



NATIONAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROGRAM
FUNDING ROUND 2022

Research Agenda

Contents

1	Purpose	1
2	Policy Development Research Model	2
2.1	Priority Brief	2
2.2	Inquiries	3
2.3	Investigative Panels	4
2.4	Research projects.....	5
2.5	Scoping projects.....	6
3	Priority Brief	7
4	Inquiries	8
5	Investigative Panels	12
6	Research projects.....	16
7	Scoping projects.....	22
8	National Housing Research Program Funding Round 2022	24

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, 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 2022 Research Agenda.

The 2022 Research Agenda is structured around one Priority Brief, two Inquiry topics, three Investigative Panels and topics provided for five Research projects plus a Data project and two Scoping projects.

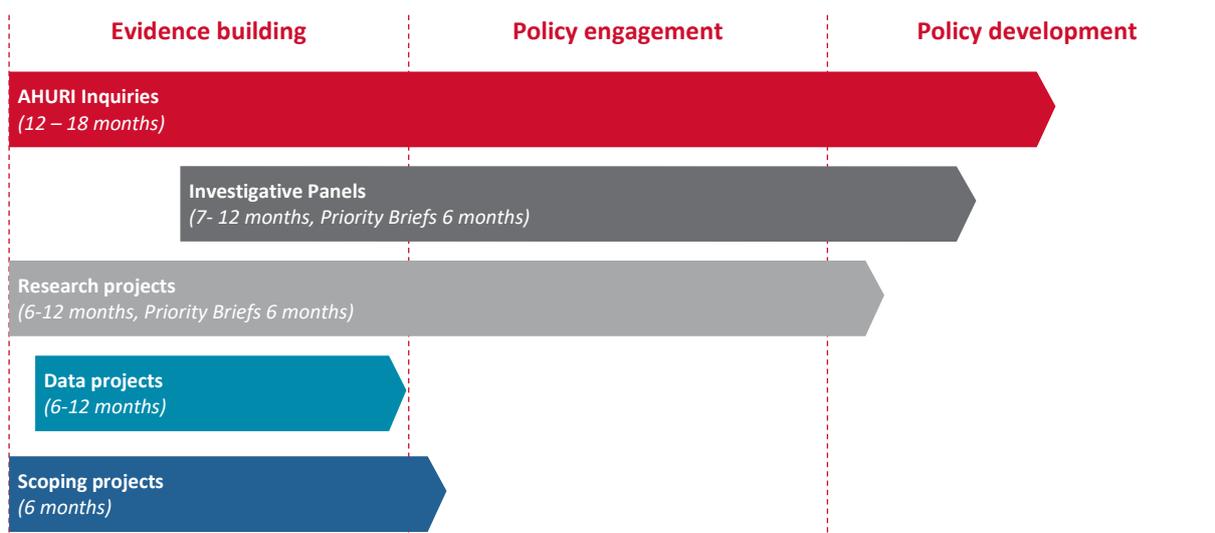
These topics have direct relevance to policy development priorities and call for research to inform practice and policy reforms.

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). Priority Briefs are issued for the most time-sensitive topics, and use accelerated processes with the methodologies of AHURI research vehicles. 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



2.1 Priority Brief

In response to the dynamic housing policy environment and the need to support policy development, AHURI is implementing a new Priority Brief funding mechanism to address the most time-critical policy evidence needs.

Priority Briefs are announced to the AHURI research network prior to the NHRP funding round but have a shorter application period (three weeks), accelerated assessment and merit ranking

processes, policy engagement of early findings within six months and final reports following soon after.

Priority Briefs use the methodologies of Investigative Panels and Research projects, but are expected to be completed before the end of the calendar year, with publications early the following year. Priority Briefs enable AHURI to respond to urgent policy issues, with accelerated delivery of research addressing these issues and supporting early engagement of policy or sector stakeholders.

A Policy Research Paper presenting interim finding will be a key deliverable in each Priority Brief contract, due by September 2021. Research leaders will participate in a Policy Exchange to discuss findings and implications for policy developments with key housing policy stakeholders.

