last decade

AHURI research has documented the decline in capital and operational funding for public housing up to 2005/06 and the impact on the supply of dwellings ([Project 30154](#)). Hall and Berry (2004) report that the total stock of public and community sector housing has been declining since 1996/7, from a peak of around 382 000 dwellings, to 375 000 dwellings in 2000/01, followed by further losses of 10 100 dwellings to 2005/06.

Berry and Hall report that over the decade between 1990/91 and 2000/01, total real capital funding for public housing in Australia fell by 25 per cent ([Project 30282](#)). In addition, the rental revenue base has been in decline largely as a result of increased targeting of public housing to low and very low income tenants. Over 87 per cent of tenants were on rebated rents over the period 2000/01 to 2005/06 and over 40 per cent of new tenancies were allocated to high needs priority applicants ([Project 30282](#)).

The private rental market fails to provide adequate supply at the low-end of the market

AHURI has established there is persistent market failure at the low-rent end of the private rental sector. Wulff et al.'s (forthcoming) most recent analysis of 2006 Census data identifies a worsening affordability problem for low-income private renters, over the ten years from 1996–2006 ([Project 50502](#)).

While the number of households renting privately has grown, there has been a net decline of stock in the low-rent segment of the market.

Private rental grew by 11 per cent between 2001 and 2006, compared to 8 per cent growth in the previous period between census ([Project 50502](#)). While private rental stock in the four lowest rent categories declined from 50 to 37 per cent between 2001 and 2006.

Most importantly the availability of the remaining low-rent stock to low income renters is declining, with worst conditions recorded in the capital cities and some Queensland regional centres.

The research finds a consistent phenomenon of higher income households occupying lower cost dwellings. In 2006, 56 per cent of existing low-cost dwellings were occupied by higher income households, resulting in a shortfall of 211 000 available affordable private dwellings. This means there was only one dwelling available for every five *very low-income* households ([Project 50502](#)).

¹³ The research used data from the 2002–03 *Survey of income and housing*

Geographically, Sydney records the greatest shortages, followed by the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast and then Melbourne and Brisbane ([Project 50502](#); [Project 60190](#)).

It is therefore unsurprising then that low-income private renters experience the greatest incidence of housing affordability stress in Australia ([NRV3](#)).

3.2.3 Governments must commit to an ongoing capital recurrent subsidy

Existing financing mechanisms for the state and territory housing authorities are inadequate to increase the supply of affordable rental housing sector

Changes to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement in 1996 caused six out of nine state/territory housing authorities to run in deficit. AHURI has demonstrated that Commonwealth funding of the gap between public tenant rental charges and the market value of those units would allow all but one of these authorities to run in surplus ([Project 30154](#)).

Australia's public housing receives relatively low subsidies compared to international counterparts. This undermines its potential for financial viability. Australian social housing authorities are required to provide both affordable housing for low income households and financial viability for the organisations that manage the housing stock. In other comparable countries, additional subsidies are provided to housing providers to allow them to discount rents. Another approach is to pay specific subsidies to households on a case-by-case basis ([Project 50226](#)).

Increased targeting of housing and concessional rents are costing governments tens of millions of dollars in lost rental revenue. Small increases in the percentage of income paid in rent by these tenants would go a long way towards reversing this financial trend ([Project 30352](#)).

Some researchers have partnered with major investment companies to develop models for private investment in community housing. One such project proposed a pooled fund, much like a listed property trust. However, they calculated a 3 per cent, per annum return, which is too low to attract significant interest. Therefore, they suggest that private investment will not take place without ongoing government investment ([Project 50022](#)).

3.2.4 Growing the not-for-profit housing provider sector through financial, regulatory and capacity building interventions has proven internationally successful and cost-effective

Demand for affordable rental housing is stronger than ever

Explicit demand for public and community housing is stronger than ever ([Project 50318](#); [Project 50347](#)). There is latent demand which is not even registered on waiting lists. Those who apply for public housing are generally seeking increased security of tenure over locational and dwelling choice ([Project 50142](#)).

There is evidence of different needs and preferences for public housing. Demand for particular dwelling types such as high-rise can vary between ethnic groups and locations. Areas with high private sector rents also have high unmet demand for public housing. Analysing demand through the lens of *housing submarkets* may assist providers in improving the delivery of public housing in the shape and location where it is most needed ([Project 50347](#)).

Increasing supply by growing the not-for-profit housing sector

International examples and case studies suggest that growing the not-for-profit housing sector (e.g. community housing associations) is a successful way of

increasing the supply of low-cost housing stock ([Project 60504](#); [Project 60323](#); [Project 60191](#)).

Regulatory support, reliable, adequate ongoing government subsidy and capacity building are critical for growing an effective and functional not-for-profit housing sector. An effective regulatory framework for community housing associations is essential for ensuring that social housing objectives are met ([Project 60504](#)). A strong regulatory framework could assist with attracting private investment into affordable housing by meeting investors' risk assessment needs ([Project 60504](#); [Project 60118](#)).

An AHURI assessment in 2005–06 found that most Australian community housing providers were small-scale organisations, with high levels of volunteer labour and ageing stock. They also had insufficient resources for professional stock management. Whilst operating costs were generally lower for community housing than for public housing, associations tended to severely understate their real operating costs. Most organisations were found to have a backlog of maintenance ([Project 30355](#)).

The Indigenous community housing sector varies widely, according to its location and the types of services delivered. Those with a larger stock of houses tend to perform better, as do those in urban and large centres, and those who only manage housing rather than multiple types of services ([Project 80316](#)).

Community housing providers can make a significant contribution to strengthening local communities, particularly where there are low levels of public housing and in high cost city areas. Community strengthening activities include brokering access to services, personal development and supporting social and economic development ([Project 60025](#)).

An important consideration is attracting increased investment to help grow the not-for-profit housing sector. AHURI has modelled various options for expanding the supply of affordable housing, ranging from increasing subsidy to state and territory governments to borrow for social housing, launching an equity vehicle on the stock exchange dependent upon Commonwealth equity injection and state revenue subsidies to meet investor returns, and the formation of a non-profit company financed by injection of non-refundable equity by state government, complemented by state borrowing and developer contributions. It found that government subsidies were significantly leveraged by private investment in all cases, with outcomes sensitive to the level of capital gains, changes in incomes of tenants, and charges such as stamp duty ([Project 30021](#)).

In another project, AHURI also sought to develop a financial product and vehicle through which private retail investors could invest in community housing with the assistance of the expertise of Macquarie Bank. It found that to utilise private retail investment for the expansion of community housing, then some form of additional government intervention is necessary, either in the form of capital or operating subsidies to the Community Housing Organisations (CHOs). Land tax, stamp duty and other exemptions could be used but not one would be sufficient to enable a CHO to break even. Private sector investment is only feasible if those renting have some form of private income ([Project 50022](#)).

A number of other countries have successfully implemented private investment schemes. AHURI has analysed those operating in the Netherlands, France, UK, Switzerland, Austria and the US. A wide range of mechanisms to facilitate affordability are explored. Of particular interest to policy makers includes those implemented in Austria (housing construction convertible bonds model), and the syndicated bonds issuer in the UK ([Project 30439](#)).

