



NATIONAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROGRAM
FUNDING ROUND 2024

Research Agenda

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1. Purpose

The National Housing Research Program (NHRP) is building an evidence-base of practical applied research to support policy development, and is adding new knowledge to housing, homelessness, cities, urban policy and related disciplines. The NHRP Research Agenda is updated annually to provide direction in the development of this evidence-base and to set priorities for the annual funding round. The Research Agenda is developed through consultation with government Housing Chief Executives and senior officers, the Australian Government, relevant state and territory government departments, Research Centre Directors, the AHURI Limited Board and the NHRP Research Panel.

The purpose of this document is to present the AHURI NHRP 2024 Research Agenda.

The 2024 Research Agenda is structured around one Inquiry topic, three Investigative Panels and topics provided for eleven Research projects plus a Data project.

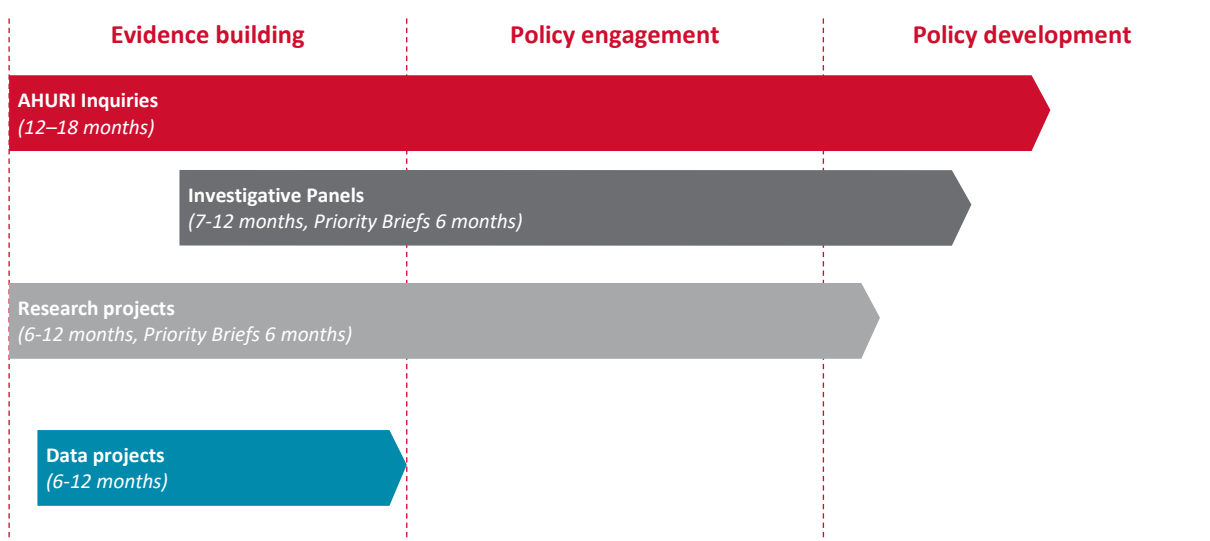
These topics have direct relevance to policy development priorities and call for research to inform practice and policy reforms.

2. Policy Development Research Model

The Policy Development Research Model facilitates engagement between the research and policy communities. Policy development research integrates the traditionally separate processes of evidence building and policy development into one set of practices. The Policy Development Research Model demands a high degree of collaboration within and between the policy and research communities.

This occurs through specialised research vehicles developed by AHURI, in which research and policy engagement are integrated. These vehicles include AHURI Inquiries, Investigative Panels and Research projects, which are established to address identified policy research priorities (Figure 1). AHURI identifies policy research priority issues through direct consultation with senior officials in the Australian Government, state and territory government Housing Chief Executives, Research Centre Directors and the NHRP Research Panel. The agenda is agreed by senior officials and endorsed by the AHURI Limited Board.

