Final Report

Assessing management costs and tenant outcomes in social housing: recommended methods and future directions

authored by

Hal Pawson, Vivienne Milligan, Edgar Liu, Peter Phibbs and Steven Rowley

with

Elton Consulting

for the

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

at The University of New South Wales
at The University of Sydney
at Curtin University

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ACRONYMS

ATCS	Additional tenant and community support
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AH	Affordable Housing
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited
CCA	Cost consequences analysis
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CHP	Community Housing Provider
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRC	COAG Reform Council
CSLA	Core social landlord activities
FTE	Full time equivalent
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency (UK)
ICT	Information Communications Technology
ITS	Individual tenant support
MF	Management Field
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NSWFHA	New South Wales Federation of Housing Associations
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
NRSCH	National Regulatory System for Community Housing
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
NSW	New South Wales
OHA	Other housing activities
PAC	Public Accounts Committee (Parliament of NSW)
PHP	Public Housing Provider
ROGS	Report of Government Services (Productivity Commission)
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
UK	United Kingdom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research purpose and context

Reliable measures of provider efficiency and effectiveness are fundamental in enabling governments to determine how best to deliver social housing services. As confirmed by this research, however, Australia's existing suite of official social housing performance measures is seriously inadequate in this respect and lags well behind other service realms (Pawson et al. 2014; CRC 2013a, p.15). The aim of this project, therefore, is to develop and trial a conceptual framework and methodology to address this problem. The research responds to the longstanding policy-maker and industry interest in improving performance metrics for Australian social housing; a sector encompassing both the public housing authorities and the not-for-profit landlord entities which cater for low and very low-income households.

This report focuses primarily on the second phase of our study which involved extensive joint working between the research team and eight 'case study' social landlords—six larger community housing providers (CHPs) and two (state government) public housing providers—PHPs. This collaboration involved:

→ Road-testing proposed metrics for assessing the cost of managing social housing provision.

→ Investigation of possible enhancements to tenant outcome measures.

→ Workshops with organisational managers and an online survey of front line CHP staff to examine their respective views about each case study provider's activities and aspirations regarding its 'social mission'.

→ Exploration of the social inclusion contribution of social housing via a telephone survey of recently housed tenants.

Under the overarching framework developed in the first phase of the study and refined in consultation with providers, 'housing management' is defined as synonymous with the activities involved in providing 'landlord services', including the specification, ordering and monitoring of repairs and maintenance services (but excluding actual works implementation). Crucially, the framework disaggregates the social landlord task into four constituent elements—differentiating the 'core landlord activities' of 'tenancy management' and 'property management' from additional social landlord activities, termed 'individual tenant support' and 'additional tenant and community services'. Using a cost-consequences logic, matched performance measures are then specified for these four management fields (see Figure 1). This framework has been well-received across the social housing industry.

Road testing and enhancing measures of social housing 'cost of provision'

Pivotal to this part of the study was the development of a workbook (data input vehicle and rules manual) to:

→ Define 'housing management (HM) activities' for this purpose.

→ Guide grouping of relevant HM activities into proposed categories.

→ Appropriately allocate all relevant salary and non-salary expenditure—including overheads.

Problematic issues addressed through trialling the workbook with case study providers included how to split tenancy management and individual tenant support, how to treat 'back office' and senior management salary 'overheads', and where to locate expenditure associated with functions such as managing housing applications (waiting lists), housing advice and assistance for non-tenants.

While absorbing substantial case study landlord staff time, the trial confirmed the potential applicability of our proposed framework in the context of larger CHPs. The trialling exercise also usefully brought to light important calibration issues and led to definitional and procedural refinements that have been incorporated in the model. Following from our experimental application of the service costs model and associated documentation, we consider that wider use of this tool across the CHP sector could be fruitfully pursued. A whole-of-industry structured approach to implementation would be essential to assure consistency of application and to contribute to future refinements of the methodology.

Although acknowledging the conceptual logic of the proposed framework, state housing colleagues directly involved in the research encountered substantial obstacles in attempting to apply the proposed model in the PHP context. Associated issues included specifying the 'boundaries of housing management' and, in particular, the comprehensive capture of expenditure associated with all organisational contributions (including back office functions). Nevertheless, the case for the reform and standardisation of the official framework for calibrating the cost of providing public housing remains compelling. Full application of the proposed model in the PHP context would undoubtedly present accounting challenges. In principle, however, there is no reason why this could not be achieved. It will be the responsibility of parliaments and central government agencies to ensure that such a direction is pursued.

How social landlords seek to enhance tenant outcomes

Beyond the aspiration to provide efficient and effective tenancy and property management services, social landlords are also tasked with enhancing tenants' welfare and quality of life. These obligations have become increasingly important in response to significant shifts in the social housing client profile and public policy ambitions to enhance the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged tenants and to promote sustainable transitions into market housing.

With regards to tenancy support in particular our study found that the case study CHPs had progressively refined housing management activities and procedures to better support their tenants with a primary aim of preventing rent arrears and tenancy complaints. All case study organisations were facing cost pressures associated with this growing service challenge but there were few well-defined measures of their effectiveness in this respect.

There were differences between PHPs and CHPs as regards organisational efforts to promote community development and the 'beyond housing' needs of individual tenants, such as access to training and employment. For large, resource-strapped PHPs such functions had become more marginalised. Under the organisational structures of some states, activities of this kind are administratively divorced from mainstream housing management.

Conversely, case study CHPs had been generally expanding associated 'place management' activities and deploying additional resources. However, little could be discerned from existing measures about the effectiveness of such activities. The geography of CHP housing portfolios was perceived to be a key driver of the scope for positively influencing tenant outcomes. In particular, potential to support community development and tenant engagement was subject to the scale of a landlord's presence in a local community. This, therefore, should be an important consideration in plans for expanding the CHP model in Australia.

CHP frontline staff survey respondents were generally supportive of the value and importance of community development activities and, by and large, backed their organisation's endeavours to support tenants and to actively promote tenant wellbeing. However, they were more sceptical about organisational effectiveness on individual tenant support, with workload and training issues, as well as growth pressures seen as problematic. Few staff considered that their organisations were prioritising or having significant success in promoting tenant employability. Indeed, while it involved only two of the case study providers (one PHP and one

CHP) our new tenants' survey results appeared to confirm the very limited extent of activity currently ongoing in this respect.

Measuring the tenant outcomes associated with social housing

In Australia, the monitoring of social housing outcomes is substantially reliant on the two-yearly National Social Housing Survey that continues to provide a widely-respected benchmark on tenant satisfaction. However, there is scope for enhancing the survey—in particular through a stronger focus on calibrating the social inclusion impacts of social housing as regards recently-housed tenants.

As is widely recognised in the industry, a key outcome indicator shedding light on social landlord effectiveness on social inclusion is the measurement of tenancy sustainment. To improve its utility, this measure—already routinely applied to PHPs—could be more precisely directed to a defined cohort of 'at risk' tenancies, as well as being extended in coverage to encompass CHPs.

Another potential aspect of 'tenant outcome measurement' explored in the research related to measuring impacts of landlord action to assist work-capable, jobless tenants to re-connect with employment. However, while the logic of our proposed tenant 'economic re-connection' metric was generally acknowledged by case study providers, evidence from our new tenants survey illustrated the potential complexities which would be involved in collecting and interpreting such data. The proportion of tenants recently accommodated in social housing and 'working less' than previously was greater than the proportion of this cohort 'working more', when compared to their previous housing situation. This apparently paradoxical finding probably reflects the way that access to social housing is prioritised according to 'need'. Thus, the onset of disability or the imminence of a birth might have materially contributed to a household's priority for a tenancy offer, while also being associated with a condition negatively impacting on the tenant's 'employability', at least in the short term.

This experience highlights the challenge inherent in attempting to gauge social landlords' success in economic reconnection and the necessity for targeting any such metric on those deemed 'work capable'. If governments wish to assure themselves that social landlords actively assist tenants in gaining employment, possible ways forward include linking to Centrelink records and introducing regulatory oversight of providers' managerial activities in this respect.

Conclusions, recommendations and the way forward

Noting the small number of case studies and the experimental nature of the research, only provisional conclusions can be drawn from this study regarding the costs of social housing management. The first of these concerns how CHP costs were apportioned across the four distinct management fields defined in our research. The case study analysis yielded the following benchmarks: on average 56 per cent of the total management outlay was expended on 'tenancy management'; 25 per cent on 'property management'; 10 per cent on 'individual tenant support' and 9 per cent on 'additional tenant and community services' (Table 5). In other words, non-traditional landlord services (individual tenant support and community development) indicatively accounted for 19 per cent of total housing management expenditure.

The second tentative finding to emerge from the study concerns the overarching question of how efficiency and effectiveness compare between public housing and community housing. Relating outputs from our experimentally generated 'cost of provision' statistics for community housing to estimates derived from published accounts for public housing, it would appear that typical housing management expenditure per dwelling for larger CHPs may be marginally higher than that for PHPs (although we could not verify PHP figures). If such a difference was confirmed it would need to be interpreted within the context that, in terms of portfolio size, the public housing entities concerned were between 20 times and 70 times larger than the average case study CHP (Section 2.4). Assuming that scale economies continue to accrue as social

landlord portfolios expand, it would be expected that future CHP growth would yield consequential unit cost reductions. Moreover, at least at their current operating scale, CHPs continue to record significantly superior service outcomes than PHPs in terms of tenant satisfaction ratings (Table 11) and, as discussed above, are more focused on contributing to broader tenant outcomes.

The study's main contribution, however, is through the formulation of a logical and widely supported new framework for the analysis of social housing management activities; in particular, the calibration of associated expenditure and tenant outcomes. On the basis of this study, therefore, we would argue that this framework and the associated metrics offer a sound way forward for enhancing the measurement of social housing management costs and tenant outcomes and, accordingly, should be accorded high priority in government. The report makes a number of specific recommendations in this regard (Section 5.2).

Albeit beyond the scope of the research, there is an outstanding concern about the designation of overall responsibility for reforming the social housing performance monitoring framework. While the existing system is managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and reported on by the Productivity Commission, these organisations see themselves as servants rather than masters in this realm. It is recognised that progressing any such reform will call for government leadership. The current absence of a formal coordinating body, such as the Housing Ministers' Advisory Council, presents a challenge in this respect, as does uncertainty about future roles and responsibilities for housing services (arising from the 2014–2016 Reform of the Federation process). In any event, however, the availability of robust information on the efficiency and effectiveness of social housing providers is fundamental to principles of public accountability and transparency. Having suitable measures of the cost of service provision and tenant outcomes is also pivotal to informing future public policy settings and subsidy arrangements for social housing.

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research purpose and questions

This research has been conceived and designed to offer a conceptual framework and a tested methodology to enable better assessment of the management costs and tenant benefits attributable to public and community housing, collectively termed 'social housing'. The guiding purpose has been to inform the development of a multi-provider system of social housing delivery grounded in the principles of contestable service provision and accountability for outcomes. The research responds to the longstanding interest of both policy-makers and housing provider communities in improving performance metrics for the Australian social housing industry.

The project is ground-breaking and experimental in nature. Thus, rather than seeking to reach definitive judgements on the relative efficiency and effectiveness of social housing provider types and entities, the primary intent was to develop the capacity to do so in future. This will be accomplished through proposing, testing and, thereby, further refining a framework, thus constructing a methodology to that end.

The research has involved a two stage process each resulting in a published report. This is the second and final report of the research.

Across its totality, the research has addressed five core questions:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing official measures of housing management inputs and service outcomes?

2. How should management expenditure per dwelling be defined, measured and disaggregated for application to a multi-provider system?

3. How do social landlords seek to maximise added value on wellbeing outcomes?

4. How can added value via tenancy management services be effectively quantified and measured?

5. How should existing assessment methods and measures of housing management service outcomes be adapted to promote comparison across provider entities and provider types?

The previous report (Pawson et al. 2014) fully addressed research question one and proposed an initial approach (for consultation and testing) to question two, as summarised in Section 1.2. Subsequent chapters of this report address the remaining research questions are explained in Section 1.5 below.

1.2   Findings from phase 1 research

The phase 1 research was comprised of four core components. The relevant outcomes are summarised below.

1.2.1   Review of concepts and methodologies

First, phase 1 reviewed concepts and methodologies developed in Australia and elsewhere to measure aspects of social housing system performance, especially those pertaining to management costs and service outcomes (see Pawson et al. 2014, Chapter 2). Relying mainly on research from the UK and the Netherlands, it found that measurement of landlord efficiency had become well established international practice via both regulatory and industry-led processes, and that survey approaches to measurement of tenant outcomes were widespread. In both countries data on such performance measures are publically available as a norm.