There are a large number of current AHURI research projects which will continue to make a major contribution to improving the supply of social/affordable housing in Australia¹⁴:

- Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not-for-profit housing sector ([Project 40559](#)).
- What future for Australian public housing? A critical analysis ([Project 40561](#)).
- The problem of social housing stigmatisation and innovations that can minimise its effects ([Project 40600](#)).
- Good practices for managing Australia's public housing assets ([Project 50366](#)).
- Public housing and employment: challenges and strategies ([Project 50515](#)).
- Secure occupancy in rental housing: a comparative analysis ([Project 50565](#)).
- Housing, public policy and social inclusion ([Project 50566](#)).
- Partnership working in the design and delivery of housing policy ([Project 70588](#)).
- Pathways and choice in a diversifying social and affordable housing system ([Project 70615](#)).
- Scoping the capacity of Indigenous community housing organisations—Victorian extension ([Project 80398](#)).

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

3.3.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Housing assistance can significantly improve social inclusion for disadvantaged households.
- There is no clear link between densification and an increase in social disadvantage.
- Safe, stable, secure and affordable housing enhances wellbeing ([Project 60008](#); [Project 70068](#)).
- 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 poorer wellbeing ([Project 80188](#); [Project 50300](#); [Project 50361](#)).
- The location, cost and type of housing can have a significant impact on economic participation, as most people live and work in a single region or adjoining regions.
- Successful community development programs start with local people identifying local issues and build on the strengths of the existing community. They also minimise the social disruption where relocation is part of the approach.
- In older areas, urban renewal programs can significantly improve housing stock. This can lead to improved non-shelter outcomes as well as building greater wellbeing and social participation amongst residents.
- Regional investment in social and physical infrastructure can reduce geographic disparities and strengthen communities.

¹⁴ See also the [accompanying catalogue](#) for a fuller description of these projects.

3.3.2 *Social inclusion*

→ Social cohesion has three key dimensions: social connectedness, inequality and cultural environment. Many aspects of housing, including tenure type and location, affect the level of social cohesion within a community ([Project 50300](#)).

AHURI research has shown that the provision of housing assistance can significantly improve social inclusion for disadvantaged households. Assistance programs can have lifetime benefits for individuals, such as improved access to education, employment and income support. Research demonstrates that these benefits far outweigh the costs to governments ([Project 10003](#)).

The location and urban form of a community can also impact on individuals' participation in society. AHURI research has demonstrated that the redevelopment of middle-ring suburbs that are poorly serviced by transport and other infrastructure can actually result in concentrations of disadvantage through large and rapid increases of low-cost housing ([Project 50224](#)).

Although there is no clear link between densification and an increase in social disadvantage, there is a perception that high-density housing leads to concentrated social disadvantage. This is largely due to the historical investment in public housing towers.

Four AHURI research projects currently underway will explore the ways in which housing services and social isolation can either contribute to or alleviate disadvantage and socio-economic exclusion ([Project 40585](#); [Project 40601](#); [Project 50566](#); [Project 50599](#)).

3.3.3 *Economic opportunities*

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 people's access to jobs, and their transport time and choices. AHURI research has found that in large metropolitan centres such as Melbourne and Sydney, most people live and work in a single region or adjoining regions ([Project 50024](#)).

Those receiving unemployment benefits tend to move to areas with better employment opportunities. Those in high-cost housing areas are most likely to move, as are young singles and those with some other form of non-benefit income ([Project 70065](#)).

AHURI has also shown that moves from cities to regional areas are often driven by lifestyle and affordability choices. Moves from regional areas to cities are more usually driven by the need to access improved employment opportunities ([Project 70175](#)).

Whilst housing costs do not appear to be the primary driver, high housing costs can provide a disincentive for low-income households to live in those areas with high cost housing and fewer jobs. Older, industrial suburbs tend to have higher unemployment than urban fringe locations. There has been an increase in the number of master designed estates on the urban fringes of major cities in recent years. This has reduced concentrations of disadvantage in these locations ([Project 50024](#)).

3.3.4 *Wellbeing*

Housing can play a central role in promoting social, emotional and physical wellbeing. AHURI researchers have explored community strengthening approaches and found that successful programs start with local people identifying local issues, and build on the strengths of the existing community ([Project 70026](#); [Project 60025](#)). Other important factors are:

- Locally based housing management and community policing ([Project 70026](#); [Project 70111](#)). Social rather than physical interventions are required to achieve a reduction in crime in public housing estates. Intense interagency collaboration and non-traditional community policing are important elements in crime reduction ([Project 70111](#)).
- AHURI research has also shown that community housing associations can make a significant contribution to strengthening local communities, particularly where there are low levels of public housing and in high housing-cost city areas. Their community strengthening activities include brokering access to services, personal development and supporting social and economic development ([Project 60025](#)).

In older areas, urban renewal programs can significantly improve housing stock—leading to improved non-shelter outcomes—and build greater wellbeing and social participation amongst residents. The most effective approaches to urban renewal start with empowering local people and ensuring minimal disruption to existing social networks ([Project 70026](#); [Project 70110](#); [Project 80125](#)). Other important understandings emerging from AHURI research in this area are as follows:

- AHURI research examining the effects of an urban renewal project on the wellbeing of Indigenous communities found that social wellbeing could be diminished despite physical improvements to housing and a de-concentration of poverty. This occurs where there is a lack of understanding of the role that Indigenous relationships with place, family and extended kinship networks play in creating a sense of belonging and community ([Project 80125](#)).
- One of the frequent aims of urban regeneration programs is to build social cohesion through greater social diversity. Whilst there may be some improvement in community spirit, there is little evidence of significant social networks developing between tenants and new property owners ([Project 70110](#)).
- Private sector-led urban development and industrial regeneration can have some positive socio-economic outcomes. However, this may be limited to certain locations and may not filter out to a whole region, or flow across different socio-economic groups ([Project 30035](#)).

Regional investment in social and physical infrastructure can reduce geographic disparities and strengthen communities. Spatially targeted housing assistance has the potential to enhance regional wellbeing, with flow-on effects for the entire country ([Project 70030](#)). Regional investment in social and physical infrastructure can also reduce spatial polarisation of different socio-economic groups.

- Suitable and affordable housing is a vital component of regional development policy and programs. The provision of a broader range of housing types, including specialised housing for cultural groups and people with disabilities, subsidised housing for key professional groups, all play a vital role in attracting and retaining a more diverse community ([Project 60029](#); [Project 80031](#)).

Forthcoming AHURI research will explore the impacts of housing on childhood development and wellbeing ([Project 80551](#)).

3.4 Housing opportunities for Indigenous communities that support improved amenity, wellbeing and economic sustainability

3.4.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Indigenous housing needs differ to non-Indigenous housing needs.
- There are relatively high levels of unmet Indigenous housing need.

- Indigenous dwelling conditions are generally poor.
- Indigenous housing providers are inadequately funded to maintain existing housing stock and to provide additional housing.
- Housing design is crucial to improving housing amenity and Indigenous involvement in planning and design can improve the functionality and lifespan of housing.
- The causes and solutions for Indigenous homelessness are significantly different to those of non-Indigenous Australians.
- Access to tenancy and other social support services are critical for some Indigenous Australians in maintaining stable tenancies and avoiding homelessness.
- Home ownership can be important to Indigenous people's wellbeing.
- AHURI research indicates that housing provides one of the few genuine opportunities for economic and community development in remote Indigenous communities.
- The viability of Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) is dependent on a number of variables.

