

*Research Agenda*

# **Research Agenda 2007**

**Australian Housing and  
Urban Research Institute**

[www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)

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## PURPOSE

*Research Agenda 2007* details the research funding priorities of AHURI in 2007. The research funding priorities for National Research Ventures (NRVs) are detailed in Part A and the research funding priorities for research projects in Part B.

## THE AHURI RESEARCH PROGRAM

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

- National research ventures (NRVs)
- Research projects
- Research capacity building
- Research dissemination

**NRVs** typically comprise suites of projects that extend over 3 years and are designed to answer research questions that are complex and/or longitudinal in nature and require a long term funding commitment. NRVs are not funded via a competitive funding round but are developed collaboratively across the Institute through a process of negotiation with AHURI Research Centre Directors. AHURI has three NRVs underway.

**Research projects** are the backbone of AHURI's Research Program and consume the largest single share of annual research funding. Research projects typically comprise 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 NRVs and research projects as well as by discrete activities such as the AHURI postgraduate top-up scholarship program, post-doctoral fellowships, and the annual postgraduate symposium.

**Research dissemination** is central to AHURI's aim of providing an evidence base for policy development. Research dissemination is generally funded separately by AHURI. AHURI publishes reports from NRVs and research projects on the AHURI web site. Research and Policy Bulletins are also published by AHURI 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 including the biennial National Housing Conference.

## **PART A: NATIONAL RESEARCH VENTURE (NRV) FUNDING PRIORITIES**

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

Each NRV is structured to reflect the information needs of a particular policy research question and can include a mix of research, policy and program analysis, intervention studies with control and comparison groups, the development of evaluation frameworks, information dissemination and capacity building. Approximately \$750,000 is available to support each NRV.

Once the focus of a NRV has been developed through consultation with stakeholders, NRVs are developed collaboratively across the Institute through a process of negotiation with AHURI Research Centre Directors, rather than via a competitive funding round. Through these consultations a NRV Director is appointed. The Director will be a leader in the field and have a depth of research and publishing experience related to the focus of the NRV. The NRV Director will then, typically, establish a small team of colleagues, across a number of AHURI Research Centres, to assist in the development of the NRV Plan. A draft and then full plan is developed by the research team in consultation with a User Group that includes senior members of the policy community. The plan includes key research questions, the broad research design; 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 NRV are scheduled throughout the course of the program. Milestones are scheduled for completion within 'date windows' that seek to coincide with key policy development cycles.

The draft and full plans are considered by the Board of AHURI Ltd to gain funding approval.

Each NRV:

- Is managed by a pre-eminent academic and/or experienced project manager as program 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 program of dissemination events;
- Includes structured engagement with policy makers; and
- Has explicit research capacity building measures.

The three NRVs currently underway are detailed in the following pages.

## **NRV1: Housing Assistance and Economic Participation**

This NRV aims to answer the overarching research question: how do housing assistance programs impact on economic participation outcomes (e.g. employment, retirement, education, training) once we control for the mediating effects of intermediary variables such as 'health' and 'neighbourhood'?

There are three key stages of work in the NRV. Stage one aims to identify: the number and socio-demographic characteristics of Australians in the labour force and in receipt of housing assistance; the range of factors shaping the economic participation decisions of housing assistance recipients; and how particular aspects of housing assistance programs affect economic participation decisions.

Building upon the first stage findings, stage two will develop the detailed research designs to analyse the causal relationships between housing assistance and economic participation outcomes.

The aim of stage three is to explain: how housing assistance programs impact upon economic participation; how housing assistance programs can be reformed to promote economic participation; and the nature of the trade-offs between improved economic participation and housing policy goals.

NRV1 is scheduled for completion in the final quarter of 2006.

## **NRV2: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Housing Careers and Australia's Housing Futures**

This NRV seeks to answer the overarching question: how are housing careers changing in Australia and what are the implications of change for government-provided housing assistance and housing policy?

This NRV advances the evidence base around 21<sup>st</sup> century housing careers in Australia and sheds light on how shifts in household structure, the labour market, fertility patterns, attitudes to home ownership and government assistance, will influence the demand for government interventions in housing markets over the next 10, 20 and 30 years.

The NRV comprises three stages. Stage one includes:

- A comprehensive review of the literature relating to 21<sup>st</sup> century housing careers in Australia and internationally;
- A review and analysis of existing data sets for insights into 21<sup>st</sup> century housing careers. These data sets will form a benchmark against which we can measure change captured in our own data collection; and
- A qualitative analysis of the housing preferences and consumption patterns of key consumer groups such as early retirees, 25 to 34 year olds, and youth.

The results from stage one are to be used in stage two to frame a major data collection exercise – the *Housing 21 Survey* – alongside a process of consultation with key stakeholders about the stage one findings.

Stage two consists of the design, development, implementation and subsequent iterative analysis of this data set.

