Positioning Paper

Resident participation, social cohesion and sustainability in neighbourhood renewal: developing best practice models

authored by

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This paper reports research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute: University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney Research Centre, which examines resident participation, social cohesion and sustainability in neighborhood renewal.

This is the first in a number of outputs from this project. It describes the policy issues that are to be addressed in subsequent stages of the research project, provides a comprehensive review of the relevant academic literature and details the research methods that will be adopted in the subsequent stages of the project.

Further outputs from this project will include a work in progress report, a final report and a findings paper. The project will be completed by the end of December 2001.

Definitions

We use the term 'Neighbourhood Renewal' as a generic term to encompass both 'Urban Renewal' which is generally taken to mean asset management and physical upgrading, and 'Community Renewal' which is generally used to refer to social and economic community development activities. This distinction is more apparent in the policy documentation in South Australia and Queensland, whereas in NSW the two have been conflated into the Community Renewal Strategy (CRS) approach (but still a distinction NSW Department of Housing (DOH) staff use for practical estate management purposes).

The primary focus of the research is on areas where urban or asset renewal projects have been implemented, not just where community (social and economic) renewal activities have been developed. We want to look at effective participation in the physical renewal programs as well as tenant based community development activities.

Aims of research

This research will have both conceptual and practical outcomes. In particular, it aims to deliver:

- A review of current best practice models of effective resident participation in neighbourhood renewal in both Australia and overseas;
- A review of the concept of social cohesion and sustainability as applied to renewal programs and the role of participation in generating sustainable neighbourhood renewal;
- A series of detailed case studies of current approaches to resident participation in renewal programs in three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia);
- A set of draft evaluation tools to monitor the effectiveness of resident participation in creating social cohesion and longer-term sustainability of renewal initiatives;
- A series of state-based workshops to feedback the key findings to practitioners to assist in formulating an agenda for effective resident participation in renewal programs.

This paper addresses the first two of these tasks and sets out the overall policy context for participation strategies and practice across Australia, with particular attention to New South Wales, Queensland and South Autralia. The Australian experience is not critically reviewed in this paper. A more rigorous critique, using the concepts and theoretical material reviewed in the literature review that follows (Chapter 2) will be undertaken in a subsequent Final Report once the analysis of fieldwork is complete. Subsequent outputs will, for example, examine the following research questions:

- Why is there a focus on resident participation in many of the urban renewal initiatives in Australia?
- What do the housing authorities think participation will achieve and why do they pursue these strategies?
- How far does participation contribute to greater 'social cohesion' and 'sustainable' improvements in the social environment of the estates?
- How do housing authorities measure the success of participation strategies?
- What do tenants/residents perceive participation has achieved and to what extent have they been active participants?
- What methods and models of participation are used and how do these equate to conceptual models of various levels of participation. Do the approaches used amount to more than simple information dissemination or consultation?
- To what extent do tenants and homeowners have different perceptions and expectations of participation and different levels of participation?

Our approach to the research and other questions is included in Chapter 4 which sets out the research methods.

Background

While the notion of resident or community[1] participation in neighbourhood renewal is not a new one, it has assumed a new prominence in the policy agenda of the Commonwealth and State Governments of Australia and elsewhere, notably in the English speaking nations, over the last ten to fifteen years. This resurgence has been influenced by the emergence of a 'third way' post-socialist position (Scanlon, 2000) on the left and the continuation of a conservative emphasis on family and community on the right (Giddens, 1994; Giddens, 1998; DFCS, 2000). It is also clear that the practice of 'community development', that emerged in the late 1960s, has continued to influence a wide range of government and non-government services and that communities themselves have maintained their long tradition of organising around local problems (Popple, 1995; Meekosha and Mowbray, 1995).

Despite the high levels of renewal activity in Australia, the task of reviewing developments in this policy area is complicated by a number of factors. First, it is difficult to get a genuine appreciation of the nature and scale of publicly sponsored renewal initiatives since current sources are largely restricted to promotional leaflets and sections of broader Annual Reports. The number of reports offering independent

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[1] The term resident participation is used in this report in preference to community participation to highlight a geographical context, since the term community may also connote a geographically diverse group with a common identity or common interests rather than local residents *per se.* In practice, however, the term community participation has been dominant in most of the sources that have been cited.

evaluations of these initiatives is limited (Arthurson, 1998; Spiller Gibbin Swan, 2000; Stubbs and Storer, 1996). Few have highlighted the role of resident participation (but see Randolph *et al*, 2001).

The resurgence of the idea also seems to have brought with it an extensive, undisciplined and confusing new vocabulary. Some terms such as 'social capital' and 'community capacity' are apparently being used in a variety of ways or, perhaps more confusingly, as synonyms for the same phenomenon. Second, those actually implementing renewal strategies (at the coalface), whether paid staff or community volunteers, rarely have the opportunity to record the development of their initiatives. Third, the academic consideration of participation in renewal is very limited in Australia. While there has been an extensive amount of research elsewhere (Alterman and Cars, 1991), particularly in the UK (Taylor, 1995; Wood, 2000), the extent to which findings from this source may be transposed to the Australian context is complicated by context, history and the variance of government arrangements.

This Positioning Paper attempts to overcome the first difficulty by reviewing and critically evaluating an extensive, but by no means comprehensive, collection of Commonwealth and State policy documents. There is a somewhat expedient bias in this review to material from NSW, QLD and SA since subsequent case study work will be restricted to these states. The second problem will be addressed in an important, if limited, way through the fieldwork that will permit the more detailed consideration of a small number of projects on the ground. Lastly, the academic literature review addresses the third problem by reviewing in some detail the extensive UK material on regeneration.

There is a particular focus, throughout the paper, on renewal interventions in *residential* neighbourhoods and while the concept is not restricted to public housing estates, the role of participation in public housing interventions is considered in more detail than that which has emerged from other public services. This bent reflects the centrality of public housing staff to the renewal agenda. Housing staff are frequently the first port of call for community groups and have had a key role in developing inter-agency responses in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Current 'place management' initiatives outside the public housing estates are beginning to draw on this experience as they attempt to implement a 'whole of government' approach to the co-ordination of service delivery.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Roots of Participation

The idea of participation in the public sphere has a long history with its roots in the classical democracies of the Greek polis. While contemporary conceptions of democracy are characterised by their 'representative' rather than 'participatory' structures there have been periodic exhortations, from the left and the right, maintaining that the populous should have more direct influence over the decisions that affect their lives. Historically, advocates of participatory democracy - from the radical dissenters of seventeenth century England to the students' movement of 1968 - have largely been unsuccessful and representative democracy has remained theoretically and practically dominant since the re-emergence of democratic ideas at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Held, 1987; Woodcock, 1986). The dominance of this view might be explained by the common belief, notably expressed by Schumpter, that it is impractical to allow all citizens to participate in all decisions:

> It is true that in a community of any size … it would be highly inconvenient for every individual citizen to have to get into contact with all the other citizens on every issue in order to do his (sic) part in ruling or governing (Schumpter, 1943, p. 250).

Ideologically, however, this position has been hard to maintain. In exploring the historical development and present state of democratic theory, Held (1987) describes the tensions that emerge between notions of the 'sovereign state' and the 'sovereign people'. He points out the paradoxical similarity between the emphasis that the New Right and the New Left place on 'self determination' and autonomy. While the specific emphasis on participatory democracy has come from the left it is also implicit in the liberalism of the right. Nozick, for example, envisages a framework in which people are 'at liberty to join together voluntarily to pursue and attempt to realize their own vision of the good life in the ideal community but where no one can *impose* his (sic) own utopian vision upon others' (Nozick, 1974, p. 312). However, as Cooper and Hawtin have pointed out, the neo-liberal perspective stresses 'individual freedom, choice and the sovereignty of the market' in contrast to a position which emphasises the notion of citizenship and collective interest (1997, p. 84).

Despite the dominance of representative structures, then, the idea of participation has refused to disappear and has, since the 1960s for a number of reasons, become increasingly prominent in the delivery of services. In the first instance this appears to have occurred as a result of the expansion of the state into the provision of an increased range of public services, with what was perceived as a limited amount of accountability, and a growing cynicism with what was perceived as 'unresponsive' bureaucracy (Thomas, 1983; Stewart and Taylor, 1995). This cynicism often lead to the politicisation of community organisations engaged in a struggle for better services (Kilmartin *et al*, 1985). At the same time, there emerged a recognition that poverty had not been abolished by economic growth and that local residents had a part to play in defining their own problems in the neighbourhoods where they were concentrated (Stewart and Taylor, 1995, Meekosha and Mowbray, 1995). Government programs such as the 'War on Poverty' in the United States in the 1960s, the Community Development Programme (CDP) in Britain from 1968 and the Australian Assistance Plan from 1973 began to stress the importance of public participation (Hallet, 1987).

Initiatives of this nature have been subsequently criticised for their pathological framework – that is, the assumption that the problems resulted from the failure of the individuals, families and communities involved (Stewart and Taylor, 1995) - and for their implicit emphasis on social control. Nevertheless, a shift in perspective had occurred:

> Even if these developments are interpreted as measures designed to give the appearance of control without the freedom that comes from real control, the idea that the customer knows what he (sic) needs better than the expert must be gaining ground as an idea, for the tactic of increased participation to be an appropriate one for authority to employ (Plant, Lesser and Taylor-Gooby, 1980, p. 105).

The findings contained in the various CDP outputs in the UK also supported the 'pathological' critique and led to the development of the radical 'structural' perspective. It is clearly no coincidence that these developments took place between 1968 and the early seventies: a period that witnessed the emergence of New Left ideas grounded in libertarian and feminist critiques of Marxism. This has been the dominant source of inspiration for radical community work and its promotion of participatory democracy (Fisher, 1993).

This was not, however, the only tradition to emerge at that time. Baldock (1974) distinguished between the professional and socialist schools and argued that while radicals promoted community action (as part of the class struggle for change) those from the professional school advocated the creation of mutual self-help organisations and a co-operative rather than conflictual approach to government agencies. The professional school was influenced by the experience of community organising as a strategy of social work in North America (Rothman, 1968) and community development initiatives in the British colonies (Mayo, 1994).   According to Mayo, the latter 'contained a basic commitment to self-help to promote development … [and] commitments to popular participation' (1994, p. 64). While the colonial initiatives were predominantly paternalistic they led to theoretical developments, such as the so-called 'non-directive' approach that influenced early community work practice in the UK (Batten, 1967; Popple, 1995). This position can also be seen in the promotion of local community involvement that occurred as part of the Australian 'postwar reconstruction' (Meekosha and Mowbray, 1995).