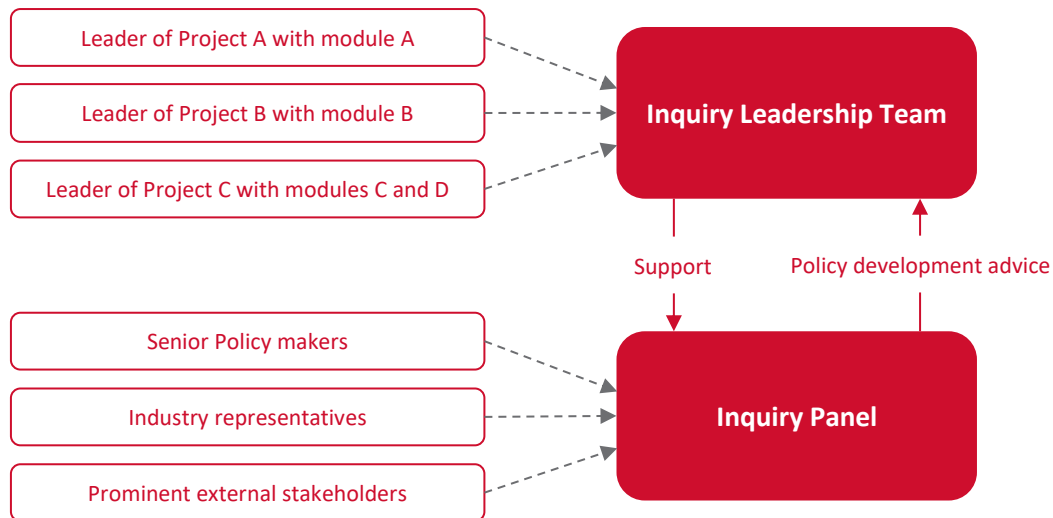
Figure 1: Policy development research



Inquiries

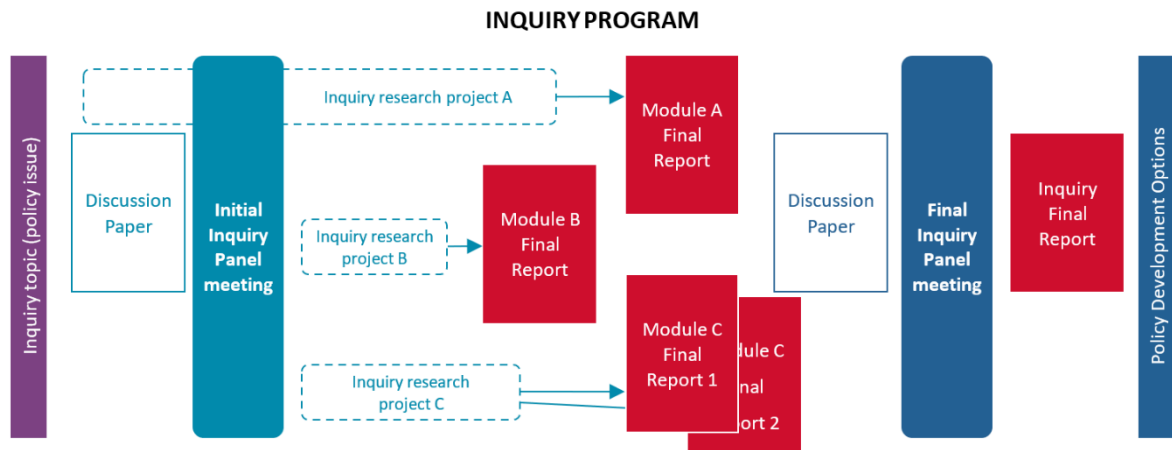
An Inquiry is led by academics with the expertise to develop the Inquiry Program which provides the overall logic and the framework of the Inquiry. This Inquiry Leadership Team also conduct a suite of independent, original research modules to advance knowledge to address the policy issue. The Inquiry Panel draws a mix of policy and practice expertise from government, non-government and private sectors together to consider the evidence and the outcomes of the research to address the policy issue and to make particular recommendations for policy development and/or practice innovation (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Inquiry key personnel structure



The Inquiry Leadership Team authors the materials for the Inquiry Panel and all publications for the Inquiry. The Final Report for the Inquiry and for each of the modules are published over the course of the Inquiry in the AHURI journal series. These Final Reports are double blind peer reviewed. An example of the structure and outputs expected in an Inquiry is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Inquiry structure and outputs



In the NHRP 2024 Funding Round, one Inquiry will be funded—focussed on a pressing policy issue, as listed below and detailed in Chapter 3.

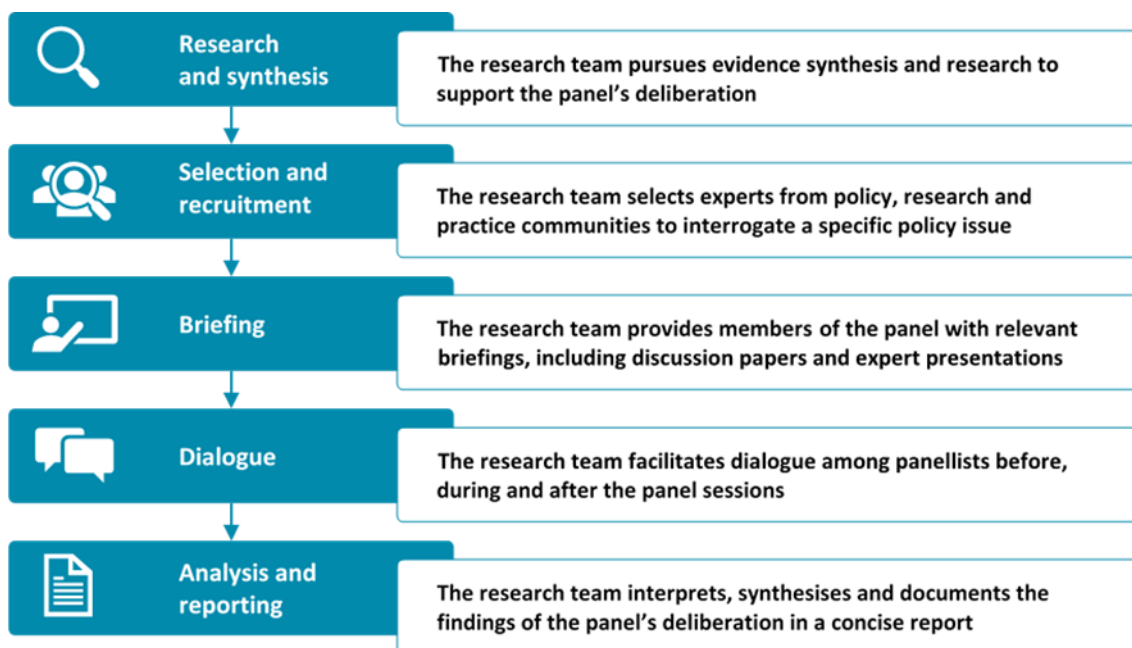
- **2024A** Inquiry into residential construction capacity and sector innovation

