



Australian Housing  
and Urban Research Institute

# AHURI Research Agenda 2003

[www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda\\_2003.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda_2003.pdf)

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## **PURPOSE**

*Research Agenda 2003* details the research funding priorities of AHURI in 2003. The research funding priorities for Collaborative Research Ventures (CRVs) are detailed in Part A and the research funding priorities for research projects in Part B.

## **THE AHURI RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

The AHURI Research Programme invests \$2.6 million annually in housing and urban policy research through a range of activities.

- collaborative research ventures (CRVs)
- research projects
- research capacity building
- research dissemination.

CRVs typically comprise suites of projects that extend over 3 years, and are designed to tackle research questions that are complex and/or longitudinal in nature and require a long term funding commitment. CRVs are not funded via a competitive funding round but are developed collaboratively across the Institute through a process of negotiation with AHURI Research Centres. AHURI expects to fund only three to four CRVs at a time. The number of CRVs to be funded in 2003 and the priorities will be announced over the ensuing months.

Research projects are the backbone of AHURI's Research Programme and consume the largest single share of research funding. Research projects typically tackle single, less complex research questions. They are funded through an annual competitive funding round and by inviting tender responses to research briefs issued throughout the year. Research projects may vary in length from a few weeks to a few years and range across discrete secondary data analysis to significant primary data collection exercises.

Research capacity building aims to develop the skills and resources of the housing and urban research community in Australia. Research capacity building is funded through the conduct of CRVs and research projects as well as by discrete activities such as the AHURI postgraduate top-up scholarship programme, post-doctoral fellowships, and the development of an online housing research directory.

Research dissemination is central to AHURI's aim of providing an evidence base for policy development. Research dissemination is generally funded separately by AHURI Ltd. AHURI Ltd publishes reports from CRVs and research projects on the AHURI web site. Research and Policy Bulletins are also published by AHURI Ltd to summarise the key findings from completed research and to develop the implications of the research findings for policy development. Seminars and conferences are also supported by AHURI Ltd including the biennial National Housing Conference.

## **PART A: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH VENTURE (CRV) FUNDING PRIORITIES**

CRVs are designed to respond to the fundamental housing and urban research priorities of government that require longer term funding. CRVs typically comprise suites of projects that extend over 3 years, and are designed to tackle research questions that are complex and/or longitudinal in nature.

Each CRV is structured to reflect the information needs of a particular policy research question and can include a mix of research, policy and program development, intervention studies with control and comparison groups, evaluation studies, information dissemination and capacity building.

CRV funding priorities for 2003 are currently being developed in consultation with key stakeholders. As these are finalised they will be included in an updated *Research Agenda 2003*.

AHURI seeks to commence two to three CRVs in 2003 and approximately \$750,000 is available to support this work in 2003.

Each CRV commences with a systematic review of the current evidence base. The systematic review then provides a basis for the development of the CRV research plan, including key research questions, the broad research design to be adopted; the people and skills being brought together; the broad timeframe for undertaking different phases of the research; and a budget. Deliverables from the suite of projects within a CRV are scheduled for delivery throughout the course of the programme. Milestones are scheduled for completion within 'date windows' that seek to coincide with key policy development cycles. CRV research plans also include a: structured process of engagement with policy makers; dissemination of research findings through the course of the programme; capacity building; and engagement with leading international researchers, industry and community leaders.

Each CRV:

- is managed by a pre-eminent academic and/or experienced project manager as programme director
- is collaborative across multiple (at least 3) AHURI Research Centres
- is collaborative with external partners (industry, community, international researchers)
- has funding of up to \$750,000 over 3 years
- is nationally focussed
- has a programme of dissemination events
- includes structured engagement with policy makers
- has explicit research capacity building measures.

## **PART B: RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING PRIORITIES**

Research projects typically tackle single research questions. They are funded through an annual competitive funding round and by inviting tender responses to research briefs issued throughout the year. Research projects may vary in length from a few weeks to a few years and range across discrete secondary data analysis to significant primary data collection exercises.

Approximately \$1.5 million is available in 2003 to fund research projects to be undertaken by AHURI Research Centres. There is one funding round in 2003 to support research projects. AHURI funds small projects (\$50,000), medium projects (up to \$125,000) and large projects (up to \$250,000).

**NB: THE INCLUSION OF CRVS IN THE AHURI RESEARCH PROGRAMME MEANS THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A SECOND PROJECT FUNDING ROUND IN 2003.**

### 2003 Research Project Funding Application Opening and Closing Dates

	Opening	Closing
Research Project Funding	2/09/02	25/10/02

The key housing and urban policy issues to be examined by research projects through 2003 will relate to the following policy themes and research areas:

1. Housing Assistance Programmes
  - 1.1. Housing assistance and housing management
  - 1.2. Evaluation methods
2. Housing Futures
  - 2.1. The future environment for housing policy
  - 2.2. Ageing and housing
3. Programme Integration and Housing Assistance
  - 3.1. Housing assistance linkages
4. Innovation in the Provision of Housing
  - 4.1. Housing assistance funding and financing
5. Urban Management and Infrastructure
  - 5.1. Housing and sustainable urban development
6. Transforming Communities
  - 6.1. Strengthening communities
  - 6.2. Rural housing
7. Indigenous Housing
  - 7.1. Housing futures, needs and aspirations
  - 7.2. The housing system
  - 7.3. Housing and non-shelter outcomes
  - 7.4. Sustainability
8. Homelessness and Marginal Housing
  - 8.1. Homelessness and marginal housing
9. The Housing System
  - 9.1. The dynamics and drivers of supply and demand
10. The Policy Horizon

Many of these themes continue from the previous year, but there are some new emphases within them.

'The Policy Horizon' is a new theme that seeks to fund projects that explore concepts and ideas that may be at the forefront of 'tomorrow's' policy agenda.

Project applications should extend rather than duplicate AHURI research to date. It is therefore vital that all applicants familiarise themselves with the findings, aims and foci of completed and current projects. Summaries of AHURI research to date have been integrated with the policy context sections of each research area below. Further details can be found in the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* at:

[www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf)

There is, inevitably, a degree of overlap across the themes and research areas. Project funding applications should aim to identify which research area their proposal primarily addresses.