While the structural analysis continued to stress the economic source of the problems that were faced at the locality, the professional school, in contrast, saw the problem in more administrative terms. From this perspective the solution was to improve the delivery of services at the local level by making them more accountable. In the UK this approach was apparent in state backed efforts to promote participation in a range of public services such as planning, social welfare and housing. In 1968 the Seebohm Report, which advocated the adoption of community work methods by social workers, was published (HMSO, 1968a) and in the same year the Skeffington Report promoted increased (if limited) public participation in planning issues (HMSO, 1968b). These developments reflect and appear to build upon the American experience of community organisation and citizen participation in planning (Stenberg, 1972). It is interesting to note the lack of similar initiatives in the Australian context. This, it has been suggested derives from the strong centralist tendency in Australian politics from federation onwards (Colman, 1971). Payne, writing in 1973, for example, questioned whether Australian society was ready to accept citizen participation:

> Functions of government are carried out largely by State and Federal levels and while this does not necessarily preclude citizen involvement, it does not offer either the importance or the responsibility of participation at the local level (1973, p. 27).

Intriguingly, two years later - and in the same publication - citizen participation was described as a major element in the rhetoric of Australian education, social welfare and town planning (Hamilton-Smith, 1975). This development was clearly the result of the experimental program implemented by the Whitlam Labor Government (1972 – 75), including the establishment of the Department of Urban and Regional Development and the Australian Assistance Plan. These initiatives 'engaged problems such as urban decay' and 'supported innovative, participatory social programmes' (Meekosha and Mowbray, 1995).

These radical initiatives were largely suppressed by the subsequent Liberal and National Party governments, and are barely recognisable in more recent Labor projects:

> Where the 1970s federal Labor government's welfare reformers saw 'community' as a simile for working-class development and participation, neo-conservative post socialist Labor social engineers in state and federal governments from the 1980s increasingly saw 'community' as an avenue to cut back the welfare state and privatize social problems and provision (Meekosha and Mowbray, 1995).

Similar policies were adopted in the UK by the Thatcher administration. From this perspective, local problems experienced in disadvantaged neighbourhoods were the result of economic inefficiencies and dependency on welfare. Rolling back the state through the privatisation of public services were considered to be the best mechanism for ensuring efficiency and accountability. Community initiatives, especially in the field of welfare services such as care of the elderly and disabled, were privileged over public provision on economic grounds. Family, voluntary and 'community' care were perceived alongside the market as the natural mechanisms for welfare provision (George and Wilding, 1985). Similar arguments have been made about the promotion of community control of public housing and education in the UK (Wood, 1994 and Taylor, 2000a). In other words, it was the emphasis on market policies and consumerism that led directly to government support for 'user-run' services. Partnership with community involvement was the mechanism adopted to achieve this.

However, as Taylor reports, the neo-liberal project was also unsuccessful:

> … the policies of the 1980s, which sought to bring wealth into disadvantaged urban areas through the extension of consumer choice and the investment of financial capital to renew the physical fabric and economic infrastructure, failed to address the continued social, political and economic exclusion of local populations. Instead the gap between the rich and the poor increased dramatically, with poverty being increasingly concentrated in areas of social housing both in and on the edge of cities (Taylor, 2000a).

While economic rationalisation and the restructuring of welfare were clear motives for the promotion of 'community' participation in public services, a new and extremely influential theoretical base has emerged from the mid 1990s onwards, with slight variations in the UK, the United States and Australia. This base draws upon and amalgamates current ideas about social exclusion, social capital, capacity building

and communitarianism. While these terms have their own history and, to some degree, represent distinctive cultural traditions they have emerged as common ingredients in a post socialist, post neo-liberal melting pot. However, given the importance of these new concepts on the development of current policy debates around community renewal, it is important to review them as they form the conceptual context within which the current interest in participation in urban renewal has largely been framed.

Social Exclusion

The contemporary use of the term social exclusion has its origins in the policy work of the European Union (EU). A series of programs have been implemented by the EU since the 1970s: from the 'Anti-poverty Programme' (1975-80) to the establishment of an 'Observatory' on policies to combat social exclusion (Room, 1995). In the first instance the term poverty (defined along the lines proposed by Townsend (1979)) was adopted, but subsequent programs were more concerned with the integration of the 'least privileged' and the term social exclusion was introduced. While it should be noted that these distinctions may simply reflect the rejection of the term poverty by some member governments and the enthusiasm of others, particularly in France, to use the concept of social exclusion, the exchange of ideas between the two traditions has arguably resulted in some major conceptual developments.

The term social exclusion, while closely related to the notion of multiple deprivation, reflects a shift in analysis to the social and political implications of poverty and deprivation. It draws attention to the *processes* of marginalisation which prevent people from participating in their society. As Room explains, "poverty is primarily focussed upon distributional issues: the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or a household", while "social exclusion focuses primarily on relational issues, in other words, inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power" (Room, 1995 p. 5). The historical and ideological antecedents appear contested. Jordan, following Esping-Andersen (1990) suggests a conservative tradition that emphasised the need to regulate the poor and provide for them as a means of maintaining a system orientated around the creation and conservation of wealth (Jordan, 1996, p. 3). Byrne emphasises the significance of a more collectivist approach and maintains that this tradition is derived from a combination of 'Catholic 'solidarism', its mirror image in the solidarism of Jacobin republicanism, non-transformational socialism and Keynesianism' (1999, p. 33). Room, appears to sit on the fence:

> [I]t is the 'conservative vision of society (using that term in Esping-Andersen's sense) that inspires the continental concern with social exclusion. Or, insofar as the principal moral rights and obligations that shape social relations are those of an egalitarian citizenship, rather than traditional hierarchies, it is (again using the term in Esping-Andersen's sense) the social democratic vision that shapes the debate on social exclusion (Room, 1995, p. 6. Brackets in the original).

The divergence of perspective is not without significance. If it is the conservative perspective that inspires, then social exclusion becomes detachment from a moral order and 're-integration' is the prescription required to ensure 'social cohesion'. It is but a short step from this position to that of Murray's underclass thesis which ascribes exclusion to the moral deficiencies of lone mothers and derides their dependency on welfare (Murray, 1990). This perspective retains then a pathological

explanation of deprivation and prescribes reintegration into the labour market as its solution. These distinctions and nuances are carefully unpicked by Levitas (1996) who considers the usage of 'social exclusion' in EU policy documents and in the pre-election report of the British Labour Party's Commission on Social Justice (the Borrie Report - *Social Justice: National Strategies for Renewal* (CSJ/IPPR, 1994)). Levitas argues that there is very little difference in the analysis presented in both. The EU documents reviewed consistently equate social exclusion with unemployment (i.e. exclusion from the labour market) and ignore the problems of the low waged or un-paid workers (work done principally by women). While she concedes that the Borrie Report acknowledges the importance of unpaid work, again it is, she claims, paid work that is identified as the main means of integration (Levitas, 1996, p. 13).

There are clearly internal contradictions within this discourse. The tension rests largely on the emphasis given to citizen's rights (Byrne, 1997, p. 31) and the degree to which a government intervenes in the regulation of the economy. Byrne, for example suggests that Blair's 'Third Way' is characterised by his admission that 'the power of global markets is so great that no political system can stand against them' and that the best that can be achieved is tendential modification. This is contrasted with the French government's efforts to 'regulate economic systems so they do not challenge social goals' (Byrne, 1999, p. 34). It is, however, the Blair agenda on social exclusion that has been the most influential in the English speaking nations.

There has been an extensive output from the UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) since 1997, including a 'National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' backed up by 18 'Policy Action Team' reports. The term social exclusion has been used by New Labour to describe 'what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown' (SEU, 1997). The Action Plan published in January 2001 identifies a combination of factors resulting in exclusion:

> These have included economic change and the decline of old industries leading to mass joblessness, skills demands and entrepreneurship of new industries. At the same time, we have seen more family breakdown, the declining popularity of social housing and ever greater concentration of vulnerable people in poor neighbourhoods (SEU, 2001, p. 7).

The report also acknowledges that previous efforts at tackling the problems had been ineffective and had sometimes been 'part of the problem':

> Departments have worked at cross purposes on problems that required a joined up response. Too much reliance was put on short-term regeneration initiatives in a handful of areas and to little was done about the failure of mainstream public services in hundreds of neighbourhoods. There was little attention to the problem of worklessness, crime and poor education and health services. Government failed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people, or empower them to develop their own solutions. There was a lack of leadership, and a failure to spread what works and encourage participation (SEU, 2001, p. 7).

It is the latter point that has re-affirmed community participation as a central plank within the renewal agenda of the UK although this should be set against the apparently contradictory emphasis on having 'someone in charge at neighbourhood level' – part of the neighbourhood management proposals (Wood, 2000).

While there is no direct reference in the SEU documents to the need to create 'social cohesion' or generate 'social capital' there are clear links in the analysis and emerging agenda. The Borrie Report, for example, notes the economic value of social cohesion and lists it as one of the six objectives of financial security based upon tax and benefit systems and private provision (CSJ/IPPR, 1994, p. 225.). Levitas suggests, in her review, that the opposite of exclusion is presented not as inclusion but as 'integration' and that the policy documents are primarily concerned with social cohesion and economic efficiency (p. 11).

A major problem in reviewing the relationship between these terms is the lack of coherent analysis. Kearns and Forest (2000) have, for example, suggested that the term 'social cohesion' is often used in a nebulous way:

> … the impression is given that everyone knows what is being referred to. The usual premise is that social cohesion is a good thing, so it is conveniently assumed that further elaboration is unnecessary (p. 996).

Nevertheless, they list what they consider to be the constituent dimensions of social cohesion:

- Common values and a civic culture;
- Social order and social control;
- Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities;
- Social networks and social capital;
- Territorial belonging and identity.

Their account attempts to link the different domains of social cohesion and the 'various spatial scales' (neighbourhood, city, city-region, etc.) at which policies may be formulated but their conclusion is far from salutary:

> A city can consist of socially cohesive but increasingly divided neighbourhoods. The stronger the ties which bind local communities, the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. The point is that social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing. It can be about discrimination and exclusion and about a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority … (p. 1015).

A less critical analysis is presented by Miller (1999) from the UK Office for Public Management. Here, social exclusion, social inclusion and social cohesion are presented as an 'additive policy continuum'. It is suggested that policies which concern tackling social exclusion are focussed on alleviation and elimination. Those based on inclusion add 'the need to both satisfy the moral concerns of the rest of the population that people should not be excluded, and to ensure that the included do not suffer the 'spill-over' effects that can come from some aspects of exclusion such as crime or the costs of tackling exclusion'. Lastly, those focussed on cohesion add the further aspect of situating this 'within the context of a civil society whose cohesion is based on mutual links between people'. This is defined as 'social capital' (p. 8). However, Miller does not attempt to justify these assertions by reference to other sources or to any empirical work. He refers to 'the proponents of social cohesion' but does not say who they are. Rather he bases his subsequent discussion of social cohesion on a definition of 'social capital'. What emerges is a lack of clarity in the usage of all of these terms. While 'social exclusion' itself is not exempt from this

criticism it has at least been subject to a more rigorous academic critique than terms such as 'social inclusion' and 'social cohesion'.