Investigative Panels

Investigative Panels are designed to bring about direct engagement between experts from the research and policy communities, and practitioners from industry and community sectors, to interrogate a specific policy or practice question. They are best suited to research examining new or emerging policy issues, for which rapid evidence building is required.

The Investigative Panel is a research method that draws together elements of key informant interview and focus group approaches, to generate new knowledge through the expert panel discussions. The Panel may be called together for one or two meetings, depending on the research approach. The research approach may also include other research activities or methods, such as a literature review, interviews or secondary data analysis, but the information from the Panel members is an important contribution to the research. Panel members are chosen for their expertise and knowledge about the subject. The Final Report is, however, authored by the researcher(s) and contributions from individual Panel members are not attributed or identifiable. Typical processes involved in an Investigative Panel are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Investigative Panel process



An Investigative Panel is deemed the most appropriate method to address the topics listed below and detailed in Chapter 4.

- **2024B** Investigative panel on engaging with Aboriginal communities to improve housing outcomes
- **2024C** Investigative panel on housing support and modern slavery
- **2024D** Investigative panel on identifying and leveraging success in disability housing

Research projects

The NHRP Funding Round 2024 will include funding for Research projects which include Data projects, to ensure coverage of a broad range of policy issues and more varied research delivery output timelines. Research projects use a wide variety of research methods to tackle the research topic. Research projects may vary in scale and can range across discrete secondary data analysis to limited primary data collection exercises. These are listed below and detailed in Chapter 5.

- **2024E** Maturation of Australia’s multi-provider social housing systems
- **2024F** Drivers of new models for boarding houses in Australia
- **2024G** Models of housing with support for youth
- **2024H** Longer-term impacts of stock transfers on social housing supply
- **2024I** Housing policy fact sheets
- **2024J** Data hunger and regulation
- **2024K** Housing seasonal workers
- **2024L** Vicarious trauma on the housing and homelessness frontline
- **2024 M** Impacts and features of shared equity programs in Australia
- **2024 N** Landlord motivations and models of short term rental accommodation
- **2024O** Methods and assumptions of rental vacancy data
- **2024P** Data projects to inform housing and homelessness policy

3. Inquiries

2024A Inquiry into residential construction capacity and sector innovation

Policy issue: The constrained capacity of the construction industry limits the nation's capacity to respond to changes in housing demand. Workforce development, including effective recruitment and retention of workers in the sector, is a concern. International supply chains remain challenging.

What can policy makers do to improve supply side responsiveness across all segments of the housing construction sector, including its workforce capacity?

Context

The provision of new housing in Australia is constrained on the supply side, especially for the more affordable housing segments of the housing market and for new approaches which address emissions reductions and climate change adaptation. Despite increased demand for housing, new supply is less responsive to price signals compared to other developed countries. In the post-COVID lockdown period, this has been seen in the growing numbers of dwelling constructions that are not completed, and dwindling numbers of new commencements.

Previous AHURI research has described the residential construction industry in Australia as segmented across three main areas – the detached house building industry (mainly focused on new broadacre developments), a boutique house renovation sector, and commercial firms building higher density housing. The size of the detached house building segment has not changed substantially over many decades, nor have the construction techniques or technology supporting the industry.

The housing workforce has largely been characterised by sub-contracting and specialisation, which limits skills to a few professions while most construction workers have low skills. While this has enabled ease of entry of new workers, it has reduced potential for upskilling over the course of a career with consequences for workforce turnover.

International material supply chains remain compromised, by market disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic and international conflict. Alternative supply chains, and more flexible, innovative approaches have not compensated for supply shortages at scale.

There is interest in understanding the ways in which Australia's residential construction capacity can be increased, and how innovative approaches to construction practices and workforce development could be pursued, while also improving on minimum standards.