For each research area a description of the policy issues to be investigated and a summary of relevant completed and current AHURI research are provided. The latter provides guidance about the extent to which each research area is being addressed. Some research projects will be most appropriately funded once the findings from the current projects are known.

In each research area there is then an indicative list of the research outputs that AHURI is seeking in relation to such policy issues. Our aim is to invite research proposals that advance understanding of the identified policy issues and researchers are encouraged to be creative in designing research projects that will advance policy understanding and development.

The ABS 1999 Australian Housing Survey, the ABS Census 2001 and the first release of data from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia survey provide important data sources for a wide variety of analyses in Research Agenda 2003.

## **INDIGENOUS HOUSING RESEARCH**

On the basis of consultations with the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing, and Indigenous community leaders, research project funding priorities relating to Indigenous housing policy issues have been identified and are specified in section (7) *Indigenous Housing*. This includes four research areas: (7.1) *Housing futures, needs and aspirations*; (7.2) *The housing system*; (7.3) *Housing and non-shelter outcomes*; (7.4) *Sustainability*. These are all priority funding areas in 2003.

In the year 2003 up to \$300,000 will be dedicated to Indigenous-specific housing policy research. However, to promote research relevant to Indigenous housing issues to be undertaken in all AHURI research projects, AHURI expects research project proposals to include a focus on Indigenous people wherever possible. Where it is not possible to include a focus on Indigenous people in a research project, the responsibility rests with applicants to explain in their application why this is not possible.

All research projects must adhere to appropriate principles and protocols as specified in the *Guidelines for Applicants*. Research projects that include a focus on Indigenous housing issues must adhere to appropriate research ethics as specified in *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Indigenous Research* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/ethical.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/ethical.pdf) 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 of the project. This can be done efficiently, since the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing (SCIH) is a mechanism through which consultation can take place. The SCIH has offered and is committed to providing a forum for consultation and a conduit to relevant communities.

## **APPLYING FOR RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING**

All research project funding applications must be submitted using the AHURI research project funding pro-forma. This pro forma is used for automatic data entry. It is available on our web site at [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/application\\_proforma\\_wd2000.doc](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/application_proforma_wd2000.doc).

Strict word limits apply to all research project funding applications. See the Guidelines for Applicants [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda\\_guidelines03.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda_guidelines03.pdf) for details. Any application that does not fall within these word limits will not be accepted for consideration.

An AHURI Research Centre Director must submit all research project funding applications. A submission form signed by an AHURI Research Centre Director must accompany each application. Details of all AHURI Research Centre Directors can be found at [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/application\\_directorsub03\\_wd2000.doc](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/application_directorsub03_wd2000.doc).

For further details about how to apply for AHURI research funds see the *Guidelines for Applicants*, available at [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda\\_guidelines03.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/agenda_guidelines03.pdf).

# **(1) HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES**

## **RESEARCH AREA (1.1) HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Government needs to fully appreciate how housing assistance can be delivered. Governments require assessments of how different forms of housing assistance meet the differing needs of a range of population groups, and an understanding of the effects of specific forms of government funded housing assistance. This includes understanding the range of potential modes of delivering assistance, and the roles for different tenures in securing a range of housing outcomes

The policy outcome that government seeks is identification of the most efficient and effective ways of achieving desirable housing outcomes.

Much recent housing policy debate in advanced western economies, including Australia, has focussed upon the most effective ways of providing housing assistance. In Australia a large part of the debate has focussed upon the competing merits of in-kind provision of social housing, against supplementing income support for tenants in the private rental market. This remains an important matter but it is only one part of the broader issue.

The effectiveness of alternative forms of housing assistance has not featured strongly in this debate. In this policy context the measurement of what is effective refers specifically to a variety of shelter outcomes such as affordability, appropriateness and adequacy. Measurement of these sorts of shelter outcomes is now being standardised across Australia through the work of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Productivity Commission.

Recent research has focussed upon how effectively public housing and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) meet the needs of sole parents, a very significant client group for each form of housing assistance. This research (project #11 The location and housing needs of sole parents) found that there are 'relatively high concentrations of sole parents relative to other families in areas where housing prices and rental costs are low' as a result of underlying poor economic conditions rather than the location of public housing (see AHURI, Research and Policy Bulletin 8, June 2002). Also sole parents in receipt of CRA and in public housing are quite different in socio-demographic profile (project #12 Sole parents, social well being and housing assistance). This, plus the fact that CRA and public housing provide very different forms of housing assistance lead to problems of high mobility rates and housing affordability difficulties for private renters, whilst access to employment opportunities is more problematic for public tenants.

Six current research projects investigate further aspects of housing assistance:

- Project #33 Tenure security and its impact on private renters in Queensland
- Project #38 Residential location outcomes of assisted home purchasers compared with public and private renters
- Project #49 Demand subsidies for private renters: a comparative review
- Project #87 Falling through the net? A risk management model for home ownership support schemes
- Project #88 A micro-simulation model of the Australian housing market with applications to Commonwealth and State policy initiatives
- Project #107 Analysis of expenditure patterns and levels of household indebtedness of public and private rental households, 1975-99
- Project #147 Regional impact of Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Where housing assistance continues to take the form of in-kind provision there is an overarching question about the nature of housing management practices. Housing management practices vary across states and territories, and vary between the public housing and community housing sectors. Differences are apparent in allocations policies, rent setting, stock transfers to housing associations and so on. As governments strive to promote the supply of affordable housing and explore the most effective ways of providing housing assistance as one part of a package of meeting complex needs, there is a need to understand the nature, costs and benefits of different types of housing management practice.

The Federal Government's welfare reform agenda has highlighted the possibility of more individualised service delivery, rather than 'one size fits all' approaches. The implications of this for housing management and program delivery need to be understood.