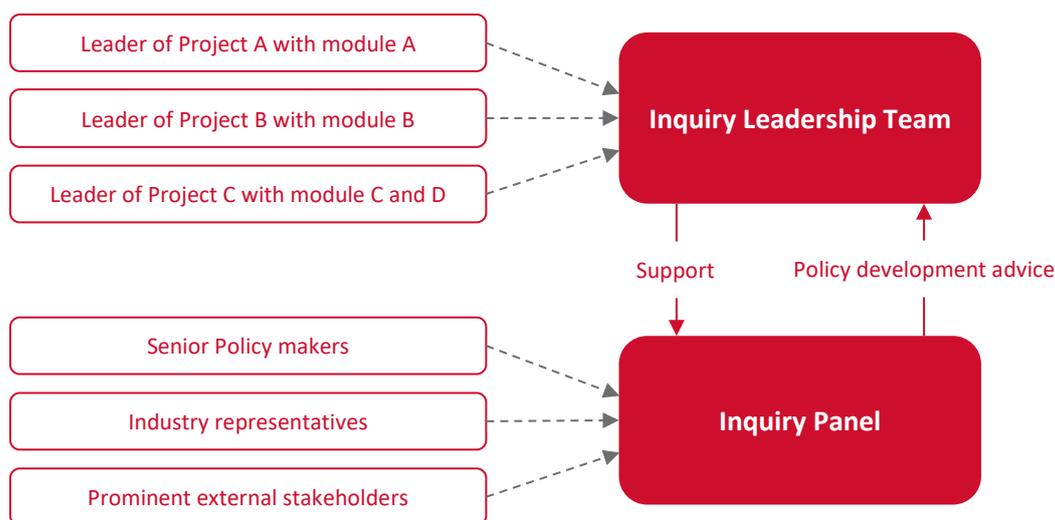
The Priority Brief is listed below and detailed in Chapter 3.

- **2022A** Lessons from the pandemic

2.2 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).

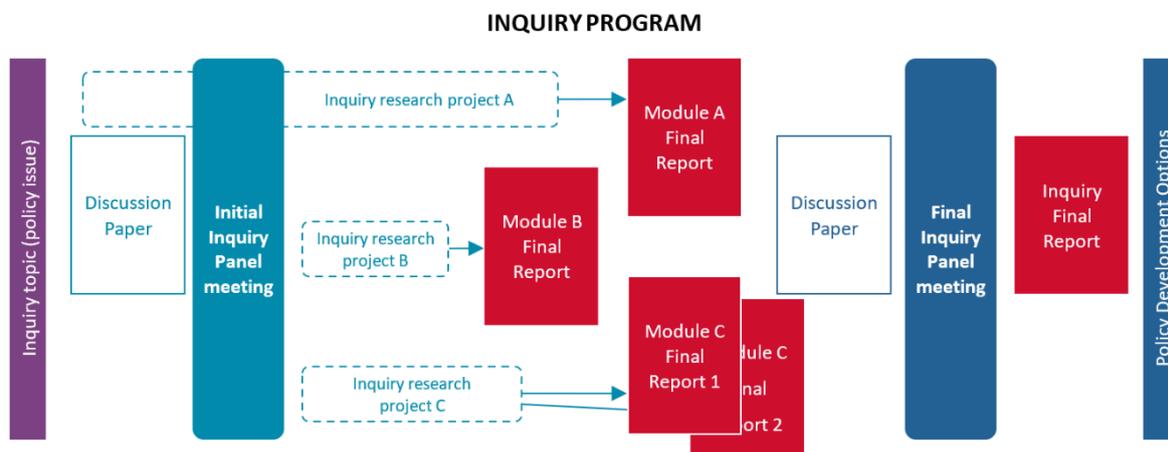
Figure 2: Inquiry key personnel structure



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 2022 Funding Round, funded Inquiries will run in parallel—each focussed on one pressing policy issue, as listed below and detailed in Chapter 4.