There is also interest in better understanding of supply chain constraints, the potential of alternative material supply solutions, and the policy and regulatory settings that would enable supply chain innovation.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Review approaches taken by governments and construction industries internationally, to address workforce capacity constraints during sustained periods of high demand
- Identify present obstacles to sector growth, including those that might be amenable to reform or change
- Consider the relative merits of different approaches to the supply and management of Aboriginal housing
- Examine innovations in technology and organisational approaches in parts of the construction sector that have promise for improving construction capacity
- Consult key residential construction industry stakeholders to understand present issues around workforce recruitment, skilling and retention
- Identify strategies that might be taken by state, federal and local governments to better align new housing supply with demand over the long term.

4. Investigative Panels

2024B Investigative panel on engaging with Aboriginal communities to improve housing outcomes

Policy issue: Policy-makers and practitioners (both within government agencies and in non-government entities supported by government funding) need to genuinely engage with Aboriginal communities and organisations to better include Aboriginal voices and participation in policy making to meet the challenges in the delivery of housing services.

How can government address the historical failures and more meaningfully include and support Aboriginal communities and organisations in addressing housing issues?

Context

In contrast to other former settler colonies, engagement with First Nations people in Australia is affected by the lack of comprehensive legal framework or treaty. Treaty negotiation processes are underway in different jurisdictions and in late 2023 there will be a referendum on a Voice to the Australian Parliament.

Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people is underpinned by ethical and human rights concerns. It should enable participation, agency and negotiation from the earliest stages and be driven by the participants. AHURI research has examined successful programs and identified flexibility, cultural understanding, clear purpose and open communication as critical with an Indigenous framework and timeframe, and strengths-based approaches.

To engage positively, government (and non-government) agencies need culturally competent protocols to consider and respect the historical development of aboriginal housing services and its legacy, the developments in Treaty and constitutional change and how it can support new directions.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Consider approaches to engagement and development of housing and homelessness programs.
- Examine investment in Indigenous governance capacity and resources.
- Identify community/Country-specific protocols and how these would support policy and program development.
- Provide models and frameworks which support co-design within a human rights framework and building cultural frameworks into consultation practice.
- Consider different approaches and the challenges in different settings.

2024C Investigative panel on housing support and modern slavery

Policy issue: There is growing concern about the prevalence of human trafficking and ‘modern slavery’ in Australia. There are significant challenges in measuring the prevalence of modern slavery, and a paucity of evidence on the interactions of victims of modern slavery with housing and homelessness support systems.

What measures can be implemented to equip housing and homelessness providers to assist?

Context

The Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018 defines modern slavery as including eight types of serious exploitation: trafficking in persons; slavery; servitude; forced marriage; forced labour; debt bondage; deceptive recruiting for labour or services; and the worst forms of child labour. There are obligations for large entities in Australia to report on the risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

NSW has recently appointed the nation’s first Commissioner for Modern Slavery. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) have expressed concerns regarding increased risks of modern slavery as a result of the pandemic. Those at risk include people in financial hardship, experiencing family violence, and those who fell out of touch with their communities during school and workplace closures. The AFP has developed a training program to assist front line officers to recognise signs of modern slavery¹.

While victims might present at crisis accommodation services, not much is known about their interaction with housing or homelessness services systems. There is a need to understand how services detect and respond to this issue, and to develop protocols and supports to safely assist victims and address the illegal activities of perpetrators.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Review existing Australian and International policy and practice responses to modern slavery.
- Engage housing and homelessness services organisations to gauge their awareness of modern slavery, examine any protocols and processes for identifying modern slavery, and document any experiences they have had working with clients affected by it.
- Develop best practice in organisational protocols around identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery.
- Engage communities most likely to be affected by modern slavery to best understand how to address the issue in culturally-diverse contexts.

2024D Investigative panel on identifying and leveraging success in disability housing

Policy issue: The introduction of the NDIS has changed the way people with disabilities access services to facilitate greater independence, but there are ongoing issues with accessing appropriate, affordable and secure housing, even with the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) scheme.

What needs to change in present policy and practice to improve housing outcomes for people with disability across different jurisdictions?

Context

The NDIS has changed the provision of services for people with disability to increase consumer choice and control, with the aim of increasing independent living. The initial rollout of the NDIS progressed over several years, with its implementation staged differently in each state and territory. Now, with almost a decade of experience of the NDIS, there is a need to better understand the experiences and outcomes of the scheme in improving housing for people with disabilities.

AHURI research has highlighted how different disabilities profoundly affect access to housing, and described the challenges in meeting aspirations of people with a disability. Integrating NDIS entitlements with various forms of housing and housing assistance remains a challenge.

There is a need to understand where the NDIS and SDA are working well, and how successes can be leveraged more broadly. There is also a need to identify what SDA and the NDIS are missing, and how people with disability who are not supported by the scheme can be assisted in accessing appropriate housing.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Document the different experiences and approaches across jurisdictions regarding the take up of the NDIS and SDA, and what conditions support best outcomes
- Critically assess the role the SDA and other forms of housing assistance in improving housing outcomes for people with disabilities
- Examine the housing experiences of people with disability not accessing SDA
- Canvas the views of policy makers and providers in identifying areas for improvement in policy and practice.