Seven current research projects investigate housing management issues:

Project #94 Tenancy databases in the context of tenure management: risk minimisation and tenant outcomes in the private rental sector

Project #110 The benefits of tenure diversification

Project #118 Stakeholder requirements for enabling regulatory arrangements for community housing in Australia

Project #138 Independent living units provided for not-for-profit organizations: clarifying their current and future role as an affordable housing option for older people with low assets and low incomes

Project #141 Allocating social housing

Project #142 Entering rental housing

Project #154 Operating deficits and public housing: policy options for reversing the trend

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002*. [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

## RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The research outputs could include:

1. Examining the feasibility, advantages and disadvantages of common registers for social housing applicants across various social housing providers, analysing relevant overseas and recent Australian developments. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous specific housing provision would be particularly valuable.
2. Identification and evaluation of the performance of community housing, private real estate and public housing managers, and assessment of the potential for future development of affordable housing management capacity across each sector, bearing in mind the different contexts of metropolitan, rural and remote settings. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous housing providers would be particularly valuable.
3. Assessing the extent to which different forms of housing assistance meet different needs of different socio-demographic groups including the young, aged, sole parents, Indigenous Australians, immigrants, etc.
4. Analysis of the effectiveness of a range of housing assistance models in delivering 'housing affordability' outcomes. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
5. Poverty traps and rent setting in social housing. Whilst there is now a good understanding of the cause and incidence of so-called poverty traps, work could valuably investigate the impact of poverty traps on workforce and savings incentives and on alternative solutions to the problem of poverty traps and rent setting formulas. A review of overseas initiatives and of the

income support literature would provide a valuable profile of options. Such research might inform pilot schemes combining income support and housing assistance in individualised packages. Research that includes a focus on income support for Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.

6. Analysis of the impact of the current design of Rent Assistance on decisions of recipients, landlords and housing investors, and on outcomes for recipients. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
7. Analysis of how security of tenure might be made available across a range of rental tenure options, focussing upon the environments that can create incentives for the provision of security of tenure and the structural, legal, financial or personal reasons why residential landlords typically provide short rather than long leases.
8. Enumeration and evaluation of alternative measures of providing housing assistance to households in the private rental market who would otherwise qualify for public housing. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
9. Investigation of the equity and effectiveness implications of a policy and programme separation between income support and housing assistance in the context of social policy initiatives to integrate housing and human services.

#### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/or small category projects will be funded.

## **RESEARCH AREA (1.2) EVALUATION METHODS**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Programme evaluation is an integral part of policy review and development. Indeed, the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement gives explicit attention to the importance of evaluation. The quality of evaluation does, of course, rest significantly on the use and development of methods that enable programmes/policy to be assessed against required objectives and to be compared on equal terms. There are two issues here: facilitating the use of appropriate evaluation methods, and developing new methods where there are identified gaps in the suite of available evaluation tools.

Current research (project #96 Risk management and efficient housing assistance provision: a new methodology) seeks to develop an evaluation tool that will determine the most cost effective mix of housing assistance options, sensitive to changes over time and geographic variations in housing markets.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Development of social and economic indicators required to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of urban, community and estate renewal schemes over time.
2. Detailing of the approaches required to evaluate the effects of housing assistance on broader social and economic outcomes.

### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Small projects will be funded.

## **(2) HOUSING FUTURES**

### **RESEARCH AREA (2.1) THE FUTURE ENVIRONMENT FOR HOUSING POLICY**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Changes in the demographic, economic, social and institutional environments present a continuing challenge for housing policy. A crucial component of government planning and policy development around housing assistance delivery involves understanding what is likely to occur in the future in terms of need and demand for housing assistance. Housing policy also must adapt to developments in other policy areas. This process of adaptation is easier and more successful when it anticipates rather than responds to a changed environment. A view of the future environment is a valuable, if not essential, input for policy development. This is particularly the case with housing policy where housing has lifetime impacts and today's bricks and mortar decisions have a major impact on the scope and demands of the policy response in future years.

The policy outcome that government seeks is identification of directions and forms of future policy and assistance delivery scenarios, understanding the impacts of government policy on future social, economic, and demographic patterns, and identifying future roles for government in terms of housing and broader social policy.

A key change in the institutional environment that has been shaping demands upon housing assistance is that of deinstitutionalisation of people with intellectual disabilities. Research project #15 'Deinstitutionalisation and housing futures' sought to identify the future demand from this client group. It found that whilst there remains a significant number of people who could be deinstitutionalised, the rate of deinstitutionalisation is slowing across most jurisdictions in Australia, with the exception of New South Wales and Victoria. In New South Wales, almost 2,500 people are planned to move into community based housing over the next ten years. Another 900, according to reports from other states, will make this move by 2011.

Current research (project #14 Medium and long term projections of housing needs in Australia) seeks to project future housing requirements at a regional level, and (project #81 Explanations of changes in housing tenure in Australia) to analyse longitudinal survey data to understand the changing dynamics of housing careers and contemporary life courses.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

#### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Scenario development work to support existing work on housing futures. These might include:
  - Rates of 'falling out' of home ownership associated with re-mortgaging practices, with increasing levels of separation and divorce amongst the over 50s, and with interest rate rises.
2. Qualitative and quantitative assessment of policy-related 'risks' that will impinge on housing policy in coming years. Strategic analysis and evaluation of policy environments in income security, retirement incomes, labour market, immigration, and aged care assessing how they are likely to change in the future and what the implications would be of such changes for housing assistance policy. Research that includes a focus on policies and programmes for Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
3. Modelling of the future (10 and 20 year time horizons) level and cost of health and aged support needs associated with current and projected declining rates of home ownership.

4. Modelling of the future (10 and 20 year time horizons) level and cost of health and aged support needs associated with current and projected levels of home ownership amongst Indigenous people.
5. What are the implications of socio-demographic change (such as divorce and fertility rates) for Australian housing careers, and what are the implications of these changes in housing careers for housing assistance and the welfare system?

**BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/or small projects will be funded.

## **RESEARCH AREA (2.2) AGEING AND HOUSING**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The ageing of the Australian population is one of the most significant policy challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As the population ages there will be a decrease in the ratio of working to non-working persons and an increase in the demand for pensions, health care, housing assistance and other social services. This will place a greater financial load on those in the labour force to pay sufficient income tax to assist both the old and the young.

As the population ages, more care will need to be provided to older people in their own homes, particularly in a context of deinstitutionalisation. Where older people live has implications for their access to services and for those who care for them. Planning for transportation, community and health services in conjunction with housing development and housing assistance will be essential.

The policy outcome that government seeks is to better understand the housing needs, aspirations and preferences of older population cohorts and assessment of the extent to which these can be met by the housing market, the housing stock, and housing assistance measures.