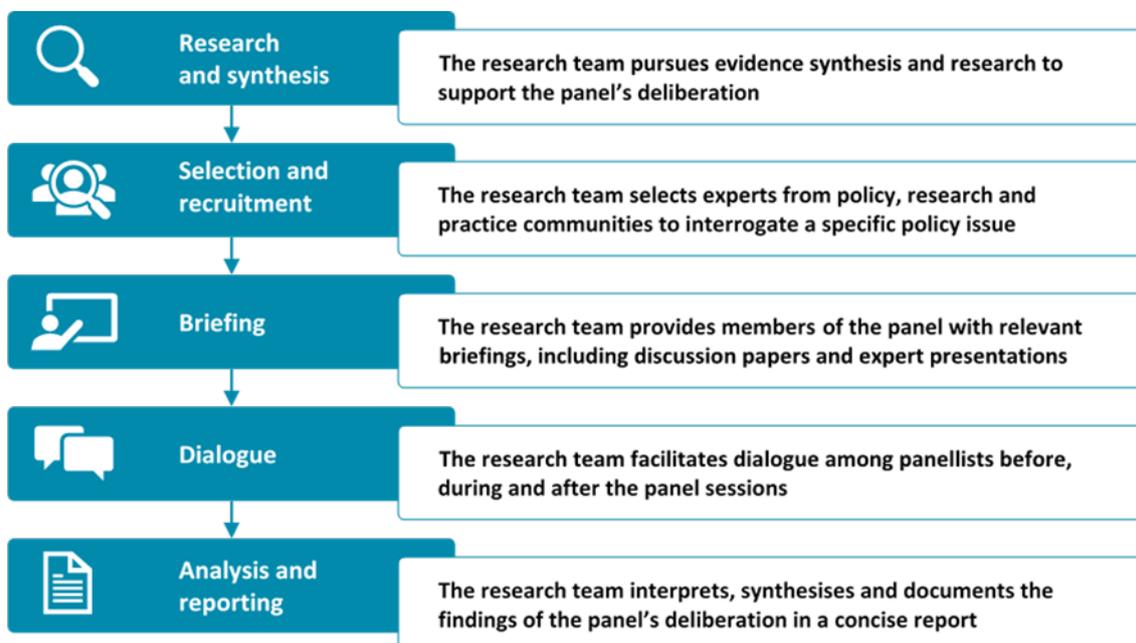
- **2022B** Inquiry into social housing demand, tenancy support and client outcomes
- **2022C** Inquiry into population dynamics and projections

2.3 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 5.

- **2022D** Investigative Panel on homelessness sector development
- **2022E** Investigative Panel on understanding poverty in Australian housing
- **2022F** Investigative Panel on public housing tenant relocation

2.4 Research projects

The NHRP Funding Round 2022 will include funding for Research projects to ensure 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, and include Data projects. 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 6.

- **2022G** Housing sale and rental market impacts of COVID-19
- **2022H** Mixed tenure development in Australia
- **2022I** NDIS and social housing
- **2022J** Understanding national approaches to housing and homelessness
- **2022K** Planning for remote communities
- **2022L** New data on housing

2.5 Scoping projects

Scoping projects operate under a shorter time frame and smaller funding limits than Research or Data projects—there is a cap of \$50,000 on the costing, and none should be longer in duration than 6 months.

Scoping projects must be led by an Early Career Researcher working in collaboration with a senior researcher or researchers. Early Career Researchers are defined in line with ARC DECRA eligibility—researchers are typically eligible if they have been awarded a PhD within five years (longer if combined with periods of significant career interruption).

A key feature of Scoping projects is evidence mapping—describing the quantity, design and characteristics of evidence and available data in broad topic areas. Researchers can undertake a Scoping project to examine the extent, range, and nature of current evidence, determine the value of undertaking further research or policy development, and identify gaps in the existing evidence base. As such, researchers can use Scoping projects to clarify a complex concept and refine subsequent policy research priorities. It is however expected that a Scoping project consists of more than a literature review, provides an opportunity for the development of the lead ECR and engages with a policy priority.

Scoping projects may be particularly relevant to issues with emerging evidence, where there is a lack of knowledge about the quality and applicability of the existing evidence base. In disseminating the findings from Scoping projects, it should be considered how to direct further research so that a body of literature can emerge to inform policy. These are listed below and detailed in Chapter 7.

- **2022M** Scoping energy and transport costs in housing affordability
- **2022N** Scoping the potential and limitations of housing data sources

3 Priority Brief

2022A Lessons from the pandemic

Policy issue: The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic shocks had profound impacts on housing outcomes of many Australians.

What structural faults did COVID-19 expose in Australian housing systems? How successful and sustainable were the policy interventions at federal and state level designed to mitigate the impacts?

Context

Over the course of 2020 and into 2021, COVID-19 and its economic repercussions have had significant impacts on housing security across all tenures. Coordination of housing policy initiatives between states and territories and the Australian Government was rapid and strong. Interventions to mitigate these impacts included mortgage deferrals, moratoria on rent increases and evictions due to rent arrears, negotiations of rent deferrals or reductions, and programs placing rough sleepers in hotel accommodation, as well as the HomeBuilder program.