1.2.2 Critique of existing metrics

Second, it assessed the two official Australian 'management expenditure' and tenant outcomes 'performance' measures, namely the 'net recurrent cost per dwelling' metric and a 'customer satisfaction' measure, each of which is reported in the Productivity Commission's 'Report on Government Services' series. The key findings of the assessment were that:

→ The 'net recurrent cost per dwelling' metric was inadequate for evaluating the efficiency of social housing landlords mainly because of being too broadly defined and too inconsistently assembled (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.25–27).

→ While the national social housing survey (NSHS) 'tenant satisfaction measure' had merit as an indicator of service outcomes from a tenant perspective, it would be desirable to enhance this survey and to complement it with additional indicators more sensitive to a range of tenant outcomes related to 'social inclusion' policy objectives (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.27–30).

The review of Australian core metrics also identified a little known 'tenancy sustainment metric' that was designed to be an indicator of the success of lettings to 'highest needs' clients within public housing. This was assessed as having the potential to be more broadly applied across the social housing system and thus was included for consultation in the phase 2 research design (see Section 1.4 below).

1.2.3 Developing a proposed conceptual framework

Using the findings, the third product of the first stage of the study comprised the research team's proposal for a new conceptual framework and related set of metrics suited to promoting a more robust assessment of social housing landlord management costs and tenant benefits. The framework proposed that new matched input and outcome measures be developed in four 'management fields' of social housing activity:

→ MF1—Tenancy management

→ MF2—Property and neighbourhood management

→ MF3—Individual tenant support

→ MF4—Additional tenant and community services.

The conceptual framework is consistent with the program logic approach to program evaluation, which stresses both the need to develop an understanding of how specific inputs and activities are linked with specific outcomes and the desire for measurement of short and longer term outcomes (Pawson et al. 2014, p.36). Furthermore, the conceptual framework is designed to be consistent with a cost-consequences analysis (CCA) approach to economic evaluation (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.7–8).[1] A CCA allows for the likelihood of complex and multiple relationships existing between management activities and service outcomes. It also promotes documentation of inputs and outcomes, without requiring judgements about causality or value for money. Apparent linkages identified by calibrating indicators for each field can be used to decide where further research could be conducted to explore how different approaches to management have influenced desired tenant outcomes.

Also importantly embedded within the conceptual framework is a definition of 'housing management' that excludes 'works expenditure' on the repair and maintenance of existing housing. This is deliberately narrower than an analysis of total operating costs, which, for any

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[1] Unlike other approaches to economic evaluation, such as cost effectiveness analysis and cost benefit analysis, CCA was considered better suited for assessing the complexity of social housing management because it did not require monetisation of all outcomes nor require that a diversity of outcomes be reduced to a single metric (Pawson et al. 2014, p.3).

social landlord, will include expenditure on physical works associated with property maintenance and modernisation.

In developing a metric to facilitate calibration of landlord cost-effectiveness we consider it appropriate to exclude 'works expenditure' because this is potentially influenced by historic property design or investment decisions.[2] Equally, however, a landlord's effectiveness in the administration of repairs will impact on overall tenant satisfaction—a key social housing 'outcome measure'. With this in mind, our proposed definition of 'housing management' includes 'the management of maintenance'—that is ordering responsive repairs and administering planned maintenance programs. Expenditure associated with these activities is therefore encompassed within Management Field 2.

An important attribute of the proposed conceptual framework is its capacity to separate the costs of 'core activities' common to any residential property landlord—tenancy and property management—from services specific to social housing management, such as individual tenant support and additional services that may be provided to tenants or in their communities. This demarcation was designed both to facilitate 'management expenditure' benchmarking between social and private landlords (on common functions) and to separately account for any additional contribution of social landlords to wellbeing outcomes (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.39–41).

Discussions with social housing stakeholder representatives evoked widespread support for our proposed conceptual framework. The diagrammatic representation shown below in Figure 1 is a slightly revised version of the original version as set out in our Positioning Paper. Partly for consistency with our assignment of 'management activities' to the four management fields[3] (informed through the trialling process recounted in Chapter 2), this edition of the diagram incorporates some minor changes to the model as previously specified.

1.2.4 Specifying the testing and refinement of proposed concepts

Finally, the stage one report set out the proposed design for testing and refining the concept and measurement approach that was advocated (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.42–48). Application of that research design has provided the basis for the research results presented in this report.

Prior to outlining the stage 2 research, this introductory chapter will next provide an update of relevant developments that have occurred since publication of the first report.

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[2] Although it is highly desirable that data on maintenance works expenditure is separately collected.

[3] As shown in Appendix 2.

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework for measuring social housing cost of provision and tenant outcomes

Housing management activities (examples)

- Property letting - including tenant selection for specific vacancy
- New tenant induction
- Rent reviews, rent collection arrears management
- Managing tenant transfers, complaints and appeals
- Managing antisocial behaviour – investigation and enforcement

- Property/estate inspections
- Managing responsive maintenance/repairs to dwellings and common areas
- Empty property works specification
- Managing estate cleaning/grounds maintenance
- Programming/managing planned maintenance

- Identifying tenant support needs
- Making referrals for personal support/counselling
- Managing support partnerships
- Preparing case management plans
- Supportive interventions to sustain tenancies, resolve arrears or respond to antisocial behaviour

- Supporting tenants to engage with employment or training
- Supporting tenant participation in housing/ neighbourhood governance
- Community development, place making and events
- Community services provision (e.g. youth activities)
- Supporting tenants to move through the housing spectrum (e.g. home purchase)

Management field

1. Tenancy management

2. Property and neighbourhood management

3. Individual tenant support

4. Additional tenant and community services

Tenant/community outcome measures

- Overall tenant satisfaction with landlord services

- Tenant satisfaction on:
  - repairs service
  - property condition
  - neighbourhood quality

- Tenancy sustainment (at risk households)

- Change in tenant household social/ economic participation
- Change in local social capital

Source: Authors

1.3 Relevant external developments since the phase 1 research

Chapter 3 of this study's first report includes a review of research, policy and administrative developments that at the time had a bearing on the enhancement of performance measurement in the social housing system. To complement that review, this section includes a short overview of relevant developments that have occurred since.

1.3.1 NSW Public Account Committee Inquiry into tenancy management in social housing

In 2014 the New South Wales Parliament, through its Public Accounts Committee (PAC), undertook an inquiry into tenancy management in social housing in that jurisdiction. The concerns of this Inquiry were closely akin to those of this research:

→ The cost effectiveness of current tenancy management arrangements in public housing, particularly compared to private and community housing sectors.

→ The range and effectiveness of support services provided to tenants in social housing.

→ Outcomes for tenants from current tenancy management arrangements.

→ Possible measures to improve tenancy management services (Public Accounts Committee 2014, p.iv).

Following submission of our research plans and the findings of our initial positioning paper to the Inquiry,[4] two members of the research team together with the Deputy Director of AHURI Limited Board appeared as witnesses before the Inquiry, held in September 2014.

In its subsequent report, the PAC concurred with a key finding from our phase 1 research that there is currently no adequate basis on which the cost-effectiveness of social housing landlords can be determined and compared. As expressed by the PAC Inquiry Chair in the foreword to its report:

> Almost universal among stakeholders was the view that performance measurement and reporting in social housing is unreliable and inadequate … This appalling situation must be addressed. (Public Accounts Committee 2014, p.v)

The PAC strongly endorsed the framework proposed in our first report (see Figure 1) as the basis for defining and measuring the performance of social landlords and recommended that future decisions by the NSW Government about resource allocation to providers be based on the application of that measurement framework. Again in the words of the PAC Inquiry Chair:

> Most witnesses anticipated that ongoing research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) would help resolve this oversight [see above], and the Committee agreed. (Public Accounts Committee 2014, p.v)

Box 1 (overleaf) lists the PAC recommendations that specifically referred to this research project. The potential for this research to fulfil those expectations is discussed throughout this report.

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[4] See Parliamentary Accounts Committee, Inquiry into Tenancy Management in Social Housing, Submission 12, City Futures Research Centre, UNSW

Box 1: Recommendations concerning the research from a 2014 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry

> *Recommendation 2*
>
> The Committee recommends that the outcomes of the research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute detailed in its paper entitled *Assessing management costs and tenant outcomes in social housing: developing a framework* should form the basis for defining and measuring the performance of social housing provision, including tenancy management (Public Accounts Committee 2014, p.47).
>
> *Recommendation 3*
>
> The Committee recommends that the introduction of the AHURI framework as the foundation for robust performance measurement and reporting in social housing be pursued by the NSW Government as the fundamental prerequisite for making resource allocation decisions, especially where the Government seeks to transfer resources between housing sectors and providers as a way of improving effectiveness. (Public Accounts Committee 2014, p.24).

Source: NSW Parliament 2014, p.v

1.3.2 Changes to public policy and administration

As described in our first report, the post-2008 intergovernmental agreement for housing and homelessness services provision (the National Affordable Housing Agreement—NAHA) placed increased emphasis on the development of robust outcomes measures as a means of improving service performance assessment and, consequentially, informing service reform strategy (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.33–36). Responsibility for progressing the social housing reform agenda was allocated to the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council (within the Council of Australian Governments—COAG). Meanwhile, development and analysis of an outcomes-focussed measurement approach was assigned to the independently established COAG Reform Council. In 2014 both those entities were abolished, disrupting national progress on social housing reform.

The future of performance reporting is now one aspect of a much wider ongoing review, Reform of the Federation (Australian Government 2014; 2015). This review is focussed on, among other things, how responsibilities for housing and homelessness services are allocated between levels of government and whether changes in roles and responsibilities could contribute to improved service provision. A factor in these considerations, as recognised by the COAG Reform Council (COAG 2012, p.xi.), is whether the current intergovernmental agreement, the NAHA, is suited to assessment and measurement of performance against agreed outcomes (Australian Government 2014). Contributors to a 2015 round of stakeholder consultations on the Reform of Federation review again emphasised that, under any form of service delivery arrangements, improved accountability and transparency regarding the performance of agencies delivering housing assistance and homelessness services should be required (Australian Government 2015, p.116). Recommendations from the review will be included in the Reform of the Federation White Paper to be published in 2016.

The other arena of public administration with prospective bearing on how the performance measurement system for social housing can be enhanced is the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) that commenced in 2014. Under the NRSCH, state-based regulators agreed a common set of financial and service performance reporting requirements. With the NRSCH now operational, state regulators are acquiring extensive data sets on community housing providers that have potential to enhance public accountability, as we discuss further in our conclusions to this report. An initial round of provider registrations was completed in six jurisdictions by June 2015. The first national annual report on the sector's profile and performance using aggregate data compiled from provider returns will be released later in 2015. A limitation on the usefulness of that report, however, arises because two

jurisdictions—WA and Victoria—are not participating in the NRSCH, instead choosing to maintain their pre-existing state based regulatory systems.

1.3.3 Launch of Community Housing Industry Benchmarking Framework

In 2015 the NSW Federation of Housing Associations launched its House Keys[5] sector benchmarking framework to collect, analyse and share operational performance and workforce data between participating providers. Partly drawing on statistical data collected under the NRSCH, the online system enables member organisation to compare their own metrics with sector norms. While initiated in and operated from NSW, the system is open to providers based elsewhere in Australia. At its inception, NRSCH involved 38 providers—including organisations based in four other jurisdictions. Importantly, the framework encompasses not only traditional management output indicators (e.g. on rent arrears and occupancy rates) but also input and outcome measures (e.g. operating expenses and tenant satisfaction scores).

1.3.4 NSW development of Social Housing Outcomes Framework

Connected with its social housing review, the NSW State Government has been working on a 'social housing outcomes framework'. The starting point for this was Gabrielle Upton MP, NSW Minister for Family and Community Services at the time, contending that '[the social housing system] doesn't do enough to change the lives of the people it serves. Until now, success has been measured by sustaining tenancies, not by improving outcomes' (NSW FACS 2014, p.2).

In response to the above concern, NSW has sought to develop and define a range of 'outcome measures' under seven 'domains' including home, economic, social and community, and empowerment. In accordance with Sen's concept of 'capabilities' (Sen 2002), the framework aims to specify measures focused on the extent to which a given government service facilitates service user capability to achieve better outcomes, rather than on outcomes *per se*. The underlying logic here is that governments can only create opportunities to facilitate the possibility of a desirable client outcome; the inevitable presence of multiple intervening factors means that such an outcome cannot be guaranteed.

Linked with this work, the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) has recently developed a new framework and monitoring procedures relating to tenancy terminations (Bermingham & Park 2015). Recording the 'reason for vacation' of a newly vacated property has long been standard practice in social housing. However, the new NSW system adds a degree of sophistication by recognising that traditional 'reason for vacation' typologies problematically elide together the reason that the property falls empty (e.g. tenant evicted) with the former tenant's onward destination (purchased dwelling). The scope for drawing on this new framework in measuring 'tenant outcomes' is further discussed in Section 4.4.1.