3.4.2 Overall findings

Indigenous housing needs differ to non-Indigenous housing needs. The causal factors are multi-dimensional and resultant from historical circumstances but include:

- Geographic diversity: 25 per cent of Indigenous people live in remote or very remote areas compared to 2 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians, 43 per cent live in regional areas and 32 per cent live in major cities compared to 64 per cent of the total Australian population^{15 16}.
- Demographic factors: the Indigenous population is young and growing. Only 3 per cent of the Indigenous population is over the age of 65 compared to 13 per cent of the non-Indigenous population and 37 per cent of the Indigenous population are under the age of 15 years compared to 19 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians¹⁷. The *total fertility rate* for Indigenous mothers is 2.1 babies compared to 1.8 babies for non-Indigenous mothers¹⁸.
- Cultural factors: kinship responsibilities motivate and support high levels of Indigenous mobility, which impacts living arrangements, homelessness and overcrowding ([Project 20260](#); [Project 80368](#)).

There are relatively high levels of unmet Indigenous housing need.

- The Indigenous population experiences a disproportionately high level of homelessness, which is 3.5 times the rate of non-Indigenous homelessness¹⁹.

¹⁵ ABS. (2008) *Year Book Australia*. Number 90. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, page 192; ABS. (2007b) *Housing Occupancy and costs*. 4130.0.55.001. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

¹⁶ AIHW. (2008) *2.02 Overcrowding in housing*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, page 5.

¹⁷ ABS and AIHW. (2008) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. ABS Catalogue No. 4704.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, page 4.

¹⁸ AIHW. (2008) *2.02 Overcrowding in housing*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, page 79.

¹⁹ AIHW. (2005) *Indigenous housing needs 2005: A multi-measure needs model*. AIHW Cat. No. HOU 129. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, p.26

- Indigenous people experience greater rates of overcrowding with 27 per cent of Indigenous people living in overcrowded homes (according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard) compared to 5 per cent of the total population²⁰.

3.4.3 Improved amenity

Indigenous dwelling conditions are generally poor. This experience is particularly acute for those households renting from community housing associations and those households living in remote areas. In 2006, 30 per cent of dwellings in discrete Indigenous communities required major repairs or replacement and this was highest in remote areas (36%)²¹.

Indigenous housing providers are inadequately funded to maintain existing housing stock and to provide additional housing. AHURI research has established that remote area housing construction is significantly more expensive than new construction in urban areas. For example in Queensland, a State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing Organisation (SOMIH) house costs 84 per cent more and an ICHO house costs 66 per cent more to build in a remote area compared to an urban area ([Project 30282](#)).

This poor quality, high maintenance, remote housing stock is the primary reason for large deficits reported by ICHOs and SOMIH, which are on average, nine times that of non-Indigenous housing providers ([Project 30282](#)).

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 ([Project 30354](#)).

3.4.4 Wellbeing

Indigenous Australians are highly mobile and this significantly impacts their housing arrangements and need. Indigenous mobility, or visiting your relations, is a critical part of Indigenous culture and creates bonds which provide resilience in times of need, including during loss of housing. Culturally sanctioned visiting may result in short-term over-crowding but has a positive benefit for the community ([Project 80368](#); [Project 80317](#)).

Kinship is the driving force behind Indigenous mobility in northern Australia. It defines broad regions of travel, provides accommodation for travellers and is maintained through mobility. AHURI research has established that these mobility patterns require a re-think of housing design in order to accommodate fluctuating numbers of residents ([Project 20260](#); [Project 80317](#)). Patterns of mobility are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, so housing and other services need to be planned and delivered in a way that assumes ongoing mobility ([Project 20260](#)).

The causes and solutions for Indigenous homelessness are significantly different to those of non-Indigenous Australians. AHURI research finds that mainstream concepts of homelessness do not necessarily reflect Indigenous understandings. A lack of permanent shelter is not an indication per se of homelessness. Rather it could be

²⁰ AIHW. (2008) *2.02 Overcrowding in housing*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, p.597

²¹ ABS. (2007a) *Housing and infrastructure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities: Australia*, 2006. 4710.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, p.2

better redefined as losing one's sense of control over, or legitimacy in, the place where one lives. The research identified the importance of spiritual homelessness resulting from a disconnection from traditional land or country ([Project 20168](#)). This is related to lack of access to (suitable) housing, substance misuse and violence ([Project 80368](#)).

Homelessness is the major cause of Indigenous overcrowding. Overcrowding occurs because of strong kinship obligations which mean that housed kin will provide shelter to their family in need. Indigenous homelessness is concealed by overcrowding and if prolonged can become a destructive force in the family or lead to the breakdown of the household ([Project 80368](#)).

Access to tenancy and other social support services are critical for some Indigenous Australians in maintaining stable tenancies and avoiding homelessness ([Project 80372](#)). Tenancy incentive schemes also offer some benefit ([Project 80234](#)).

AHURI research finds that Indigenous women and their children have particular difficulties accessing and maintaining tenancies. They are often disconnected from their community, which can isolate them from the services they need in order to achieve stable, secure housing. Support services that assist women to improve their financial management and urban living skills as well as assisting them to access information and source other service providers may also help to break the cycle of unstable, substandard housing that they experience ([Project 40158](#)).

Home ownership can be important to Indigenous people's wellbeing. AHURI research has established that Indigenous attitudes towards home ownership do not depend on whether they live on communal land. The social benefit of being able to pass property on to younger generations is the main motivation for investigating home ownership. And for some, the economic benefits of investing in property are not significant ([Project 20501](#)).

Whilst less Indigenous people aspire to or achieve home ownership compared to non-Indigenous Australians, this is likely to reflect disproportionately low incomes. A previous history of home ownership in the family is more likely to pre-dispose younger generations to purchase a home ([Project 80317](#)).

There are three AHURI research projects currently underway that examine some aspect of Indigenous housing and its relationship to wellbeing. One is examining service integration and Indigenous housing ([Project 70569](#)) and another is looking at Indigenous homelessness in NSW and WA, trialling the categories developed by Memmott et al. ([Project 20168](#); [Project 80368](#)). The third project is examining Indigenous patterns of mobility and housing responses in urban areas ([Project 40526](#)).

3.4.5 Economic sustainability

AHURI research indicates that housing provides one of the few genuine opportunities for economic and community development in remote Indigenous communities. The chief means for achieving this are the construction, management and maintenance of housing, as well as related infrastructure and services ([Project 80124](#)).

The viability of ICHOs is dependent on a number of variables. The Indigenous community housing sector is very diverse. AHURI research found that overall, those with a larger stock of houses tend to perform better, as do those in urban and large centres compared to those in remote areas. Specialists in housing management did better than those running multiple types of services. Critical dimensions of an organisations' viability are: location, governance, human resource management and housing management ([Project 80316](#)). A Victorian case study that is scoping the capacity of ICHOs is currently underway ([Project 80398](#)).

An AHURI research project that examines the relationship between Indigenous housing procurement and the broader economic and social objectives of Indigenous communities is currently underway ([Project 20583](#)).

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

3.5.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Overwhelmingly, the AHURI evidence base indicates that older Australians and those with a disability or other health impediments want to age-in-place, live independently and actively engage in their communities.
- Home-based care is more cost-effective than existing forms of residential care.
- Housing affordability can be a significant issue for older Australians.
- Well-integrated housing and support services facilitate the best outcomes for older people or those with additional needs.
- Home ownership can provide real or perceived wealth that can facilitate choice for older Australians about how and where they age.
- Decreasing housing affordability trends and an ageing population will significantly shape tenure arrangements for older Australians in coming years.
- Younger people with a disability are more likely to be living in the community than older disabled persons, but the trend towards deinstitutionalisation has not been matched with adequate resources.