Some of the policy interventions have lapsed or are lapsing soon. Some are transitioning into new arrangements, while others are appropriately understood as a crisis response rather than a system reform. Some interventions are potentially beneficial as ongoing programs. There are also potential lessons in policy implementation and coordination. This research will identify lessons for housing policy emerging from the COVID-19 response.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What housing policy interventions were effective in responding to the impacts of COVID-19 and supporting recovery?
- Of the policy interventions implemented to respond to the pandemic, which should be sustained, adapted or retired?
- What are the ongoing impacts of lapsing moratoria on rent levels, eviction rates, tenant-landlord disputes presented to tribunals, private rental vacancy rates and social housing waiting lists?
- What are the lessons from the COVID-19 period for the coordination of housing policy across the federation?

4 Inquiries

2022B Inquiry into social housing demand, tenancy support and client outcomes

Policy issue: The complexity of needs of social housing tenants and of those on social housing waiting lists has implications for service system design and delivery, as well as for an understanding of good client outcomes.

How could policy makers understand and design system reforms to best meet client needs and ensure good client outcomes?

Context

With the increasing demand for social housing, and growing complexity and diversity of needs amongst social housing tenants and people on waiting lists, there is a recognition of the need to work in partnership with clients to understand and respond to their individual needs.

Social housing providers are increasingly called upon to adapt and tailor services and the delivery of services to the complexity of social housing tenant needs – to operate as social landlords and deliver or oversee individualised tenancy support programs. This approach speaks to an understanding of client outcomes beyond sustaining shelter, with key implications for the increasing use of outcomes-based funding models for service delivery.

The length of time clients remain on waiting lists for social housing is problematic. This may force individuals or households into compromised living arrangements with potential adverse impacts on personal finances, health, safety, educational participation, or employment. While increasing the supply of social housing is one way to reduce waiting lists, consideration should be given to other policy interventions that might provide other forms of assistance or facilitate changes in circumstance that reduce overall social housing demand.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What are the demand profiles of contemporary social housing? What are the implications for service systems, delivery and for planning?
- How do social housing providers understand client needs, and how do they develop tailored packages to support those needs – how should tenancy support packages be determined and delivered?
- How do other services support social housing providers in working with complex clients?

- What are the client outcomes housing and homelessness policy and programs need to deliver? How are they determined on an individual basis? How is success measured?
- How can commissioning frameworks be designed to achieve good client outcomes? How can policy frameworks or implementations ensure the focus remains on good outcomes for clients, and avoid becoming throughput-driven?
- What are people on social housing waiting lists doing while they wait? What household configuration adjustments or compromises are made by people on the waiting lists and what are the client outcomes resulting from remaining on a waiting list for extended periods?
- Beyond new social housing supply, what interventions influence waiting list numbers (e.g. what policy interventions can serve as diversions from social housing waiting lists).

2022C Inquiry into population dynamics and projections

Policy issue: Approaches to small area population projections across Australia are fragmented and inconsistent. This is problematic for the understanding and planning for population growth at a local area level, as well as for understanding shifting internal migration patterns – including those after the COVID-19 pandemic – with significant implications for infrastructure and service planning.

What is best practice in small area level population projection, and how can a consistent approach be implemented nationally to understand and plan for future settlement patterns?

Context

COVID-19 has disrupted long running internal migration trends in Australia. While the overall trend towards urbanisation has continued, more people have moved to regional areas since the COVID-19 crisis began. These moves have been supported by increased opportunities to work remotely. This may support national settlement policies that have long focussed on decentralisation and regionalisation, although, the longevity of these impacts on population mobility is uncertain. More significant however, is the impact of reduced international migration, which will restrict the growth of Australia's major cities and overall population. Annual population growth in 2020 was the lowest it has been since WWII.

However, different levels of government use different methodologies and data sources for projecting population at different spatial scales and these are rarely comparable. Local governments may predict and plan for different population outcomes, though there is little coordination between councils and the methodologies they use vary significantly. Further, the objectives of local governments and the outcomes they seek in terms of population growth or stability can also vary. This means that information about the movement of people around Australia is patchy at best.