A project (Project #170 Rental housing for lower-income older Australians: scoping the issues, clarifying the policy choices and developing a program of research) has recently commenced. This project will use demographic, policy, financial and consumer analyses to determine the changing rental and affordable housing needs of lower-income older Australians.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Developing and evaluating programmes that would assist people to age in their own homes, across all housing tenures. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
2. Review of the changing patterns of family support for older people and the implications of this for government support, housing design, and the integration of housing and other human services (see also theme *3.1 Programme Integration and Housing Assistance*). Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
3. Examining the options for 'unlocking' housing wealth of the baby-boomer generation in an environment of high dependency ratios and tight fiscal policy.
4. Analysis of the intergenerational transfer of wealth through home ownership and its implications for patterns of home ownership and wealth distribution. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
5. Evaluation of strategies for the effective support of people with complex needs and in particular the needs of older people - especially for integration with health services. Also, the development of strategies to address gaps in the availability of suitable accommodation, and to meet the housing and location preferences of older population cohorts. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
6. Examination of the financial effects on older people when their partners die. In the private rental market, rents would remain at the same level but Commonwealth Rent Assistance would reduce. In the public housing sector rents are fixed as a proportion of income but other expenses would no longer be shared. How widespread are these sorts of impacts and what are their implications for housing assistance?

### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and /or small projects will be funded.

### **(3) PROGRAMME INTEGRATION AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

#### **RESEARCH AREA (3.1) HOUSING ASSISTANCE LINKAGES**

##### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Changes in government policy in non-housing areas have had a significant impact on the management of social housing and its tenants. For example, deinstitutionalisation in the mental health sector has led to increased demand for housing support for people with varying kinds of psychiatric illness. Other groups with significant health or related problems are also increasingly accommodated in social housing. These people require particular forms of support that require close integration between housing and other service providers.

Within government the complexity of these and other housing and social issues has been recognised by the need for 'joined-up solutions to joined-up problems'. One strategic response has been the creation of departments that integrate housing assistance with other human services.

The Department of Family and Community Services, within which the function of housing assistance sits at the Commonwealth level, has three key strategic objectives: to strengthen families, strengthen communities and increase economic and social participation. At the State government level housing assistance functions are being co-located with other human service functions and to varying degrees integrated with the delivery of such services.

Mirroring this move to integrate at the policy/portfolio level is a need to understand how housing assistance programmes might more effectively link with other types of programmes (for example welfare services, disability support services and income support). There is a need to understand not only how to create positive synergies between programmes, but also whether and how current forms of (dis)-integration generate negative outcomes.

The policy outcome that government seeks is to better understand the relationship between housing and other assistance areas, at both program and portfolio levels, and to identify how housing and other assistance areas can be integrated, and how concepts like place management can be utilised to achieve greater integration and improved overall outcomes.

Recent research projects have focussed on improving the housing and support needs of people with disabilities, in particular people with a mental illness. Currently older persons with a disability are more likely to live in cared accommodation than in the community. Ageing in place strategies, plus the fact that younger persons with a disability are more likely to live in the community, add to the complexity of integrating housing and support services (project #19 Housing and care for older and younger adults with disabilities). Nonetheless, with appropriate housing and support it is clear that people with significant psychiatric disabilities can maintain stable housing in the community. The research to date identifies the success factors for housing and service supports that lead to these positive outcomes (project #18 Effective programme linkages: an examination of current knowledge with a particular emphasis on people with mental illness, project #102 Linkages between housing and support: what is important from the perspective of people living with a mental illness).

Current research (Project #20 Evaluating the Miller foyer pilot project) evaluates how effectively 'foyers' integrate housing assistance, training and employment programmes to obtain better outcomes for unemployed and homeless young people. A further project (#111 Linkages between housing, policing and other interventions for crime and harassment reduction on public housing estates) investigates how effective different community renewal programme are, as an integrative strategy, in reducing crime and harassment on public housing estates.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

## **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Identification, comparison and contrast of alternative models (Australia and overseas) for seamless on-the-ground delivery of housing and other human services that support sustainable tenancies, including assessment of their costs and outcomes. The consideration should be of people with complex and competing support needs, of which one group is Indigenous people.
2. Exploration of future governance scenarios and options for the integration of housing and other human services (for example 'broadbanding' of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement with the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement) and their financial and client outcomes.
3. Estimation of the cost effectiveness of linked versus unlinked housing and support models and assessment of the approaches that provide the best outcomes for different client groups.
4. Investigation of the support-services required by intermediary housing providers such as boarding houses, caravan parks, transitional housing managers and family carers.

## **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and /or small projects will be funded.

## **(4) INNOVATION IN THE PROVISION OF HOUSING**

### **RESEARCH AREA (4.1) HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUNDING AND FINANCING**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Government wishes to identify whether, where and how it can influence the private sector and the community to contribute to the delivery of housing assistance, and play a greater role in providing lower cost housing.

The policy outcome that government seeks is to identify how housing assistance can be best and most appropriately delivered, including potential mechanisms for private sector investment in low cost housing, how to overcome barriers to greater private sector involvement, and the policy levers that could be used by government to increase private sector involvement in lower cost housing provision.

There have been attempts in Australia to promote such private sector and community sector involvement, with limited success. Recent research has identified the barriers to private sector financing of affordable housing and specified the options for institutional investment in affordable housing (project #21 New approaches to expanding the supply of affordable housing in Australia: an increasing role for the private sector), and the options for retail investment in affordable housing (project #22 A private investment vehicle for the community housing sector). Whilst the research identifies a range of opportunities, each requires a level of government subsidy to make it feasible.

In light of the introduction of a new tax system research has examined the impact of fundamental tax reform on alternative providers of rental housing such as boarding houses and caravan parks (project #23). AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin 4, (December 2001) specifies that in favourable economic conditions the impact of the new tax system upon rents and site fees is estimated to be between 5% and 6%. Though this will vary according to geographic variations in the strength of the property market. Those cities with higher capital gains on property values may be able to hold rent and site fee increases lower. Either way because the tenants living in boarding houses and caravan parks are on very low incomes, proprietors could find it difficult to pass on any cost increases, making it more economic for them to exit the business.