In stage three further qualitative analysis is undertaken. This additional stage uses a range of qualitative methods to investigate in greater depth some of the key issues and findings emerging from the *Housing 21 Survey*.

NRV2 is scheduled for completion in the third quarter of 2007.

### **NRV3: Housing Affordability for Lower-Income Australians**

This NRV seeks to provide the evidence needed to answer the overarching question: how do we assess and address housing affordability for lower income households in Australia?

The NRV breaks this question down into six logically connected, researchable areas:

- 1) How is the problem conceptualised?
- 2) What are the drivers of affordability problems?
- 3) Why does affordability matter?
- 4) Who has an affordability problem? How has this changed over time?
- 5) What are projected affordability problems into the future?
- 6) How do we assess policies intended to improve affordability?

The NRV will be conducted in three stages. Stage one develops the background material and conceptual framework for the NRV. Stage two, through the analysis of Census data and new survey data examines the drivers and effects of housing affordability. Stage three looks forward to project the extent of housing affordability problems in coming years.

NRV3 is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2007.

## PART B: RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING PRIORITIES

Research projects typically consider single and discrete 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 million is available in the 2007 funding round to fund research projects to be undertaken by AHURI Research Centres. AHURI funds small projects (\$50,000), medium projects (up to \$125,000) and large projects (up to \$250,000).

### 2007 Research Project Funding Application Opening and Closing Dates

	Opening	Closing
Research Project Funding	Monday 14 August 2006	Friday 6 October 2006

The key housing and urban policy issues to be examined by research projects through 2007 will relate to the following policy themes and research areas:

1. Housing Assistance Programs
1.1. Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes
1.2. Housing assistance and shelter outcomes
1.3. Housing management practice
2. Housing Futures
2.1. The future environment for housing policy
2.2. Ageing and housing
3. Program Integration and Housing Assistance
3.1. Housing assistance linkages
4. Affordable Housing
4.1. The supply of affordable housing
5. Urban Management and Infrastructure
5.1. Housing and sustainable urban development
6. <i>Place holder only</i>
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
7.5. Homelessness – place, house and home
8. Homelessness and Marginal Housing
9. The Housing System
9.1. The dynamics and drivers of supply and demand
9.2. Housing, housing markets and non-shelter outcomes
10. The Policy Horizon

Project funding applications 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 projects as detailed in *AHURI Research Review 2000-2006* and the associated *Appendices*. These documents provide guidance about the extent to which each research area is being addressed. Some research projects will be most appropriately funded once the findings from current projects are known.

Project funding applications should identify which research area their proposal primarily addresses. The **policy research aim** of each research area is quite distinctive and applicants must ensure that it is clear how their proposed project will contribute to addressing the policy research aim.

For each research area, a description of the policy issues to be investigated is provided.

In each research area there is then a list of the research questions that AHURI seeks to answer 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 assist policy understanding and development. A single project may logically be able to address more than one of the listed research questions. Equally, not all aspects of a listed research question may be readily tackled by the one project – though clearly these are seen to be integrated issues.

## Indigenous Housing Research

On the basis of consultations with the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing, research project funding priorities relating to Indigenous housing policy issues have been identified and are specified in section (7) *Indigenous Housing*. This includes five research areas: (7.1) *Housing futures, needs and aspirations*; (7.2) *The housing system*; (7.3) *Housing and non-shelter outcomes*; (7.4) *Sustainability*; (7.5) *Homelessness – place, house, and home*.

In the year 2007 up to \$400,000 can 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 appropriate. Where it is not appropriate 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 appropriate.

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*. 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 facilitating communication with 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.

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 on the AHURI website.

Strict word limits apply to all research project funding applications. 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 website.

# **(1) HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

## **Research Area (1.1) Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the attributes of housing assistance which make a difference (positive and negative) to the economic and social participation outcomes of individuals, households and communities.

### *Policy Context*

Housing assistance interventions not only aim to meet housing needs, they also contribute to higher level outcomes, such as improved social and economic well being for individuals, families and communities.

Government is seeking to better appreciate how housing assistance interventions improve other aspects of people's lives. There is a need for government to more fully understand:

- The role that housing assistance plays in the lives of individuals, households and communities;
- Which attributes of housing assistance make a difference to the quality of people's lives, and;
- How to design housing assistance interventions that support communities in the ways that they most need assistance.

Where changes are made to housing assistance there are likely to be flow-on effects, not just for individuals, but also for the breadth of government programs that help to meet their needs. Given this, there is a need to understand the government-wide fiscal implications (monetary and other costs and benefits) of possible changes in housing assistance.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)) and must extend the work of [NRV1 Housing Assistance and Economic Participation](#). NRV1 focuses upon education and employment outcomes in particular and will analyse the effects of different forms of housing assistance (e.g. public housing, rent assistance in the private rental market) as well as different aspects of housing assistance (e.g. affordability, security of tenure, location). While the primary focus of this research area is on the effect of housing assistance on economic and social participation outcomes, consideration needs to be given to the range of mediating factors and differential effects for different population groups such as young people, older households, Indigenous people and people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

- 1) Amongst a small sample of recent entrants to public housing in Queensland research has found positive improvements in children's education outcomes. This work needs to be extended to a larger sample in other States and Territories to validate these findings and to include a focus on education outcomes at both the primary and secondary school level.