Social Capital

The recent use of the term social capital has a much clearer theoretical basis. It stems primarily from the work of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993). Although, of course as with ideas about cohesion, they echo earlier themes such as Durkheim's (1949) consideration of social solidarity. Bourdieu's thesis is that social capital is:

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalisd relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (1997, p. 51).

That is, the individual or collective advantages that result from one's membership of a group. In Bourdieu's conceptualisation, social capital (like human and cultural capital) is 'fungible' and can be transformed into economic capital but ultimately derives from economic capital (1997, p. 53 – 4). From Coleman's perspective social capital is, in contrast, not completely fungible and not an attribute of individuals. Rather:

> Social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. It is not lodged either in the actors themselves or in physical implements of production (1988, p. 98).

This difference is captured by Winter when he notes, 'if Bourdieu is interested in how social capital works to generate economic capital for individuals in a range of social settings, Coleman is interested in how social capital works in family and community settings to lead to more or less human capital for individuals' (Winter, 2000, p. 26). This is an important distinction, which has largely been ignored in subsequent policy discussions.

In fact, policy interest in the concept of social capital in Australia appears to have been largely derived from Putman (1993) through his research on the relationship between civic tradition, democratic participation and associational activity in modern Italy. Putman, drawing on Coleman, defines social capital as 'trust, norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement' (1993, p. 167). However, while Coleman and Bourdieu have focussed on the outcomes for individuals (e.g. economic capital or human capital respectively), Putman has focussed on regional or national implications. From this perspective, membership of various voluntary and co-operative associations fosters participation and improves democratic institutions. Social capital therefore, it is maintained, facilitates co-ordination and co-operation and generates mutual benefits for participants. The corollary is that low levels of community participation or 'civic spirit' are associated with declining levels of trust in individuals and institutions (Hughes, Bellamy and Black, 1998).

This conceptualisation of social capital has had a considerable impact upon recent debates in America and Australia and (more recently) in the UK, and social policy has been increasingly pre-occupied with a perceived decline in volunteerism, the need for social entrepreneurialism and the return of mutual aid organisations and initiatives. Key to this policy is the promotion of community intervention to tackle the perceived failure of both the market and the state (Latham, 2000). This has resulted

in a renewed emphasis on participation as a vehicle for tackling social disadvantage not least in relation to community and urban regeneration.

In some senses those wishing to promote social capital advocate participation as both a means and an end. If people become more involved in groups within their local communities then this will increase levels of trust, promote shared norms and facilitate the networking that is required to promote collective action for mutual benefits. The emphasis on engaging community involvement in aspects of the renewal process is seen therefore as a mechanism to draw people into developing the kinds of relationships and social skills that proponents of social capital say is essential for building levels of trust and engagement. These are considered to be deficient in these kinds of areas.

Capacity Building

Capacity building, unlike community development, has also become associated with the concept of social capital. The roots of the notion of 'capacity building' are less clear. While the origins are thought to be in the United States it application is now fairly ubiquitous. It began to be used in the United Kingdom in the mid 1990s and was popularised by the publication of Skinner's *Building Community Strengths* report (1997). Skinner and others have stressed the difference between capacity building and community development while others have either conflated the terms or seen 'community capacity' as the objective of community development or 'capacity' as a prerequisite of community development. A Canadian *Community Development Handbook*, for example, asserts that 'community development *requires* and *helps to build* community capacity to address issues and to take advantage of opportunities, to find common ground and to balance competing interests' (Frank and Smith, 1999, emphasis added). This seems to imply a cyclical process. Community development is dependent upon a certain level of capacity within the community and can develop this capacity further. But the message is confused. Community development is described as 'a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems'. Through this process, it is suggested, communities:

- Become more responsive;
- Organize and plan together;
- Develop healthy options;
- Empower themselves;
- Reduce ignorance poverty and suffering;
- Create employment and economic opportunities;
- Achieve social, economic, cultural and environmental goals.

Subsequent sections of the handbook suggest, '… it takes capacity to build capacity, and it takes a well-thought-out process to start both capacity building and community development'. Capacity is described as the 'ways and means needed to do what has to be done'. It is suggested that this is more than 'simply skills, people and plans' and includes the following components:

- People who are willing to be involved;
- Skills, knowledge and abilities;
- Wellness and community health;
- Ability to identify and access opportunities;
- Motivation and the wherewithal to carry out initiatives;

- Infrastructure, supportive institutions and physical resources;
- Leadership and the structures needed for participation;
- Economic and financial resources;
- Enabling policies and systems.

Although the authors are at pains to suggest that the terms denote different things, it is apparent that they are both broad enough to encompass one another. Community development has always been about 'involving people', 'facilitating skills', 'enabling' and 'empowerment' (see Ife, 1995) so how does community capacity building differ?

Arguably the significant factor is the emphasis on the need to create sustainablity (see below). Community development is normally considered to require a long-term input whereas capacity building is often described as a relatively short-term intervention: one that is required in order to get the local people 'up-to-speed' so that they can participate in the renewal process and/or take over at the end of the program.

Communitarianism

Contemporary accounts of communitarianism have emerged from the US and while they were popularized by Etzioni (1993) they draw upon earlier political theories (Taylor, 1989).

Communitarianism seeks to balance out the excesses of liberal individualism by also stressing the importance of reciprocity and 'good neighbourliness'. Its main tenet is that individuals are embedded in communal relationships and may only flourish within 'rich forms of common life' (Henderson and Salmon, 1998). At this level the theory is purportedly descriptive but Etzioni's work is characterised by a strong emphasis on morality and on the need for individuals to exercise responsibility. From this perspective 'rights' should be balanced with 'duties' and the flavour is increasingly normative.

Etzioni is critical of state welfare liberalism because of its rejection of 'traditional constraints' but he is equally critical of more recent free-marketism for encouraging competition and greed (1993). The solution for Communitarians is to inculcate the general population with a sense of responsibility for themselves, their families and the communities to which they belong. This may, to some extent explain its popularity on both the left and the right particularly at a time when government spending is of equal concern to both. While the concern with morality is conservative the emphasis on mutuality has appealed to progressive Laborites. Latham (1998), for example reflects the communitarian agenda in his recent book *Civilising Global Capital*:

> Self government helps to build the skills and practice of social participation and commonality. It forces citizens to take and manage risks in the realisation of their needs and interests. It engages them in the possibilities of co-operation – trusting in others to meet common needs; and working collectively towards the satisfaction of mutual interests (1998, p. 302).

Etzioni's examples of communitarian 'action' include voluntary 'medical' activities such as America's Emergency Medical Technicians but there is a particular interest in those groups that are involved in crime prevention from the 'Guardian Angels' of New York to a multiplicity of neighbourhood watch groups. Some have claimed however, that there is nothing very distinctive about the examples given. Henderson

and Salmon have commented, for example, 'some of the examples of locally-based activity in [the UK] had their origins in community development of the 1960s and 70s. They are now being rebaptised into the communitarian movement' (1998, p. 26). Perhaps more revealing is their careful distinction between communtarianism and community development:

- Community development sets its work within a wider socio-economic context: communitarianism pays little attention to the way in which communities – like people – are also shaped by external forces;
- Community development faces up to the questions of power and recognises the relative powerlessness of marginalised groups: commitarianism is strangely silent on the subject, and has little experience of working with excluded minorities;
- Community development sees the need for structural and institutional changes which are beyond the scope of local action: communitarianism is silent about the need for wider changes and tends to uphold the *status quo;*
- Community development appreciates the importance of the issues of class, race and gender though – in practice – it has sometimes been tentative in its work around race and gender. Communitarianism shows little interest in these themes, and is particularly vulnerable on the rights of women;
- Community development takes account of conflicts within neighborhoods and between different factions within groups: communitarianism has an idealized view of communities;
- Community development has a long record of being radically progressive and democratic: communitarianism's inclination is to be conservative and authoritarian (Henderson and Salmon, 1998. p. 47 – 48).

These distinctions are important and reflect the way in which recent community based policy is based more upon a conservative reaction to the market and the state than upon a radical questioning of the current power structures.

Towards a new consensus on participation

A new consensus appears to be emerging from these disparate sources. At its root is the assertion that neither the state nor the market can provide the solution for disadvantaged communities without the active engagement of local people. Community participation is therefore cast as an essential if not central element in the process of renewal and as an end in itself. A fundamental tenet of this new consensus is that renewal work is unsustainable unless the community becomes actively engaged in ongoing arrangements. This, in large part has been stimulated by the social exclusion, social capital and social cohesion debates and led in turn to a renewed emphasis on community development and the emergence of notions like capacity building. As the following sections examining the UK experience and the review of the Australian experience contained in the next chapter show there has been a degree of convergence of theory and practice in this area. Theoretical ideas about exclusion and social capital have filtered down to policy makers and practitioners while, similar perspectives have emerged from ongoing practice experience and longer traditions of community development.
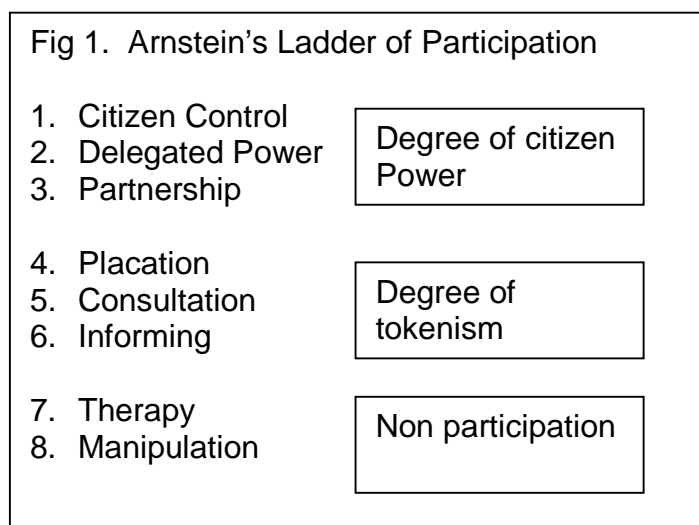
Despite, however, the almost ubiquitous call for community participation the term participation is frequently undefined or used uncritically with no recognition of the contested nature of the structures and processes that have been used by those wishing to promote the activity. This begs the question: 'what is meant by participation?'

Understanding participation

Whatever the motive or historical source, the idea of participation is not straightforward. Discussions about the meaning and usage of the term often draw upon Sherry Arnstein's hierarchical ladder developed in 1969 (see Fig. 1). Top-down approaches are located at the bottom of the ladder and deemed to be 'non-participation'. The middle rungs show increasing levels of citizen engagement but are essentially viewed as tokenistic and it is only at the upper end of the hierarchy that a shift in power relations is perceived. For Arnstein, citizen participation is predicated on:

> The redistribution of power that enables have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future (1969, p. 216).