Project #99 'Policy options for stimulating private sector involvement in affordable housing across Australia: operationalising and implementing viable new options', takes the affordable housing finance options identified to date to the operational stage.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

#### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Extension of current research projects, once completed, into pilot schemes ready to put into operation. Particularly close liaison with relevant State and Territory authorities would be required in the design of such projects.
2. Identification and evaluation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of community management and public management and investigation of the mix of possible funding arrangements and programmes for the delivery of better housing outcomes including:
  - Evaluation of the relative merits of alternative funding models for inter-governmental housing assistance.
  - Examination of structural efficiencies/ inefficiencies in, and overall effectiveness of, the capital/recurrent funding split, based upon a review of what can be learnt from

other systems, such as health funding in Australia, and housing assistance funding in Canada.

- Analysis of joint ventures between community and government and the opportunities and constraints associated with this sort of model.
  - Understanding of the relative merits of alternative models for the shelter and non-shelter outcomes for a diverse range of client groups.
3. Enumeration and evaluation of alternative approaches to 'locking in' affordability into public-private partnerships, for example, through inclusionary zoning.
  4. Consideration of how to promote affordable private housing in high employment areas.
  5. Cost-benefit analysis and modelling, and risk-scenario development, of the longer-term outcomes for tenants, housing assistance, and the private rental sector, of attracting institutional investment into the private rental sector.
  6. Detailing of the empirical costs associated with not meeting the demand for affordable housing and assessment of the risks of transfer costs to other government services associated with not meeting the demand for affordable housing.

#### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/or small projects will be funded.

## **(5) URBAN MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **RESEARCH AREA (5.1) HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Australia is a highly urbanised country. This means that much housing policy making and housing assistance delivery takes place in an urban development context and the nature and form of that urban development context has considerable implications for housing policy.

Assessment of the costs and benefits of urban development is increasingly being undertaken using the 'triple bottom line' approach of examining economic, environmental and social outcomes. This recognises that not only is each dimension central to overall well-being but that well-being in any one sphere is critically related to the others.

Housing assistance has traditionally pursued social objectives but there is now a need to understand the impact of housing assistance measures within a sustainable urban development context. For example, how might it be possible for public housing provision to embrace environmentally sound principles of building and design whilst not undermining the urgent need to house people? Moreover, how do programme-specific concerns about sustainable housing assistance become integrated with sustainability of other aspects of urban development such as land-use planning and transport systems? What demands will the current generation of metropolitan strategies place upon the overall housing system and upon forms of housing assistance?

The Australian social preference for a detached dwelling and large garden is renowned, and has indeed been supported by housing policy measures over time. Yet, the size and form of our cities intensifies negative environmental outcomes, due to reliance on private transport and long work and recreational trips. The low-density environment, and associated commuting patterns, also impact negatively upon the quality of social relations in our neighbourhoods, with high levels of social isolation and loneliness in outer suburban developments, particularly for women.

The policy outcome that government seeks is the integration of the social objectives of housing assistance with economic and environmental objectives, so that housing assistance contributes to 'triple bottom line' sustainability.

Current research is examining the performance of 'normal regulatory led sub-divisions' and 'master planned land developments' against economic, environmental and social variables to assess their contribution to affordability and sustainability (project #137 Affordability and sustainability outcomes of 'greenfield' suburban development and master planned communities). Project #132 'Housing policy and sustainable urban development', evaluates the use of local government housing strategies in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

## **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Assessing the compatibility of current approaches to the provision of affordable housing with broader social, economic and environmental sustainability objectives, including matters such as infrastructure pricing, metropolitan growth strategies and controls, building and development regulation, etc.
2. Examination of the immediate versus long-term cost-benefits of environmentally sustainable housing. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.

## **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Medium and/or small projects will be funded.

## **(6) TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES**

### **RESEARCH AREA (6.1) STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The nature and pace of the impacts of economic, cultural, political and demographic change are spatially variable. Different communities in Australia are affected by these forces of change and respond to these forces of change in different ways. Some communities, for example inner-suburban ones, are apparently being advantaged. Other communities, such as rural and remote communities and public housing estates, appear to be disadvantaged along multiple dimensions – high unemployment, outward population migration, an ageing of the resident population, high crime rates, high youth suicide rates etc. This set of circumstances poses the key policy challenge of how to design policy interventions that support communities in the ways that they most need assistance – different solutions are required for different communities – and of how to put in place programmes that can handle complex dimensions of need.

A series of case studies in regional South Australia (project #28 Community development and the delivery of housing assistance in non-metropolitan Australia), New South Wales (project #29 Housing assistance and regional disadvantage) and Western Australia (project #31 Rural housing, regional development and policy integration) have been conducted to investigate the integration of housing assistance and regional development programmes. These case studies identified significant opportunities for the development of such integration although found no evidence of formal co-ordination. Ways of achieving this are mapped out by project #30 'Responding to regional disadvantage: what can be learned from the European Union'. This research identifies three key features of policy frameworks that support the development of a co-ordinated approach.

- Recognition that housing assistance can be productive, rather than unprofitable, for regional wellbeing.
- Recognition that universal programmes which provide the same assistance to all regional areas need to give way to greater targeting of programmes to regions which have the greatest need.
- Emphasising regional cohesion rather than trying to prioritise the needs of rural areas over cities or vice versa. (AHURI, Research and Policy Bulletin 1, June 2001).

Current research includes project #25 'Community housing management and stronger communities', examining what it is about the processes of community housing management that might contribute to strengthening communities, and project #35 'Community building in Melbourne's new west', examines the role of housing and urban policy and the private sector in the regeneration of a traditionally deprived region.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

#### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

1. Examination of the impacts upon communities of on the one hand increased targeting of public housing and on the other hand community renewal initiatives, including assessment of the implications of these impacts for housing policies such as tenure diversification.

#### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Medium and/or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **RESEARCH AREA (6.2) RURAL HOUSING**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The housing policy issues facing rural Australia have their own particular dynamic. The direction of future social, economic, and demographic patterns in rural and remote regions are likely to vary significantly from those in urban and metropolitan areas. Similarly, the behaviour and performance of housing markets in rural and remote areas is likely to be quite different from those in cities and regional centres. Population size and geographic distance combine to create quite particular housing policy and service delivery issues.

There is also considerable unevenness in the population, employment and housing circumstances of rural Australia. If some communities are experiencing decline, others, even in the same region, can be experiencing growth. The latter are often coastal communities or inland centres with particular lifestyle advantages, buoyed by a population that has sought early retirement and/or is disaffected with urban living.