Q: How do different aspects of housing and housing assistance (i.e. tenure, appropriateness, location, affordability, security of tenure, length of tenure etc.) contribute to children's primary and secondary education outcomes?

- 2) Changes to the income support system and work obligations for new recipients of the Disability Support Pension (to be introduced in July 2006) provide an opportunity to examine changes in the employment and housing outcomes of this group in comparison with the general population of people with a disability and the general population of unemployed people.

Q: What is the effect of changes in work obligations for people with a disability on their employment, housing circumstances and receipt of housing assistance?

- 3) Changes to the income support system and work obligations for new recipients of the Sole Parent Pension (to be introduced in July 2006) provide an opportunity to examine changes in employment and housing outcomes of this group in comparison with the general population of sole parents and the general population of unemployed people.

Q: What is the effect of changes in work obligations for sole parents on their employment, housing circumstances and receipt of housing assistance?

- 4) In a public housing policy context of increased targeting and geographically concentrated stock, matters of appropriate social mix and the sustainability of communities become important.

Q: Which geographically defined communities, that include significant numbers of public housing tenants, exhibit the characteristics of sustainable or strong communities? Which do not, and why? What housing tenure, income and socio-demographic characteristics are associated with positive and negative community-level outcomes? What benchmarks or guidelines about 'social mix' could assist policy makers to avoid inappropriate concentrations of low-income tenants?

- 5) Current AHURI research ([project 80306](#)) is examining the costs of homelessness to government and the benefits of homelessness prevention to government. There is a need to extend this work beyond those homeless and at risk of homelessness to estimate the costs and benefits of housing assistance to the wide range of groups that receive it. In this context, a scoping study is required to examine available local and overseas methodological approaches to determining the costs and benefits of housing assistance and, with the use of case studies, to demonstrate the value of different approaches.

Q: How can the whole of government and whole of lifetime costs and benefits of housing assistance for a range of socio-demographic groups be measured? What data sources are available and/or would be required to undertake such measurement? Using selected case studies, how can the value of different measurement approaches be demonstrated?

### *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (1.2) Housing assistance and shelter outcomes**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the effectiveness of current and future ways of delivering housing assistance that help secure different shelter outcomes (affordability, security, adequacy, appropriateness) for a range of population groups in different housing market settings (urban, regional, rural and remote).

### *Policy Context*

Government needs to fully understand the most effective ways that housing assistance can be delivered. Government requires assessments of how different forms of housing assistance meet the differing needs of a range of population groups, and an understanding of the shelter related effects of specific forms of government funded housing assistance.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)) and [NRV3 Housing affordability for lower-income Australians](#).

- 1) Little work has been done on the significance of crowding/overcrowding for a range of economic and social participation outcomes (education, health, family well-being). This is especially pertinent for Indigenous households, who report significantly higher levels of overcrowding.

Q: What are the extent, nature and causes of overcrowding in the private rental market, and in mainstream and Indigenous social housing? How does overcrowding affect economic and social participation, health and wellbeing? Which alternate standards and measures of overcrowding are appropriate to housing policy and practice in Australia?

- 2) With regard to the demand for residential security in the private rental market, an earlier AHURI study found, amongst a survey of households in Brisbane and Ipswich, that longer-term leases were not a priority for tenants. There would be value in validating (or not) these findings.

Q: What is the extent and nature (e.g. by household type, location) of the demand for longer residential security in the private rental market by low and moderate-income households including those on the public housing waiting list? What trade-offs with other aspects of private renting, if any, would low-income households make for longer residential security. What interest might landlords have in providing longer-term residential security, and what would be the changes in transaction costs for landlords and tenants?

- 3) Recent policy changes have introduced time limited tenure for public tenants, highlighting the need to understand the importance and value of the different attributes of social housing for different social housing tenants, particularly the relative importance and value of security of tenure compared with, for example, affordability.

Q: Amongst social housing tenants, who wants and/or needs periods of secure tenure, why do they want it and for how long? What dollar value do people put on periods of secure tenure, and what other aspects of housing assistance would households 'trade' it for? What are the costs and benefits to households and housing authorities of providing different periods of secure tenure? What are the optimal periods of secure tenure required by different population groups to achieve positive housing and well-being outcomes? What alternative models of providing periods of secure tenure are operating effectively in Australia and internationally?

### *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (1.3) Housing management practice**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the nature, costs and benefits of the range of different housing management models and practices.