5. Research projects

2024E Maturation of Australia's multi-provider social housing systems

Policy issue: Each Australian jurisdiction features a distinct multi-provider social housing system, including public housing and community housing offerings. The 'market share' of community housing providers, their specialisation, and growth trajectories vary in each jurisdiction.

What can be learned from the growth of multi-provider housing systems in Australian jurisdictions, and how do these systems compare with more established multi-provider systems internationally? What are the implications for the future directions of Australian social housing systems?

Context

Social housing provision in Australia is characterised by state-based systems of public housing, complemented by community housing provision. The scale, portfolio mix, and balance between public and community housing segments has developed differently in each state and territory. Jurisdictions have, to varying degrees, invested substantially in the development of community housing sectors, through stock transfers and funding allocations, or through concessions and subsidies.

Community housing providers have developed from diverse origins to provide housing to particular cohorts of need, based on demographic profiles, specific needs, or geographic locations. A number of large providers now operate in multiple jurisdictions, with complex organisational structures. The complementarity of public housing and community housing is not clearly articulated – there is a risk that public housing becomes the residual offering for those households not supported by the community housing sector.

Government funding frameworks at state and federal level operate differently for public and community housing providers. There are separate development and operating costs for public and community housing, and different subsidy streams available – for both providers and tenants.

There is benefit in understanding how these systems operate and what might be learnt across jurisdictions.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Identify the range of government subsidies and concessions used to develop community housing sectors, and the relative impact of these subsidies in fostering growth
- Examine the implications of commonwealth government funding mechanisms for the growth and sustainability of social housing systems (including the new HAFF and other Housing Australia programs, CRA, and tax concessions)
- Consider lessons from international examples in identifying appropriate components in social housing system design
- Identify opportunities to expand social housing systems in each jurisdiction, including application of successful approaches from international systems and other jurisdictions.

2024F Drivers of new models for boarding houses in Australia

Policy issue: Boarding houses provide accommodation to increasing numbers of low-income persons, in a variety of regulated and unregulated forms.

Who are the occupants, owners and developers of this form of accommodation, what are the drivers of growth in this sector and what new models of boarding houses are emerging?

Context

Boarding houses (also termed lodging or rooming houses) are a form of communal rental accommodation owned and managed by a private landlord. They typically provide a lockable bedroom and access to shared facilities such as bathrooms and communal areas.

Previous AHURI research has looked at boarding houses as a form of marginal housing, identifying three main types: traditional inner city boarding houses catering mainly to single people; smaller 'new model' or mini boarding houses involving conversion of existing dwellings; and hotels and motels providing extended stays. AHURI research has also highlighted issues this form of accommodation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most jurisdictions regulate some types of boarding houses, while planning regimes such as NSW have facilitated its growth.

There is a need to understand the contemporary and emerging roles boarding houses play, the drivers of new models, their appropriateness for tenants, and linkages to other parts of the housing and homelessness system.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Map, compare and critically analyse the different regulatory and planning approaches that relate to the provision of boarding houses in each state and territory
- Critically analyse the market drivers of new boarding house provision
- Identify key issues facing tenants and owners in the sector, and critically assess the benefits and appropriateness for tenants
- Identify the factors that drive business models in the sector, considering issues around its social and economic sustainability
- Seek the views of key policy and other stakeholders regarding regulation of the sector and addressing tenant needs.

2024G Models of housing with support for youth

Policy issue: A number of models of 'housing with support' for young people have been and are being developed, and have shown positive outcomes. The financial sustainability of these models is challenging, requiring ongoing subsidy. Youth homelessness, and associated social and economic issues, are a priority for policy responses.

**What are the most viable/effective models for providing supported accommodation for youth?
What are the key characteristics/scale?**

Context

Nearly a quarter of all homeless people are aged under 25. This group had the highest rate of homelessness amongst all age groups in the 2021 census.

Housing with supports for young people needs to address a range of potentially complex needs. The Foyer model is one well-known approach which integrates accommodation, training and mentoring, employment assistance, sporting and social activities and provides secure accommodation on exit. First developed in France, the model has been adopted (and adapted) in Australia in recent years and is well suited to those willing to engage with education or employment.

Other models are focussed on fostering reunification with family. For example, Ruby's reunification program, aimed at 12-17 year-olds, provides accommodation, counselling, 24-hour services and family support.

There is interest in more robust evidence around different models of supported housing for youth and their effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Document and conceptualise the different models of housing with support for young people in Australia, including in urban and regional housing contexts.
- Assess financial viability and cost effectiveness of different models including considerations of scale, service profile and location
- Examine funding, regulatory and accreditation systems that underpin different models
- Compare these models with international best practice.