1.3.5 NSW Auditor General's report on developing community housing

In September 2015 the NSW Audit Office published a report on how the NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services had managed the development of community housing in NSW (Auditor General of NSW 2015). Of most relevance to this research, the performance audit considered whether desired outcomes for tenants were being achieved in the context of expansion of community housing in recent years. A key finding in this respect was that, beyond tenant satisfaction measures, the Department did not have adequate outcome measures for determining whether services to tenants and wider desired tenant and community outcomes (e.g. tenant participation in training and employment) were being realised and, consequently, this audit had not been able to determine if CHP services offered government value for money. The pending outcomes framework outlined in Section 1.3.4 above is clearly designed to address this gap (for public and community housing services).

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[5] See http://www.communityhousing.org.au/housekeys/index.html.

However this must be underpinned by suitable, well defined performance measures and, specifically, a rigorous calibration process, as argued in the Auditor General's report. As highlighted by this research, this is a challenging task.

1.4 Phase 2 research components and methodologies

The phase 2 research centred on engaging the Australian social landlord community in considering the cogency of our proposed performance measurement framework (see above) and on testing the practicability of the proposed metrics associated with it.

Accordingly, this phase of the research had three main components:

1. Testing and further development of the proposed social housing landlord performance measurement framework via detailed consultation with, and experimental application to, eight social housing landlords.

2. Development of a detailed housing management expenditure analysis workbook to underpin the methodology for collecting management cost data.

3. Stakeholder consultation on the proposed management framework, expenditure analysis workbook and the wider recommendations of the project.

Below we provide a brief overview of how each of these project components has been conducted. Subsequent chapters will expand on the scope of these activities, the methodologies used, results from the experimental case studies and the implications for future performance measurement, as indicated below.

1.4.1 Testing the framework via case studies

Two public housing providers (PHPs) and six community housing providers (CHPs) were selected as sites (in two jurisdictions) to explore the feasibility of the proposed measurement framework. To improve comparability of the findings and in line with the project's overall focus on public housing authorities and 'larger CHPs', it was determined that participating community housing providers would need to be managing a portfolio of at least 1000 dwellings. In keeping with the experimental purpose of the study, participants were guaranteed anonymity.

Following provider agreement to take part, two sets of activities—relating respectively to service costs and service outputs—were conducted in parallel with each selected case study organisation from the second half of 2014, as set out next.

Service cost case studies

Testing of the service costs (or, to be more precise, service expenditure) framework commenced with a series of group interviews with senior managers of each participating provider. Usually this involved executive level financial managers and operational managers and, in the case of CHPs, the Chief Executive Officer. Members of the research team attended these discussions together with personnel from Elton Consulting, a firm engaged specifically to assist with the development of the housing management expenditure analysis workbook and experimental data collection and testing. These meetings were to explain the intended methodology for collecting management expenditure data. Initial drafts of a housing management expenditure analysis workbook and associated information sheet (see below) were also discussed.

As well as enabling participating organisations to consider how they would complete the expenditure workbook, these inception meetings also allowed providers to suggest refinements to the methodology. Such suggestions were generally focused on activities to include or exclude from the various management fields as further discussed in Chapter 2. This process was important to road test the research team's thinking and to ensure participating organisations aggregated activities consistently, thus enabling a like-for-like comparison. Issues raised by CHP and PHP colleagues helped to inform initial refinements incorporated

into a second edition of the workbook issued prior to data assembly commencement by the case study organisations.

Subsequently, when all participating CHPs had made initial submissions of completed workbooks a workshop of their Chief Financial Officers was held to share experiences of the process and to raise previously undiscussed issues thereby brought to light.[6] This resulted in identification of some inconsistencies in CHP approaches and of the need for some refinements to the workbook and associated guidance. Subsequently, CHP participants agreed to make revised submissions to accord with an updated workbook and set of instructions.

For participating PHPs, a debrief about the agency's experience with using the service costs methodology was conducted with the responsible staff member at the completion of the data collection, as discussed further in Section 2.3.4. Other means of expenditure data validation incorporated into the methodology are also discussed in that section.

Service outcomes case studies

This part of the research concerned engagement with case study providers around their housing management activities above and beyond the 'core tasks' of (a) tenancy management, and (b) property and neighbourhood management. This references, the 'added value' that social landlords aspire to contribute to tenant and community welfare—referred to in the study framework as 'individual tenancy support' (MF3) and 'additional tenant and community support' (MF4). The kinds of activities envisaged here are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

As shown in Table 1, an array of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used to identify relevant activities and to consider possible ways of measuring their quantum and impacts. This part of the case study fieldwork aimed to discover more about such activities in terms of:

→ How they are incorporated within organisational objectives.

→ How associated responsibilities are accommodated within the organisational structure.

→ How housing management activities, procedures, staff training, partnerships and networks contribute to these goals.

→ How associated activity and the outcomes of such activity are currently measured (including via tenants surveys).

→ The feasibility of enhanced measures as proposed by the research team.

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[6] The self-disclosure of CHP identities enabled this event to be convened without breaching ethics obligations as regards anonymous participation.

Table 1: Case study investigation of non-shelter service outcomes

Research design components	Purpose	Findings and more information
Workshop with a cross section of senior operational/tenancy management staff of each case study provider and associated document review	Concerned with understanding: the corporate objectives of; the activities carried out for; and the approaches to measuring the success of activities intended to contribute to non-shelter outcomes. Assist with validation and interpretation of management expenditure analysis related to MF3-4.	Chapter 3 Topic guide Appendix 3
Survey of client service staff	An online survey of 43 frontline staff in the six case study CHPs probed participant views on how their organisations promoted tenant support and wellbeing. Informed by workshop outcomes (see above), survey items were also designed to validate (or otherwise) senior management assertions.	Chapter 3 Survey instrument Appendix 4
Measuring additional outcomes (to tenant satisfaction) via administratively generated statistics	Test and further refine, in consultation with case study landlords, researcher proposed new tenant outcome metrics for: → Tenancy sustainment for 'at risk' tenants. → Reconnection of work-capable tenants to training and employment following social housing placement.	Chapter 4
Measuring non-shelter outcomes via all-tenant surveys	This concerned an assessment of the potential for existing tenant satisfaction surveys to yield more information on tenant outcomes of management activities related to certain fields of management activity. Testing was limited to CHPs that commissioned (or conducted) their own tenant surveys (additional to the NSHS).	Chapter 4
Probing outcomes via new tenant telephone survey	To gain a better understanding of whether and how living in social housing can enhance tenant outcomes using a purpose-designed 'new tenant' survey instrument focussed on tenant perceived changes resulting from recent entry to social housing. Testing was limited to two case study providers (one CHP and one PHP).	Chapter 4 Survey instrument Appendix 5

1.4.2 Expenditure analysis workbook

Early in the second phase of the research, the manual envisaged in the Positioning Paper was reconceptualised as a Social Housing Management Expenditure Workbook ('the workbook') in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format. This shift in approach to data collection was intended to better facilitate the provision of financial data from case study organisations, calculated using consistent methodologies and assumptions.

The piloting and refinement of the workbook was an iterative process undertaken with extensive input from with the case study organisations. A key driver was to ensure that it would be readily useable by other providers if the methodology developed and trialled in this study were to be adopted more widely.

Over the course of the phase 2 research, three versions of the workbook were tested and refined. The workbook is described in greater detail in Chapter 2 and the final version is reproduced in Appendix 1. Reproduced as Appendix 2 is the detailed 'expenditure grouping

guidance' on how individual staff activities and organisational non-salary expenditures should be classified under broader headings.

1.4.3 Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation throughout the second phase of the project aimed to raise the profile of the research and, complementing similar activity in the first phase, sought feedback from the broader housing constituency on the concepts and recommendations that arose through the research process. In addition to the publication and dissemination of the study's Positioning Paper and the intensive work conducted with the case study landlords, the main phase 2 engagement activities involved conference presentations, a meeting to explore the applicability of the social housing landlord measurement framework to Indigenous social housing landlords, and consultation with the project's Reference Group, as outlined below.

Conference presentations

At a late stage of the research, presentations on methods and emerging findings were well-received at two major CHP peak events: the PowerHousing annual conference (March 2015) and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations' Community Housing Conference (May 2015).

Indigenous social housing sector

Australia's Indigenous housing sector, which has long been a small but distinctive part of the social housing system (Milligan et al. 2010), is in a state of flux with jurisdictions promoting different approaches to service delivery for Indigenous households and communities. In some jurisdictions, such as South Australia and Queensland, there has been a strong trend away from supporting specialist Indigenous-governed organisations towards mainstreaming service delivery to Indigenous people. However, in NSW, VIC and WA, there is ongoing government support for retaining and strengthening service delivery by Indigenous-run organisations. The Northern Territory has taken a contractual approach to service delivery to its large Indigenous tenant population—this can result in either Indigenous or non-Indigenous organisations being responsible for social housing management.

To the extent that Indigenous organisations continue to be involved in service delivery, the question this research gave rise to was whether and how the proposed measurement framework could be applied in that sector. Present official collections are organised around public housing designated specifically for Indigenous households (known as state owned and managed Indigenous housing—SOMIH) and community based Indigenous social housing, the latter with more limited coverage. However, many more Indigenous tenants live in mainstream public and community housing managed dwellings where outcomes for them are not separately identified. This is an area of policy priority because of the relative disadvantage experienced by many Indigenous households along with government commitments to 'close the gap' in health and wellbeing outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

One matter of particular concern regarding Indigenous housing is tenancy turnover rates and the high incidence of 'tenancy failure'. Better measurement of these phenomena is a high priority for the development of improved housing management metrics for Indigenous housing. In parallel with our study, the NSW State Government has also been focusing on the issue. Associated research has confirmed that tenancy turnover rates for Indigenous households in public housing in that jurisdiction typically run at double the overall rate, and that 60 per cent of Indigenous households exiting public housing subsequently re-enter the sector. Alongside this research, NSW has developed an enhanced framework for recording tenant exits from social housing. Key to this is the separate classification of circumstances surrounding the end of a tenancy and the onward housing destination of the exiting tenant. Intended for eventual

application across all provider types, the new system was introduced for NSW public housing in March 2015.

At the outset of this study, it was determined that the initial testing for the project would not involve Indigenous organisations as case studies. This was for two main reasons:

1. All such organisations are much smaller than the threshold of 1000 dwellings under management that was set to ensure any results would be limited to those organisations deemed of sufficient scale to have efficient operations and be comparable.

2. It was recognised that there were likely to be significant differences in the cost of managing Indigenous tenancies (compared to the broader client group of social housing), especially in remote and discrete communities.

However, an undertaking to consider the future applicability of our conceptual framework in that sector was honoured at the end of the project through a meeting with the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, which is responsible for funding and regulating the social landlord activities of around 50 Aboriginal provider organisations in NSW. Informed by support and advice received in that meeting, the report's recommendations now include a proposal for the Indigenous community housing sector and their government funding partners to undertake further work in this area. It is also worth mentioning that a researcher on this project (Phibbs) is also involved in a project on remote indigenous tenancies (Habibis et al. 2015). In its focus on housing management costs, the latter work is borrowing heavily from the methodology developed in the current study.

Project Reference Group

A Project Reference Group[7] was established in the first stage of the research to consider the overall direction of the project and to review the proposed primary research approach. This was reconvened at the end of stage 2. In their second meeting, Reference Group members were presented with the revised management expenditure workbook developed collaboratively with the participating social housing landlords and the key outcomes of the research, and asked for feedback on the research team's draft recommendations for future action. Members indicated strong support for the proposed methodology for assessing management expenditure and endorsed the recommendation that governments and the industry give priority to improving the accountability and transparency of social housing management expenditure along the lines developed in this research. Provider members observed that conducting such analysis should be an integral part of good business practice and welcomed the potential of the tested framework to offer a systematic means of approaching this industry-wide. Specific comments provided by members have been incorporated in this Final Report.

1.5 Report structure

This introduction has summarised the purpose and design of the study, together with the key findings that emerged from phase 1 of the project. The remaining chapters of this report set out the results of phase 2 as follows:

→ Chapter 2 describes the process of trialling the proposed landlord management expenditure measurement framework in the case study organisations, with a two-fold focus on refinements to the method of assessment generated through the initial testing of the framework and workbook, and illustrations of management costs calibrated (in each management field) where these are considered sufficiently robust to report. This chapter addresses research question 2.

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[7] Invited members included three nominated state housing officials, AIHW, AHURI Limited, National Shelter, a nominee of two community housing peak bodies (PowerHousing and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations) and independent experts.