### *Policy Context*

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, for example, in allocations policies, rent setting, stock transfers to housing associations, asset management practices, and sales policies. 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.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) An important facet of the targeted use of social housing is the use of appropriate asset management practices to extend the life of current stock and to match dwelling type with the needs of social housing tenants.

Q: What practices in asset management and dwelling maintenance across the government, community and private housing sectors contribute to improved housing outcomes for tenants and landlords?

- 2) In social policy a range of approaches to conceptualising 'need' are in operation, ranging from the apparently objective 'expert judgement' approaches (such as normative needs and comparative needs), to the apparently subjective approaches that rely on 'client judgement' (such as expressed needs or felt needs). Conceptualising and operationalising 'need' is especially pertinent to housing assistance systems that seek to identify and assist those in greatest need.

Q. Internationally, what conceptualisations of 'need' inform housing policy? Within Australia, what conceptualisations of 'need' inform a range of social policy fields, including housing? What implications for housing policy in Australia do these different conceptualisations of need have?

### *Budget*

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

## (2) HOUSING FUTURES

### Research Area (2.1) The future environment for housing policy

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand future scenarios for housing assistance delivery, housing policy and broader public policy in a context of population ageing and socio-economic change.

#### *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 housing policy makers can anticipate rather than respond 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.

#### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)) and [NRV2 21<sup>st</sup> Century Housing Careers and Australia's Housing Future](#).

- 1) Previous work by AHURI ([project 10014](#) and [project 30205](#)) has clearly demonstrated the projected increase in the absolute number and proportion of single person households. This rise in single person households is occurring across a range of age groups and is driven by different factors including, but not limited to, widowhood, divorce, leaving the parental home.

Q: What are the implications of the growth of the number of single person households (across different age groups) on the location, demand for, and design of affordable and social housing?

- 2) There is increasing policy interest in shared home ownership as one form of housing assistance for households unable to afford and access home ownership via normal purchasing arrangements.

Q: What are contemporary attitudes of different social groups towards 'shared ownership' and 'shared equity' in Australia? What are the implications of these attitudes for the future role of home ownership in the Australian housing system, and the design of home ownership assistance schemes and financial products in the public and private sectors? What policy settings might attract private capital to invest in shared equity schemes; how might such schemes work and what would be the costs, if any, to governments?

### *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (2.2) Ageing and housing**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the implications of demographic ageing and the housing needs, aspirations and preferences of older population cohorts, for the housing market, the housing stock, and housing assistance measures.

### *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. The nature of people's decisions concerning housing, retirement and personal savings and their consequent need for income and other forms of support during retirement will be an important component of the future policy environment. Such decisions will affect the extent of the financial load on those in the labour force and the magnitude of the income tax required 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. Therefore, planning for transportation, community and health services in conjunction with housing development and housing assistance is essential. In this context it is important to understand the structural dimensions of population ageing and the demands it will place upon the housing system. Additionally, the housing intentions and actual housing outcomes of older cohort will have important ramifications for the generations that follow.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) Previous AHURI research ([project 70223](#)) has found that home-ownership is a conduit to greater self-determination in older people's lifestyle choices.

Q: What are the types, sizes and locations of dwellings occupied by older home owners? How do these patterns vary for different household sizes? What incentives or disincentives could encourage or discourage the efficient use of dwellings and land occupied by older home owners?

*Budget*

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

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

#### **Research Area (3.1) Housing assistance linkages**

##### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how to integrate housing assistance with other government assistance programs, to improve overall outcomes.

##### *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 mental illness. Other groups with significant health and complex 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 Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), 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.

##### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) With greater proportions of social housing tenants presenting with complex needs, provision of social support is a critical requirement in sustaining tenancies, and meeting care and support needs. Integral is the establishment of inter-agency cooperation between State Housing Authorities (SHA) and support agencies, and the fostering of appropriate skills for SHA staff.

Q: How has inter-agency collaboration between State Housing Authorities and support agencies been achieved to secure effective and sustainable outcomes for tenants?

##### *Budget*

Medium and/or small projects may be funded.

## **(4) AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

### **Research Area (4.1) The supply of affordable housing**

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how governments use housing assistance and other policy levers to increase the supply of affordable housing.

#### *Policy Context*

From the mid 1940s to the mid 1980s Australia's housing market and housing policy settings were characterised by growing home ownership and reasonable levels of housing affordability. Numerous economic and social benefits associated with these housing outcomes underpinned these housing policy settings. The benefits were recognised to include: poverty alleviation, asset appreciation for households, reduced retirement pension outlays for government, better housing standards and health benefits for workers, and the foundations for neighbourhood attachment and social cohesion.

These economic and social benefits are less obvious today due to changes in the nature of the labour market, the volatility of housing market booms and slumps, and policy changes since the mid 1980s. As a result there has been an erosion of housing affordability, limited government or private sector investment in lower cost housing stock, falling home ownership rates amongst younger households, and increased numbers of homeless people.