The policy outcome that government seeks is an understanding of how to respond to demand for housing assistance in rural and remote areas, and in particular the best ways of delivering assistance to people living in rural communities.

Project #175 has recently commenced to examine low-income earners' considerations in migrating from non-metropolitan to metropolitan NSW and SA.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Analysis of trends in 'small', non-metropolitan housing markets to understand housing market performance in such areas, and the implications of this performance for the delivery of housing assistance
2. Examining the relationship between housing costs, higher living costs and poverty in rural areas to develop the research evidence required to monitor and track housing stress in rural communities. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
3. Exploration of the feasibility of housing assistance models that adopt a 'local solutions to local problems' framework. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.

### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Medium and / or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **(7) INDIGENOUS HOUSING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In December 1992, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. When Commonwealth, State and Territory housing ministers met in 1996 and 1997 they supported this commitment which included giving priority to health-related aspects of Indigenous housing such as water and waste disposal, and improving program administration and data collection to ensure future funds are targeted to areas of greatest housing need. The ministers established the Commonwealth State Working Group on Indigenous Housing (CSWGIH) to advance this work.

In May 2001 the Commonwealth, State and Territory housing ministers adopted a new policy *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010*. The new policy of 'safe, healthy and sustainable housing for Indigenous Australians' aims to provide better housing and housing-related infrastructure, to secure improved environmental health outcomes for Indigenous people.

There are four objectives in this new policy:

- Identify and address unmet housing needs of Indigenous people
- Improve the capacity of Indigenous community housing organizations and involve Indigenous people in planning and service delivery
- Achieve safe, healthy and sustainable housing
- Coordinate programme administration

These four objectives give rise to a number of key information and research needs that are organised under the headings detailed below.

In the conduct of research relating to Indigenous housing issues it is expected that the research process and project deliverables will explicitly and critically reflect upon the research methods in an attempt to continuously improve research effort in accordance with Recommendation 51 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

### **RESEARCH AREA (7.1) HOUSING FUTURES, NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Surveys and censuses over the past decade have shown that Indigenous households are about twice as likely as other Australian households to be in need of housing assistance. The data also show that Indigenous people experience high rates of both before and after housing poverty and homelessness, and are more likely to live in overcrowded housing. The impact and extent of Indigenous housing need vary considerably, depending on the location and circumstances of the people.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to develop a multi-measure approach to determining Indigenous housing need. This approach to quantifying Indigenous housing need is undergoing refinement, particularly with regard to data accuracy and this work is being undertaken by the housing jurisdictions. Further work is required to test the assumptions and values implicit within this measurement approach so that culturally appropriate measures of housing need are developed.

To fully understand the measurement of Indigenous housing need, we must also understand the context that shapes it. Housing need is at one level shaped by subjective aspirations and preferences and at another level by trends in family and household formation, labour market participation and residential mobility. In contrast to the population at large the Indigenous population is young and growing, which places particular pressures upon housing policy and housing assistance.

Project #37 is currently developing a framework for measuring the impact of housing programmes on a range of shelter and non-shelter outcomes within Indigenous communities. Project #125 is a case study of the *New Living* public housing regeneration project in Western Australia that aims to analyse the impact of such programmes on Indigenous households in Perth.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

## **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Examination of culturally and circumstantially (e.g. urban, rural and remote differences) appropriate dwelling use standards for the measurement of Indigenous housing need.
2. Investigation of the impact of the trend of increasing propensity to self-identify as an Indigenous person upon Indigenous housing provision.
3. Investigation of the implications of changing employment, demographic (e.g. family and household formation) and residential mobility patterns for Indigenous housing provision.
4. Examination of the housing (including type and tenure) and location aspirations and preferences of Indigenous peoples, including:
  - cultural variation in housing and location aspirations and preferences amongst Indigenous people
  - the extent to which housing and location aspirations are realised
  - how housing and location aspirations are shaped by the choices and constraints facing Indigenous peoples
  - the funding implications of housing and location aspirations and preferences in relation to Indigenous housing provision.

## **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## RESEARCH AREA (7.2) THE HOUSING SYSTEM

### POLICY CONTEXT

Indigenous housing policy and housing assistance cannot be planned in isolation from other elements of the housing system. Indigenous people live in a wide variety of housing tenure circumstances and receive a variety of forms of housing assistance: home owners 32 per cent; private renters 26 per cent; public renters 24 per cent; community renters 11 per cent; and other 8 per cent. There is a need to understand the role and function of these different housing tenures, and their associated forms of housing assistance, for Indigenous people. The extent to which the 'market' parts of this housing system are able to house Indigenous people will have an impact upon the levels and locations of housing assistance demand.

Government is seeking to develop a contemporary understanding of the dynamic interrelationships between the different tenures and their role and function in the overall housing system as it relates to the needs of Indigenous people.

To understand the capacity of the housing system to meet the needs of Indigenous people we need to know more about the nature of Indigenous housing need and demand and also about the capacity of the housing system's supply-side to respond to these needs. The costs of land, building materials, labour, finance, exchange, and government regulation, all impact upon the eventual price of housing, upon housing affordability and upon the demand and need for housing assistance. Each of these cost items in the supply chain is part of a broader industry. For example, mortgage finance is simply one part of the very large financial services industry. Such industries are themselves undergoing significant change and restructuring that will impact upon the housing system and the demand for housing assistance. Policy makers require a detailed understanding of how the various elements within the housing system are changing so that decisions about housing assistance policy making are informed by this broader systemic view.

The dynamic nature of housing supply and demand, the housing system, sits within a broader context of economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and demographic change. There is a need to have a linked understanding of how the nature of change in the housing system is affected by changes in labour markets, family and community life, cultural values and aspirations, environmental sustainability, etc.

Current projects include:

Project #124 Indigenous housing and governance: lessons from case studies of remote communities in WA and NT

Project #158 Sustainable tenancy for Indigenous families: what services and policy supports are needed?

Project #168 Categories of Indigenous homeless people and good practice responses to their needs

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

### RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The research outputs could include:

1. A qualitative assessment of the nature of the private rental market as it affects Indigenous people. Is the private rental market able to meet the needs of Indigenous people, including with regard to family and community sustainability? What is the nature of the problems, what are their causes, and how can private rental market housing outcomes be improved for Indigenous people?