→ Addressing research question 3, Chapter 3 reports the findings of the case study investigation of how social landlords aimed to achieve non-shelter outcomes and how they measured the resultant impacts. The chapter includes specific empirical findings from the frontline staff survey as a bottom-up perspective on CHP approaches to supporting tenant welfare and community development.

→ Drawing on a range of information sources (set out in Table 1, above) to address research question 4, Chapter 4 is concerned with the feasibility of social housing administrators introducing a range of new tenant outcome metrics developed in this study. It is also concerned with the prospects for other approaches beyond the scope of the study (e.g. linking administrative data sets) that would have the potential to strengthen the evidence-base around social housing tenant outcomes. The chapter includes illustrative results from the 'new tenant 'survey conducted with a sizeable sample of tenants from two case study social landlords and presents more data on tenant satisfaction in the CHP sector that was obtained from a secondary analysis of existing survey data.

→ Chapter 5 discusses the final research question concerned with how measurement frameworks and indicators can better enable assessment of social housing landlord efficiency and effectiveness. This chapter presents the study's overall findings, its conclusions about the prospects and priorities for systematically enhancing the social housing measurement framework. It also provides recommendations for further action by administrators and providers (acting either collectively and individually).

2 CALIBRATING SOCIAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE

2.1 Backdrop

As noted in Chapter 1, the broad aim of this research was to develop better statistical measures to provide a basis for assessing social landlord cost effectiveness. Phase 2 of the study aimed to include trialling and refinement of proposed new metrics. In practice, much of the research team effort has been focused on measures of housing management expenditure rather than tenant outcomes. This was, in part, a consequence of the phase 1 research conclusion that this is where 'data deficiency' is most problematic (see Chapter 1).

The need for a fresh approach stems partly from the highly unsatisfactory nature of the relevant statistics currently published in the Productivity Commission's annual Report on Government Services (ROGS). In the absence of anything better, these are often utilised (e.g. by policy-makers and consultants) as a proxy indicator for the cost of providing social housing. However, for reasons discussed more fully in our first report (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.25–27), few if any sector experts consider the 'net recurrent cost per dwelling' statistic as providing a meaningful and comparable 'cost of provision' measure. As one state housing authority senior accountant commented: 'Everybody who feeds into the ROGS [data assembly process] questions the value of it'.

As noted in Chapter 1, trialling the proposed new metrics involved working with eight 'case study' social landlords—six CHPs and two state governments (or public housing providers—PHPs). The main aims of this collaboration were:

→ To validate (or otherwise) the conceptual underpinning of the proposed framework.

→ To test the feasibility of disaggregating landlord accounts according to the proposed framework.

→ To utilise provider experience to help inform fine-tuning of the proposed framework—such as in relation to:

  → Defining the boundaries of 'housing management' (which activities to include/exclude).

  → Appropriate grouping of 'housing management activities' within the proposed four-category framework.

  → Appropriate treatment of various forms of 'overhead expenditure'.

Ultimately, it was hoped that the exercise would also generate a set of 'experimental statistics', potentially shedding light on inter-organisational and inter-sectoral similarities and contrasts in resource inputs to the housing management task. In practice, for reasons discussed below, research team interaction with case study organisations in relation to the trialling work primarily involved CHPs rather than PHPs.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. First, we further explain the process followed in working with case study landlords to trial the proposed new metrics. Next, in Section 2.3, we discuss the definitional and practical issues consequently brought to light. Lastly, we will consider the outputs of the process in terms of actual measures of housing management expenditure.

2.2 Key concepts incorporated in the data collection workbook

The process followed in trialling the new metrics has already been explained in outline in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.4.1). Here we will elaborate our method. Central to the process was the completion of a custom-designed housing management expenditure 'workbook' by each case study landlord. Essentially, this was about defining the quantum of 'housing management

expenditure' in 2013/14 and reconfiguring it with respect to the MF1–4 framework (see Figure 1). Elton Consulting worked closely to support each case organisation throughout the data collection period (September 2014 to April 2015) to address queries and to maximise methodological consistency.

The use of a workbook (or spreadsheet) rather than a traditional 'manual' was intended to facilitate participant engagement, as the primary contributors to this aspect of the case study work were expected to be Chief Financial Officers and finance/accounting colleagues. More importantly, the use of a researcher-designed workbook facilitated methodological consistency through automated calculation of high level metrics. Of particular importance here was a standardised approach to attribution of back office and managerial overheads (see below).

The 'main sheet' of the workbook (Version 3), is included as Appendix 1. Crucially, as summarised in Table 2, this seeks to segregate organisational expenditure into broad categories as further explained below.

Table 2: Outline structure of organisational expenditure classification

Expenditure category	Salaries	Non-salary	Total
Core social landlord activities			
Other housing activities			
Corporate overheads			
Excluded cost lines			
All expenditure			

Also included within the workbook, and reproduced here as Appendix 2, is our 'expenditure grouping guidance' on how individual staff activities and organisational non-salary expenditures should be classified under broader headings within our conceptual framework as summarised in Table 2.

As embodied in workbook design, key conceptual components of our methodology include the following:

→ Incorporation of both salary and non-salary expenditure.

→ A distinction between 'core social landlord activities' and 'other housing activities'.

→ A recognition of the need to quantify and defensibly attribute 'organisational overheads' so that expenditure on each component of housing management task includes an appropriate allowance for this element of overall corporate expenditure.

→ The need to encompass all organisational expenditure (including items not of direct interest) to (a) ensure a comprehensive approach to attribution of overheads and (b) provide the basis for reconciliation/validation against published annual accounts.

→ A recognition that, as the denominator for the 'unit expenditure' calculation, the recorded number of dwellings in management must be consistent with the scope of the exercise in terms of the measurement of 'housing management resource inputs'.

Issues associated with each of the above points are more fully explained below.

Coverage of both salary and non-salary expenditure components

Especially because our definition of 'housing management' excludes repairs and maintenance works expenditure (see Section 1.2.3), the vast bulk of a social landlord's relevant expenditure is likely to relate to staff salaries. However, especially in smaller organisations with less scope for a specialised division of labour, only a relatively small number of staff members will be wholly engaged in activities encompassed within one of our defined management fields—MF1–

4 (as shown in Figure 1). A large proportion of the work involved in configuring organisational expenditure in line with our proposed categories is therefore inevitably concerned with attributing appropriate proportions of staff member salaries to each of the four 'management fields' of specific interest, to other services/functions, or to organisational overheads (see below).

All social landlords procure certain relevant services (e.g. legal advice and representation) from an outside party. In the case of some services (such as financial auditing) they are required to do so.

Distinguishing 'core social landlord activities' from 'other housing activities'

Core social landlord activities (CSLAs) are those functions associated with the management of 'mainstream social housing'—that is management fields 1–4 as shown in Figure 1). Especially for many smaller community housing providers this will account for the vast bulk of organisational activity. For some larger CHPs and for state housing entities, however, a significant component of service provision may relate to other functions. Examples include:

→ property acquisition and development

→ transitional housing management

→ other assistance to non-tenants

→ fees for service operations.

Thus, a key step in configuring organisational expenditure in line with our proposed conceptual framework is the drawing of a distinction between expenditure associated with CSLAs and 'other housing activities' (OHAs).

While Version 1 of the workbook aggregated all OHAs into a single category, the above service categories were separately specified in later versions (see Version 3 in Appendix 1). This was in response to the preference of CHP case study organisations that such expenditures should be clearly differentiated.

Accommodating organisational overheads

Relevant 'overhead expenditures' are of two main kinds. Firstly, many 'back office' functions contribute to a social landlord's housing management service. Examples include ICT, Human Resource Management, Payroll and office running costs. Associated expenditure may include both salary (in house provision) and non-salary (externally procured service) elements.

Secondly, the salary costs associated with CEO and senior management input to an organisation's operation should be seen as a form of overhead expenditure—with an appropriate proportion of such costs being properly attributed to gross organisational expenditure on each component of housing management.

Capture of total organisational expenditure

Our specific interest is focused on those components of organisational expenditure contributing to the management of mainstream social housing—that is CSLAs. This necessitates identification of expenditure (if any) attributable to OHAs (e.g. transitional housing management, fee-for-service operations) so that back office and senior management overhead expenditures may be appropriately allocated to these functions as well as to CSLAs.

Beyond the identification of CSLAs, OHAs and overhead expenditures, the workbook also requires the specification of expenditure on 'excluded cost lines' (see Table 2). The reason for this is consistency with the standard framework used in annual accounts in regards to non-management expenditure items such as repairs and maintenance works costs and depreciation.

Structured in this way, and applied on a financial-year basis, the model potentially makes provision for two points of external validation of CHP data collected under the proposed framework. Firstly, in relation to total organisational expenditure as detailed in a CHP's annual report and, secondly, in relation to the total salary expenditure reported by CHPs in the Financial Performance Return which forms part of the National Regulatory Scheme for Community Housing (NRSCH).[8]

Appropriately recording the number of dwellings in management

In generating a unit expenditure figure, a crucial component is the number of dwellings in management—used as the denominator for this purpose. It is therefore critical that in recording the appropriate number of dwellings, there is consistency with the approach to segregating organisational expenditure. For example, while most CHPs will likely wish to cite an inclusive 'dwellings in management' figure in an annual report, this would not be an appropriate denominator if it included (say) transitional housing dwellings for which associated expenditure had been (properly) excluded from the CSLA total.

2.3 Issues brought to light through trialling the proposed framework

As noted in Section 1.4.1, the trialling process was iterative in nature. Partly to acknowledge some of the ambiguities raised by the proposed framework, the following paragraphs summarise some of the key issues thereby brought to light. First, we discuss issues concerned with defining the scope of 'core social landlord activities', and relating to the classification of CSLAs. Second, we discuss the apportionment of salaries expenditure. Third, we discuss treatment of overhead expenditure. And finally, we will discuss issues specific to identifying and classifying housing management expenditure for PHPs.

2.3.1 Definition and classification of 'core social landlord activities'

Defining the boundaries of 'core social landlord activities'

As noted in the Positioning Paper, our proposed framework for calibrating housing management costs and outcomes was envisaged as applicable to 'mainstream social housing' activities only. This was to provide the best basis for comparison across providers of different sizes and types (including public housing providers—PHPs). A case in point here relates to affordable housing management activities. Affordable housing is conceptualised here as involving housing targeted at a wider range of income groups than 'social housing'. It is usually made available at market-related rents –discounted by at least 20–25 per cent. Some CHPs are engaged in affordable housing management—for example as developed under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), but this is not part of PHP business.

Arguably, the inclusion of affordable housing services within CSLAs could influence resulting management expenditure metrics to the advantage of a provider with significant involvement in this activity. The logic here is that, being usually occupied by lower needs households than social housing, affordable housing may be typically less managerially demanding. However, as contended by some case study CHPs such effects could well be offset or negated by other features of the affordable housing product; notably the piecemeal distribution of such portfolios, the need to perform regular income and rent reviews, and the possibility of higher tenancy turnover. On this basis, therefore, it was decided that CSLA expenditure could include

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[8] Albeit that, under current regulatory practice, such data are held by the relevant state Registrar on a confidential basis and remain unpublished.

affordable housing activities—and, thus, affordable housing dwellings should be likewise included in the organisational denominator.[9]

Management of housing applications

Given that the definition of 'housing management' advocated in the Positioning Paper conceptualised this as concerned with 'landlord activities' (i.e. services to tenants) it was envisaged that CSLAs would exclude the administration of housing applications ('waiting list management'). This was also seen as desirable in promoting like for like comparability both across a sector encompassing organisations with varying levels of responsibility as regards housing applicants (especially as a result of cross-jurisdictional differences) and also with private landlords.

Some case study CHPs argued that interacting with potential tenants is an important component of effective housing management. These organisations believed that expenditure on waiting list management should be included in MF1. Others took the view that a tenancy begins at the time of letting, and that it would be therefore inappropriate to include expenditure incurred prior to this point as part of tenancy management (MF1) activity.

As reflected in Version 3 of the workbook, it was eventually determined that waiting list management expenditure should be excluded from CSLAs, but specified as a distinct OHA category (see Appendix 1).

Responding to tenancy breaches

Activities connected with breaches of tenancy conditions may absorb a substantial amount of housing manager staff time. Arguably, however, such activities might be logically segregated between those connected with 'enforcement' (e.g. managing legal action to repossess a property) and 'support' (assisting a vulnerable tenant to better manage their finances so as to repay rent arrears). Thus, Version 3 of the workbook places 'rent arrears management (including legal action)' and 'managing anti-social behaviour—investigation and enforcement (including legal action)'—in MF1. Meanwhile, 'managing tenancies at risk due to rent arrears or antisocial behaviour—supportive interventions' is cited as an instance of salaries expenditure to be allocated to MF3.