3.5.2 Overall findings

Older Australians value stable, secure, affordable accommodation that facilitates maximum levels of independent living for as long as possible ([Project 20170](#); [Project 50318](#); [Project 70233](#); [NRV3](#)). In addition, older Australians who have or are experiencing homelessness and people with mental health issues also value these things ([Project 50102](#); [Project 50018](#), [Project 70072](#); [Project 70135](#)).

For older Australians in particular, outdoor and indoor space, such as a private garden or extra bedroom, are important as people tend to engage in more home-based activities with age ([Project 50318](#); [Project 70392](#)).

Two current research activities are examining older people and housing broadly. The first is conducting a meta-analysis systematic literature review of Australian and international evidence on older people's housing policy ([Project 70636](#)) and the other is an essay examining the connections between loneliness, housing and health in Australia ([Project 40601](#)).

Younger people with a disability are more likely to be living in the community than older disabled persons. However, trends towards deinstitutionalisation have not been matched with adequate resources for younger people living with disabilities. One critical factor for living in the community successfully is appropriate and accessible housing with support services to meet the complex needs of residents ([Project 60019](#), [Project 50102](#); [Project 70311](#); [Project 20335](#)). One current project is expected to provide evidence about how housing assistance can make a vital contribution to promoting greater social inclusion amongst people with disabilities ([Project 40585](#)).

3.5.3 Finance

Home-based care is more cost-effective than existing forms of residential care. One of the few cost-benefit studies comparing the types of care for ageing Australians found that providing home-based care in 2005 is less costly on average than residential care. The annual average cost of residential care is reportedly \$48 710 per person whereas in-home formal care costs on average \$7520 per annum. When in-home formal and informal care are implemented together the costs are on average \$11 370 and where in-home informal care is used in isolation it is valued at \$10 880 per recipient ([Project 60313](#)).

Unsurprisingly both formal and in-formal care costs increased with age but did 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 ([Project 60313](#)).

AHURI evidence also indicates that 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 ([Project 70392](#)).

Housing affordability can be a significant issue for older Australians. AHURI research finds that 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. The same study found that housing affordability stress is particularly acute for low-income private renters. These people often have less wealth than home owners and do not experience a reduction in rental payments in line with a shift to a single income like their public housing counterparts ([Project 30315](#)).

The large majority of current research projects are examining some part of housing and ageing in light of Australia's population forecasts. Two of these projects relate to financing or providing adequate housing for this population group. One study is reviewing international policy initiatives that are designed to meet the needs of asset-poor older persons in order to draw out implications for Australia ([Project 30563](#)), whilst another is examining the current state of the age-specific housing market in Australia, its popularity and potential growth amongst low to moderate-income older persons ([Project 70589](#)).

Additionally, one current project is evaluating the growth in reverse mortgage products for older Australians and the impact they have on retirement planning ([Project 60512](#)).

3.5.4 Support and support services

Well-integrated housing and support services facilitate the best outcomes for older people or those with additional needs. AHURI evidence indicates that this approach can sustain tenancies and promote tenant wellbeing ([Project 70311](#); [Project 70135](#); [Project 20287](#)).

For older people in particular, home modifications and maintenance make a significant contribution towards a tenant's ability to age in place. The evidence indicates that older people who have used these services value them highly ([Project 20335](#); [Project 40005](#); [Project 50318](#)).

3.5.5 Tenure arrangements

Home ownership can provide real or perceived wealth that can facilitate choice for older Australians about how and where they age. AHURI research indicates that home ownership provides older people with a greater sense of self-determination and choice over where and how they live in old age. 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 that is perceived to be important to living well in old age ([NRV3](#)).

Decreasing housing affordability trends and an ageing population will significantly shape tenure arrangements for older Australians in coming years. Demand by older Australians for public housing is projected to significantly increase ([Project 30315](#); [Project 20170](#)). Indeed, researchers have forecast that the number of people aged over 65 years in low-income private rentals will more than double by 2026 and two-thirds of these households will be sole women ([Project 20170](#)).

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

3.6.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

- Australia does not currently have an efficient or sustainable land and housing market.
- The amount spent on housing costs has been gradually rising across all households since the mid-1970s.
- The existing housing system is found to be fiscally unsustainable and inter-generationally inequitable ([Project 60314](#)).
- Australia's existing housing supply does not meet demand.
- The efficiency of land and housing markets can be impacted by planning, regulatory and financial barriers.
- International case studies and economic modelling indicate that supply-side and demand-side actions are needed in order to achieve affordability goals.
- Governments can influence and shape affordable housing supply outcomes via financial, regulatory and planning mechanisms.

3.6.2 The problems with meeting housing demand

Australia does not currently have an efficient or sustainable land and housing market

The AHURI National Research Venture 3 found that 862 000 lower-income households in 2002–03 were in housing stress, and nearly half of these households (417 000) were paying more than 50 per cent of their gross income on housing. In addition, another 164 000 moderate income households were also paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs ([NRV3 RP3](#))²².

AHURI research has rigorously established that Australia has a long-term structural housing affordability problem:

²² The research used data from the 2002-03 Survey of Income and Housing.

- The amount spent on housing costs has been gradually rising across all households from around 11 per cent of household income in the mid-1970s to just over 15 per cent in 2003–04 ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- The decline in house purchase affordability is a structural problem caused by house prices growing faster than incomes over the last half century. Between 1960 and 2006 real house prices increased at an average of 2.7 per cent each year compared to 1.9 per cent growth in real incomes ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- Currently around 15 per cent of all households pay at least 30 per cent of their income in meeting their housing costs. This percentage has remained relatively stable over the past decade ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- However, the burden of paying high housing costs is not equally distributed: the proportion of lower-income households paying high housing costs is 28 per cent, almost double the average, and has risen from 24 per cent over the last decade ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).

In 2008, the existing housing system was found to be fiscally unsustainable and inter-generationally inequitable. The heavy reliance on demand side interventions (Commonwealth Rent Assistance & First Home Owners Grant) could not reduce the growth of housing affordability stress and the consequent impacts on home ownership rates has implications for the wellbeing of an ageing population ([NRV3 RP11](#); [Project 60314](#)).

House and rental price instability has significant consequences for the broader economy by impacting on household spending patterns and generally reinforcing economic volatility. Lack of affordability in particular areas affects employment and a generation unable to purchase homes would lead to widening and unsustainable inequalities ([NRV3 RP4](#); [RP5](#); [RP10](#); [RP11](#)).

Housing affordability problems can push people into more marginal forms of housing. AHURI research has examined some of the problems arising in less common housing situations including boarding houses ([Project 20180](#)) and long term caravan parks ([Project 70109](#)).

Housing affordability differences between regional areas and major cities can affect people's choices about where to live ([Project 70066](#); [Project 70175](#)), and the impact of financial disadvantage ([Project 30295](#)).

Australia's existing housing supply does not meet demand

At a national level, demand is significantly greater than supply across all tenures (home-purchase, private and social rental) although there is some variation across geographic sub-markets (e.g. lower demand in some regional areas and within certain types of public housing estate).