Fig 1. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

1. Citizen Control 2. Delegated Power 3. Partnership	Degree of citizen Power
4. Placation 5. Consultation 6. Informing	Degree of tokenism
7. Therapy 8. Manipulation	Non participation

Arnstien was writing from a planning perspective but the model has been applied and adapted to various situations including personal social services (Benn, 1981 and Hallet, 1987), housing management (Ward, 1974 and Duncan and Halsall, 1994), regeneration (Stewart and Taylor, 1995 and DETR, 1997) and public services generally (Wilcox, 1994).

The idea, in brief, is that there is a scale of involvement from providing participants with information about their services, for example, to a level where they have direct control over decisions and outcomes. At the lowest point the level of influence is minimal, if present at all. At the upper end participants have high levels of influence. This model is, therefore, based upon the degree of participant power. As such, it has much in common with elements of social exclusion in its focus on power and economic and political exclusion.

However, these sorts of models are in some respects confusing because they conflate power with process (Cooper and Hawtin, 1998). So, for example, consultation is a process which may permit high degrees of influence if the views received are noted and acted upon, whereas 'delegated power' may be severely circumscribed. Delegating the responsibility to decide how a small budget is spent may, by way of illustration, be less empowering than giving residents influence over the way the budget is set. In other words the form of participation does not necessarily determine the final level of influence and there are a whole set of external

factors that may place a restriction on the outcome. The increased centralisation of fiscal control which occurred in the UK during the 1980s, for example, made local power struggles redundant (Wood, 1994).

The model also assumes that power is a finite resource that lies with one party or another and involves a simple contest of strength. In many situations this is questionable. Richardson claims, for example, that an increase in power to citizens does not automatically result in a loss in power to the elite:

> ... the view that participation acts to benefit one group at the expense of the other, on the assumption that their interests are wholly conflicting misses the extent to which there are common aims between them (Richardson, 1983, p. 94).

A similar perspective is taken by Croft and Beresford (1992) who argue that power is not a zero-sum game and by Holmes (1992) who maintains that empowerment is a positive sum experience allowing people to take action. All of these positions echo the theoretical perspective of Foucault who maintained that there is opportunity for any actor to acquire power by engaging in discourse about what can or cannot be done (1980).

Richardson, interestingly, plays down the aspect of power in his definition of participation. He claims, for example, that:

> … the key dimension for the definition of participation should not concern power at all; it is the existence of access, and therefore interaction, between the groups involved (1983, p. 27)

In other words, Richardson privileges process over power – the power implications can only be deduced after decisions have been made. Assertions about power, from this perspective should not be framed as part of the definition of participation but rather as 'hypotheses about its results' (1983, p. 27). Cooper and Hawtin (1998) criticise this position. While they acknowledge that access to the decision making process is important, as it provides participants with the contacts they need, it is inadequate if they are negotiating from a position of inequality with, *inter alia* disproportionately less access to knowledge, skills and resources.

Ladders of participation are also criticised by Cairncross *et al* (1997) who suggest that it is impossible to construct a hierarchy because the processes vary on more than one dimension. Writing from the perspective of tenant participation in public housing management in the UK, they overcome this problem by developing three types of landlord-tenant interaction. This is based upon structures or methods (from letter writing to tenant representation); processes (from providing information to giving control); and objectives. The list of objectives is drawn from empirical work with local politicians, housing managers and tenants in the UK, as follows:

- Community development;
- Better housing and housing management;
- More choice and power to tenants;
- Tenant satisfaction;
- Helping [local political representatives] or committee members.

From these three dimensions Cairncross *et al* construct three ideal types of participation; namely, traditionalist, consumerist and citizenship models.

- The traditionalist approach is described as an attempt to 'retain existing power relationships as much as possible in a changing situation' while the other two are based upon newer ideological positions.

- The consumerist model is influenced by the 'values and methods of the market'. Rented housing is, from this perspective, treated as a tradeable commodity which is 'not the subject of political debate or collective action'. Cairncross *et al* explore the extent to which this approach empowers tenants in relation to their landlords. They note how advocates of this approach stress 'consumer sovereignty' but question the degree to which tenants have a choice and therefore the extent to which a free market exists.

- The citizenship approach is characterised by the engagement of the landlord in dialogue with tenants' representatives. While the consumerist model stresses an individual relationship with the tenant as consumer, the citizenship approach stresses the importance of tenants acting collectively as well as individually. In other words, the model is largely determined by the context.

This approach is clearly more sophisticated but, while it recognises the influence of the political allegiances and ideologies of the various actors involved, it has been criticised by Cooper and Hawtin (1998) for lacking an historical perspective and failing to recognise the importance of the struggle of tenants in the development of tenant participation arrangements. It does, however, address the key questions of who participates, in what process.

Participation in Renewal: The UK experience

The current emphasis on community participation in renewal has emerged directly from the interplay and convergence of the ideological perspectives discussed above. There has been what might be described as a dramatic rediscovery of the themes of community involvement and service co-ordination so prevalent in the late 1960s and early 1970s although the terminology has shifted to that of partnerships, capacity building and social capital. This development can be seen in a wide range of developed countries (Alterman and Cars, 1991, Henderson, 1997) but it is particularly apparent in the Australian and UK experience. However, while the UK regeneration programs, beginning in the early 1990s, have been subject to considerable analysis, the more recent Australian examples have not, to date, been considered in this detail. An omission that will, to some degree, be remedied by this current project.

Community participation is now an accepted orthodoxy in UK regeneration initiatives. It is claimed for example that:

- Communities have a fresh perspective, and can often see the problems in new ways;
- Community involvement helps to deliver programmes which more accurately target local needs;
- The resulting projects are more acceptable to the local community;
- Programme outputs which have been designed with input from local residents are likely to last longer because communities feel ownership of them;
- The constructive involvement of communities in urban regeneration helps to build local organisational skills, making it easier to develop strong successor organisations (JRF, 1999, p. 2).

Despite the universal endorsement, however, most independent critiques of the regeneration process have questioned the extent to which local people have genuinely been involved. It was consistently asserted that involvement was inadequately funded and that unrealistic time-scales militated against local participation (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Hastings *et al*, 1996; Geddes, 1997).

Furthermore, Wood (2000) has argued that programs often fail to recognise the previous life experiences that cause disaffection, on the one hand, and a range of practical barriers that 'prevent local people from getting involved or obfuscate those that do', on the other (p. 14.). It is claimed, for example, that 'life experiences of residents on low incomes in marginalised localities reinforce low self-opinions and lead to feelings of inferiority and powerlessness' (p. 14.). This is attributed in part to the processes which stigmatise people because they live in areas with a poor reputation. The psycho-social effects of the feelings of failure that result from this experience, it has been claimed, 'invariably lead to apathy, withdrawal, depression and aggression' (Wilkinson, 1994).

It is the consensus of a growing body of UK research that considerable amounts of time and resources are needed to allow participants to develop skills and gain the confidence that they require to participate in renewal initiatives. There is also considerable stress on the importance of involving local people at the outset: at the planning rather than the implementation stage. If communities are excluded at the beginning of regeneration programs then, it is argued, there is a serious danger that the wrong issues will be prioritised and resources mis-directed or wasted (Duncan and Thomas, 2000). This has prompted commentators to point back to the lessons learned by earlier community development approaches, which started by working with people to identify what they believe to be the problems or issues that need tackling (Wood, 2000).

Beyond this general point, it is also suggested that a lack of attention to principles of equal opportunities may further alienate many. This may, for example, have to do with the inaccessible timing and location of consultation meetings but also concerns the formality of the proceedings and the 'exclusive' nature of the language used. A series of four interrelated neighbourhood studies in public housing estates undergoing renewal conducted between 1996 and 2000 highlighted problems associated with representative structures:

- people were suspicious of them;
- some felt excluded from forums – said to be dominated by cliques;
- there was little knowledge about community representatives;
- there was little experience of consultation by the representatives with the wider community (Forrest and Kearns, 1999).

The conclusion drawn from this body of research is that there is a fundamental imbalance in power and 'resources and the rules of the game' are controlled by the authorities (Taylor, 2000b). In particular this can lead to the exclusion of women and non-white residents (Brownill and Darke, 1998).

It has also been demonstrated that the short-term nature of many regeneration initiatives has significantly restricted opportunities for participation. This often results from the political imperative to 'do something quickly'. UK urban regeneration programs in the 1990s unrealistically expected partnerships to be formed, communities to be involved and bids to be drawn up in a matter of weeks (Duncan and Thomas, 2000).

Community development emerges as the most significant factor in ensuring the genuine involvement of the community in regeneration, with the primary tasks for workers in the regeneration process described as working with the community to:

> … identify priorities, develop a community vision or plan, establish consultative and participatory structures and implement a comprehensive programme of support and resources for community-based activity and projects through a capacity building plan (Duncan and Thomas, 2000, p. 29).

This is a long-term process, however, that requires:

- considerable experience of facilitating group development;
- a strong commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice;
- high levels of inter-personal skills;
- an ability to support and encourage learning;
- a good understanding of local government policy and practice;
- a keen political awareness (Wood, 2000).

Beyond the strident restatement of community work principles, training is also identified as central to the process of involving communities in regeneration. Interestingly, this is often what is meant by 'capacity building'. However, a strong message emerging from these studies should not be assumed that 'the skill deficit' lies solely within communities rather than their partner institutions (Taylor, 2000a). There is, on the contrary, considerable evidence that training is required for regeneration professionals to facilitate a change in organisational culture and management style from a 'we know best culture to one that genuinely accepts the need to listen' (Wood, 2000, p. 17).

Training for community participants needs to be delivered sensitively. Henderson and Mayo (1998), for example, refer to the need for provision to be rooted in the adult education tradition, where opportunities to learn start from a community's definition of their needs and where space is allowed for 'critical reflection and political education for citizenship'. They also note the lack of provision targeted at oppressed groups such as women, disabled people and ethnic minorities.

Sustainability

Debates about the sustainability of renewal initiatives have emerged as a direct result of the failure of past initiatives in the UK. This has been particularly apparent where the same neighbourhood has been the subject of special intervention on numerous occasions over a period of twenty to thirty years. Fordham comments, for example, 'there is overwhelming evidence that earlier programmes were unable to stimulate regeneration on a scale or with sufficient durability to make further special funding unnecessary' (1995, p. 3).

Considerable attention has subsequently been given to ways of ensuring that the effects of regeneration initiatives continue to be felt after the special funding has come to an end. This led to a focus on the need for better resident participation, the development of 'exit strategies' at the end of programs and consideration of what might constitute an optimum length for interventions.