Transitioning tenants out of social housing

Another issue raised via the trialling process was how to classify expenditure associated with activities directed toward assisting tenants to transition out of social housing. Arguably, this function is analogous to client referrals to employment and training, which is included in MF4. Version 3 of the workbook therefore includes 'supporting tenants to move through the housing spectrum (e.g. home purchase)' in the guidance for MF4.

2.3.2 Apportionment of salaries expenditure: the process

Inherent within our 'bottom up' model of expenditure classification is the task of apportioning salaries expenditure between CSLA management fields, OHAs and overhead activities (see Table 2). Factors influencing the scale of this challenge included an organisation's structure, the degree of specialisation, and the diversity of the business.

All case study organisations contained groups of staff whose activities related overwhelmingly to a single CSLA management field. Associated salaries expenditure could thus be directly allocated to the relevant category. For example, salary costs of staff responsible for ordering repairs could usually be easily identified and attributed to MF2. However, most organisations also had 'generic housing management' staff who undertook activities associated with both

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[9] Moreover, 'segmentation' of CHP business as required under the NRSCH financial performance return does not differentiate the finances of NRAS or other 'affordable housing' products from those of mainstream community housing activities.

tenancy management (MF1) and individual tenant support (MF3). In some cases, these staff also undertook activities associated with additional tenant and community services (MF4).

Different methods were used to apportion salaries expenditure associated with staff who undertook activities split across CSLA management fields—or between CSLAs and OHAs. One case study CHP organisation, informed its decisions here through reference to an activity-based costing exercise already being undertaken separately to this research. Similarly, one of the case study PHPs was also able to refer to recently-collected activity-based costing data. More commonly, however, managers made informed estimates in attributing staff time (and therefore salaries expenditure) to the specified categories.

2.3.3 Treatment of 'overhead' expenditure

Apportionment of overhead expenditure

In attributing overhead expenditure to each management field within CSLAs and to OHAs, our approach (built into the workbook through protected formulae) was to apportion total overheads pro rata to the identifiable expenditure associated with each management field (MF1–4) or OHA. For example, if salary expenditure attributable to CSLAs constituted 80 per cent of an organisation's total (non-overhead) salary expenditure, and MF1 (tenancy management) activities accounted for half of all CSLAs expenditure, 40 per cent of all salary overhead expenditure would be attributed to MF1.

The workbook instructions, however, propose minimising pro rata overhead expenditure attribution by—where possible—aligning corporate management overhead expenditures directly with a specific management field. For example, expenditure on outsourced legal services related to property repossessions and staff salaries associated with 'back office' rent accounting could be directly attributed to MF1.

Some participating organisations preferred to manually apportion overheads, as in the instance where all corporate overheads were initially allocated to the four management fields and other social housing activities proportional to the 'full time equivalent' (FTE) headcount.

Version 3 of the workbook (see Appendix 1) retained the salary-based apportionment formula, largely because it simplifies the inputs required of the user and is likely to maximise consistency. However, it also contains an FTE column to facilitate FTE-based calculations where desired.

Problematic overhead expenditure items

The trialling process usefully brought to light a number of corporate management overhead items that raised issues needing resolution:

→ *Regulatory compliance*—With respect to their 'managerial overhead expenditures' needing to be partially attributed to CSLAs, some CHPs noted that these necessarily included significant resource costs of demonstrating compliance with regulatory requirements. As organisations not subject to comparable regulation, PHPs incur no directly equivalent costs.[10] It was, however, decided that such CHP expenditure should remain included within corporate management overheads.

→ *Office accommodation*—Social landlords' office accommodation arrangements vary significantly. Some PHPs and CHPs own their offices, others lease accommodation at market rent, while others enjoy rights to use offices at discounted or peppercorn (nominal) rents. Some case study organisations therefore argued that to include any office premises costs in 'corporate overheads' expenditure would create discrepancies. Others contended that all such expenditure, including rent, should be included in the expenditure analysis as they are an inescapable cost of running the business. It was decided that all office

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[10] Equally, however, there might be an argument that CHP 'cost of provision' should additionally include an appropriate proportion of regulatory expenditure borne by state and territory governments.

premises costs actually incurred (including rent, council rates and utility charges) should be reckonable as non-salary expenditure within corporate management overheads.

→ *ICT capital and licensing costs*—Participating organisations agreed that costs associated with ICT operations should be included within corporate management overheads expenditure, whether insourced or outsourced. However, there were mixed views about the treatment of ICT capital and licensing costs. Again, it was noted that ICT capital and licensing expenditures are an inescapable cost of running the business. However, there are large year-on-year variations in ICT expenditures, particularly where entire systems are being replaced, which could lead to significant discrepancies in reported data for certain years. It was therefore decided that the workbook should include 'ICT capital costs, annualised over anticipated system/hardware lifetime' and 'ICT software licences, annualised' as non-salary corporate management overheads.

→ *Vehicle costs*—It was generally agreed that vehicle costs should be included as a corporate management overhead. Some organisations took the view that such expenditure should be apportioned manually to specific management fields, as appropriate. Others applied the automated overhead apportionment method explained above.

2.3.4 Issues specific to housing management expenditure classification by PHPs

Most of the above discussion is associated with the trialling process involving case study CHPs. Separately, the two case study state governments also worked to quantify and reconfigure 2013–14 'housing management expenditure' data in accordance with our proposed framework. However, this proved to be much more problematic. State government staff involved in the process found it much more difficult than their CHP counterparts to apply the proposed methodology in the context of what are very large and complex organisations in which public housing is far from a discrete service entity.

Challenges faced in one of our case study states included the fact that a substantial element of PHP tenancy support services was delivered by another state government department. Being funded from within that department's budget, associated expenditure could not be quantified. Equally, it had been found difficult to confidently determine an appropriate salary apportionment in relation to regionally based staff whose role spanned the management of public housing and government employee-housing. In factoring in staff salary expenditure inputs had been in all cases calibrated according to the top of the relevant scale. However, no account had been taken of employer salary-related overheads (superannuation contributions). Thus, in qualifying this state's submitted metrics, the co-ordinating staff member highlighted a lack of certainty around the resulting statistics, noting that '…in reality [the estimated total housing management expenditure per dwelling is] still just a finger in the wind'.

The colleague who co-ordinated the exercise in the other participating state acknowledged that his department's submitted figures were far from comprehensive in terms of fully capturing indirect overheads in terms of (a) appropriate fractions of senior manager salaries, and (b) 'back office' services provided by another departmental entity. In consequence of these factors, it was recognised that the submitted statistics could be an understatement of the 'true figures' by 'around 20 per cent'. Other problems included difficulties experienced in disaggregating expenditure to facilitate 'stripping out' the element associated with the specifically Indigenous component of state housing—considered as having special characteristics and therefore ideally excluded from the exercise.

Likewise, more problematic in the application of the framework to PHPs than to CHPs is the paucity of any clearly identifiable benchmarks or validation points for PHP 'total housing management expenditure'. Such figures might have existed historically in most or all states and territories; when reference could be made to the published accounts of organisationally definable and distinct state housing authorities. In recent years, however, the ongoing integration of public housing within (usually) human services departments has made this

increasingly difficult. However, notwithstanding these challenges, an effort is made in Section 2.4.4 to utilise recent and historic 'published accounts' data for benchmarking purposes.

None of this is to say that it would be impossible for state and territory governments to comprehensively quantify and disaggregate their housing management expenditure along the lines of our proposed framework. However, this would call for very substantial administrative effort in overcoming administrative fragmentation across departmental boundaries and in fully capturing all 'overhead expenditure' contributing to service outcomes. The devotion of managerial effort on this scale is far beyond what could ever be envisaged within the context of an external research project. Rather, it could be imagined only within the context of a high-level corporate commitment to do so—perhaps within the context of a cross-jurisdictional agreement at Ministerial level.

2.4 CHP housing management expenditure metrics: appraisal and benchmarking

Through the trialling process, the research generated 'expenditure per dwelling' estimates for MF1–4 for all participating case study providers. For most of the CHP players, the statistics finally submitted were derived from a third iteration of the data, factoring in worksheet refinements as agreed with the research team. Participating CHP Chief Financial Officers were generally supportive of the proposed conceptual framework and confident in their application of it.

However, while supportive of the framework in principle, PHP colleagues found it much more difficult to apply in practice (see Section 2.4.3). Thus, while both PHPs worked through the recommended methodology as far as possible, colleagues in both organisations acknowledged the resulting statistics as incomplete in terms of fully capturing all expenditures contributing to the housing management service. It is therefore considered inappropriate to include in this report any of the submitted PHP housing management expenditure estimates, since these could give a misleading impression of PHP costs of provision.

Table 3 sets out the anonymised 'experimental statistics' generated by the research as regards case study CHPs. The 2013–14 mean housing management expenditure per dwelling was $2671. Interestingly (and perhaps encouragingly) the total expenditure figures for all six participating providers were in a relatively narrow band, $2444–$2813. Moreover, the relative scale of expenditure under each management field is quite similar across the six organisations.

Table 3: Unit housing management expenditure for case study CHPs, 2013/14*

Organisation	Annual housing management expenditure per dwelling ($)				
	Tenancy management	Property management	Individual tenant support	Additional tenant and community services	Total
CHP1	1,314	703	205	223	2,444
CHP2	1,895	481	128	220	2,723
CHP3	1,473	792	175	251	2,691
CHP4	1,328	793	314	201	2,635
CHP5	1,513	621	210	378	2,723
CHP6	1,568	595	526	124	2,813
Mean	*1,515*	*664*	*260*	*233*	*2,671*

* Except for CHP5 for which the figures are based on 2012/13 data, up-rated by CPI.

Source: This study

2.4.1 Benchmarking against previously published estimates

How do our expenditure estimates compare with existing benchmarks or informed assumptions on the cost of CHP housing management services? One method of deriving external validation for our 'total housing management expenditure per dwelling' statistics is to refer to published annual reports data to make a crude division of organisational expenditure by total dwellings in management. It must of course be acknowledged that this approach to validation is imperfect, mainly because of the inability to make allowance for salaries expenditure unrelated to 'housing management' (e.g. housing development, services to non-tenants). Hence, estimates derived in this way will necessarily over-state the resource inputs related to housing management activities *per se*.

Setting aside the above qualifications, the unit expenditure figures crudely derived from annual reports of our case study CHPs (as discussed above) are set out in Table 4. Here, to protect provider anonymity we have amalgamated figures for the participating organisations. Two sets of figures are presented: one for all six landlords and one which excludes two of six whose business models arguably made the use of corporate level expenditure figures inappropriate for housing management expenditure benchmarking purposes. Thus, we would see the $3180 figure as the more useful of the two unit expenditure proxy statistics. This latter number could be interpreted as providing some reassurance as regards the CHP experimental statistics derived directly from our research (Table 3). Since the four CHPs concerned are primarily in the business of housing management it would be expected that only a relatively modest element of their employee costs would be justifiably excluded from such an analysis.

Table 4: Larger CHP annual report data as a (crude) external benchmark for unit housing management expenditure

	6 CHPs	4 CHPs
Employee costs ($)	35,695,738	23,871,784
Offices ($)	1,188,345	1,188,345
Other expenses ($)	12,626,962	7,218,038
Total ($)	49,511,045	32,278,167
Dwellings in management	14,195	10,151
Expenditure per dwelling ($)	3,488	3,180

Source: Case study CHP Annual Reports

2.4.2 Benchmarking against previously published CHP management outlay estimates

Recent published reports concerned with assessing the impacts of transferring ownership of public housing to CHPs in NSW (Sphere 2010) and South Australia (Sphere 2013) have provided possible points of reference for validating the CHP management costs derived in this study. The former report factored a figure of $1170 for 'management costs' per dwelling into its financial modelling, which seems low by comparison with our metrics. However, the exact scope of 'management' for this purpose (e.g. whether it included the management of maintenance and non-housing support) is unclear from the report.

The second report included an annual per dwelling figure for 'tenancy management services' of $1500, a figure which accords very closely with the CHP 'tenancy management' figures derived from our research (see Table 3). In this report it was also clear that 'community development' services were considered as additional to tenancy management rather than being contained within this category.

2.4.3 Comparing with UK housing management expenditure metrics

Not so much a benchmark, but more a point of reference is the unit management costs recorded for UK social landlords who work with a definition of 'housing management expenditure' for these purposes similar to that adopted in our conceptual framework (i.e. encompassing MF1–4 activities, and excluding repair works costs). In 2014 the management cost per unit for housing associations in England averaged £990 (HCA 2014), or $2038 at August 2015 exchange rates. While this is somewhat lower than the norm for larger Australian providers as indicated in Table 3, it should be recognised that:

→ The typical size of English housing associations included in the HCA analysis is substantially in excess of Australian CHPs, thus resulting in scale economies.