Public housing has become financially unviable and the decline of public housing stock has put additional pressure on the private rental market, resulting in worsening affordability ([Project 30282](#)).

The private rental market fails at the low-cost housing end, warranting ongoing government intervention ([Project 20280](#); [Project 30521](#); [Project 50502](#)).

One current project will also explore the housing sector labour market. It is anticipated to identify the principle constraints faced by the housing sector labour force in meeting the challenge of increasing housing supply ([Project 30634](#)).

The efficiency of land and housing markets can be impacted by planning, regulatory and financial barriers

In Australia, planning system complexity, uncertain timeframes, inconsistent planning requirements and a lack of adequate resources at the local government level have all been identified as planning barriers to achieving affordable housing ([Project 70393](#)). The research suggests that these barriers are of greater concern to developers than fixed charges or infrastructure contributions ([Project 70393](#)).

Barriers to large scale private investment in low-cost rental housing market include:

- Financial risks such as the changing value of dwellings and land, small rental yields, limited capital gains and the illiquidity of housing.
- Regulation such as landlord-tenancy legislation and taxation settings that favour small rental holdings.
- Management and operating risks related to maintenance issues, rental arrears and vacancy rates ([Project 30021](#); [Project 30063](#); [Project 20346](#)).

Addressing housing affordability problems in Australia

Governments must intervene to increase the amount of housing available for the lower end of the market and not just provide subsidies to consumers. International case studies and economic modelling indicate that supply-side and demand-side actions are needed in order to achieve affordability goals ([Project 60323](#); [Project 60504](#); [Project 30399](#); [Project 30206](#)).

Governments can influence and shape affordable housing supply outcomes via financial, regulatory and planning mechanisms.

The not-for-profit sector has been identified in the AHURI research as an institutional vehicle for increasing and managing affordable housing ([Project 60323](#); [Project 60504](#); [Project 60322](#)).

3.6.3 Government regulation, planning and housing supply

Planning regulations, land release systems and urban planning policies all impact on housing supply, urban development and economic productivity gains. Geography and the location of housing can significantly impact people's mobility, labour force participation and housing affordability.

Planning and meeting demand

Along with regulatory and financial mechanisms, planning mechanism can be employed by governments to shape housing supply and demand. Given Australia's poor housing affordability trends, much of the recent research examines how planning mechanisms can be effectively used to increase the amount of low-cost housing stock.

Planning plays a central role in a number of European and North American states in maintaining and increasing the supply of affordable housing. A range of planning mechanisms can be used to preserve or offset the loss of affordable housing in redevelopment settings, reduce barriers to the development of low-cost housing, and facilitate the increased supply of new affordable housing. These mechanisms include affordable housing targets in new developments, density bonuses and inclusionary zoning ([Project 60322](#)).

Developer contribution charges constitute the largest quantifiable planning-related cost to developers, averaging around \$45 000–\$100 000 per lot across Australia ([Project 70393](#)).

Two current projects are examining planning and some aspect of housing affordability. The first is examining the relationship between planning policies and housing supply outputs over two distinct policy regimes in Victoria, which may result in a better understanding of how and in what ways planning mechanisms shape housing supply ([Project 30590](#)).

The second project is an Investigative Panel, which aims to identify the scope and processes required for a new development model that is capable of delivering more affordable and sustainable medium density housing through the regeneration of greyfield precincts ([Project 50593](#)).

Mobility, access to opportunity and labour force participation

Housing costs vary by location and the location of affordable housing affects people's access to jobs, and their transport time and choices. AHURI research has found that in large metropolitan centres such as Melbourne and Sydney, most people live and work in a single region or adjoining regions ([Project 50024](#)).

Low-income households tend to move away from those areas with high cost housing and fewer jobs, although housing costs do not appear to be the primary driver for the move. High unemployment tends to be found in older, industrial suburbs rather than all being located at the urban fringe. In contrast, recent years have seen an increase in the number of master designed estates on the urban fringes of major cities, which have reduced the incidence of concentrated disadvantage in these locations ([Project 50024](#)).

In low-amenity, car-dependent parts of middle-ring Melbourne, a rise in largely unplanned sub-divisions of existing house lots is creating smaller, more affordable private rental housing accessible to low income households. In turn, this is resulting in the concentration of disadvantaged people in poorly serviced areas ([Project 50224](#)).

Regional investment in social and physical infrastructure can reduce spatial polarisation of different socio-economic groups. Spatially targeted housing assistance in regional areas can potentially enhance both regional and national wellbeing. It is vitally important to include suitable and affordable housing in regional development programs. Such housing needs to cater for a wider range of housing types, cultural groups, and people with disabilities. It also needs to include subsidised housing for key professional workers in areas of severe skill shortage ([Project 70030](#); [Project 80031](#)).

AHURI has investigated rates and reasons for moving between cities and regional areas. Mobility rates are similar however motivations differ. The majority of moves from the city to a regional area are driven by affordability and lifestyle choices. Moves in the opposite direction are usually driven by the search for improved employment opportunities ([Project 70175](#)).

Current research is mapping the house prices and rents, income and labour market change in Melbourne over the past 20 years in order to examine the way in which the mobility of different income and tenure groups are both influenced by and shape socio-spatial polarisation patterns ([Project 50382](#)).

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

3.7.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

→ Environmental sustainability is a fairly new area of AHURI research. Its interaction with housing policy is an area needing urgent attention.

- There is a considerable volume of research around demographic change (e.g. ageing, changing of household size and composition, worsening affordability, gentrification and socio-spatial polarisation of urban settlements).
- There is a need for further research on the impact of economic change on housing outcomes. However, current AHURI research shows that for older Australians, the loss of a partner through bereavement, separation or divorce significantly impacts housing affordability and disrupts home ownership aspirations. Demand for public rental for persons over the age of 65 is likely to increase 155 per cent by 2026.

3.7.2 *Systemic shifts: environmental sustainability*

Environmental sustainability (climate change, carbon trading, drought etc.)

Until recently only a small number of AHURI researchers began to tackle this topic. One early project found that governments are increasingly looking to improve the sustainability of new residential subdivisions and master-planned communities, whilst maintaining affordability. This is primarily achieved through increased densities and a trend towards smaller houses ([Project 70137](#)).

However, the focus of a number of projects is beginning to change AHURI's contribution in this area. One current project is looking at the challenges of implementing the Carbon Emissions Trading (CET) scheme amongst private renters ([Project 40560](#)).

A couple of AHURI-supported PhD candidates are also currently working on environmental sustainability projects:

- 'Promoting pro-environmental behaviour in Australian households: determining best practice and policy applications' (Anna Cooke, UQ).
- 'Reframing affordability: how may the concept of housing affordability be reframed to take stock of the environmental sustainability of housing' (Bronwyn Meyrick, RMIT).

3.7.3 *Systemic shifts: social transitions*

Ageing population

AHURI has completed a large body of research around the ageing population and their housing needs and aspirations. Research completed to date falls into four broad categories:

- The housing needs, aspirations and preferences of older Australians ([Project 20170](#); [Project 70223](#); [Project 30315](#); [Project 70392](#)).
 - Older Australians want to age in place, live independently and actively engage in their communities ([Project 50018](#); [Project 70072](#); [Project 50102](#); [Project 70135](#); [Project 70233](#); [Project 20170](#); [Project 50318](#); [NRV3](#)).
 - Outdoor and indoor space are important as people tend to engage in more home-based activities with age ([Project 50318](#); [Project 70392](#)). These spaces include private gardens or extra bedrooms, and are often used for alternative recreational activities or for visiting relatives.
 - Demand for public housing by older Australians is projected to significantly increase due to affordability issues in the private rental market.
 - It is anticipated that the number of low-income private renters over the age of 65 will increase by 115 per cent by 2026 ([NRV3](#); [Project 30315](#)).
- The costs and benefits of ageing in place ([Project 60313](#); [Project 50318](#); [Project 20335](#)).