From a sustainability perspective, local participation is presented as a mechanism for ongoing activity, once the funding has run out. For many this was perceived as the rationale for 'capacity building' (Fordham, 1995). That is, communities need to be strengthened so they can continue with the 'good work' at the end of the program. There are, however, few examples of resident owned and controlled bodies taking over on completion (demonstrated by the following discussion of exit strategies). Rather, 'participation' is used euphemistically to describe the 'community based' initiatives that follow the completion of a regeneration program. Direct community ownership and control initiatives are limited to Tenant Management Organisations (see below). This distinction between physical renewal, which is largely driven by the asset management needs of housing authorities, and the community renewal activities focusing on social and economic initiatives is also a central feature of the Australian renewal experience.

The development of exit strategies was identified as a crucial element of maintaining the progress of regeneration strategies in the mid 1980s. In his review of the available examples, Fordham identified six distinct variations:

- Project-driven: a variety of projects address a variety of needs, and the exit strategy is principally at the project level, the goal being to develop [a portfolio of long-term projects to leave behind];
- Flagship projects: a more limited version of the above, which concentrates on a few key strategic activities, normally with an institutional focus …;
- Successor organisations: a series of institutional successors, reflecting different aspects of [the regeneration agencies'] work;
- Single successor body: … suggests the need for a *permanent* (or at least very long-term) focus to regeneration activities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- Mainstream organisation driven: a concentration on creating foster homes in 'permanent' local institutions, allied with attempts to 'sensitise' mainstream institutions to the needs of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and clients;
- Baton change: in which one short-life institution's exit is to transfer responsibility to another short-life regeneration agency (Fordham, 1995, p. 19-20).

It should be noted, however, that the implicit assumption in each is the 'need to maintain an area based regeneration focus' beyond the initial program (Fordham, 1995, p. 20). Fordham also revealed a widespread consensus among regeneration professionals of the need to engage in collaborative, joint venture project development with agencies that are likely to be around in the longer-term (p. 35).

So far as the optimum length is concerned, it is now commonly suggested that programs such as the UK's City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget initiatives, which received funding for 5 and 7 years respectively, were too short. While there is an argument for short-term 'pump priming' investment to act as a catalyst which aims to overcome specific difficulties which prevent so-called normal processes which would otherwise be maintained through mainstream services (DOE, 1994), this perspective fails to recognise the often entrenched nature of social disadvantage present within these localities. The UK's SEU has set a 10 to 20 year time frame for the renewal of their worst estates but implementation would either entail cross-party support or the continuation of the current administration for that period. The chances of long term bi-partisan political support for such approaches is not great.

Fordham concludes his review by suggesting that the unanimity which existed among regeneration professionals about the need for successor organisations raises

questions about the 'short-life' nature of these initiatives and reinforces the claim that there are 'no quick-fixes'.

The main problem with the use of the term 'sustainability' is that it assumes that there have been significant gains from regeneration that can be maintained. However, the evidence is that the gains have been very limited and are, if anything, restricted to minimising the effects of structural economic decline – local communities were 'swimming against the tide' (Power and Tunstall, 1995). As Carley and Kirk suggest, '[the] failure to achieve sustainability may derive in part from a misassumption that deep-seated urban problems can be resolved by temporary or 'catalyst' initiatives' (1998, p. 2.). In fact, any clear understanding of what the sustainability of regeneration initiatives might mean is complicated by a lack of clarity over what the specific objectives of programs are and the lack of a baseline against which any developments could be compared (Fordham, 1995, p. 4.). Part of this confusion rests on conflicting explanations of the underlying causes to disadvantage discussed above. If the structural analysis is correct then the sustainability of local initiatives is essentially derived from the wider economic context.

A more recent consideration of 'sustainability' in regeneration identifies the following requirements to overcome persistent *failures of integration*:

- integrate short-term initiatives with long term vision on the future role of our cities, and an investment framework to support that vision;
- evolve strategies for the sustainable regional development which support city and local regeneration initiatives, and link cities and their hinterlands in a beneficial way;
- link physical development to economic and social regeneration;
- link policy streams, regionally and in local government, such as the location of economic activity, education and vocational training and transport, to derive maximum benefit from inward investment;
- promote both leadership at the city level and devise means for genuine participation of all citizens in sustainable urban development, thus linking 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' in a new way which contributes to governance in the next century (Carley and Kirk, 1998, p. v.).

There is, therefore, a clear implication that sustainable urban renewal requires active citizen participation in an innovative form of local structures of governance of some kind.

Neighbourhood management

Perhaps one of the most innovative ideas to have emerged from the UK experience is the proposal to develop neighbourhood management initiatives. The Social Exclusion Unit's Priority Action Team 4 (Neighbourhood Management) report distils four main ingredients:

- someone in charge at neighbourhood level;
- re-organised public services as the main instrument of renewal;
- maximum involvement from communities and voluntary and private organisations;
- targeted assistance from government (Taylor, 2000b).

In a review of existing models of neighbourhood management, Taylor identifies two approaches: those that are service led or top-down, such as area co-ordination initiatives which 'join up' services at a local level, and those that are community-led or bottom-up. Examples of the latter include Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) and the more recent development of Resident Services Organisations (Taylor, 2000b).

Service-led models, such as area co-ordination initiatives are characterised by the 'joining-up' of council services at a neighbourhood level. In this approach, multi-disciplinary teams report to community forums or local area committees comprising local councillors (JRF, 2000). This model connects closely with the notion of 'whole of government'-based place management approaches currently prevalent in Australia.

Community-led initiatives, however, present much greater possibilities for community control. There are two established forms of TMOs: Tenant Management Co-operatives (TMCs) and Estate Management Boards (EMBs). TMCs are independent bodies and are controlled by tenants. Under a management agreement with the council they take on responsibility for a range of functions. They are allocated a budget to fulfil this role. They often employ their own staff but may choose to undertake these roles themselves. TMCs may be governed by a committee elected from the membership but smaller co-ops take all decisions to general meetings. This is only possible, however, because co-ops rarely take on responsibility for more than 100 properties. EMBs are similar to TMCs but manage larger estates. Tenants on an estate may become members of a registered association. Elected representatives from this association form a majority on a board which normally also includes local councilors and co-optees. Although general meetings are held for members of the association decisions are made by the board (Phillips, 1992; Scott *et al*, 1994; Wood, 1994 and 1996).

TMOs have been very successful and represent one of the few initiatives to have continued over a long period of time. Arguably, this success stems from the tangible benefits of housing improvements. For example, while local economic development initiatives are clearly critical, in many cases the impacts of such programs are less apparent at the neighbourhood level where housing issues tend to dominate (Maclennan, 2000). TMOs such as the Bloomsbury EMB have begun to tackle economic issues by establishing a credit union, a community café and a Local Exchange Trading Scheme (Taylor, 2000b).

The principles contained within TMO arrangements have also been extended to other services in Estate Agreements (although not at such a high level of participation). These initiatives represent something of a halfway house between service-led and community-led initiatives. An Estate Agreement adopted on an estate in York, for example, includes 'separate service-level agreements for community policing, street and environmental cleaning, jobs and training, leisure services, social services, housing, a dog warden service, the local adventure playground and the community education service' (JRF, 1998).

Experience suggests, however, that the best TMOs have emerged after careful and sustained periods of community development work where local people have been in charge of the process from the earliest possible stages. This is important because, as Taylor notes:

Neighbourhood Management is not simply to address the immediate problems that governments and communities identify, important though this is. It is: to ensure the economic, social and political inclusion of disadvantaged areas and their residents, so that they have access to their full rights as citizens (Taylor, 2000b, p. 13.).

The Australian experience

There is no comparable body of literature or practice experience in Australia on resident participation in neighbourhood regeneration activity (see Darcy, Randolph and Stringfellow (2000) for a review of current literature of social problems and policy responses on larger public housing estates). This is not entirely surprising given the relatively new emphasis placed on this aspect of renewal policy by state housing authorities. Nevertheless, there is substantial experience in community development initiatives in disadvantaged areas going back to the 1970s and a body of literature that has developed from this. Much of this appears to be within the social policy and social work fields rather than in housing (for example, see Sarkissian, *et al,*1986 and Sarkissian and Walsh, 1994).

But it is also the case that much valuable past experience has simply been lost as a result of a longstanding lack of evaluative research to learn the lessons and write them down. Given the marginal nature of many local community development initiatives and the short-term nature of their funding, few examples of good practice have been produced. Consequently, dissemination of the lessons of earlier initiatives, and the role played by resident participation, has been limited.

Nevertheless, an emerging objective for most of the major public housing estate renewal programs currently being implemented in Australia is to strengthen communities, often within the context of overt statements about community participation. While much of the effective investment in these disadvantaged estates has been to improve asset performance or to increase social mix and diversity through stock management, there has nevertheless been a distinctive move towards increased levels of tenant and resident involvement in the renewal process. This concern has been echoed in wider initiatives to increase citizen participation in government activity (NSW Cabinet Office, 1998).

More recent initiatives have also included an active community building element to the policy package, with social and employment programs complementing physical renewal activity. These also imply an increased level of resident activity and engagement. But it is not at all clear whether such activities have been successful or have added value to the physical investment that has taken place, or if they in reality amounted to much more than good examples of consultation, rather than effective participation. Yet these non-shelter outcomes have become core objectives of such initiatives.

For example, the New South Wales Department of Housing (DOH) has a series of tenant based participation strategies, including Neighbourhood Advisory Boards, the Housing Community Assistance Program and the Tenant and Community Initiatives Program, all of which contribute to developing tenant involvement in housing decisions. However, they do not involve direct tenant participation in decision making or resource allocation and in some cases may actually marginalise tenants as there is no devolution of power or resources to tenants. In South Australia, intensive resident consultation and the establishment of resident reference groups in some urban renewal programs have clearly had benefits in terms of community

acceptance of redevelopment programs (Randolph and Judd, 2000). Again, whether these can be seen as examples of active participation is another matter.

Moreover, where these policies have been implemented there has been little systematic review of best practice, particularly in respect to what methods can be used to effectively involve tenants in renewal activities, as well as the support and training implications of bringing tenants into the decision making process. The best practice lessons about resident participation in Australia still remain diffused and largely unshared. In addition, few attempts have been made to measure the effectiveness of resident participation in delivering better community outcomes for residents in disadvantaged areas or to evaluate which approaches to participation seem to work best.

One of the few major evaluations to consider the role of tenant participation in urban renewal has been the study of the NSW Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), which was the major policy initiative of the NSW DOH between 1995 and 1999, conducted by Randolph *et al* (2001). The study concluded that consultation was considered critical to the success of the NIP by both stakeholders and tenants, and was one of the major innovations in housing management approach that the NIP help introduce in NSW. Nevertheless, in practice the participation strategies on the NIP estates were often criticised by non-DOH stakeholders as being tokenistic and of not progressing much beyond providing avenues for telling tenants about the process or only involving them in limited decisions about their own homes or neighbourhood activities largely unrelated to the actual physical renewal work. In most cases, tenants played little or no role in planning or determining priorities. They were also not involved in the initial planning phases, but only brought into the picture after the key decisions had been made. For their part, tenants regarded the NIP as having been responsible the development of much more active consultation processes on their estates. This was seen as a significant positive development. But again, it was also felt that the level of consultation declined after an initial high profile phase had passed, was felt to be tokenistic and did not involve the tenants on real choices about the estate. It was also evident that the level of involvement of tenants on the NIP process was highly variable, with a relatively small core of active tenants (see above).