→ Many English providers will benefit from stock portfolios in which a substantial proportion of housing is concentrated within estates, enhancing the scope for management efficiency.

→ Unlike the Australian counterparts, UK providers have long been subject to intense regulatory scrutiny on value for money (HCA 2012).

2.4.4 Benchmarking against published expenditure data for public housing providers

One aspiration underpinning the commissioning of this study was to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of different forms of social housing providers. For reasons explained in Section 2.3.4, it proved impossible for our two PHP case study organisations to collate their expenditure on a sufficiently comprehensive or reliable basis to derive publishable figures. However, more for loose benchmarking of our CHP statistics (see Table 3) than to facilitate strict comparison, it is possible to refer to published annual accounts data for certain state housing authorities.

In *NSW*, the administration of public housing management was until recently undertaken by a designated entity 'Housing NSW' (HNSW). Unfortunately for our purposes, HNSW was progressively integrated within the Department of Family and Community Services as from 2012. Associated reconfiguration of accounts has removed the scope for independent identification of PHP finances from published records. However, making reference to HNSW data for 2009–10, it can be noted that employee costs totalled $212.5 million. Factoring in certain relevant non-salary expenditures [11] produces a total of $272.4 million in relevant operating expenses for the year. Dividing this across the HNSW housing stock at this time (114 469) produces a corporate expenditure per dwelling of $2380 (or, uprated by CPI, $2639 at 2013–14 prices).

It must be acknowledged that $2639 will probably overstate the true level of NSW PHP housing management expenditure per dwelling, since HNSW 2009–10 activities spanned a number of areas above and beyond public housing management. These included, among other things, waiting list management, bond and other assistance for non-tenants, as well as community housing administration and housing development functions. Nevertheless, even if public housing management accounted for as little as 75 per cent of HNSW's 2009–10 business, this would still imply annual housing management expenditure per dwelling equivalent to in excess of $2000 at 2013–14 prices.

South Australia is one large jurisdiction in which public housing has remained substantially an organisationally distinct entity. Referring to the Housing SA 2013–14 accounts, staffing expenditure totalled $84.9 million. Also factoring in $44 million spent on 'supplies and services' and 'business service fees'[12] produces a total of $129 million in relevant operating expenses for

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[11] Note head lease and management fees deducted from consolidated income statement.

[12] Note that this excludes expenditures recharged to the capital account and to Housing SA, on the basis that these are likely to have related to housing development or renewal activities rather than 'housing management'. Also excluded are all rental property and depreciation expenses, as well as 'supplies and services' items such as operating lease and tenant relocation expenditures.

the year. Dividing this by the state's 41 821 public housing stock implies corporate management expenditure per dwelling of $3086. As in the case of HNSW, this is likely to overstate the true level of housing management expenditure per dwelling because it will include salary outlays for staff engaged in activities other than housing management. Again, however, unless housing management accounts for less than 75 per cent of Housing SA business, this would still imply annual housing management expenditure per dwelling of at least $2315.

This above figure compares with the more narrowly defined Housing SA 'staffing costs per dwelling' estimated in a recent SA Government-commissioned review at $1614 for 2012–13 (Elton Consulting 2014). Uprating this figure by CPI and combining it with the 2013–14 sums expended by Housing SA on 'supplies and services' and 'business service fees' (from the Housing SA Annual Report—see above) produces a total expenditure of around $112 million, thus implying an annual 'housing management per dwelling' expenditure of $2704. Because it makes no allowance for Housing SA activities other than housing management, this calculation will once again overstate to some extent the true Housing SA unit management expenditure. In other words, only part of the $44 million non-salary expenditure should properly be allocated to management services. However, even if only half of this expenditure is included in our calculation the implicit management expenditure per dwelling totals $2176.

In considering the relative unit expenditure figures for CHPs and PHPs it is of course important to factor in the likely scope for economies of scale. The state landlords included in the above analysis are both more than 20 times the size of a 1700-home CHP[13] (HNSW's 2009–10 portfolio was over 70 times larger). In this context, while the typical unit housing management resource cost incurred by larger CHPs may be somewhat greater than that for public housing landlords the difference could be considered modest.

2.4.5 *Components of housing management expenditure*

The above discussion has focused on what the research reveals as regards the overall quantum of 'housing management expenditure'. Also of interest is the light we can shed on the attribution of inputs to the distinct components of the overall housing management task. As shown in Table 5, tenancy management activities accounted for the majority of relevant expenditure for all six case study providers. Also, with the exception of CHP2, the ratio between tenancy management and property management was fairly consistent.

The data also reveal the relative scale of activities specifically associated with the social landlord role (as opposed to what is expected of private landlords managing market rental properties). Thus, across our six case study CHPs, 'individual tenant support' and 'additional tenant and community services' absorbed 17 per cent of overall management expenditure, although this varied from 13 per cent to 21 per cent. There was considerable variation regarding the relative scale of resources committed to these two management fields.

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[13] This was the mean housing portfolio for the six case study CHPs (mainstream community housing properties only).

Table 5: Unit housing management expenditure for case study CHPs, 2013/14*—percentage breakdown

	Tenancy management	Property management	Individual tenant support	Additional tenant and community services	Total
CHP1	55	28	8	9	100
CHP2	70	18	5	8	100
CHP3	55	29	7	9	100
CHP4	50	30	12	8	100
CHP5	56	23	8	14	100
CHP6	56	21	19	4	100
Mean	*56*	*25*	*10*	*9*	*100*

Source: This study. *Except for CHP5 for which the figures are based on 2012/13 data

2.5   Chapter summary

This chapter has recounted the process and outputs of 'road testing' the research team's proposed conceptual framework for housing management, as applied to associated resource (expenditure) inputs by social landlords. While absorbing a substantial amount of staff time on the part of participating organisations, our experimentation has arguably confirmed the potential applicability of the framework in the context of larger CHPs. The trialling process also proved fruitful in bringing to light important calibration issues and informing useful definitional and procedural refinements now incorporated in the model.

While acknowledging the conceptual logic of the proposed framework, state housing colleagues directly involved in the research encountered difficulties in attempting to apply the proposed model in the PHP context. Associated issues included specifying the 'boundaries of housing management' and, in particular, the comprehensive and accurate capture of expenditure associated with all organisational contributions (e.g. back office functions). Nevertheless, the case for the reform and standardisation of the official framework for calibrating PHP 'cost of provision' remains compelling. While full application of the proposed model in the PHP context would undoubtedly present major challenges, there is no in principle reason why this could not be achieved.

3   HOUSING MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO TENANT OUTCOMES

Following the examination of social landlords' housing management expenditure in Chapter 2, this chapter focuses on those social landlord activities additional to core tenancy and property management functions. That is, those functions primarily aimed at enhancing tenants' social and economic welfare, sometimes termed 'non-shelter outcomes' (Phibbs & Young 2005). As illustrated in the results of a recent survey of the intentions of diverse UK landlords to support their tenants and promote their social and economic wellbeing (Clarke et al. 2015), these kinds of activities could be expected to be those that most clearly separate the roles of social and private landlords. Under our framework (see Figure 1) such activities have been classed in two groups: supporting individual tenant wellbeing (MF3); and providing additional tenant and community services (MF4). Our experimental research has indicated that larger community housing landlords typically incur around 19 per cent of their total housing management expenditure in these fields (Table 5).

The chapter addresses the following research question:

→   How do social landlords seek to maximise added value on wellbeing outcomes?

3.1   Defining additional social landlord activities

Table 6 lists the types of activities classified respectively as individual tenant support (ITS) or additional tenant and community services (ATCS). These groupings reflect the initial proposals put forward by the research team, fine-tuned through consultation with case study social landlords around housing management expenditure calibration, as outlined in Chapter 2.

As illustrated below in Table 6, ITS activities relate to individuals and are generally concerned with promoting 'social inclusion' for tenants with specific needs. However, they could also be seen as directly or indirectly in the landlord's interest in terms of enhancing the prospects of tenancy sustainment for 'at risk' tenants (e.g. reducing the risk of eviction triggered by rent arrears).

Table 6: Types of additional ('non-core') social landlord activities

Individual Tenant Support (ITS)	Additional tenant and community services (ATCS)
Tenant support visits primarily to identify or respond to individual support needs	Supporting tenants to engage with employment or training
Tenant referrals for personal support, counselling etc.	Supporting tenant participation in housing/neighbourhood governance (arranging/attending meetings etc.)
Preparing case management plans	Community development, place making and events, including culturally specific activities
Negotiating/managing support partnerships	Direct provision of community services (e.g. employment, training, youth activities)
Responding to changing individual support needs	Referrals to community services (e.g. employment, training, youth activities)
Managing tenancies at risk due to rent arrears or antisocial behaviour—supportive interventions	Supporting tenants to move through the housing spectrum (e.g. home purchase)
	Management of community volunteers

ATCS activities generally relate to communities rather than individuals (often termed 'community development') but also include engagement with individual tenants aimed at

enhancing employability. They are thus aimed at building social capital—including through empowerment—and promoting economic inclusion (via assisting work capable tenants to gain or sustain paid work).

3.2 Assessing additional service activities in this study

This part of our research aimed to discover more on social landlords' ITS and ATCS activities in terms of:

→ How these are incorporated within organisational objectives.

→ How associated responsibilities are accommodated within the organisational structure.

→ How housing management activities, procedures, staff training, partnerships and networks contribute to these goals.

→ Whether and, if so, how the outcomes of associated activity are currently measured (including via tenants' surveys).

→ The feasibility of enhanced measures as proposed by the research team.

Two research processes were used to explore these additional activities of social landlords:

→ A workshop with managers and appropriate specialist staff of each participating organisation (CHPs and PHPs).

→ A survey of frontline staff in participating CHPs.

Undertaken via an online questionnaire (see Appendix 4), the survey was in part aimed at validating (or otherwise) senior manager perspectives on organisational priorities and activities.

The remainder of this chapter reports on what was learnt through these two processes with regards to the purpose, scope and type of activities engaged in by case study landlords to fulfil their missions to promote tenant well-being and social and economic inclusion. Measurement issues discussed in the workshops are reported on in Chapter 4.

3.3 Management explanations of additional social landlord goals and activities

3.3.1 Workshops

Meetings were convened with senior managers and specialist staff responsible for ITS and ATCS-type activities in each case study landlord organisation. Involving between three and 14 staff in each instance, these workshops were structured according to a pre-circulated topic guide (see Appendix 3) incorporating the issues listed in Section 3.2. Staff testimony was checked against corporate documents, such as annual reports and strategic plans, and each provider was invited to comment on draft workshop notes. To protect anonymity participating providers are not specifically referenced in the account that follows. The small number of participating providers and the qualitative nature of the information collected have curtailed the extent to which conclusions about differences between providers and provider types can be drawn.

3.3.2 Sustaining tenancies and individual tenant support

Sustaining tenancies was a prominent corporate objective for all the organisations participating in this study. For both PHPs and CHPs, this priority had been enhanced by the high (and growing) share of allocations to clients with special needs. First and foremost, it was justified by management as being in the landlord's interest. For one PHP, for instance, the cost to other government agencies of failed tenancies was increasingly recognised as a key consideration, while for one CHP the commitment to sustaining tenancies was described as 'enlightened self-interest'. Some providers were largely focused on differentiating tenants and identifying 'at risk' tenancies (e.g. those with manifest tenancy problems, such as arrears or subject to serial

neighbour complaints). Others, meanwhile (CHPs only) were taking a more holistic and preventative approach that involved a more intensive process of getting to know all tenants, assessing their needs and aspirations (e.g. on employment—see below), identifying, classifying and monitoring any risks to tenancies and referring tenants with additional needs appropriately. While tenant support needs were reportedly diverse, managers in several CHPs agreed that, in practice, the main tenant support activity was financial management advice, to enable tenants to honour arrears repayment plans.

The challenges facing social landlords in supporting their tenants were significant and growing, adding to costs and cost pressures. Several CHPs described how they had, in recent years, enhanced their capacity to support their tenants individually and collectively. Cited examples included:

→ Appointment of specialist client service staff (for example, an aged services specialist, a youth worker or an Indigenous outreach worker).

→ Enhancing data collection and retrieval systems.

→ Case planning.

→ 'Hot spot' activities (i.e. in an area manifesting unrest/complaints).

→ Other direct interventions targeted at an emerging issue, for example, addressing hoarding and squalor.

In the perception of some CHP participants, specialist positions in public housing (previously numerous—commensurate with both organisational scale and estate–based tenancy concentrations) had been cut back.[14] On the other hand, staff in one PHP commented on the greater flexibility available to CHPs to address case complexities and to respond to the diversity of needs in ways that were not feasible for a large government agency (e.g. having a rewards system). This perceived contrast echoes a key finding from our first stage research, which examined perceptions of differences between public and community housing landlords held by staff who had worked in both sectors (Pawson et al. 2014 p.54).