Housing affordability is also shaped by policy settings beyond housing portfolios – taxation and urban planning being key. For example, metropolitan planning policies have sought to increase housing densities within metropolitan areas to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and enhance environmental sustainability, and the cost of available, serviced land at the urban fringe has increased.

It is in this context that Principle Eleven of the 2003-08 CSHA recognises the importance of promoting a national, strategic, integrated and long term vision for affordable housing in Australia through a comprehensive approach by all levels of government. Government needs to understand the range of factors shaping the supply of affordable housing and what policy responses across housing, planning, taxation and other portfolios might effectively improve affordable housing outcomes. More recently the Framework for National Action on Affordable Housing has been a means by which this principle might be advanced at a policy level.

## Research Questions

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) AHURI research ([project 70217](#) and [NRV3](#)) shows that a large proportion of low-income households experiencing housing affordability problems reside in the private rental market. A number of jurisdictions have sought ways to assist private renters who might otherwise present for public housing to access more appropriate private rental housing. Research is needed to examine the efficacy of various supply-side initiatives (e.g. head-leasing, brokering models) to facilitate access to, and the maintenance of, tenancies in the private rental market.

Q: What forms of government supply-side initiatives in the private rental market most effectively enable low-income households to access appropriate housing and sustain tenancies?

- 2) The current minerals boom has made an important contribution to the national economy, particularly the economic well being of Western Australia and Queensland. However, the boom has contributed to a rapid escalation of house costs for purchasers and renters, particularly for key and ancillary workers residing in 'resource boom towns'. This substantial increase in housing costs in rural and remote towns may mean that ancillary workers, such as nurses and shop assistants, cannot afford to live in these towns.

Q: What are the housing market dynamics in resource boom towns and how do these contribute to housing affordability outcomes? What effects do these housing market dynamics have on the labour market with respect to 'key' and ancillary workers?

- 3) Current AHURI research through National Research Venture 3 ([NRV3](#)), 'Housing affordability for lower-income Australians', finds that 1.2 million households (or 15.8 per cent of all households in Australia) paid 30 per cent or more of gross household income in meeting their housing costs. Recent evidence from the NRV has indicated that two out of every three persons living in such circumstances would no longer be living in such circumstances in 2 years time. Of particular relevance for housing policy is the actual duration and persistence of housing affordability stress and the frequency of housing affordability stress for different household types.

Q: How many and which households move in and out of housing affordability stress over time, how frequently, and why? What are the key factors causing this movement?

- 4) In the late 1980s, various States in Australia implemented low-income home ownership support programs (both mainstream and Indigenous specific) and more recently new programs have commenced.

Q: How do the designs of government low-income home ownership support programs compare and how do they compare with current products offered by private sector mortgage providers? How have changing national and local economic circumstances affected the outcomes of such programs? What forms of government action and subsidy most effectively support low-income households access to and maintenance of home ownership?

*Budget*

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

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

### **Research Area (5.1) Sustainability – housing and urban development**

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how infrastructure, land and environmental resource pressures associated with urban management impact upon local housing markets and sustainable housing outcomes.

#### *Policy Context*

Australia is a highly urbanised country. This context has considerable implications for housing policy making and housing assistance delivery.

There is 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 program-specific concerns about sustainable housing assistance become integrated with sustainability of other aspects of urban development such as land-use planning, availability of water for an increasing population 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 cultural 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 commuting patterns associated with low-density environments also impact negatively upon the quality of social relations in neighbourhoods, and there are high levels of social isolation and loneliness in outer suburban developments, particularly for women who are not participating in the paid workforce.

#### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) Recent work has sought to estimate the effect of government regulations on housing costs and affordability. For example, the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources estimates the Building Sustainability Index will add \$8,988 to the cost of a typical detached house and \$8,590, on average, to a multi-unit dwelling. (See also work by the Productivity Commission, the Housing Industry Association and the Property Council of Australia). Research is required to review this work, to determine a reliable and consistent method for estimating the cost effect, of local government building controls, state government charges and other regulation impacts on housing costs, and consequently, on housing affordability.

Q: What are the impacts of local government building controls, state government charges and other regulations on housing costs and affordability?

*Budget*

Medium and/or small projects may be funded.

## **(7) INDIGENOUS HOUSING**

### **Introduction**

In December 1992, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 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 (now the Standing Committee on Indigenous Housing, SCIH).

In May 2001 the Commonwealth, State and Territory Housing Ministers adopted the policy *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010 (BBF)*. This 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. The BBF is intended as a comprehensive sustainability framework:

- Ensuring the viability, capacity and quality of the Indigenous social housing sector;
- Addressing current unmet and emerging housing need;
- Taking a holistic approach to addressing Indigenous housing need through policy and program linkages with the related but broader context of Indigenous social and economic development; and
- Emphasising the importance of genuine participation and ownership and shared responsibility by Indigenous people.