In general, therefore, it did not appear that the level of participation in the NIP, *as a whole*, progressed much beyond the fifth level of Arnstien's ladder. The report also noted the need for skills development among tenants *and* staff, together with resourcing to achieve the necessary capacity building to allow this to be achieved. So the practice of participation developed during the implementation of the NIP in NSW had clear limits, despite it being a significant step forward for the DoH itself. The issue of participation is much more prominent in the Community Renewal Strategy (CRS) that has replaced the NIP in NSW. Whether the level of tenant participation under the CRS initiative has progressed remains to be seen (NSWDOH, 2001).

The current research project aims to address the lack of systematic information on the nature and role of participation in urban renewal programs in Australia. In doing so, it will shed light on the extent to which such strategies have been successful in effectively drawing residents into the process, and the aims and objectives for pursuing such initiatives among those involved. At this point, it is appropriate to review the range of policy and practice that have been adopted on tenant/resident participation in urban renewal initiatives across Australia.

CHAPTER 3: POLICY CONTEXT

State and Federal administrations have become increasingly aware of the problems associated with the concentration of disadvantaged households in particular neighbourhoods. This has stemmed from a growing body of research aimed at identifying 'communities in need' (Gregory and Hunter, 1995; NIEIR, 1999; Vinson, 1999) and an appreciation of the inter-connectedness of the problems experienced by residents in these neighbourhoods.

Gibson and Cameron (2001) document six types of intervention: conventional economic development, local economic development, integrated community and economic development, community development, challenging stereotypes and area improvement. They argue that neighbourhood renewal initiatives have varied in their relative emphases on these six types.

An initial review of State and Commonwealth policy drawn from a range of documents and reports gives a clear indication of the current emphasis on participation in community renewal. This applies equally to interventions in urban, rural and regional contexts. The amount of activity has varied by state, as has the nature an initial impetus for the intervention. For example, in Queensland, the current Community Renewal Program is the responsibility of the Housing Department but was introduced as a component of the State's crime prevention strategy. The lead for renewal initiatives may be taken by different departments or a central unit. While there is a growing emphasis on 'whole of government' responses there has been varying degrees of inter-departmental co-ordination. However, because of the emphasis on the concentration of problems in predominently public housing neighbourhoods much of the activity has been led by housing departments.

The strategies employed by housing departments have been very diverse ranging from asset-based approaches involving disposal, sales and physical improvements to the housing stock, through alternative forms of housing management to community development and various attempts at 'whole of government' approaches. The relative emphasis placed on these different elements has varied; some have been more asset-based and others more community or socially oriented. The trend both here and overseas has been towards holistic solutions with a greater emphasis on cross-departmental collaboration (Altermann, 1995; Spiller Gibbin Swan, 2000; and Randolph and Judd, 2000).

In predominantly asset-based approaches the focus has been on investment in the physical infrastructure – housing improvements and environmental work often rectifying design defects and addressing safety and security issues. A major strand in this approach has been the re-modeling of estates through demolition, sales and redevelopment. This has often been combined with the development of more localised management structures which aim to be more responsive to the local situation and therefore reduce turnover and improve arrears controls. These improvements are also aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour (Randolph and Judd, 2000).

Renewal initiatives with more of an emphasis on social and community factors have concentrated on the development of partnerships with local tenants and other government and non-government service providers.

However, there is a danger in simply associating public housing estates/ neighbourhoods with disadvantage. Similar problems are clearly apparent in predominantly private (rented and owner-occupied) neighbourhoods (Randolph, 2000). Consequently, while the following review focuses on the initiatives of the State and Territory housing authorities, reference is also made to other State and Commonwealth initiatives that operate alongside the housing programs.

The following review is necessarily constrained by the documentation that the project team were able to collect form state housing authorities in the time available. The coverage has been variable, with some states able to provide a greater range of material than others. This is reflected in the review that follows. It is anticipated that further details will be made available over the course of the project.

ACT

There is little reference to renewal activities in the Australian Capital Territory and limited information about participation initiatives. It is clear that the Territory supports community development interventions: the Annual Report of the Department for Urban Services (DUS) refers to "service purchasing arrangements with community organizations for community development activities, community consultations and advisory services related to housing matters". And, as recent announcements illustrate, community consultation has been adopted in the establishment of a 'Multi-Unit Property Plan' for the upgrade, sale and master planning of large multi-complexes. The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) announces the Territory's intention to 'reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through forging closer relationships with tenant and community groups'.

New South Wales

There has been a notable upsurge in renewal activity in NSW since the early 1990s on public housing estates. This followed from the development of new 'service delivery structures' arising from the 'Mant Inquiry' in 1992. Mant, for example, proposed increasing consultation with tenants and establishing more accessible client service teams at a local level (1992). In a subsequent report on the future of the Tenant Participation Program, Mant (1994) argued that the previous structure of tenant participation had been defective. It was, he claimed, too highly structured, dependent upon representative structures "without a system of universal tenant suffrage" and orientated to a combative rather than co-operative approach. He argued that these arrangements would, in any case, need to be adapted to the new approach to housing management that was being implemented. The tenant participation program, introduced in 1986, consisted of a representative structure with regional and State Public Tenants' Advisory Councils. There was a two way process of communication with the regional council acting as an intermediary between the State Council and local tenants groups. While the structure had been adjusted in 1989 by strengthening the role of the regional Councils, Mant maintained that there should be a greater focus on the local level, allowing tenants' groups/councils to "become involved in localised area planning" (1994, p. 6).

These recommendations were picked up in the 1995 Housing Policy Green Paper of the newly elected Carr Labor Administration and lead to the establishment of 26 Neighbourhood Advisory Boards (NABs) by 1997. The aim was to ensure that "tenants and agencies work in partnership to improve conditions on those estates and guide neighbourhood improvement projects" (NSWDOH, 1998, p. 35). Some of these NABs implemented precinct level representation in an effort to ensure wider tenant input into decision making. NABs involve representation from the Department

of Housing, tenants representatives and other agencies and stakeholders including Department of Community Services, Police and the Health Department.

At the same time a series of complementary and overlapping initiatives were emerging within housing and across other State departments.

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) was implemented on 13 estates between 1994 and 1999. This aimed to rejuvenate the Department's most 'run down and difficult to live in estates' by encouraging an integrated approach to area regeneration (Randolph *et al*, 2001). By adopting such an approach it was anticipated that the program would deal with "larger scale problems that isolated upgrades and piecemeal approaches had not otherwise solved" (Randolph *et al,* 2001). The *NIP Framework Document* (NSWDOH, 1996) stressed the primacy of providing residents with an opportunity to fully participate in their communities and in the management of their housing. In NIP estates the NAB's have an important liaising role between the Department of Housing, tenants and other agencies.

The Department's current Community Renewal Strategy (CRS) builds on the NIP experience. It recognises that the emphasis on physical solutions in earlier projects is not "necessarily appropriate' and emphasises the importance of integrating employment and community development initiatives" (NSWDOH, 1999 p. 1). The need for increased tenant involvement and participation has been accepted and current priorities include:

- Involving tenants in decisions affecting the management of the estates;
- Adopting a flexible and localised approach to tenant consultation and involvement in decision making processes;
- Building tenants' skills to enable them to contribute more effectively to their community (NSWDOH, 2001).

A major policy initiative to support the development of tenant participation in housing management (although not specifically targeted at renewal activity) is the Tenant and Communities Initiatives Program (TCIP) which was developed by the Department of Housing and the (then) Office of Housing Policy in the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) following a review of tenant participation conducted by Coopers and Lybrand Consultants with Robyn Kennedy in 1995. The study found that tenant participation had "not received adequate consideration during the evolution of related initiatives and programs". Amongst other things the consultants recommended "a greater focus on local activities and community initiatives, where these may involve interaction with other government agencies", and that the Department of Housing should not be the budget holder for the program (Coopers and Lybrand Consultants, 1995 p. xiv - xvii).

TCIP aimed to:

- increase the opportunities for tenants and applicants to have a greater say in their living environment at local, regional and State decision-making levels;
- raise tenant awareness of local tenant and community groups;
- provide information to tenants about issues which affect them;
- work with tenants to create new community projects (NSWDOH, 1998).

Clearly these objectives overlap with those of the NIP, and a number of NIP estates benefited from funding under this program.

The program was evaluated in 1999 by RPR Consulting and the Department has now adopted their recommendations that the activities of the TCIP should be integrated into their core operations. As a result, new strategies to enhance tenant participation are currently being implemented. These include:

- Funding to address the State-wide information and training needs of tenants groups and their advocates;
- Increased funding for Regional Tenants Resource Services (RTRS);
- Support for RTRS to develop good practice in management to ensure accountability to tenants;
- Integration of tenant participation more effectively with the core business of social housing providers;
- Measures to increase representational mechanisms of tenants with special needs, including people with a disability, older people, youth and people from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- Supporting separate State and regional structures to represent the interests of tenants in each of the public, community and Aboriginal housing sectors, to ensure that the special needs and circumstances relating to each sector can be raised with the relevant providers;
- Providing Community Development and Resourcing Grants to assist one-off community building initiatives designed to resolve local housing and community issues;
- Supporting a new biannual conference bringing together social housing tenants to share and explore ideas, experiences and visions (RPR Consulting, 1999).

However, it is apparent from this list of recommendations that the focus on tenant participation essentially remains one of consultation and information sharing. There is no indication that the DoH is moving substantially beyond this essential consultative model and into more direct participation in decision making or resource allocation issues. If this is the case, then it is unlikely that the involvement of residents in future renewal activity in NSW will progress much beyond level 5 of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation noted above.

Northern Territory

There is comparatively little available information pertaining to renewal activities in the Northern Territory and there are only limited references to 'consultation initiatives' in the Territory Housing Annual Report 1999-00. NT Health service had, until recently, a 'bushbook' on the web site entitled 'Working with Communities'. This book advocated partnerships and a community development approach (www.nt.gov.au/nths/publich/bushbook/volumr1/communities.html)

Territory Housing considers itself to be a part of the broader human services network and as such has been working collaboratively with other government agencies such as Territory Health Services and the Office of Women's Policy, peak bodies including NT Shelter and Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) and with non-government service providers including those representing women, youth, aged, people with disabilities and indigenous people.