2024H Longer-term impacts of stock transfers on social housing supply

Policy issue: The community housing sector is critical in the supply of social housing and addressing the needs of low-income and vulnerable Australians. The transfer of public housing stock (management or title) to community housing providers has been used in some jurisdictions to support the development of the community housing sector.

What are the longer-term impacts of stock transfers, in terms of overall social housing supply and sector capability? What features of stock transfer programs have led to best outcomes?

Context

The growth of the community housing sector in each state and territory has been influenced by a range of policy settings, time-limited growth programs, transfer of stock from public housing, and other factors.

Stock transfers have been, at various times, high profile and influential mechanisms to build the capacity of the community housing sector. Transfers have also been motivated by the opportunity to increase social housing revenue through Commonwealth Rent Assistance, the leveraging of private investment, expectations of improved services for tenants, and neighbourhood renewal. These stock transfers include management outsourcing programs as well as title transfers, though the latter has been less common.

Earlier AHURI research examined the practice and potential of stock transfers in the context of declining public housing provision and the development of the community housing sector. There is a need to understand the longer-term impacts of stock transfers on the community housing sector. The extent to which stock transfers have been leveraged by CHPs to further expand portfolios through their increased equity, and the additionality created through transfer of stock then replaced within public housing portfolios, are key concerns. There is also interest in the extent to which transfers have realised improved services for tenants. The potential for further expansion of social housing sectors through new stock transfers should also be considered.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Examine how the policy settings and implementation of stock transfer approaches has varied in different states and territories, and the learnings for Australian policy
- Examine whether stock transfers have built capacity and capability in the community housing sector in each jurisdiction
- Review the extent to which these transfers have then been leveraged for further additional supply
- Consider the specific challenges and opportunities highlighted in stock transfers involving Indigenous Housing
- Review outcomes for tenants, asset management and community cohesion.

2024I Housing policy fact sheets

Policy issue: Housing policy knowledge has advanced substantially in Australia over the last 25 years. New appointments to senior official positions and ministerial offices frequently require rapid assimilation of understanding of complex systems.

How can policy decision makers new to housing policy develop rapid understanding of accumulated knowledge on housing policy successes and challenges?

Context

Australia's housing systems are complex and frequently operate in counterintuitive ways, with multiple inputs and motivations, and interconnected policy settings in diverse portfolios at federal, state and local level all influencing practice and outcomes.

Senior policy decision makers frequently move into housing policy roles from other portfolio backgrounds, bringing deep policy design and political expertise, but limited knowledge of the intricacies of housing policy settings and their impacts. This drives a need to rapidly digest information on housing-related policy settings, housing system design, stakeholder interests and the impact of prior policy decisions.

AHURI's evidence base and capacity building through the National Housing Research Program, commissioned projects, and public discourse, has heavily influenced policy makers (and public) understanding of housing issues. Other sources of quality evidence and data from Australia and overseas also make important contributions. There is a need for more succinct descriptions of key housing policy learnings over the last quarter of a century.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Map areas of key understanding important to housing policy decision making
- Consult with senior policy makers on the issues that require concise explanation
- Examine innovation in data visualisation and policy communication to develop a format for housing policy evidence summaries
- Develop a range of concise summaries of foundations of housing policy knowledge.

2024J Data hunger and regulation

Policy issue: Prospective tenants of rental housing are required to furnish rental housing providers with increasing amounts of personal information. There are concerns around privacy and data security for renters, as well as fairness in tenancy selection and management processes.

What is presently occurring in Australia around housing consumers' personal data? What could be done to improve privacy and protections for consumers?

Context

Prospective tenants (particularly in the private rental system, but also in social housing) are required to provide extensive identifying information, with little assurance of safeguarding of data. There is growing concern about the increasingly expansive data requests, and the emergence of fees for applicants to keep their data secure.

The breadth and detail of information required – extending beyond that required to assess an applicants' capacity to sustain a tenancy, to include social media profiles, claims history, and third party ratings from alternate sources such as eBay, Uber, and LinkedIn - raises concerns about unfair discrimination. Concerns have also been raised that these platforms may be used to circumvent regulations intended to prevent soliciting of 'rent bidding'.

Privately owned commercial tenancy application databases - centralised online platforms for applications, as well as online portals managed by individual real estate agencies, have experienced data breaches, with consequent risks of identity theft for applicants.

There is a need to understand the risks associated with increasing requirements for disclosure of identifying information, as well as the use and retention of this data. There is also a need to examine the potential role of regulation in ensuring data use, security and retention are appropriate.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Examine the range of identifying data required for tenancy applications, and reasons why such data is requested
- Examine the growth of centralised platforms and consider the implications of these services and their revenue models for privacy, discrimination and data security for housing consumers
- Examine current policy and regulatory settings in Australian jurisdictions, as well as the potential role of reform agendas
- Consider international practices, including best practice examples, for managing tenancy data, taking into account situations where demand might outstrip supply.