2. Assessment of the role and function of the different housing tenures and different forms of housing assistance in different geographic and demographic contexts, for example the role of Indigenous community housing in urban areas. Data sources include the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey, National Housing Survey and Census.
3. Analysis of the institutional barriers within the housing system to enabling Indigenous people to achieve sustainable housing outcomes. Examine options for change.
4. Assessment of the cost-benefits of individual title on community land including:
  - models and definitions of private and community property rights and differences in applying these in urban and rural settings
  - how to provide choice
  - impacts on economic development at individual household and community levels
  - case study evaluations of existing schemes.
5. Investigation of various aspects of homelessness including:
  - the impact of public and community housing governance frameworks (e.g. eligibility, rent setting, and evictions rules) upon homelessness
  - the impact of breaching income support regulations and its relationship to homelessness
  - the appropriateness of homelessness information, referral and support services for the needs of Indigenous people.
6. Investigation of the use of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by Indigenous persons. In Indigenous community housing low rents and complex household-income unit structures may affect the meeting of eligibility requirements.

## **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **RESEARCH AREA (7.3) HOUSING AND NON-SHELTER OUTCOMES**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

A central aim of housing policy for Indigenous people is to provide better housing and better housing-related infrastructure so that environmental health outcomes for Indigenous people might improve. This priority was a key outcome of the meeting of Commonwealth, State and Territory Housing Ministers in May 2001.

The quantity and standard of housing for Indigenous people is often very poor. The environmental health of Indigenous people remains a major concern, with life expectancy for Indigenous people 14 to 19 years below that of other Australians. Education and labour force participation levels are also significantly below that of other Australians so there is a need to understand how housing policy and housing assistance might be designed to assist the development of better education and employment outcomes for Indigenous people.

### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. In relation to the nature of the links between housing, health, and physical, mental and spiritual well-being for Indigenous people:
  - examine the housing and housing-infrastructure related aspects central to positive health and well-being outcomes.
  - provide empirical substantiation of the purported link between housing hardware and physical and environmental health.
2. Examination of perceived and 'actual' differences in the nature of community control, ownership and management of housing and how these contribute to community capacity, in urban, rural and remote communities.
3. With regard to education and employment outcomes:
  - quantitative description, using the most up-to-date and accurate data, of the tenure, location, education and employment interrelationships for Indigenous people
  - qualitative investigation of the meanings of 'home', 'stability', 'security', 'control', etc, and their relationship to education, training and employment participation for Indigenous people.

### **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **RESEARCH AREA (7.4) SUSTAINABILITY**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The housing needs of Indigenous people are in many ways urgent and complex. This context shapes decisions about the design of housing assistance measures, the implementation of housing management programmes and the design of the housing stock and associated infrastructure. Effective policy-making, however, also needs to understand the longer-term consequences of this decision-making focussed on immediate need. Governments need to understand what the longer term economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes of the current policies and programmes are.

## **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. The development of future risk scenarios associated with different balances of capital, recurrent and maintenance expenditures, in relation to the sustainability of tenancies, families, communities, community management practices, and housing assets.
2. Evaluation of the long-term outcomes of housing maintenance programmes in Indigenous communities for the sustainability of Indigenous housing organisations.
3. Investigation of the economic, social, environmental, cultural, and spatial implications of National Competition Policy (for example deregulation of the electricity industry) for the sustainability of disadvantaged Indigenous communities.

## **BUDGET CATEGORY**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **(8) HOMELESSNESS AND MARGINAL HOUSING**

### **RESEARCH AREA (8.1) HOMELESSNESS AND MARGINAL HOUSING**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Homelessness has been a growing problem in Australia for many years with serious consequences for those affected by it. Demand on existing services is increasing and becoming more complex as the homeless population undergoes change. The factors driving change in the profile of homeless people include:

- Increased family breakdown;
- The deinstitutionalisation of people with psychiatric illness, physical and intellectual disabilities;
- An increase in women and children fleeing domestic violence;
- A decrease in rooming house and low-cost accommodation options;
- Shifts in patterns of substance abuse and the availability of illicit drugs; and
- Changes to the structure and nature of the labour market.

The homeless population today has increasing numbers of single women, families and young people. Single adult males remain a significant group amongst the homeless population and Indigenous Australians are over represented.

Considerable research has been undertaken upon the risk factors associated with homelessness and upon enumerating the homeless, but there remain significant knowledge gaps.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme data collections may be of value to much of the research in this area. However, research funded by AHURI should not duplicate existing analyses of these data such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 2000-2001, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hou/saapndcar00-01/index.html> or the Australian Housing Research Fund report 'Analysis of housing or accommodation needs and characteristics of homeless persons from the SAAP national data collection'.

The policy outcome that government seeks is the identification of appropriate responses to homelessness that focus on prevention, providing assistance to those in housing crisis and at immediate risk of homelessness, helping the homeless to secure more stable housing solutions as a basis for supporting stable life conditions, and - importantly - ensuring that interventions make a lasting difference.

Nine projects are currently underway examining homelessness from the perspective of various social groups:

- Project #48 A comparative study of housing needs and provisions for recently-arrived refugees
- Project #56 Heroin users, housing and social participation: attacking social exclusion through better housing
- Project #48 Ex-prisoners and accommodation: what bearing do different forms of housing have on social reintegration?
- Project #176 Ex-prisoners and accommodation: what bearing do different forms of housing have on ex-prisoners' social reintegration? Six-month extension.
- Project #72 Predictors of housing vulnerability and incipient homelessness: the case of psychiatric patients living in the community
- Project #109 On the Margins? Housing risk among caravan park residents

Project #135 Housing options and independent living: sustainable outcomes for older people who are homeless

Project #156 The development of prevention and early intervention services for homeless youth: intervening successfully

Project #160 Developing models of good practice in meeting the needs of homeless young people in rural areas

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

## **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. A national analysis of models for integrated service delivery to different groups of the homeless population to develop an evidence base that can be used to measure the effectiveness of homeless interventions. The research will need to include a focus upon groups with high support needs. Some initial work is underway on people with a disability, people with mental illness, people with drug abuse problems, ex-prisoners, older people, young people and Indigenous people.
2. A whole of government cost-effectiveness analysis of the costs of not preventing homelessness, including, for example, health, crisis accommodation, policing, and housing assistance costs.
3. Examination of how housing authorities in different Australian state jurisdictions determine where and how to provide crisis accommodation. Understanding of the implications of different approaches for regional and client outcomes, with emphasis on particular client groups.