- One cost-benefit analysis found that home-based care is less costly on average than residential care ([Project 60313](#)).
 - Unsurprisingly both formal and informal care costs increased with age but did 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 ([Project 60313](#)).
- Linkages with services for older people ([Project 20287](#)).
- For older people with complex needs, well-integrated housing and support services facilitate the best outcomes. These additional services can greatly enhance tenant wellbeing and can sustain tenancies ([Project 70311](#); [Project 70135](#); [Project 20287](#)).
 - Home modifications and maintenance for older people significantly contribute to a tenant's ability to age in place ([Project 20335](#); [Project 40005](#); [Project 50318](#)).
 - AHURI research indicates that successful elements of a well-integrated system include:
 - a coordinated, whole-of-government approach
 - close interdepartmental working relationships
 - individualised support where a trusting relationship can develop between client and worker
 - a variety of support options ([Project 70392](#)).
- Reverse mortgages:
- One current project is evaluating the growth in reverse mortgage products for older Australians and the impact they have on retirement planning ([Project 60512](#))

Gentrification

Two AHURI projects have dealt with the issue of gentrification of older urban areas and its effects on housing affordability. [Project 50224](#) found that a rise in largely unplanned sub-divisions of existing house lots in low-amenity, car-dependent parts of middle-ring Melbourne is creating smaller, more affordable private rental housing, which is accessible to low income households. However, this is resulting in the concentration of disadvantaged people in poorly serviced areas ([Project 50224](#)).

One current project is investigating how gentrification (the move of high-income households to low-rent/cost neighbourhoods) has impacted on the supply of affordable housing in these areas in Sydney and Melbourne ([Project 40548](#)).

Social transition – socio-spatial polarisation of cities

Two projects have explored the socio-spatial polarisation of cities ([Project 70030](#); [Project 20257](#)). They found that significant demographic, social and economic change in Australia over the past few decades has resulted in polarisation of household income, as well as increasing social and spatial inequalities ([Project 20257](#)).

Researchers also found that regional investment in social and physical infrastructure can reduce geographic disparities and strengthen communities. Spatially targeted housing assistance has the potential to enhance regional wellbeing, with flow on effects for the entire country ([Project 70030](#)).

Home ownership rates and household structures

One group of researchers re-examined Australian housing careers and found that it is no longer possible to talk in terms of the traditional linear career path, due to major demographic and socio-economic change. Changes of particular impact are 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 ([Project 80151](#); [Project 70179](#); [NRV3 Final Report](#); [NRV3 RP4](#); [RP5](#); [RP10](#); [RP11](#)).

- The decline in house purchase affordability is a structural problem created by house prices growing faster than incomes over the last half century ([NRV3 Final Report](#)).
- House and rental price instability has significant consequences for the broader economy by impacting on household spending patterns and generally reinforcing economic volatility. Lack of affordability in particular areas affects employment and a generation unable to purchase homes would lead to widening adversity and unsustainable inequalities ([NRV3 RP4](#); [RP5](#); [RP10](#); [RP11](#))

3.7.4 Systemic shifts: changing financial conditions

Financial boom and bust cycles

This area is little understood and is under-researched. Research has commenced recently which will begin to build the AHURI knowledge base in this area. Two current projects will examine the nature and implications of changing home ownership rates as well as mortgage default among Australian home owners over the last several years ([Project 40503](#); [Project 30529](#)).

Tax reform

A very small amount of research on taxation reform found that changes in taxation laws can mean additional tax burdens for providers of alternative accommodation such as boarding houses and caravan parks. The additional costs cannot often be passed on to low-income tenants, so these changes often lead to a reduction of supply, particularly in areas with sluggish growth in property values ([Project 80023](#)).

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

3.8.1 Key understandings from existing AHURI research

AHURI has a broad body of evidence on the effects of housing policy on non-shelter outcomes. However, the reverse—the effects of non-shelter policy on housing outcomes—has been largely untouched. The only real exception to this is in the area of urban (land-use) planning. AHURI researchers have contributed a small but significant number of projects in this area.

- Urban planning can have significant impact upon housing costs and ongoing sustainability of urban settlements.
- Local governments can use planning policies such as housing strategies to examine and provide for emerging local housing needs. They can use mechanisms such as inclusionary zoning, density bonuses and affordable housing targets for new developments.
- Whilst there is a small amount of evidence about the effects of housing on health outcomes, there is no evidence currently around the effects of health and health policy on housing outcomes.

3.8.2 Non-housing policies

Urban planning

Urban planning is the orderly development of urban areas, in both cities and towns. It can have a significant influence on the type, location, environmental sustainability and affordability of housing. A small number of AHURI projects have examined urban planning processes to assess their impact on the cost of housing developments and to identify mechanisms for improving the supply of affordable housing and the environmental and social sustainability of urban areas.

- Several projects have demonstrated that planning, regulatory and financial mechanisms can be used to encourage private sector investment in affordable housing, particularly where this is managed by not-for-profit housing associations ([Project 60323](#); [Project 60504](#); [Project 60322](#)).
- In Australia, planning system complexity, uncertain timeframes, inconsistent planning requirements and a lack of adequate resources at the local government level have all been identified as planning barriers to achieving affordable housing. Developer contribution charges constitute the largest quantifiable planning-related cost to developers, currently averaging around \$45 000 to \$100 000 per lot. One project suggested that these barriers are of greater concern to developers than fixed charges or infrastructure contributions ([Project 70393](#)).
- Local governments play a significant role in planning for housing. They can use statutory planning regulations to ensure that an adequate supply of affordable housing is delivered, and they can ensure that housing is located close to necessary services. Statutory mechanisms include affordable housing targets in new developments, density bonuses and inclusionary zoning ([Project 60322](#)).
- One way in which local governments influence housing is through Housing Strategies ([Project 60132](#)). The keys to successful implementation of local housing strategies are consistent local leadership, effective partnerships with state governments and private developers, and the ability to leverage internal and external funding.
- Environmental and social sustainability of housing can be improved through encouraging and mandating initiatives such as more effective passive solar design, smaller house sizes and increased housing density ([Project 70137](#)). There is a perception that high density housing leads to concentrated social disadvantage. However, there is no clear link between densification and an increase in social disadvantage.
- Several current projects will examine the impact of planning reform and land release on the supply of housing ([Project 30590](#)), housing and income inequalities in major urban centres ([Project 50382](#)), and the development of a model for housing regeneration in greyfield areas ([Project 50593](#)).

Aged care

AHURI researchers are continuing a strong tradition of research into the housing needs of an ageing population. Research to date has demonstrated that the influence of housing on wellbeing is largely psychological, affecting areas such as companionship, happiness, depression, morale and ability to cope with life.

Further, wellbeing varies with the type of housing tenure and demographics ([Project 40005](#)); there are a range of options for adequately housing ageing Australians within the community ([Project 20287](#); [Project 60019](#)); and older people appreciate flexibility of options and home modifications which allow them to remain in their chosen dwelling longer ([Project 70223](#); [Project 20335](#)).