2024K Housing seasonal workers

Policy issue: Key workers engaged in seasonal labour markets (such as agriculture and tourism) have difficulty accessing housing, which negatively impacts regional productivity and makes workers vulnerable to exploitation.

How can seasonal workers be better accommodated to ensure a productive workforce in regional areas?

Context

In some rural and regional areas, seasonal workers in agriculture and tourism must compete for housing with long term residents, tourists, retirees and more affluent fly-in/fly-out workers. Because of high demand for housing, they often work in areas where housing is overpriced. Increased pressure on regional housing markets, including low rental vacancy rates in many areas, has highlighted this vulnerability in Australia's housing systems.

The private rental market may not be the most appropriate source of accommodation for seasonal workers, due to the time-limited nature of their tenure. Short-term letting is prohibitively expensive in many locations, and group accommodation options can lead to problems of overcrowded, poor quality accommodation, with related safety and exploitation concerns.

Seasonal workforces often include migrant workers, young people, and others with limited resources and little awareness of their rights.

While some jurisdictions are beginning regulatory reforms to fast-track establishment of seasonal worker accommodation, there is an interest in better understanding the appropriate housing options for seasonal workers in an Australian context.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Examine current practice in accommodating seasonal workers, particularly in regional areas of Australia.
- Develop case studies highlighting positive and negative experiences of seasonal workers.
- Consider the implications of shortages of seasonal worker accommodation for relevant industries, and the potential knock-on effects for regional economies.
- Review best practice to seasonal worker accommodation internationally.

2024L Vicarious trauma on the housing and homelessness frontline

Policy issue: Trauma is a common experience among clients of housing and homelessness services, but it can have secondary impacts on service personnel via vicarious trauma.

What is the incidence of vicarious trauma on tenancy managers and case workers in Australia, and what can be done to reduce its negative impact on workers and organisations?

Context

Trauma can be understood as events in which a person is threatened or feels threatened. Trauma is a common experience of clients presenting at housing and homelessness services, and many services employ a trauma-informed care approach. Professional work with clients with experiences of trauma has been linked to worker experiences of stress and secondary trauma. This has been described as vicarious trauma; compassion fatigue and burnout are related concepts.

There is emerging evidence of the impacts of vicarious trauma in frontline workforces on the wellbeing of individual workers as well as on staff retention and organisational development. However, little is known about the prevalence of vicarious trauma in the Australian housing and homelessness sector, nor the training and worker care responses by housing organisations. This is despite the potentially high costs to workers and organisations from this issue.

There is a need to understand the impacts of vicarious trauma on social housing and homelessness workers in Australia. There is also a need to identify mitigating strategies being used by organisations to support staff experiencing vicarious trauma and their effectiveness and potential for broader implementation.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Scope existing international literature around vicarious trauma to better understand concepts and relevance to Australian housing service systems
- Explore the experiences of tenancy managers and case workers of stress and trauma
- Document and critically review current approaches to dealing with vicarious trauma in the homelessness and housing sectors
- What is the cost to organisations? i.e., high turnover due to vicarious trauma.

2024M Impacts and features of shared equity programs in Australia

Policy issue: Shared equity programs in Australia have been implemented by state governments (and soon the Australian Government) to assist lower- and moderate-income households access home ownership.

What are the impacts of shared equity programs, and what features improve outcomes for purchasing households and governments?

Context

The Australian Government's 2022 election commitments included a 'Help to Buy' shared equity program. A number of state governments either run or have run, shared equity programs. While these programs have been enduring in Western Australia and South Australia, programs in the eastern states have been shorter in duration.

In these programs a homebuyer takes out a loan on a proportion (often 70% or more) of the cost of the property, while the equity partner provides the rest of the capital. During the loan period the homebuyer can buy more equity in the property (if and when they can afford it) as a mechanism to progress to full ownership. At the time of sale (or refinancing), the partner recoups their equity loan plus a share of capital gain.

Earlier AHURI research examined shared equity programs and found there was considerable consumer appetite for the approach, and that a national program could provide long-term commitment and greater certainty than state-based programs.

There is a need to understand the effectiveness and impact of shared equity programs in Australia, including outcomes for purchasing households, to consider the merits of different shared equity program design features and how a national program would support this. There is also interest in the review of international practice for additional opportunities.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Review the effectiveness of shared equity programs in Australia
- Identify design features in shared equity programs that have addressed risk and enhanced outcomes, including policy or regulatory settings in jurisdictions that have been enabling
- Consider factors that have influenced the longevity of shared equity programs at state level, and the implications for a national program
- Identify international evidence for alternative forms or designs of shared equity programs and their application to Australian contexts.

2024N Landlord motivations and models of short term rental accommodation

Policy issue: Online platforms for Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) have rapidly expanded since the COVID pandemic lockdown period. Existing research and commentary has focused on the impact on private rental market supply, particularly in tourism focused locations.

What are the motivations and financial models of STRA landlords, and the impacts of STRA on communities?