To prioritise the provision of housing, social services, and infrastructure, and to prevent under-utilisation, there is a need for fine-grained and more coherent population projections across the nation.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- How effective are local area population projections?
- How can a national program of local area population projections be implemented?
- What role does local government play in fostering or inhibiting population growth?
- What is the relationship between housing supply and population growth – can new housing supply serve as a meaningful proxy for population projections?

- How do policy makers recalibrate to changes in population distribution; what are the service system and infrastructure implications of this?
- What are the drivers of shifts from major centres to regional and remote settings?
- What are the drivers of changing interstate migration, and implications for settlement strategy?
- How should re-introduction of international migration be managed, and what are the implications for population distribution?

5 Investigative Panels

2022D Investigative Panel on homelessness sector development

Policy issue: Recruitment, retention and development of the homelessness sector workforce has been a continuing challenge.

How can the homelessness sector workforce be better developed and supported?

Context

Consistent with much of the human service and health workforces, recruitment and retention in the specialist homelessness sector remains a challenge. The tertiary education sector does not provide offerings specifically preparing staff for specialist homelessness work. Neither is there a set of clear educational pathways and qualifications for contemporary specialist homelessness practice. For those already working in specialist homelessness services (SHS) the availability of suitable ongoing education and training is varied, but overall is underdeveloped.

Resourcing workforce development in the homelessness sector was impeded by the short-term nature of National Partnership Agreements on Homelessness. The current National Housing and Homelessness Agreement restores longer range certainty to commonwealth-state homelessness funding, but does not directly address workforce development.

Sector-led, state-based approaches to workforce capability, learning and development or workforce pathways are in active development. A nationally coordinated approach to sector workforce development could more efficiently enhance sector capabilities and career pathways across the country.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What is needed under the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement to enhance the homelessness sector?
- What are effective workforce preparation, attraction, recruitment, and sustainment strategies for the specialist homelessness sector, including consideration of opportunities for Commonwealth investment in training and development of this workforce?
- How is the cultural competency and cultural responsiveness of housing and homelessness service workforce best understood and measured?
- What do we currently know of the current status of sector workforce capability? How does this capability interact with related sectors? How can it best be measured into the future?

NHRP FUNDING ROUND 2022
RESEARCH AGENDA

- What are the workforce practice model implications of government commissioning and funding models?
- What are the opportunities to strengthen relevant courses offered in the VET and higher education sectors?

2022E Investigative Panel on understanding poverty in Australian housing

Policy issue: Poverty and low incomes prevent people from accessing and sustaining appropriate, safe, and secure housing and exercising choice.

What is the relationship between poverty, tenure, and other housing outcomes in Australia?

Context

Tight private rental markets, limited access to social housing, and barriers to entering home ownership mean that people on low and very low incomes face significant issues in accessing and securing housing. When they do access it, high housing costs can impose significant hardships including inability to access healthcare, nourishing food and heating or cooling their home. Poverty can be a driver of homelessness, or emerge after persons become homeless.

In 2017-18, over 3 million people in Australia (13.6% of the population) lived below the poverty line (where the poverty line is measured at 50% of median income)¹. This amounts to more than one in eight adults and one in six children.

Poverty is especially apparent among renters (who are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as homeowners). Poverty is also higher among young people and migrants born in a non-English speaking country, both of whom were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 related economic shocks. As Australia faces challenging economic circumstances, how might we ensure that housing inequalities resulting from poverty are not exacerbated?

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What is the impact of poverty on housing outcomes in Australia?
- How does housing unaffordability create opportunity costs in terms of health and wellbeing, food security, or access to heating and cooling?
- What are the drivers of Australian poverty (including housing-related drivers) and how are they best addressed?
- What impacts did COVID-19 and related policy interventions (including JobSeeker and JobKeeper) have on poverty in Australia and associated housing outcomes?
- What are the key groups currently facing housing vulnerabilities due to poverty, and what policy interventions might help?

¹ ABS Survey of Income and Housing (2017-18).

2022F Investigative Panel on public housing tenant relocation

Policy issue: Renewal and redevelopment of public housing, as well as positive tenancy management and efficient asset management, require the relocation of tenants residing in these properties.

What is best practice in tenant relocation in public housing contexts?

Context

Relocation of public housing tenants is often required by public housing authorities, and can be driven by issues pertaining to the property in the context of estate renewal and redevelopment – or to the tenancy agreement (e.g. addressing underoccupancy), or by a range of other drivers. The national context is complex as jurisdictions adopt differing relocation policies and operational guidelines to the management of these processes.