Among CHPs there had been an evident shift in practice from housing visits being primarily concerned with property management (where the tenant presence is discretionary) to tenancy management with an emphasis on getting to know or 'having a conversation with' tenants. Visiting tenants directly assisted in pro-active identification of those at risk and allowed a record of current and potential tenant support needs to be established. However, several CHPs and a PHP commented on the need to minimise the costs of tenant visits—e.g. by differentiating clients into two groups, one requiring more direct contact because of higher needs; the other less. Building tenant–community linkages was also mentioned in this context by several providers as a means of promoting tenant engagement with their locality and—importantly from a landlord perspective—enlisting wider community support for tenants.

Generally speaking a 'facilitative role' rather than a 'service provision role' was envisaged with both CHPs and PHPs having well-established linkages with partner (external) support agencies that involved a diverse array of referrals—for mental health services, financial counselling, health services, disability services, child support or personal support. This places a premium on landlords' connectedness with local support agencies as well as on the ability of front line staff to accurately identify support needs.

Managers generally saw the activation of referrals as a tenant (rather than a landlord) responsibility. However, front line staff favoured a more proactive approach (see Section 3.4.3). In management's view, the main difficulties being faced with external support arrangements

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[14] PHP managers were coy about changes in specialist staff numbers.

were waiting times for support packages and loss of support during a tenancy. Social landlords ultimately bore the costs and consequences of such difficulties.[15]

Because outcome measures remain so under-developed in the social housing sector (see Chapter 4) it has not been possible to gauge the effectiveness of the various approaches to tenant support that were discussed, other than the assessments provided via the front line staff survey (see Section 3.4.3). However, several case study landlords reported that they were stepping up their monitoring and evaluation efforts with the aim of better understanding how services could be developed. Growth in numbers of clients with special needs, which is adding to landlord costs, makes this a key area for further specialised cost-effectiveness research.

3.3.3 Additional tenancy and community services

Across participating landlords there was considerable diversity in the commitment and scope of activities being pursued to support wider tenant and community outcomes, and a clear distinction between the level of interest of CHPs and PHPs in ATCS.

Both PHPs reported limited or shrinking capacity to operate such services although some whole-of-government initiatives (e.g. around training opportunities) and special purpose or one-off activities (e.g. as part of a major renewal project), along with legacy programs, were identified. Traditional educational and training support programs (e.g. scholarships and financial assistance for education and training) were continuing.

CHPs presented an evolving approach, with some more advanced than others. At one end of the spectrum, some CHPs had specialist community development staff and budgets dedicated to social investment. This was presented as a positive development that had been enabled by organisational growth and maturation. Others were debating what priority should be attached to wider tenant outcomes in their overall planning and expenditure. A minority saw their role as being limited to traditional landlord services.

A key determinant of specific approaches to community development was the location and spread of the CHP's housing portfolio. Those whose houses were more scattered could not justify this activity, while those managing spatially concentrated housing gave more priority to local community engagement and place-making activities. This issue also influenced the kind of tenant engagement being pursued. For example, agencies with different configurations of housing were differentially focused on block-based, area (estate)-based or organisational-wide tenant engagement mechanisms.

While enhanced tenant employability was recognised among most CHPs as an emerging social landlord goal, associated activities in this realm appear to have remained generally small in scale. Several CHPs had implemented, or were developing, social procurement policies that aimed to promote employment of identified target ('work capable') groups through their major suppliers. Small-scale examples of employment partnerships with other (usually NGO) job providers and some opportunistic direct employment programs for tenants were cited by a couple of CHPs. The 'getting to know you approach' to tenants that had informed tenancy sustainment practices (see Section 3.3.2) was also seen to be bearing fruit with regards to its potential to provide information about tenant aspirations for employment and social inclusion.

The other non-core activity that some CHPs were giving increasing attention to was transitioning tenants whose income allowed it into other housing options. This was being addressed in two main ways: offering additional housing options (along a continuum of products such as affordable housing and, prospectively, a shared equity model) within the organisation; or by encouraging such tenants to move to the private market.

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[15] All social landlords were anticipating more demand for their housing services from National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) clients as the number of support packages funded under that initiative ramps up in coming years.

Overall, as we will discuss further in Chapter 4, our case study provider workshops revealed only very limited definition and clarity around the tangible outcomes that social landlords aspired to achieve through their additional tenant and community service activities and investment.

3.4   Client service staff views

3.4.1   Purpose and method

As part of our investigation into how social landlords work to promote tenant well-being outcomes we also undertook an online survey of frontline staff of the six participating CHPs.[16] The survey was designed to generate a 'bottom-up' perspective on landlord approaches to ITS and ATCS activities and, in this way, to complement the portrayal of these functions derived from managerial and specialist staff via the workshop sessions (see previous section).

Using a five-point Likert scale, the survey probed the extent of participant agreement or disagreement with a series of key claims about CHP missions, objectives and ways of working with tenants.[17] These included assertions of senior and specialist staff participants in the workshop sessions. Across the statements put to survey participants, there was an emphasis on the perceived impacts of organisational growth and changing roles that had stemmed from recent developments, such as transfers of former public housing tenants or priority lettings to previously homeless or special needs clients.

The survey covered four aspects of the landlord-tenant relationship, the results in each field are reported below:

→ organisational roles in, and priorities for, addressing responsibilities to tenants

→ individual tenant support

→ promoting tenant employability

→ tenant feedback and participation.

A copy of the online questionnaire is provided in Appendix 4.

As nominated by senior managers in each organisation, invited participants were frontline staff whose role included some aspects of tenancy and community services and who did not occupy specialist positions—e.g. roles solely concerned with functions such as rent arrears management, tenant support or community development. Sixty-five staff (in six CHPs) were surveyed with 43 responding—a response rate of 66 per cent.

3.4.2   Organisational roles and priorities

Eight statements of organisational positioning that broadly referred to landlord responsibilities to tenants and tenancy services were considered by client service staff. The results for the six CHPs together and for each CHP are shown in Table 7.

As shown in Table 7, client service staff across all participating CHPs almost universally accepted the view that social landlord responsibilities to tenants extend beyond providing an efficient tenancy management service. However, a third of individual staff (and higher in three CHPs) saw their main priority as enforcing the conditions of tenancy, while around 40 per cent of staff disagreed with this view. This tension was elaborated by one respondent:

> I feel the focus from our organisation is divided, there are some people pushing for involving tenants and enriching their lives, then there are others pushing to get all the

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[16] In our original research design, focus groups with front-line staff in each participating organisation had been proposed. This was changed to a survey to overcome limitations of focus groups (such as group think) and to increase the quantitative information for analysis. Mainly for logistical reasons the survey was limited to the case study CHPs rather than also including the (much larger and more complex) PHPs.

[17] Provision was also made in the survey for staff to provide additional comments on any survey item.

money we can, both are putting that back to [frontline staff], we have to play sympathetic ear then the big bad debt collector. (survey respondent)

This finding may also reflect the somewhat different staff roles and responsibilities that were represented in the sample.

There were polarised views on the impacts of organisational growth on corporate priorities. Forty per cent of all respondents agreed with the proposition that: '*As our organisation has grown it has begun to lose its tenant-centred philosophy and approach*'. The proportion of all respondents disagreeing was slightly higher (46%)—see Table 7. However, in most CHPs a large minority to half the staff had some concerns that growth had adversely affected their organisation's tenant-centred philosophy. Likewise, as shown in Table 10, a substantial minority (38%) of all respondents endorsed the proposition that '*As our organisation has grown we have started to lose touch with our communities*'.

Another factor influencing changes in the priority for tenancy services as perceived by most participants, especially in certain organisations, was increasing workloads (per staff member). Sixty per cent agreed with the proposition that rising staff workloads had reduced scope for dealing with non-tenancy-related issues.

Several staff elaborated on their concerns in this regard. For example:

We have taken on managing more properties, this impacts on the way we deliver service to our tenants and stakeholders. Each tenancy manager [TM] would manage on average 300–400 properties, with limited support. The result of this is not spending that time engaging and helping our tenants sustain their tenancies, follow ups are not been done [sic] for tenants because there is so much a TM has to manage and keep the relationship …. (survey respondent)

Coupled to workload concerns was a majority perception that geographic expansion of their organisation's housing portfolio, and resulting increased staff travel times, were also factors behind erosion of tenant services. These related considerations—workloads and geographic spread of portfolios—reflect key efficiency issues in Australian CHPs. Until CHPs can achieve a larger scale of operation within each of their local service areas, unit service cost and/or service quality is likely to be sub-optimal. Related to the discussion in Chapter 2, the scope for organisational growth to generate economies of scale will depend on the pattern of such growth as well as its quantum.

There were critical views about the strength of organisational commitments to the overall tenant wellbeing. At least half of the responding staff in five (of six) CHPs considered that their organisation should make a stronger commitment to enhancing tenant welfare (see Table 7). Almost half of all respondents (49%) made allowance for organisational commitments in this regard not yet being fully reflected in practice.

Table 7: Comparison of frontline staff views on CHP tenant roles and priorities

(a) Proposition: As a community housing provider, we have important 'social' responsibilities to tenants which extend beyond providing an efficient tenancy management service

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	100	75	91	100	92	93
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	9	0	8	5
Disagree (%)	0	0	25	0	0	0	2

(b) Proposition: As our organisation has grown it has begun to lose its tenant-centred philosophy and approach

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	50	37.5	50	18	50	50	40
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	0	27	25	8	14
Disagree (%)	50	50	50	54	25	42	46

(c) Proposition: There has been a shift in favour of property management over tenancy management in our organisation

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	50	50	50	27	50	25	37
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	25	0	18	25	25	19
Disagree (%)	50	25	50	54	25	50	44

(d) Proposition: My main priority when relating to tenants is to enforce the rules (i.e. tenancy conditions)

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	25	25	50	18	75	42	35
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25	25	0	45	25	16	26
Disagree (%)	50	50	50	36	0	42	39

(e) Proposition: Growing staff workloads have reduced the organisation's capacity to help tenants deal with problems not directly related to their tenancy

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	37.5	75	45.5	100	67	60
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	9	0	8	5
Disagree (%)	25	62.5	25	45.5	0	25	35

(f) Proposition: The expansion of our property portfolio has increased the time I spend travelling and reduced the time I spend with tenants

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	62.5	75	55	50	50	58
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	9	25	33	16
Disagree (%)	25	37.5	25	36	25	17	26

(g) Proposition: My organisation should make a stronger commitment to actively enhancing tenant welfare (e.g. in the Corporate/ Strategic Plan)

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	72	50	36	50	58	55
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25	14	25	36	50	25	28
Disagree (%)	0	14	25	27	0	17	17

(h) Proposition: The commitments our organisation makes to actively enhancing tenant welfare are not (yet) fully reflected in actual practice

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	12.5	50	45.5	100	42	49
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	25	25	0	0	25	14
Disagree (%)	0	62.5	25	55.5	0	33	37

Source: Client service staff online survey March 2015

3.4.3 Individual tenant support

Table 8 provides front line staff viewpoints on eight propositions relating to how their respective organisations have responded to tenants with support needs. Consistent with the hard data on allocations to social housing by needs category (Productivity Commission, Review of Government Services, various years), the vast majority of participants considered that the proportion of tenants with support needs had risen significantly in recent years. A majority in all CHPs (68% of all respondents) considered that their organisation's emphasis on sustaining tenancies had increased contemporaneously.

While staff were almost unanimous in their view that identifying and meeting tenant support needs was in the landlord's interest (e.g. by reducing tenancy failure and neighbourhood complaints), they were much more divided about their organisation's effectiveness in assessing support needs. In only two CHPs were the majority of staff convinced their needs assessment methods were effective; in two others the majority considered they were ineffective. The vast majority of staff, overall, considered that both additional training and specialist advice and improved partnerships with external support agencies would improve this situation. The additional comments provided by one survey respondent sum up the challenges of this nature that face social landlords:

> There is an increase of tenants losing their tenancies—could be have we done enough, have we spent that time, followed through, engaged with tenants and support? Also do we have the right people in the roles? Another area we need to improve in is training, the on the job support training is not as good, there is no structure or consistent, when you're a new staff member it can be overwhelming to be placed in a role and left to find things out for yourself or you're sent to anyone available that can help you …. (survey respondent)

There were mixed views within and across CHPs about the extent to which staff considered that supporting tenants involved being proactive in referring them to partner agencies and ensuring they received the support they needed. Nevertheless, the majority of staff in the majority of organisations favoured proactive approaches to referral and follow through. Staff also differed on what tenant support actually involved, with a sizeable minority (38%) overall considering that, in practice, the bulk of support offered related to rent arrears repayment plans

(Table 8). However, a similar proportion disagreed with this narrow view of the tenancy support role, perhaps again reflecting different organisational roles represented in the sample.