Both the policy *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* and the ongoing work of Housing Ministers' give rise to a number of key information and research needs that are organised under the headings detailed below.

In accordance with Recommendation 51 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody research on Indigenous housing issues, it is expected, will critically reflect upon its research methods. As discussed on page 5, AHURI's *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Indigenous Research* must be adhered to.

### **Research Area (7.1) Housing futures, needs and aspirations**

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how housing need is shaped by subjective aspirations and preferences and by trends in family and household formation, labour market participation and residential mobility.

#### *Policy Context*

Surveys and censuses over the past decade have shown that Indigenous households are about twice as likely as other Australian households to require housing assistance. The data also show that Indigenous people experience high rates of housing poverty and homelessness, and are more likely to live in overcrowded housing, as evident by the second report prepared by the Productivity Commission on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. However, it is known that 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 the housing need of Indigenous households. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has developed the Indigenous Housing Needs 2005: A Multi-measure Needs Model. This report assesses Indigenous housing needs with the use of a multi-measure needs model. The report presents data on the five endorsed dimensions of need: homelessness, overcrowding, affordability, dwelling conditions and connection to essential services. It also assesses the feasibility of including an additional three dimensions in the model: appropriateness of housing, security of tenure and emerging housing needs.

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.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) Previous AHURI research on residential mobility in remote and rural Indigenous settlements ([project 20260](#)) shows that Indigenous households, while exceptionally mobile by Australian mainstream standards, are relatively stable in their customary attachment to their home community, local bush country and their cultural region.

Q: Taking into account patterns of Indigenous mobility in remote areas, what factors need to be addressed when determining the type and configuration of dwellings in order to balance the accommodation needs of those seeking stable housing with those individuals whose mobility patterns produce the need for short-term housing options?

## **Research Area (7.2) The housing system**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the dynamic interrelationships between the different tenures, their associated forms of housing assistance and their role and function in the overall 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. 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.

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. 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 and environmental sustainability.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) Previous AHURI research ([project 80234](#)) has examined the access of Indigenous people to some forms of mainstream housing assistance. The findings from this research prompt questions about the sustainability of tenancies in mainstream forms of housing assistance over time.

Q: What are the different factors (individual, household and program related) that contribute to a sustainable tenancy for Indigenous public and community housing tenants? How sustainable are Indigenous tenancies in mainstream housing assistance?

- 2) A significant development in Indigenous policy has been the 'mainstreaming' of housing assistance. Mainstreaming, in this context, refers to all housing and related programs (in relevant State, Territory and Australian Government portfolios) for non-Indigenous people being made more accessible to Indigenous people.

Q: What is the impact of 'mainstreaming' on public and community housing agencies in terms of financial sustainability, demand (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), tenancy and asset management?

- 3) Previous AHURI research ([project 80234](#)) has examined the access of Indigenous people to some forms of mainstream housing assistance. This research highlighted the parallel development of the mainstream community-housing sector and Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHO).

Q: What changes to mainstream community housing practices would improve access for Indigenous individuals and families?

## *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (7.3) Housing and non-shelter outcomes**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how housing policy and housing assistance might be designed to assist the development of better environmental health, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous people.

### *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 provided to Indigenous people is often very poor, as highlighted in the second report prepared by the Productivity Commission on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. Education and labour force participation levels, while improving, still remain below that of other Australians therefore there is a continued 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 Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) While participation in education by Indigenous Australians continues to slowly increase (AIHW, 2005 *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*) the educational participation and attainment of Indigenous Australians remain below that of other Australians. This is due in part to the high proportion of Indigenous students who experience chronic health problems, lack of access to educational institutions, financial constraints and social, cultural and language barriers. Previous AHURI research ([project 60008](#)) has pointed to the general affect of housing on education outcomes: specific research is required to determine the way housing, along with a range of mediating factors, affect education outcomes for Indigenous children.

Q: How do different aspects of housing and housing assistance (i.e. tenure, appropriateness, location, affordability, security of tenure, length of tenure etc.) contribute to Indigenous children's primary and secondary education outcomes?

- 2) There are logical connections that can be asserted between positive early childhood development, family stability and security of tenure. Yet, there is little empirical evidence in Australia, about the nature of these connections for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Health research (AIHW, 2005 *The Health*

*and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*) shows that a number of family and household factors are associated with a high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties in children such as household occupancy level, stressful family events, and the physical health both of the child and primary carer. Research is required to ascertain the specific effect of housing and housing assistance on early childhood development and how this varies by geographical location.

Q: How do different aspects of housing and housing assistance (security and length of tenure, dwelling quality and type, home and location) affect early childhood development for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children?

- 3) Previous AHURI research on residential mobility in remote and rural Indigenous settlements (*project 20260*) shows that Indigenous households, while exceptionally mobile by Australian mainstream standards, are relatively stable in their customary attachment to their home community, local bush country and their cultural region. Further research is required to determine the impact of such mobility on a range of outcomes for household members including education, employment and social outcomes.