Operational guidelines to tenant relocation vary in their acknowledgement that these moves are potentially disruptive of a tenant's connections to existing communities and networks, and they aim to mitigate the impacts of displacement to tenant's sense of security, safety, and control. There is an opportunity to learn about best practices across jurisdictions, including international jurisdictions, to understand outcomes for public housing providers and tenants that reflect equity and fairness while acknowledging the rights and responsibilities of both parties to the tenancy agreement.

There is a need for greater understanding of Australian principles and practices applied to tenant relocation, and the outcomes of those relocations for tenants and communities. There is an opportunity to learn about the practices across jurisdictions, including internationally.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What are the drivers of public housing tenant relocation? How are differing decision models around relocation processes shaped by the drivers of public housing tenant relocation, and how do they impact tenant outcomes?
- How is relocation best achieved in terms of client and system outcomes?
- Do system constraints allow consideration of tenant choice or participation in decision-making?
- What international practices could be translated to Australian public housing contexts?

6 Research projects

2022G Housing sale and rental market impacts of COVID-19

Policy issue: COVID-19 has had a complex and unpredictable impact on housing submarkets across Australia, with new patterns of supply and demand emerging.

What are the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on housing markets and how does this affect access to secure, safe and affordable housing for people on low incomes?

Context

Patterns of housing consumption across Australia have shifted following the COVID-19 pandemic. During the initial crisis there were significant and immediate impacts on housing markets, including reduced capacity of households with reduced income to afford their housing, changed demand due to lower immigration, restrictions on house inspections and auctions and decreased household mobility. A range of demand-side policy interventions addressed income support, access to superannuation, support for the residential construction industry, investment in new social housing, planning reforms, housing and energy efficiency upgrades and taxation reforms.

The housing market in Australia has remained tight, though the drivers of supply and demand have changed. House prices have sharply increased in many locations, despite economic downturn. There are increasing pressures on the private rental system, with very low vacancy rates being observed (Sydney and Melbourne having comparatively high vacancy rates due to the absence of international students), and tenants struggling to access suitable housing in many locations. New demand in regional areas has impacted access to housing, vacancy rates and affordability.

As the immediate effects of the pandemic and temporary policy interventions recede, it is important to understand the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on housing markets and the differential effects this has on access to appropriate, secure housing for different household types in different housing submarkets across Australia. The 2021 Census will reveal new insights into housing markets post-COVID-19, with opportunities to compare to previous data.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- How have patterns of housing consumption changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions?
- How have the drivers of supply and demand changed in different locations across Australia?
- What supply responses are emerging, and what might be required? How can more private rental supply be encouraged?
- Have interventions had significant market or affordability impacts? What are the longer-term implications of these interventions for reform and regulation of rental systems?

2022H Mixed tenure development in Australia

Policy issue: Mixed tenure development is a model for renewing and increasing social housing stock that leverages diverse funding streams.

Projects across Australia have had varied outcomes: what contributes to successful mixed tenure development?

Context

Housing policy and planning frameworks have been used to incentivise mixed tenure development across Australia. Mixed tenure developments encompass a range of tenure options including social rental, below-market rental, subsidised home ownership and market rental and ownership. The model is seen as a cost-effective mechanism to cross-subsidise the renewal of ageing social housing stock, deliver new affordable housing supply, and promote socially mixed communities.

A range of approaches have delivered mixed tenure developments across Australia's states and territories. Recent programs include the *Public Housing Renewal Program* in Victoria, the *Social Housing Economic Recovery Package* in Western Australia and the suite of urban renewal projects facilitated by *Renewal SA* through South Australia's *Our Housing Future 2020-2030* strategy.

Built form and design varies across developments, as do strategies for community engagement and community development during and after completion. What factors ensure good outcomes in mixed tenure development in Australia, and how can these be replicated?

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What is mixed tenure in an Australian context? What supports or barriers exist in each jurisdiction?
- How cost effective are mixed tenure developments, and how can the optimum funding mix be determined?
- How does built form and design influence tenant outcomes and experience?
- What community programs or built form approaches can encourage communities to form in mixed tenure developments?
- What role does stock transfer play in mixed tenure housing development?
- Has the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation changed the prospects of mixed tenure development?

20221 NDIS and social housing

Policy issue: The Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and social housing provision are both constrained systems with complex eligibility criteria, and complex inter-relationships.