## **BUDGET**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded in this research area.

## **(9) THE HOUSING SYSTEM**

### **RESEARCH AREA (9.1) THE DYNAMICS AND DRIVERS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The demand for and cost of housing assistance is fundamentally affected by supply, demand and regulation in the overall housing system. In relation to demand, for example, we might surmise that any factors reducing either the ability or the willingness of households to enter or remain in home ownership will put increased pressure on the private rental market. To the extent that lower income households are affected by these trends the cost of Commonwealth Rent Assistance would then increase correspondingly. Without an appropriate supply response in the private rental sector, the demand for social housing would be likely to increase. If this increased demand cannot be met then its impact would be felt in the homeless services sector. The inter-relationships between the different tenures are complex and vary over time and by location.

In contrast to other research areas within *Research Agenda 2003* that focus on housing assistance in isolation, this research area seeks to develop a contemporary understanding of the dynamic interrelationships between the different tenures and their role and function in the overall housing system. This information is required to understand the system-wide impacts of the various forms of housing assistance and to what extent they support the balancing of supply and demand across the tenures.

The price of housing is also shaped by a range of supply-side factors. The costs of land, building materials, labour, finance, exchange, and government regulation, all impact upon the eventual price of housing, and thus on housing affordability and therefore on the demand and need for housing assistance. Each of these cost items in the supply chain is part of a broader industry. For example, mortgage finance is simply one part of the very large financial services industry. Such industries are themselves undergoing significant change and restructuring that will impact upon the housing system and the demand for housing assistance. Policy makers require a detailed understanding of how the various elements within the housing system are changing so that decisions about housing assistance policy making are informed by this broader systemic view.

The dynamic flux of housing supply and demand - the housing system - sits within a broader context of economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and demographic change. There is a need to have a linked understanding of how the nature of change in the housing system is affected by changes in labour markets, family and community life, cultural values and aspirations, environmental sustainability, etc.

The policy outcome that government seeks is a sophisticated understanding of the dynamics and drivers of the housing system, particularly as it relates to housing assistance and other aspects of regulation and assistance.

Project #151 (What drives housing outcomes in Australia? Understanding the role of aspirations, household formation, economic incentives and labour market interactions) analyses the HILDA panel survey to develop an integrated model of the housing system to identify the key drivers of housing outcomes including household formation, labour market participation, patterns of tenure and housing assistance policies.

Project #180 (Boarding houses: supply side issues) focuses upon how government might work with the private sector to attract greater investment in boarding house provision.

Please consult the document *AHURI Research Projects 2000-2002* [www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf](http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/agenda/researchprojects2000-02.pdf) for details of research projects in this research area and consult the AHURI website for published reports.

#### **RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

The research outputs could include:

1. Detailed understanding of the dynamics of supply and demand in the private rental market including the impact of tax and regulation, such as residential tenancies legislation, upon investment in private rental housing.
2. Analysis of geographical variation in private rental supply and the reasons for this including understanding of vacancy rates, rent arrears and defaults, the reasons for these, their social and geographical disaggregation, and their impact upon the supply of private rental stock. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
3. Assessment of the information requirements of investors, and potential investors, in the private rental market to establish whether the available information base (knowledge of capital gains, rental yields, investment opportunities) is sufficient to support 'rational' investment decisions, what the information gaps are, and the prospects for filling these information gaps.
4. A contemporary review of the definition and measurement of housing affordability benchmarks and occupancy standards and identification of the system-wide factors impinging upon affordability outcomes.
5. Analysis of the dynamics of urban fringe land supply. The limited evidence available suggests that land servicing costs and developer levies may have increased the price of new dwellings at the urban fringe, away from the first home-buyer market. Valuable work could be undertaken that examines the interaction of land prices, land supply, state and local government planning, building and environmental regulations, and dwelling stocks and flows, with regard to their effect on housing affordability.
6. Examination of the dynamics of affordability within households providing understanding of the interaction of structural and individual factors that may lead households into 'housing stress'. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
7. Updating, refining and disaggregating analysis of trends in home ownership, extending understanding of the nature of choices and constraints in shaping such trends and examining the drivers of change. Research that includes a focus on Indigenous people would be particularly valuable.
8. Enumeration and evaluation of intermediary influences on home ownership, for example, mortgage interest rates, user charges and transaction costs.
9. Examination of structural change in the housing system and assessment of its implications for housing provision and housing assistance, including: technological change and the mortgage industry; fragmentation of the house building industry; information technology and the real estate industry.
10. Assessment of the housing system-wide changes required to support development of an affordable rental housing stock, including analysis of factors such as: institutional investment; housing management structures; planning and development control systems; the real estate industry; residential tenancies legislation; and the development and building industry.
11. Investigation of whether the operations of the private rental market and private rental housing assistance in Australia create spatial concentrations of low-income households. Examination of the implications of spatial concentrations of low-income households in the private rental market for labour market, housing market and a range of non-shelter outcomes.
12. Investigation of the role of residential mobility costs (stamp duties and other transfer costs) in relation to labour mobility and access to labour market opportunities.
13. Examination of the short-run implications of the First Home Owners Grant for lower-income households upon the housing system in Australia, including the overall home ownership rate, cross-tenure flows of households, the home ownership take-up rate

among younger people, impact upon the public housing system, private rental vacancy rates and price changes?

14. Investigation of the extent to which medium to high-income earners utilise low cost housing, examination of the main drivers of this (eg to more rapidly save for a home loan) and assessment of the impact upon the provision of affordable housing for low income earners.

## **BUDGET**

Large, medium and/ or small projects will be funded.

## **(10) THE POLICY HORIZON**

### **CONTEXT**

This research area aims to identify the issues 'at the policy horizon'. Research projects in this research area are not guided by today's Research Agenda, but aim to shape the Research Agenda of tomorrow. Of a conceptual orientation this research area explores the conceptual foundations of housing studies. Applications are invited that will extend the knowledge base of housing studies and advance understanding of the links between housing studies, housing policy making and housing programme implementation.

### **BUDGET**

Small projects, typically up to \$10,000, will be funded in this research area.