Context

Australian legislation and policy intervention in relation to online short-term rental accommodation (STRA) platforms is less restrictive than some international jurisdictions, and there is continuing public concern and growing policy concern about the impact of STRA on private rental markets and broader housing supply and affordability. AHURI research has found that properties have been removed from the long-term rental market into STRA, contributing to increasing rental unaffordability.

Little attention has been given to the specific motivations of STRA landlords, or to the way in which properties are made available on STRA platforms (i.e., the business models employed by landlords). There are likely to be a range of motivations, and business models.

There is growing concern over the impacts of concentrations of STRA holdings on communities. In the first instance this includes disruption and noise issues for neighbours, but there is growing attention on the impact on communities more broadly, through potential erosion of particular sectors of the community. Long-term residents increasingly report the inability to secure housing, and resulting impacts on local employment, community participation and volunteering, and community cohesion.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Use a behavioural insights approach to examine the motivations of STRA landlords
- Develop a typology of the business models of STRA landlords, and map their use
- Examine the neighbourhood and community impacts of STRA concentrations
- Consider the regulatory, revenue and safety implications of STRA platforms relative to traditional tourist accommodation (hotels and bed and breakfasts) for local and state governments.

2024O Methods and assumptions of rental vacancy data

Policy issue: Rental vacancies are increasingly referenced as a key indicator of housing system conditions, influencing policy decision making as well as public perceptions of housing market performance. There is a need for more critical consideration of the methodologies, interpretations and assumptions underpinning rental vacancy data sets.

What methods are used to create rental vacancy data, and what are their assumptions, and implications for policy?

Context

Rental vacancy rates are an increasingly prominent indicator of housing system conditions and performance, reported widely in media and considered in policy decisions and policy research. Rental vacancies are calculated and published by various private sector agencies, including property advisory companies such as CoreLogic and SQM Research, Real Estate Institutes and more. Data sources and methodologies vary, and are not necessarily comparable.

Use of vacancy rate data over time has led to common assumptions of the meaning of various thresholds (e.g. three per cent vacancy shows a rental market ‘in equilibrium’). However, there is little or no rigorous Australian research on rental vacancy rate methodologies and interpretations.

As rental housing supply becomes an increasingly critical policy issue under the Housing Accord, the need to better understand, measure and interpret rental vacancy rates is increasingly important.

Opportunities

Researchers might:

- Review the methods used to create rental vacancy rates, and their assumptions, strengths and limitations
- Consider how rental vacancies are measured and interpreted in other countries
- Identify appropriate benchmarks for interpreting Australian rental vacancy rates
- Calibrate meaningful measures that depict mismatches in supply and demand in rental sub-markets, and appropriate benchmarks that enable clear interpretations of vacancy data.

2023P Data projects to inform housing and homelessness policy

To support policy development in housing and homelessness, the AHURI NHRP has, over time, analysed systematically a range of key secondary datasets (e.g. AIHW, ABS, HILDA) to provide a series of fundamental statistics about housing and homelessness in Australia. New ways of understanding policy issues or ways of responding to questions of relevance for policy can be developed through research approaches using these datasets or incorporating new datasets as they become available.

As new data becomes available or datasets are updated, there is opportunity to update the understanding of an enduring policy issue, or to reveal new insights or findings to inform policy development.

Increasingly, governments are providing access to Linked Data sets, which can also support the understanding of housing and homelessness issues. The Australian Government has implemented linked data ratings, based on the licensing, format and availability of data.¹

Data projects may include a national picture and comparisons across areas such as states and territories, and explore policy issues in relation to the following themes: affordable housing supply and tenure change in home ownership, private rental and social housing; the housing system; housing need; homelessness; Indigenous housing; urban and regional infrastructure and planning; housing and labour markets; housing finance; housing assistance; non-shelter outcomes; and demographics in relation to different housing need cohorts.

Applications for data projects should clearly demonstrate the policy issue, the policy development rationale for undertaking the data analysis, and a realistic and appropriate research approach. Applications must also demonstrate critical engagement with recent developments in methodology and awareness of the current policy and practice context.

The deliverables resulting from secondary data projects may be short reports focussed on the data analysis and its implications for policy development, may work more strongly with visuals and graphics and, it is expected, be submitted for peer review for publication in the AHURI Report series.

¹ <https://data.gov.au/page/linked-data-rating>
AHURI NATIONAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROGRAM

6. National Housing Research Program Funding Round 2024

The annual NHRP Funding Round opens with the publication of the *NHRP Research Agenda 2024* which calls for research funding applications.

The annual NHRP Funding Round 2024 capacity building component consists of one Scholarship Top-up for a postgraduate student at each AHURI Research Centre, and their attendance at the annual postgraduate symposium.

	Opening	Closing
NHRP Funding Round	Wednesday 3 May 2023	Wednesday 28 June 2023 12 noon AEST
Scholarship Top-up	Wednesday 3 May 2023	Friday 26 April 2024 COB AEST