A recent AHURI research project reported that there is an overall lack of coordination between the community based aged care support sector, the residential aged care sector and housing policy ([Project 20287, Positioning Paper pp.20–21](#)).

New research using Australian and international data is expected to show that whilst preferring to age in place, greater frailty can force relocation in order to receive needed care. This can, in turn, increase demand for care-enriched housing by older adults is significantly ([Project 30563](#); [Project 70589](#)).

Labour market programs

Several AHURI studies have tracked the labour market participation of those receiving housing assistance. Stable housing allows public housing tenants to participate in the labour market. However, some subsidies such as rent assistance appear to provide a disincentive to work ([Project 60203](#); [Project 70073](#); [NRV1](#)).

Changes in demographics are altering the patterns of home ownership and transitions between renting and purchasing homes ([Project 40010](#); [Project 80151](#)). In times of economic uncertainty or instability of employment, people tend to purchase lower-priced houses.

Once again, these projects focus on how housing interventions affect non-shelter outcomes rather than the other way round.

Health

A small but growing body of evidence explores the links between housing and health outcomes. Current AHURI work in this area explores the effects of housing on health, but research into the effects of health issues and policy on housing has not been examined. A small number of studies have examined links between stable housing and the management of mental illness:

- Strong linkage with outside agencies is a key element that ensures the success of Indigenous tenant support programs. These programs must not only address the immediate tenancy-related issues, but also the underlying health needs of clients in areas such as mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, urban life skills and family relationships ([Project 80372](#)).
- With appropriate housing and support, people with significant psychiatric disabilities can maintain stable housing. The provision of suitable housing, trusted people to provide support, medication and/or treatment, and a clear identification of threats to the stability of their housing at risk are all critical success factors ([Project 50018](#); [Project 50102](#)). Where these people fall into homelessness, it is not due to a steady decline towards less stable housing. Rather, they experience cycles of homelessness where they move through a variety of situations and periods on the street ([Project 70072](#)).

Current research projects will examine the connections between housing and childhood development outcomes ([Project 80551](#)), as well as linkages between homelessness services and other health services such as drug and alcohol recovery and mental health ([Project 80568](#)).

- The effects of health on housing remain an area urgently needing further research.

Education

Once again, research into the effects of education policy upon housing has not been researched. Three AHURI studies in the reverse direction show that stable housing can significantly improve education outcomes for tenants and their dependents across all age groups ([Project 10001](#); [Project 60008](#); [Project 70020](#)).

Tax

Research indicates that non-financial motivators like personal goals or personal and family circumstances play a key role when deciding to invest in the private rental market. However, these factors do not exert a major influence on the decision to exit the market. Instead, financial variables such as increased after-tax economic costs (rates, maintenance and repairs) are likely to influence an investor's decision to sell ([Project 20280](#); [Project 30521](#)).

Environmental policy (inc. carbon emissions trading and water use)

Until the 2010 funding round for the National Housing Research Program, there were very few studies addressing environmental policy's effects on housing. One project investigated ways in which housing and urban development could incorporate triple bottom line sustainability ([Project 70137](#)). Another ongoing project is looking at household attitudes and behaviour towards the environment as a resource to be used sustainably ([Project 20550](#)). A small amount has been published in the context of urban planning around the financial impact on housing costs of additional sustainability requirements ([Project 70393](#)).

Two further current projects look at the challenges posed by implementing the Carbon Emissions Trading for private renters and their landlords ([Project 40560](#)), and how to best improve the environmental, economic and social sustainability of new affordable housing projects ([Project 70137](#)).

4 RESEARCH APPROACHES

4.1 Contexts

In early 2009, AHURI commissioned a review of the previous Research Agenda by a leading international housing researcher, Professor Susan Smith (University of Durham). The outcome of this review assisted in the subsequent design of the 2010 Research Agenda for the National Housing Research Program and informs the current Agenda. Researchers are encouraged to see how their research fits into a broad framework for understanding housing and homelessness research. This framework will assist AHURI in categorising all its housing and homelessness research, (regardless of the precise policy instruments involved) by linking it to wider environmental, social and economic processes. It can capture how housing issues may impact (or be impacted by) environmental, welfare and economic outcomes (see Table 1). The framework also encourages researchers 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.

Table 1: A pallet of clusters and contexts

		Research clusters		
		<i>Environmental change</i>	<i>Welfare transitions</i>	<i>Economic shifts and shocks</i>
Research contexts	<i>Systemic</i>	Whole of housing system (changing pattern of risks and rewards)		
	<i>Individuals, households and properties</i>	e.g. Technologies and practices of domestic energy and water use	e.g. Housing for health; housing wealth and wellbeing	e.g. Enhancing financial capability; assessing financial risk
	<i>Communities, cultures, Neighbourhoods and Institutions</i>	e.g. Monitoring environmental risks; measuring resilience	e.g. Creating and sustaining care-full or therapeutic housing environments	e.g. Paths of neighbourhood change
	<i>Nation/states</i>	e.g. The production /construction of environmentally sustainable housing	e.g. Synergies between housing and social policy	e.g. Housing and the macro-economy

Source: Adapted from Smith, S (2009) *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*

4.2 Methods and research vehicles

AHURI also wishes to support 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 2: A matrix of methods

	Approaches		
	<i>Quantitative</i>	<i>Qualitative</i>	<i>Mixed methods</i>
<i>Literature and data review methodologies</i>	Systematic or structured review	Snowballing (key works/ bundling/ scoping) and meta-analysis	Limited examples as yet, but wide scope
<i>Scenario building</i>	Modelling	Expert (and lay) deliberation of alternative futures	Straightforward combination
<i>Interventions and experiments</i>	Variant of randomised control trial using 'natural' experiments	Case study comparisons	A variety of experimental designs and participatory methods
<i>Original analyses of cross-sectional data</i>	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)
<i>Original analyses of longitudinal data</i>	Panel/ cohort survey analysis	House biographies Housing pathways	

Source: Smith, S (2009) *AHURI Research Agenda: looking forward*

Research Agenda 2011 promotes the use of two new vehicles for research—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 Funding Round, applications for Essays, Investigative Panels and Research Projects will be accepted²³:

→ **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. Essays are intended to focus on a particular policy research issue and bring together secondary evidence, innovative thinking and debate. 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 web site, 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 several times 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 (see Table 2). Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the form that reports take, and in proposing outputs that may be generated by this process.

→ **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 and dissemination

Research dissemination is central to AHURI's aim of providing an evidence base for policy development. Research dissemination is coordinated by AHURI National Office, and is included in the budget of each research application. AHURI's published research outputs (Positioning Papers, Final Reports, Research Papers and Research and Policy Bulletins) are published on the AHURI web site. Research and Policy Bulletins are also published by AHURI in hard copy, and distributed to policy makers to provide summaries of the key findings from completed research and to indicate the potential implications of the research findings for policy development. AHURI Research Seminars and conferences such as the biennial National Housing Conference are also supported by AHURI.

There are a number of engagement strategies that AHURI currently uses to ensure that research projects are policy relevant and that the implications of research findings for policy development are fully explored:

²³ Multi-Year Research Investments (formerly known as National Research Ventures), which involve a co-ordinated program of research activities over three years, are developed through a separate process from the annual funding round and so are not outlined in or sought via this Research Agenda.