What is the interaction between the NDIS, SDA, and social housing provision?

Context

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is designed to give people with disabilities greater choice and control over the services they receive, and facilitate a greater degree of independence. NDIS participants can qualify for payments under the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) program to enable them to access appropriate housing for their needs.

SDA funding is available for NDIS participants who have “extreme functional impairment” or “very high support needs”² (NDIA 2020:173). In 2020, of the 28,000 anticipated NDIS participants eligible for SDA housing payments, just over half have received funding. While NDIS and SDA-eligible individuals may be living in a range of tenures, many seek to enter social housing because of its affordability and relative tenure security.

There is a need to better understand the experience of accessing and living in social housing for NDIS participants, including those able to access SDA or Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, as well as the interactions of the policy and practice systems associated with NDIS and social housing.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- How do SDA and social housing systems interact? Could this be improved?
- Who in social housing is receiving NDIS support and SDA? Who is providing NDIS-supported social housing?
- How do SDA-eligible individuals or households access social housing and how do allocation policies and practices affect this access?
- What is the unmet demand for SDA, and the scale of housing required in the SDA market? How is the unmet demand in the SDA market impacting the social housing system?
- What is the interrelationship of SDA funding and social housing provider requirements for individuals receiving support services through SIL funding?

² National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) 2020, *Annual Report 2019–20*, NDIA, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports>.

2022J Understanding national approaches to housing and homelessness

Policy issue: Housing policy and housing assistance is delivered through increasingly complex networks of organisations, including the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, community sectors, commercial sectors and local governments. There are shared responsibilities and overlapping roles.

What are the defining features of optimal national arrangement for housing and homelessness assistance?

Context

Within Australia's federated system of government, housing policy and assistance is a portfolio area with responsibilities shared between the Commonwealth and the states and territories. Community sectors, industry, and a growing role for local governments also contribute.

While commonwealth-state housing agreements (most recently the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement) articulate the flow of funds and associated roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth government and state and territory governments, the agreements are not designed to coordinate policy development or capture all of the activities undertaken by these governments to improve housing outcomes for Australians.

The growing contributions from other tiers of government and from non-government sectors, and the shared purpose of many of these activities – such as the development of multi-provider social housing systems involving both State and community managed housing on a shared waiting list – are also beyond the remit of such agreements.

There have been prominent calls for a national housing strategy, given the significance and complexity of housing system challenges. How a national strategy would contribute to better housing outcomes has not been a central feature of such calls. There is a need to clearly articulate the benefits of a strategy, and the mechanism through which a strategy would address the challenges of the Australian context.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What would a national housing strategy deliver, what difference would having one make?
- What is best practice for management of funding models and delivery models, and how would this translate to an Australian context?
- What is the full range of policy areas, programs and participants that a national housing strategy would need to cover?

2022K Planning for remote communities

Policy issue: Settlement and mobility patterns of Indigenous populations raise challenges for housing, services delivery, and infrastructure in remote settlements. These challenges were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic with a significant focus on return to community.

As Australia moves to a new COVID-normal, how will Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be best supported to live in their location of choice?

Context

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations face disproportionately high rates of chronic disease and ill health in Australia. There are also high rates of mobility amongst this population, with people cycling between homelands, regional and remote centres, and major cities.

When the COVID-19 crisis hit, Australian governments moved quickly to protect vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Where possible many Aboriginal people returned to homeland communities in remote settlements to be close to, and support family, and for safety. Restrictions were placed on access to remote communities to prevent transmission of the disease and border closures made it impossible for some to return to country. There is the possibility that responses during the pandemic may have lasting effects and that changes in mobility and settlement may also continue. In managing the return to country during this period local decision making and determination were required given the isolation and restrictions on travel.

To progress Indigenous housing strategies and support the ongoing management of remote areas there is concern that the ground has shifted and approaches will need to encompass learnings from this period with greater local planning and support for local decision making and determination. While temporary measures were provided during the COVID-19 crisis, many remote communities do not currently have adequate resources and infrastructure to support more people in the long term nor are potential new patterns of mobility and settlement well understood.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What are the population redistributions resulting from changes during the COVID-19 crisis, and the anticipated future patterns of mobility?
- How are the demographic profiles of remote communities shifting, and what are the infrastructure and service delivery implications of any shifts?
- What types of programs and resourcing might be required to support local planning and infrastructure provision in a context of self-determination?
- How do these programs align with Closing the Gap priorities?