Q: What impact do the housing conditions resulting from frequent rates of moving from one dwelling to another, have on the educational, employment and social outcomes of Indigenous household members?

## **Research Area (7.4) Sustainability**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the longer-term economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes of current housing policies and programs.

### *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 programs 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 programs are.

## *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) A large proportion of Indigenous people live in remote communities, especially in the jurisdictions of Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. This is particularly evident with Indigenous people returning to outstations or homelands which are small family-based settlements often located on traditional Indigenous countries, 'estates' or 'homelands'.

Q: What is the quantum of current and future need for housing on Aboriginal outstations, allowing for the impact of seasonal fluctuations in population and household mobility? How do housing outcomes, such as the provision of affordable, safe, and appropriate housing on Aboriginal outstations, compare with housing outcomes in other rural and remote settlements, and town camps?

- 2) An important facet of the targeted use of social housing is the use of appropriate asset management practices to extend the life of current stock and to match dwelling type with the needs of social housing tenants.

Q: What practices in asset and tenancy management and dwelling maintenance, across the remote Indigenous housing sector, maximise housing outcomes for Indigenous people in remote areas?

## *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (7.5) Homelessness – place, house and home**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the 'place, house and home' needs of Indigenous peoples and how to address these needs through housing and other service responses that secure sustainable solutions and support stable life conditions.

### *Policy Context*

Indigenous 'homelessness' needs to be understood and defined quite differently from non-Indigenous homelessness. The distinctions between 'public' and 'private' places that underpin mainstream definitions of homelessness are less easily drawn when analysing Indigenous experiences, though this also differs across urban, regional and remote settings.

The way Indigenous 'homelessness' is defined or categorised influences the types of response strategies that are implemented by Indigenous organisations, both

government and non-government and these responses may or may not be primarily about housing and accommodation.

Government needs to understand the differing home, house and place needs of Indigenous peoples in different locations and how housing assistance can link with other service agencies to provide sustainable solutions that meet the needs of Indigenous peoples.

### *Research Questions*

No current priority questions.

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

### **Research Area (8.1) Homelessness and marginal housing**

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how to prevent homelessness, how to address the needs of those in housing crisis or at immediate risk of homelessness, and how to assist the homeless to secure sustainable housing solutions as a basis for supporting stable life conditions.

#### *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 mental 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. However, single adult males remain a significant group amongst the homeless population and Indigenous Australians are over represented within the homelessness population.

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 Program (SAAP) data collections may be of value for much of the research in this area.

#### *Research Questions*

No current priority questions.

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

### **Research Area (9.1) The dynamics and drivers of supply and demand**

#### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand the dynamics of the housing system in Australia in particular the interrelationship between the different tenures and their role and function in the overall housing system; and the impacts of different forms of housing assistance upon the balance of supply and demand across different tenures.

#### *Policy Context*

Supply, demand and regulation in the overall housing system fundamentally affect the demand for and cost of 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 are informed by a broader systemic view.

In relation to the demand for particular tenures, 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 (CRA) 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. It is clear that the interrelationships between the different tenures are complex and vary over time and by location.

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.

A range of supply-side factors also shapes the price of housing. 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.

There is also an important geography to the dynamics and drivers of housing supply and demand. 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. There is considerable spatial unevenness in population, employment and housing circumstances. 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. Some regional centres are experiencing growth linked to highly casualised primary production and processing, however, housing investment does not always follow employment opportunities. Therefore housing policy issues facing non-metropolitan Australia have their own

particular dynamic as population size and geographic distance combine to create quite particular housing policy and service delivery issues.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

1)

Q: A feasibility study is sought to develop a model of the impact of changes in demographic, economic and policy variables on housing supply in the home purchase and private rental markets. The model should be able to estimate the impact of policy changes e.g. the implementation of a First Home Owners Grant (FHOG), changes to capital gains tax and negative gearing provisions, changes to income tax thresholds and rates.

2)

Q: How do housing and income inequalities contribute to social and spatial segregation? How is the interaction between housing and labour markets changing to affect social and spatial segregation? What are the implications of such social and spatial segregation for the efficient operation of housing markets and government intervention therein?

3) The last ten years have seen changes in immigration and settlement patterns, financial markets, investment activity, land availability and labour supply in metropolitan housing markets.

Q: What are the implications and opportunities created by these changes for the ways in which housing gets built, with regard to: the cost, type, size and location of new housing; prospects for joint ventures between the private and public sectors and; options for social housing asset acquisition, renewal/redevelopment and disposal?

### *Budget*

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

## **Research Area (9.2) Housing, housing markets and non-shelter outcomes**

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand how housing (tenure, type, price, location, density) and housing markets make a difference (positive and negative) to the non-shelter outcomes of households, communities, economies and societies and the implications of these for housing policy.