- **User Group Meetings:** are meetings 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).
- **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. Roundtables usually take place near the end of the research process and are 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.
- **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.
- **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.

4.4 Outcomes of Research Agenda 2010

AHURI implemented key aspects of the [Smith Review](#) in its *Research Agenda 2010*. While it is too early to fully assess the effect of the Research Agenda on the type and quality of research commissioned, it is possible to report some preliminary outcomes.

- **Innovative research questions**
First, the new Research Agenda structure, by identifying strategic research priorities rather than specific research questions, has provided more scope for innovation in terms of researchers developing their own research questions and appropriate methodologies. The *Research Agenda 2010* contained eight Strategic Research Issues all of which were addressed in the applications submitted.
- **Broader scope**
Second, the new research agenda structure has encouraged research to be situated within the big picture, across economic, social and environmental dimensions. An example of a big picture project is the Investigative Panel on the social sustainability of the housing system. It will examine how government and other factors can create 'a more socially sustainable housing system' whereby vulnerable households avoid the risks associated with volatile fluctuations in housing markets.
- **Diverse contexts**
Third, the new research agenda structure encourages research to be situated within a range of analytic contexts, from individuals, to communities and nations. This was in response to a critique that too much of previous AHURI research was focussed on individual and household level analysis. An analysis of projects funded in 2010 found that eight out of sixteen projects (half) were at the individual/household level, three (or approximately one fifth) were at the level of communities, cultures and neighbourhoods and the remainder (just under one third) were at the level of nation/states. This suggests that there was more of a balance between the three contexts, with nation/states in particular taking a much larger role than in the past as a scale of analysis.

→ Methodological innovation

Fourth, the new research agenda encourages methodological innovation and mixed method approaches to answer research questions appropriately. Most projects funded through the 2010 Funding Round involved qualitative methods (such as interviews and focus groups). Literature reviews were often built into projects and scenario building was a key part of the new Investigative Panels. Relatively few Research Projects involved quantitative approaches, or evaluations of interventions and experiments (such as natural experiments), scenario building/modelling or literature or data reviews. Longitudinal analysis was relatively rare whether utilising qualitative or quantitative methods. AHURI is seeking to foster a research program which is balanced, such that a range of methods and approaches is supported. While methods need to be appropriate to the requirements of the research question, AHURI would look favourably on projects with quantitative, longitudinal and evaluative approaches, and those undertaking quantitative modelling.

→ New vehicles for research

Finally, the *Research Agenda 2010* for the National Housing Research Program encouraged the use of different research vehicles in addition to the more traditional AHURI research projects. Six applications for Essays and four applications for Investigative Panels were submitted. Of these, three essays (half) and four Investigative Panels (all) were funded. This compares favourably to Research Projects (just over a quarter were approved for funding, out of thirty-five applications submitted).

5 MORE INFORMATION

AHURI Research Centre Directors

Applications for funding through the AHURI National Housing Research Program Annual Funding Round are invited from participant researchers in each of the seven AHURI 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 Queensland Research Centre**
Professor Andrew Jones
- **AHURI RMIT Research Centre**
Dr Robin Goodman
- **AHURI Southern Research Centre**
Associate Professor Keith Jacobs
- **AHURI Swinburne-Monash Research Centre**
Professor Terry Burke
- **AHURI UNSW-UWS Research Centre**
Professor Peter Phibbs
- **AHURI Western Research Centre**
Dr Paul Flatau

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

State Liaison Officers

- **Queensland**
Mr Geoff Maloney
Phone: (07) 3227 7859 – Email: geoff.maloney@communities.qld.gov.au
- **Victoria**
Ms Anne Congleton
Phone: (03) 9096 0694 – Email: anne.congleton@dhs.vic.gov.au
- **New South Wales**
Ms Deborah Brill
Phone: (02) 8753 8340 – Email: deborah.brill@housing.nsw.gov.au
- **South Australia**
Ms Alice Lawson
Phone: (08) 8124 4057 – Email: alice.lawson@dfc.sa.gov.au
- **Tasmania**
Ms Jeanette Lewis
Phone: (03) 6233 4576 – Email: jeanette.lewis@dhhs.tas.gov.au
- **Northern Territory**
Ms Lisa Braid
Phone: (08) 8999 8534 – Email: lisa.braid@nt.gov.au
- **Western Australia**
Mr Glen Kar
Phone: (08) 9222 8182 – Email: Glen.kar@housing.wa.gov.au
- **Australian Capital Territory**
Mr Bob Highland
Phone: (02) 6207 1907 – Email: bob.highland@act.gov.au

6 HOW AHURI FUNDS RESEARCH

6.1 Funding mechanisms

AHURI commissions research activities in a number of ways:

- First is the Annual Funding Round driven by the publication of the *Research Agenda 2011* which calls for research funding proposals.
- Second, are the Research Briefs which are used to commence particular research activities that have emerged as critical issues between the funding rounds.
- Finally, AHURI also funds research via research capacity building activities, primarily through top-up scholarships to postgraduate students, but also via a post doctoral fellowship offered every year across the Research Centres.

Details about these mechanisms are provided in more detail below.

Funding Round

Up to \$2.5 million is available to AHURI's National Housing Research Program in 2011 to fund research undertaken by AHURI Research Centres.

Of this amount, in the year 2011, \$400 000 will be dedicated to Indigenous-specific housing policy research.

Table 3: 2011 research funding application opening and closing dates

	<i>Opening</i>	<i>Closing</i>
<i>Research funding</i>	Friday 30 July 2010	Friday 24 September 2010 12 noon AEST

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. Some research will be most appropriately funded once the finding from current research is available.

Funding applications should identify which Strategic Research Issue the proposal primarily 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.

All research proposals must be submitted using the AHURI funding application pro-forma. This pro-forma is used for automatic data entry.

An AHURI Research Centre Director must submit all applications for funding. 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 web site.

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 Guidelines for Applicants, also available on the AHURI web site.

Indigenous housing research

Research funding priorities relating to Indigenous housing policy issues have been identified and are specified in Strategic Research Issue 4, but Indigenous related research should not be limited to this issue. To promote research relevant to Indigenous housing issues to be undertaken in all AHURI research, AHURI expects research proposals to include a focus on Indigenous people wherever appropriate. Where it is not appropriate to include a focus on Indigenous people in research, the responsibility rests with applicants to explain in their application why this is not appropriate.

All research must adhere to appropriate principles and protocols as specified in the [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](#) (currently being updated). 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.

Research Briefs

Where the funding round has not been successful in eliciting appropriate research proposals to meet Priority Research Questions, 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. Research Centres would be encouraged to submit applications to the AHURI National Office within a defined period of time to answer the brief. Applications are assessed within AHURI National Office but would still need to conform to the relevant requirements provided under the [Guidelines for Applicants](#). Briefs might be sought on any of the research vehicles listed below.

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, post-doctoral fellowships, and the annual postgraduate symposium. Guidelines for post graduate top up scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships are issued separately from this document, but are released at the same time as the Research Agenda and are available on the AHURI web site. All research done through Research Capacity Building generally needs to conform to the Strategic Research Issues in *Research Agenda 2011*.

AHURI Research Centres

Queensland Research Centre

RMIT Research Centre

Southern Research Centre

Swinburne-Monash Research Centre

UNSW-UWS Research Centre

Western Australia Research Centre

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

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