2022L New data on housing

To support policy development in housing and homelessness, the AHURI NHRP has, over time, systematically analysed a range of key secondary data sets (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 policy relevant questions can be developed through research approaches using these data sets or incorporating new datasets as they become available.

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

New census data is pertinent to this endeavour. The 2021 Census of Population and Housing will be held on 10 August 2021 with data released from June 2022.

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, 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 that the research approach is realistic and appropriate. 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 focused on the data analysis and its implications for policy development, may work more strongly with visuals and graphics and/or be submitted for peer review for publication in the AHURI Report series.

7 Scoping projects

2022M Scoping energy and transport costs in housing affordability

Policy issue: Housing affordability is a key policy challenge in Australia. However, features of housing (relating to dwelling and location) also influence energy and transport costs of households, potentially adding to household disadvantage.

What are the roles of energy and transportation costs in understanding housing affordability challenges?

Context

The term 'housing affordability' usually refers to the relationship between expenditure on housing (house prices, mortgage repayments or rent) and household incomes. Households in the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution paying more than 30 per cent of their gross income on mortgage or rent payments are considered to be in housing affordability stress. However, there are other costs associated with housing choices beyond direct housing expenditure.

The energy efficiency of a dwelling influences the overall cost of living in that dwelling. Energy prices have increased in recent years, posing a risk for greater financial hardship and poverty. Householders with resources might seek to refurbish with energy saving technology, but others may respond by curtailing energy use with potential adverse health consequences.

Lack of availability or accessibility of good transport options create disadvantage if they limit mobility, add to commute times or add to cost. Transport disadvantage can be reflected in lower housing costs, so that housing that is affordable is disproportionately located in outer areas of cities rather than inner suburbs. However, transport costs (financial and time) of accessing employment, education or other opportunities should also be considered.

Opportunities

Researchers might consider:

- What are the contributions to overall housing affordability of energy and transport costs?
- What cost factors should be considered in achieving a comprehensive understanding of housing affordability and what are the possible alternative measures of housing affordability that take energy and transport costs into account for housing and planning decision-makers?
- How are cost and transport understood and factored into household housing decisions?
- What is the potential for recognising energy and transport costs in rent setting methodologies for social and affordable housing?

2022N Scoping the potential and limitations of housing data sources

Policy issue: Data supports Australian housing and urban research and policy.

What housing related data is presently collected and who uses it? What data is needed to support Australian housing policy, practice, and research more effectively?

Context

Data about housing is collected by a range of interested parties, including government agencies, the private sector, and researchers. This data is collected for several potential purposes including policy formulation and evaluation, research, or administration of programs.

Practical and ethical considerations govern the collection, use, analysis, and publication of data.

The AHURI National Housing Research Program has, over time, systematically analysed a range of key secondary data sets to enhance understanding and inform policy development in the areas of housing, homelessness, and urban issues.

There is a need to understand the different types of housing data available, and how they are used within the policy-research-practitioner ecosystem, and how those who provided the information (such as tenants and clients) benefit from this data. Potential gaps in data should be identified to better inform policy and practice outcomes.

Opportunity

Researchers might:

- Identify and document data sets held in government departments and agencies (e.g. Valuer-General, bond board data) or the private sector and professional associations (e.g. Real Estate Institutes).
- Critically analyse the way housing data is collected, published, and used by different stakeholders including to guide policy for specific outcomes, and associated ethics.
- Explore underutilised datasets or data sources, and identify data sources or gaps in data availability to explore contemporary housing, homelessness, and related urban issues.
- Expand research reach by considering data sets internationally which could be used for benchmarking or comparisons to a wider population group, trends, or programs in another country.

8 National Housing Research Program Funding Round 2022

The annual NHRP Funding Round opens with the publication of the NHRP Research Agenda 2022 which calls for research funding applications.

The NHRP Funding Round 2022 includes a call for research funding applications for a Priority Brief.

The annual NHRP Funding Round 2022 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 Priority Brief	Tuesday 27 April 2021	Thursday 20 May 2021 12 noon AEST
NHRP Funding Round	Tuesday 4 May 2021	Thursday 1 July 2021 12 noon AEST
Scholarship Top-up	Tuesday 4 May 2021	Friday 29 April 2022 COB AEST