In practice, 'participation' is viewed more in terms of a formal consultative process. More specifically, there have been a series of Public Housing Forums held to discuss housing service issues. These have been held with the broader human services network. Territory Housing has held two rounds of Housing Forums in Darwin and Alice Springs. Key issues identified at the first forums such as housing for special needs groups, youth, priority housing, coordinated care were tasked to working

groups who then made recommendations to Territory Housing. Territory Housing is currently progressing the work recommended by the groups and will report back to the working groups through a third round of forums to be held in May 2001. Work includes two pilot projects which will involve a partnership between Territory Housing and non-government service providers. One will target youth while the other will target renal patients and those with drug and alcohol problems.

Queensland

A Community Renewal Program (CRP) was introduced in Queensland in 1998 as a component of the State Government's Crime Prevention Strategy. The program takes a 'place management' approach and seeks to engage or re-engage both government and local communities. The stated aims of community renewal are 'to address the causes and incidence of crime in targeted areas of multiple disadvantage which experience poverty, unemployment, crime, poor amenity and lack of services'. The program also 'seeks to raise the confidence and image of these communities' (QDOH, 2000a).

The current program builds on an earlier Urban Renewal Program which aimed to address the physical renewal issues in older housing estates with a concentration of public housing. Property in these areas was in low demand, stock was aging and the population was characterised by high levels of social disadvantage. While some of the earlier initiatives involved joint ventures with agencies such as the Defence Housing Authority and local authorities, on the whole they were 'single agency activities that concentrated on improving physical amenity' (QDOH, 2000b, p. 3).

The CRP involves more collaboration with community and State agencies and councils. It seeks to:

- make government work better and be more responsive at a neighbourhood level;

- make communities more resourceful and effective in their engagement with government.

The overriding aim of the program is to "reduce the level of disadvantage and raise the confidence and image of identified communities" (QDOH, 2000b, p. 3).

The program is area based and co-ordinates and integrates responses to a range of issues such as crime, unemployment, education and training, family support and the built environment. Community participation is identified as central to the process of identifying problems and solutions.

An analysis of disadvantage was conducted in 1998 by the Queensland Department of Housing (DOH) with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (QDOH, 1999, p. 18). Areas chosen for CRP activity were characterised by their social and economic disadvantage. This includes high crime rates, low income, high rates of unemployment, evidence of inter-generational unemployment and poor school retention rates and achievement (QDOH, 2000b, p. 3).

Funding of $7.5m was made available in 1998-99, $15m in 1999-00 and a further $15m for 2000-01.

The following lessons have been learned:
- The importance of goodwill among agencies, councils and communities to engage in renewal processes;

- The importance of recognising and building upon existing community strengths and achievements;

- The significance of good planning of local area plans and community action plans for Community Renewal.

The Department maintains that 'Community Renewal begins with the community planning process which has as its basis the principles of community development and social justice'. Through this process Community Action Plans reflect the shared vision of renewal stakeholders. The plans have a 3-5 year time horizon and can include physical improvements to the public housing stock, to the streets, footpaths and natural areas as well as improvements to community cultural and recreational facilities. Social improvements can include enhanced access to community services, increased opportunities for education and training and strategies for business and employment development.

The Department acknowledges the inter-related nature of the problems and aims therefore to support partnerships between community and government. This it suggests, 'reflects a trend towards tackling complex, concentrated community problems at a comprehensive local level' (QDOH, 2000a p. 24).

Alongside the specific community renewal activity the Department of Housing also encourages tenant participation in the management of housing. A Tenant Participation Strategic Directions Statement, *Working Together,* was launched in 1999. This document indicates the department's commitment to tenant participation and outlines how participation initiatives are supported. The Department operates two grant programs: Tenant Participation Grants and Community Facilities Grants.

Tenant Participation Grants program assists with the establishment or maintenance of tenant networks, including operating, training and special project costs and supports the maintenance of a representative statewide tenant group. These grants enable the tenant groups to maintain and expand their membership and/or range of activities.

The Community Facilities program provides community facilities, and furnishing and equipment grants, to enable tenant groups to hold meetings and activities. Among other things the strategy aims to improve communities by facilitating tenant involvement in community consultations and encouraging tenant involvement in broader community development activities. This is achieved by:

- Supporting the establishment of local tenant groups;
- Facilitating the establishment and ongoing maintenance of a regional tenant network;
- Facilitating and supporting tenant management of community facilities if applicable to the office;
- Ensuring that tenants with social disadvantage are able to have their needs presented to the Department;
- Providing opportunities for tenants to be involved in public housing policy such as reforms, rent, allocation, eligibility, social mix and priority housing;
- Supporting regional tenant representation at State level (QDOH, 1999).

The Department of Families, Youth and Community Care also have had a role to play in the development of community centres which act as a focal point for a range of

community services including community education and support programs, counselling and community development activities (DFYCC, 2000 p. 45).

South Australia

From the late 1980s onwards there has been a growing focus on urban regeneration in South Australia. As with, New South Wales, the activity has been predominantly on public housing estates. In the first instance, this was primarily, orientated towards asset management and included the sale of land and renovated stock. By 1998, however, success was being measured by tools such as 'community perceptions' studies (SAHT, 1998 p. 19) and one of the expressed main purposes of the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) was to 'contribute to the stability and the renewal of communities' (SAHT, 1998). Their Charter indicates, among other things, that they will:

- consult tenants where they may be affected by an initiative of the Trust in managing their tenancy, and inform tenants when the Trust is responding to government policy direction;

- develop partnerships with government agencies in pursuit of innovation and best service outcomes for the community through a whole of government approach (SAHT, 1998; SAHT, 2000).

Subsequent annual reports from SAHT reveal an increasing emphasis on customer involvement and community development.

The Northern Metropolitan Study was conducted between 1997 and 1999 to develop strategies which would address social disadvantage and old and inappropriate public housing in the northern metropolitan area of Adelaide. One of the principles identified by this study was that 'community development be encouraged through partnerships with appropriate agencies' (SAHT, 1999).

From 1999 onwards customer consultation of area renewal projects was aided by the appointment of Neighbourhood Development Officers on some renewal estates whose role includes the planning and implementation of community development programs and communication strategies in partnership with the community (SAHT, 2000 p. 23). The result of this has been a greater emphasis on employment initiatives and economic as well as community development (www.housingtrust.sa.gov).

By 2000 the Trust had sponsored a variety of consultative mechanisms to facilitate customer involvement. This included the following:

- Operational Policy Advisory Committee – provides a forum for customer contribution to improving public housing in the State. It comprises representatives of tenants, housing organisations and community organisations. It provides a mechanism for customer comment and feedback on policy and operational directions affecting the Trust;

- The Public Housing Tenant Forum – provides a forum for tenants from Regional Advisory Boards and community representatives to meet on a monthly basis to share ideas and raise issues of concern for Trust customers;

- Regional Advisory Boards – working in partnership with Trust regional offices to provide customer input at both a regional and broader policy level;

- Community Reference Groups – have been established in urban renewal areas and focus groups have been conducted to obtain broader customer feedback on particular issues such as relocation, maintenance, upgrades, amenity targets and environmental issues;

- The Trust Talk Tenant Link – is a newspaper produced by an editorial committee comprising customer and staff representatives. This publication provides a unique opportunity for the integration of both tenant and Trust articles;

- The Community Project Grant Fund – provides up to $2000 for initiatives that benefit Trust customers and local communities (SAHT, 2000 p. 18).

While urban renewal has been lead by the SAHT other initiatives within the Department of Human Services have supported this activity. In 1997-98, for example, the Neighbourhood and Community Development Program supported 29 metropolitan and nine rural services in providing a range of services to promote the welfare of disadvantaged individuals and families. These included community based neighbourhood houses and community development projects and other specialist services which are involved in facilitating self help groups, community activities, adult education programs and provision of information (DoHS/SAHC, 1998). The strategic plan for 1999/2002 also commits the department to 'developing sustainable communities through Urban Regeneration Programs. This will involve participating in "the Government's urban regeneration agenda through rejuvenation of specific areas under economic, social and environmental disadvantages" (DoHS, 1999 p. 13).

A Green Paper on Urban Regeneration was also published by the Department for Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts in 1999 (DTUPA, 1999). This stressed a partnership approach to urban regeneration and raised questions such as how the State and local government, the community and business could work together to stimulate the regeneration of urban areas and how communities could have a say in regeneration projects. The paper asserts:

> Communities should have the chance to express their views openly and at an early stage, to define their needs and aspirations and to genuinely participate in planning and decision-making about regeneration and the future of their local areas (DTUPA, 1999, p. 27).

This approach implies at least the possibility of moving beyond consultation and into the realms of empowerment through active participation in decision-making.

Tasmania

The Department of Health and Human Services Annual Report 1999-00 outlines a range of whole-of-agency strategic priorities for 2000-01. There are four key areas for action outlined under their goal of 'stronger, healthier communities':

- Invest in community development;
- Provide quality services for Tasmanians in rural and remote communities;
- Address the environmental and community-wide factors that impact on health and social condition;
- Research, identify and promote the factors that contribute to community capacity.

Housing Tasmania have identified four aspects of their activity that relate to these areas:

- Encourage local development through working with and supporting community priorities;
- Promote community safety and security through building community capacity and reducing risks;
- Encourage tenant participation through increased capacity for tenants to manage their housing.

The annual report indicates a commitment to community development. Support for tenant participation is described as "providing public housing residents with the opportunity to be more involved in the management of their housing and decisions affecting it" (DHHS, 2000).

These activities reflect earlier commitments outlined in their CSHA, such as developing stronger and healthier communities and increasing community capacity to improve the social, economic and physical housing environment.

Housing Tasmania also committed itself to identifying opportunities which would allow them to tie community development and urban renewal strategies to training and employment schemes, in particular to accredited volunteering and mutual obligation.

Further objectives outlined in the CSHA include, among other things:

- A commitment to contribute to quality neighbourhoods by working with others to create inviting and safe public and community spaces;
- Enabling local communities to have an active role in developing housing solutions that meet local needs;
- Making a substantial investment in community development and capacity building by providing financial and other support to resident and community groups for a range of community initiatives.

Housing Tasmania also indicated its intention to work with the Commonwealth to jointly support programs that enhance community capacity such as the Family and Community Network Initiative (now Stronger Families and Communities Strategy).

Other relevant initiatives in Tasmania include the expansion of tenant participation 'models' in a number of areas including larger estates and complexes and using consultation strategies and other methods to involve communities in local level planning.

Victoria

Victoria's Commonwealth State Housing Bilateral Agreement 1999/00 – 2002/03 identified 'engaging the community in housing issues' and 'achieving sustainable public communities' as key areas of activity. The former relates to tenant participation in housing management and the latter to community renewal.

The statement indicates an increased emphasis on the utilisation of the 'experience and expertise of the community' in the development of housing policy and two of their 'key directions' in this area are described as 'empowering tenants' and 'involving the local community'.

It is suggested, for example, that:

Tenants and tenant groups are well placed to identify local public housing issues and to provide input into the development of practical and workable solutions.