## *Policy Context*

Shelter is widely regarded as one of the essentials of life. Affordable, appropriate, and adequate housing is argued to be, amongst many other things, essential for people's good health and provides a stable base for family life.

At another level 'good' housing, underpins an array of broader social and economic benefits. By strengthening neighbourhood attachment through home ownership, it has long been thought, contributes to social cohesion. Similarly, as housing is the most important asset behind household wealth, the continuing healthy performance of housing markets underpins the consumption of goods and services in the economy at large.

Research area 1.1 *Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes* (see above) seeks to understand how housing assistance interventions improve peoples' lives. Yet, there are aspects of housing distinct from direct housing assistance interventions (for example, dwelling type, dwelling density, control over the physical fabric of the home, asset appreciation, and location) that may also contribute to higher-level outcomes for individuals and households.

Additionally, whereas research area 1.1 focuses upon the links between housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes, this research area is concerned with the performance of housing markets and various macro-level non-shelter outcomes.

There is a need for government to more fully understand the relationships between these aspects of housing and a range of non-shelter outcomes for individuals and households so that it can design housing assistance interventions that build upon these positive links. Government also needs to understand the consequences of poor or inadequate housing in terms of undesirable social and economic outcomes, as well as the consequences of rising and falling housing markets for the economy at large. The role of housing, housing markets and the housing system in macro-level social and economic outcomes can provide important rationales for government interventions and/or non-intervention in these markets.

## *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) Research in the UK has found that as house prices rise general consumption spending in the economy rises, and when house prices fall general consumption spending falls. This relationship is at its strongest amongst older homeowners. The interaction of demographic ageing and house price instability therefore has possible implications for the performance of the Australian economy.

Q: What are the contemporary empirical effects of house price movements on general consumption spending, household savings and debt in Australia? How does the nature of these relationships differ for different population groups? What are the implications, if any, of demographic ageing for these relationships and the economic performance of Australia?

- 2) Earlier research has found statistical associations between housing tenure and health outcomes but which housing aspects relate to these health outcomes and how is unclear. Further research is required to examine the specific effect of housing tenure on a range of health outcomes with particular reference to the main health issues identified by the national health priorities<sup>1</sup> of cancer control, injury prevention and control, cardiovascular health, diabetes mellitus, mental health, asthma, and arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

Q: How do the various aspects of housing (security and length of tenure, dwelling quality and type, affordability, home and location) relate to health outcomes for particular population groups?

- 3) There are logical connections that can be asserted between positive early childhood development, family stability and security of tenure. Yet, there is little empirical evidence in Australia, as yet, about the nature of these connections.

Q: How do different aspects of housing and housing assistance (security and length of tenure, dwelling quality and type, affordability, home and location) affect early childhood development?

- 4) Entry to employment enables low-income renters to improve their income and housing circumstances. However, accessing appropriate employment rests on the skills and training of the individuals concerned, the range of employment opportunities available within commuting distance, and the availability of key services that support employment such as child care and public transport.

Q: With regard to unemployed individuals from low-income social and private rental households, what employment opportunities are available, given their residential location, labour skills, and the availability of key services that support employment?

- 5) On average Australian households move once every seven years due to household changes, employment opportunities and changes in housing needs or preferences. [NRV2](#) focuses on the changing nature of Australian housing careers including the drivers of residential mobility decisions. There is a concern that very frequent moves have a negative effect on the well being and sense of connectedness for household members, especially for households with younger children.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/Health+Priorities-1>

Q: What is the impact of frequent and different rates of moving from one dwelling to another (e.g. moving three or more times in a single year, moving once every year, moving every three years) on the educational, employment and social outcomes of household members?

*Budget*

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

## (10) THE POLICY HORIZON

### *Policy Research Aim*

To understand key concepts that provides the foundations of housing studies and their relationship to housing policy making and housing program implementation.

### *Policy 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 foundations of housing studies.

### *Research Questions*

Projects in this research area must build upon completed and current projects (see [AHURI Research Review 2000-2006](#) and [Appendices](#)).

- 1) With a considerable evidence base for housing policy now established there are increasing demands for easy access to syntheses of this evidence to summarise 'what we know, what works and why'. In this context of increasing calls by the policy community for summary and synthesis of research evidence (as demonstrated by [AHURI report 20216](#)), there is a need to develop an understanding of how to integrate and synthesise a range of different forms and types of evidence from the housing literature. Research synthesis techniques have been developed for the health and medical sciences and are now being developed in the social sciences too.

Q: How can social science knowledge, developed through a range of research methods, be accurately and appropriately synthesised to support housing policy development? What research synthesis principles, practices, processes and outputs will enable this activity to be undertaken?

### *Budget*

Medium and/or small projects may be funded.

## **AHURI Research Centres**

Queensland Research Centre  
RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre  
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