Involving tenants, it is maintained, will 'facilitate a sense of community and ownership of public housing' and is 'integral to the success of redevelopment projects'. In recognition of this the State committed itself to the continued funding of tenant groups (VCSHA, 2000 p. 9).

So far as 'achieving sustainable communities' is concerned the statement indicates that:

Successfully achieving this outcome will strengthen local communities, encourage a positive and empowering environment and promote resident participation in local issues.

The process advocated begins with the identification of concentrations of public housing where 'social problems are evident or emerging and where public housing assets also warrant early intervention'. The aim is to achieve redevelopment of these areas on a project basis to enable 'maximum tenant and community consultation and input into the renewal process'. The statement indicates that activities should deliver 'environments which promote the development of sustainable communities through improved environmental management and energy efficiency' as well as physical improvements. Community input would be fostered through a 'community development focus including tenant consultation and community based advisory committees' (VCSHA, 2000 p. 16).

The State also laid out its intention to engage with Commonwealth initiatives such as the Family and Community Networks Initiative (now the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy) (VCSHA, 2000 p. 16).

Furthermore, under the key direction of 'managing for involvement and sustainability' the State indicated its commitment to continue supporting community development activities through its Rental Housing Support Program.

These commitments are reflected in the 1999-00 Annual Report of the Department of Human Services, which, among other things, lists the following objectives:

• Ensure consultation processes draw on the significant expertise and experience that exists in the community;

• To take into consideration the diverse needs of tenant groups, local government, community groups and neighbours;

• Improve the integration of redevelopment and upgraded estates into the local community.

Western Australia

Homeswest launched a 10 year plan in 1995, known as 'New Living', to upgrade and sell off aging public housing stock.

The aim of the New Living program is to redevelop older public housing estates to create more attractive living environments, to reduce the rental presence to between 10 and 20 per cent and to encourage home ownership.

Homeswest stresses the importance of working with local communities in improving estates and attempts to foster community involvement (HW, 1999). Eight of the New Living projects are located in Perth and there are a further nine in country areas. In total the projects affect over 10,000 properties. This constitutes about a quarter of the total stock (WAMoH, 2000).

The New living projects vary but generally involve:

- The refurbishment of Ministry dwellings for both sale and retention;
- The beautification and enhancement of infrastructure in the area;
- Local community involvement in activities.

The projects may, for example, include community development initiatives, the development of community centres, community houses and information offices. In one project a 'community consultative committee' was formed to discuss community development issues.

Homeswest have recruited independent project managers for the projects. A number of the initial projects were managed by the McCusker Holdings Pty Ltd and Satterley Real Estate. Their 'vision' was to:

> Establish attractive, safe, friendly neighbourhoods with a family oriented environment; where people will choose to live, feel safe and want to pursue local community activities, developing a strong sense of community spirit and pride; and a high level of private affordable home ownership.

McCusker/Satterley indicate their commitment to community consultation in their promotional material. This they assert is required to ensure that there is the widest possible acceptance of the refurbishment proposals and propose the establishment of a 'stakeholders' communication strategy' which would include community interest groups (McCusker/Satterley, n.d.)

Two of the earlier New Living projects were evaluated by ERM Mitchell McCotter. Among other things, they recommended:

- Developing a more whole of government approach to regenerating target suburbs;
- Consulting more thoroughly with community support networks (social workers, health clinics and employment agencies) in the suburbs in which Homeswest is undertaking New Living Projects;
- Targeting consultation activities more towards people Homeswest want to consult with. Ensuring that the method and timing of consultation is appropriate and that people are fully aware of their opportunities to become involved.

Alison Day and Associates undertook the preliminary community consultation for a subsequent redevelopment initiative and produced a Community Development Plan for the project managers 'Midland Project Management'.

Summary

This review of the Australian policy context confirms that there is a renewed emphasis on participation in public policy across the states and territories and that this has also become a part of the federal government's agenda. It is not possible from the available material to identify the rationale for this shift, nor the extent to

which it has resulted in substantive changes on the ground. In fact, given the contested nature of terms such as 'participation' and 'consultation' and the way in which their meaning varies across a number of dimensions (structures, processes and objectives), a more detailed analysis of policy frameworks will have to be deferred until subsequent phases of this research project. This will involve a critical review of participation in neighbourhood renewal, across New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, through the analysis of interviews with key stakeholders and focus group work with local residents. Nevertheless, some preliminary observations may be made on the basis of the careful reading and consideration of the documentation.

It is apparent that the term 'participation' is frequently used in connection with tenant involvement in housing management where the term 'consultation' is adopted more often with reference to involvement in the regeneration or renewal process. While it may be that terms such as these are simply being used inter-changeably and not in any technical sense, there is a danger that 'consultation' is simply seen by local people as a token gesture with little substance behind it. As the literature review revealed these terms are contested and careful scrutiny is required in order to establish how they are being used.

Three states, NSW, QLD and SA, use the phrase partnership in connection with their renewal programs. Once again it should be noted that this term needs to be explained. NSW and QLD describe the local communities as part of this partnership but they are absent from the SA descriptions. This is not to suggest that SA are being more exclusive but to highlight the need for more rigor in descriptions and explanations of program structures and activities. The lessons from the UK reveal the danger and potential exclusiveness of partnership structures and the problem of ensuring that community representatives are not marginalised within these structures when they are involved.

Community development is referred to by all of the states and territories but there is no clear indication about what is being described. To an extent, resident participation is normally taken to be central to the process of community development but there is a danger that the 'top-down' approach apparent in the communitarian view of 'building community' or in some perspectives on 'place' or 'neighbourhood management' may detract from this tradition.

The documentation reviewed in this chapter also often fails to clarify what the long term objectives of participation in renewal initiatives are. Phrases like 'building community spirit', 'creating quality neighbourhoods', making 'communities stronger' or 'more vibrant' raise questions about what is meant and how it will be known when they have been achieved. Other than these, there is no clear description of what is to be achieved through resident participation nor any consideration of how this might be sustained in the long run.

These and other questions, will be explored in the remainder of the research. Key stakeholder interviews conducted in each of the case studies will seek to ascertain what the objective of participation has been, what structures or processes have been put in place and what respondents believe to be the longer term implication in relation to these broader objectives. The viewpoint of key stakeholders will be compared and contrasted with those of the local residents who take part in the focus groups.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHOD

The planned program of research aims to build upon the theoretical foundation established in this paper and further develop an understanding of the nature of participation initiatives in Australia. In particular the study will examine the rationale for participation in renewal presented by state housing authorities and what they believe will be achieved by pursuing these strategies.   There will be an attempt to classify the methods and models of participation that are used and examine how these equate to the conceptual models of various levels of participation. Furthermore the study will consider the extent to which participation contributes to greater 'social cohesion' and 'sustainable' improvements in the social environment of the estates and review the ways in which authorities measure the success of participation strategies. Crucially the study will explore the views of local people - to what extent do they feel they have been active participants and what difference to they think this has made?

The methods adopted for the research that will follow this paper are largely framed around the collection and analysis of qualitative secondary and primary information. Standard qualitative data collection and analysis methods will be used, including: assembly of documentary evidence (published and unpublished); key informant interviews (face-to-face) and focus group work; and content analysis of primary and secondary data.

The research will be conducted through a series of detailed case studies of current approaches to resident participation in renewal programs in three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia). Two case studies will be conducted in each of these states to examine examples of resident participation in neighbourhood renewal programs. The case studies will be selected to reflect the range of renewal projects being undertaken. In particular, in each state one of the case studies will be taken from one of the longer running renewal projects to provide evidence of how participation has been undertaken over a longer period of time. The other project will be chosen from a more recently initiated projects to ensure that current practice is included in the analysis.

These case studies will comprise:

- Further review of available material and documentation from the three states to identify the target estates for the case studies, and to document the models of resident participation used in each estate in more detail. This analysis will be augmented during the field visits;

- In-depth stakeholder interviews with state housing staff, community housing staff, residents representatives/leaders, and other appropriate stakeholders in each estate case study area. Policy staff at the respective housing authority will be also interviewed to establish the current approach to participation in renewal areas, the aims and objectives of the policy and the models used. Stakeholders in each of the study areas will provide an assessment of how these objectives and models for participation are being delivered;

- One focus group with residents in each case study area to explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of the participation process they have experienced.   It may be appropriate to select different types of group participants depending on the mix of the particular estate and the age of the renewal process.

Through these methods, the case studies will address a number of issues, for example:

- What are the models of neighbourhood renewal being studied in each of the study estates?

- What is the relationship between the asset renewal and sales programs and the "softer" community development/renewal projects and how do they interact?

- Is there joint planning for both or is the community renewal component conducted parallel to rather than integrated with the urban renewal component?

- What are the models and practices employed to implement resident participation strategies and policies?

- Identify examples where the latest approaches are being used and also explore what have local housing managers learned from earlier initiatives.

- Explore the rationale for pursuing participation policies as part of renewal activity – what are the perceived benefits for both housing managers and residents? What do housing managers expect to get out of the participation strategies they have developed?

- The extent to which the range of participation models identified can be judged against the classificatory devices reviewed in Chapter 2.

- What role do residents have in both the *community* renewal and the *urban* renewal activity?

- What is the purpose of the community renewal initiatives (if present) and what role do residents play in these?

- Do exiting public tenants participate in the physical and social breaking up of their estates and how do they perceive this process?

- How do differing tenure groups interrelate with each other on estates where renewal had led to the sale of property?

- What are the perceived barriers to effective participation and how might they be overcome?

- What are the effective limits to participation – both currently (i.e. how far up the 'participation scale' do current approaches go) and potentially (i.e. how far are managers willing to let participation go and how far do residents want to actively participate and over what issues)?

- What models of participation are deemed to be successful? What approaches have not delivered a satisfactory outcome for the stakeholders, including tenants and residents?

- Are there any perceived benefits to the community on each estate in terms of improved social cohesion as a result of the development of participation

strategies? This will need to be tested through the focus groups as well as subjectively from stakeholder interviews.

- Which approaches to participation seem to offer the best solutions to the issue of sustainable renewal?

Next Steps

The immediate next steps for the research will be to:

- Contact the three case study area contacts. Discuss choice of estates;

- Arrange for information on each estate to be forwarded to research team including a map (important to guide group recruitment). This will provide essential information to assist in the development of the specific interview and focus group schedules for each estate and also assist in the focus group recruitment method;

- Establish a range of potential stakeholder contacts on each of the estates to provide a maximum of 5 interviews per estate (10 per state);

- Set up arrangements for recruitment with appropriate survey company;

- Fix dates for visits and groups (5 days in each state);

- Develop stakeholder and group interview schedules for each estate.

It is expected that the next AHUIRI output, the Work in Progress Report, will document the initial outcomes of the fieldwork. This is planned for the end of October 2001.

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