Table 8: Comparison of frontline staff views on individual tenant support activities of CHPs

(a) Proposition: The proportion of our tenants who have support needs has risen significantly in recent years

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	75	100	82	75	80	83
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	0	18	25	10	12
Disagree (%)	0	12.5	0	0	0	10	5

(b) Proposition: The organisational priority placed on tenancy sustainment has increased in recent years

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	50	71	100	73	50	64	68
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25	29	0	18	0	18	17
Disagree (%)	25	0	0	9	50	18	15

(c) Effectively identifying and meeting tenant support needs reduces the incidence of 'tenancy failure' and neighbour complaints

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	87.5	100	82	100	67	84
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	9	0	8	5
Disagree (%)	0	12.5	0	9	0	25	11

(d) Proposition: In our organisation, the procedure for assessing tenant support needs is highly effective

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	25	75	33.3	54	25	8	38
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	33.3	27	0	50	26
Disagree (%)	75	12.5	33.3	18	75	42	36

(e) Proposition: Additional training and/or specialist advice could help us assess tenant support needs more effectively

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	100	100	73	50	83	81
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	9	50	17	12
Disagree (%)	25	0	0	18	0	0	7

(f) Proposition: Improved partnerships between my organisation and external support agencies would help ensure that 'referred tenants' can access the help they need

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	88	100	91	100	92	93
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	13	0	9	0	0	5
Disagree (%)	0	0	0	0	0	8	2

Source: Client service staff online survey March 2015

3.4.4 Promoting tenant employability

As set out in Table 9, six propositions were used to probe staff views of their organisation's approach to promoting tenant employment prospects. Associated with this issue, two thirds of all respondents (65%) agreed that social landlords should help 'more able' tenants transition out of social housing to maximise housing opportunities for more disadvantaged applicants.

Overall, most participants did not consider promoting tenant employability a major priority for their organisation. Consistent with this assessment, staff generally disagreed with the proposition '*We do a good job of promoting tenant employability*'. However, staff of the one CHP (CHP 2) where this activity was rated as more of a priority largely shared a view that their agency's activities to promote tenant employment were effective. In terms of CHP prospects for success in this realm, one staff member added the comment that:

> CHPs are very well placed to assist tenants into finding employment & if set up well could do better than a lot of employment agencies. We get to know the tenants very well. Sometimes we might be the only person that enters their home. If they trust us they talk to us about wanting to work & the sort of work they might like to do. (survey respondent)

Generally, we can conclude that while both frontline staff and managers (see Section 3.3.3) recognise the importance of maximising tenant employability, CHPs have yet to become significantly active in that area. Factors influencing that situation might include the scope for tenant employment. In two CHPs (including the organisation whose staff perceived it to be strongly disposed to tenant employment) the majority of staff did not see tenant profiles and skill levels as limiting factors. However, the majority of staff in the other four did, although opinions within those organisations varied somewhat. Views of whether single parents could be a key target group for promoting employment were also quite mixed (with a sizeable share of staff in all CHPs being unsure), as were staff considerations of how far income-related rent settings discouraged tenants from seeking employment.

Table 9: Comparison of frontline staff views on promoting tenant employability

(a) Proposition: Our priority should be to help 'more able' tenants transition out of social housing, making way for more disadvantaged applicants

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	37.5	50	46	75	50	65
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	25	36	25	42	28
Disagree (%)	25	50	25	18	0	8	7

(b) Proposition: Actively working to enhance tenant 'employability' is not a major priority for our organisation

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	37.5	50	55	100	50	56
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	25	27	0	33	21
Disagree (%)	25	50	25	18	0	17	23

(c) Proposition: We do a good job of promoting tenant employability

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	0	75	25	18	0	36	31
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25	12.5	25	9	0	18	14
Disagree (%)	75	12.5	50	73	100	46	55

(d) Proposition: The scope to enhance tenant employability is very limited, given the age profile, skill levels and other characteristics of our tenant population

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	43	33	46	75	75	58.5
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	14	0	27	0	17	14.5
Disagree (%)	25	43	67	27	25	8	27

(e) Proposition: The most significant group of work capable tenants is single parents who could, potentially, (re) enter employment

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	25	14	33.3	55	50	20	33
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	50	43	33.3	18	25	30	31
Disagree (%)	25	43	33.3	27	25	50	36

(f) Proposition: The income-related rent system discourages work capable tenants from seeking employment

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	50	50	33	73	25	67	57
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	25	67	18	25	16.5	17
Disagree (%)	50	25	0	9	50	16.5	26

Source: Client service staff online survey March 2015

3.4.5 Tenant feedback and participation

Other defining activities of social landlords include promoting tenant participation in the management of their housing and community development. The survey included seven propositions to explore frontline staff views on their organisation's attitude and approach to these activities (Table 10). In all but one CHP, most staff regarded their tenants as 'customers' who had influence over the ways that services were delivered. The majority also considered that engagement with tenants was effective in reducing complaints, although about one-fifth of respondents were undecided on this issue.

Perhaps significantly, a large majority of staff in all the case study organisations considered community development to be a core social landlord function. However, views were divergent or uncertain when it came to the relative priority attached to helping tenants participate in community life, as opposed to their involvement in housing management decision making. Two respondents commented as follows:

> I thought the statements were thought provoking especially in relation to 'The community'. I'm always trying to invoke and inspire the tenants I have who live in multi-story or large condensed housing to create their own community where everyone considers their neighbours and looks out for one another. The larger community would then benefit with less anti-social behaviour. (survey respondent)

> Attempts at present are being made to engage with residents in a more meaningful way that shows that their future is important to us as an organisation and that pathways are open and are actively encouraged by staff. Unfortunately sometimes the excess reporting and checks and balances of tenancy management processes detract from sustaining and supporting our customers as our key social housing objective. (survey respondent)

Table 10: Comparison of frontline staff views on tenant feedback and participation

(a) Proposition: Tenant participation helps to reduce complaints

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	50	75	75	73	75	60	61
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	50	12.5	0	18	25	20	17
Disagree (%)	0	12.5	25	9	0	20	22

(b) Proposition: We treat tenants 'as if they were customers' whose views and preferences influence the way that landlord services are delivered

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	100	57	50	64	25	58	59.5
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	29	25	18	0	17	16.5
Disagree (%)	0	14	25	18	75	25	24

(c) Proposition: Tenant views and preferences have changed for the better the way that landlord services are delivered in our organisation

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	37.5	50	36.5	25	54.5	45
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	37.5	25	36.5	0	36.5	29
Disagree (%)	25	25	25	27	75	9	26

(d) Proposition: Tenants are generally willing to put up with a substandard service

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	25	0	50	0	25	0	10
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	0	0	20	0	8	7
Disagree (%)	75	100	50	80	75	92	83

(e) Proposition: As our organisation has grown we have started to lose touch with our communities

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	75	25	25	36.5	50	36.5	38
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	25	0	18	25	27	19
Disagree (%)	25	50	75	45.5	25	36.5	43

(f) Proposition: Helping tenants to participate in community life is a higher priority for our organisation than facilitating involvement in decisions on how housing services are run

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree (%)	0	14	25	55	0	18	24
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	25	57	50	18	25	45.5	37
Disagree (%)	75	29	25	27	75	36.5	39

(g) Proposition: Facilitating community development is an important element of our role as a social landlord

	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6	All
Agree	100	87.5	75	91	75	67	81.5
Neither agree nor disagree (%)	0	12.5	25	9	0	33	16.5
Disagree (%)	0	0	0	0	25	0	2

Source: Client service staff, online survey March 2015

3.5   Chapter summary

Via management workshops in both the PHP and CHP case study organisations and a (CHP only) frontline line staff survey, this chapter has explored the scope and focus of social landlord management activities that are associated with supporting individual tenant wellbeing and providing additional tenant and community services.

Discussions with managers highlighted that tenant support activities have become increasingly important as a response to significant shifts in the social housing client profile. CHPs in particular had embarked on significant procedural changes to better support their tenants with a primary aim of preventing rent arrears and complaints. All organisations were facing cost pressures from this growing service challenge but there appeared to be no well-defined measures of their effectiveness in this regard.

Discussions with PHP and CHP managers revealed clear differences with regards to organisational efforts to promote community development and the 'beyond housing' needs of individual tenants, such as access to training and employment. Large, resource-strapped PHPs reported that this function had become more marginalised. On the other hand, most CHPs in

the study had been growing their activities and deploying additional resources (from a small base) in this field. A key driver of differences in how CHPs perceived they could positively influence tenant outcomes was the location and spread of their housing portfolios. Success and efficiency in supporting community development and tenant engagement in particular was observed to be subject to CHPs having a sizeable presence in a local community rather than having widely dispersed housing.

The majority of CHP frontline staff who responded to the survey were generally supportive of their organisation's endeavours to support tenants and to actively promote their wellbeing. However, they were not so convinced about organisational effectiveness in doing this, with workload and training issues, and growth pressures being seen as some of the factors militating against success. Few staff were prepared to say their organisations were prioritising or having much success in promoting tenant employability although some thought this aim should be achievable. There seemed to be consistent frontline staff support for the value and importance of tenant participation and community development activities.

4   MEASURING ADDED VALUE CONTRIBUTED TO TENANT OUTCOMES

The social landlord managerial practices intended as contributing to tenants' economic and social wellbeing were examined in Chapter 3. This chapter will investigate social landlord approaches to the measurement of resulting tenant outcomes and, taking forward ideas developed in our Positioning Paper, explores the feasibility of possible enhancements to such metrics. The chapter includes illustrative results from the 'new tenant' survey conducted as part of this research and also presents data on tenant satisfaction in community housing collected by CHPs themselves.

These findings are used to answer the following research questions:

→ How do housing and customer service tenant outcomes compare across provider types?

→ How can wellbeing outcomes be effectively measured?

4.1   Why measure outcomes?

There is a variety of reasons why housing providers would want to measure tenant outcomes. These include:

→ their social mission (e.g. as reflected in stated corporate objectives)

→ legal and contractual requirements

→ the aspiration to learn more about service provision impacts so as to most effectively deploy organisational resources.

Appropriate and reliable measurement of inputs, outputs and outcomes is a key objective here. For Australia's social housing sector, performance measurement has been driven by official requirements formulated first through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreements (CSHA) and more recently the 2008 NAHA. As regards community housing, the introduction of formal state-based regulation from the mid-2000s provided a new impetus. More latterly, this has been consolidated through the National Regulatory System for Community Housing and its associated performance standards (NRSCH 2014).

In recognising the particular importance of measuring service user outcomes, and in developing regulation and monitoring frameworks to this effect, Australia has been emulating developments in the recent evolution of social housing systems in other countries. For example, 'customer satisfaction measurement' demands placed upon UK social housing providers were ramped up during the 1990s and 2000s. Although with the post-2010 re-balancing of regulatory emphasis away from service quality (Pawson & Sosenko 2012), there has been a recent shift towards an industry-led approach on satisfaction assessment. This has moved UK social housing more towards the sector-led approach long established in the Netherlands, where an industry peak body (KWH) runs a benchmarking and accreditation service to which most providers subscribe.

4.2   Existing approaches to measuring tenant outcomes

4.2.1 Survey based approaches

As reported more fully in our Positioning Paper (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.27–30), a primarily survey-based approach to measurement of social housing service outcomes is long established in Australia. The NSHS was first implemented in 1996 and has been subsequently conducted with a representative sample of social housing tenants on a two-yearly cycle. The NSHS is managed and commissioned by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), with the most recent survey conducted in 2014. The fieldwork involves a mail-out survey to a representative sample of public housing, State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing

(SOMIH), community housing, and Indigenous community housing (ICH) tenants across all states and territories.

In the 2014 NSHS, a total of 12 594 questionnaires was completed, a response rate of 32 per cent. As shown in Table 11, satisfaction ratings were generally, although not universally, higher in community housing than in public housing. Analysis of original data from the 2010 survey undertaken by the research team demonstrated that the general tendency for higher scores in community housing could not be ascribed to 'profile differences' between the two sectors—such as differences in the proportion of older tenants (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.30–33).

Table 11: Percentage of tenants overall satisfied or very satisfied with landlord, 2014

Jurisdiction	Public housing	Community housing
NSW	65	79
Vic	76	77
Qld	84	83
WA	73	83
SA	76	83
Tas	73	76
ACT	76	69
NT	72	na
Aust	73	80

Source: National Social Housing Survey 2014 (Productivity Commission 2015)

While the main role of the NSHS is to measure customer satisfaction with landlord services and accommodation quality, additional questions on other aspects of the respondents particular housing occupied, and on housing and support services provided, have also been incorporated over the years. The 2012 survey, for example, included questions on whether the housing provider facilitated tenants' access to, and use of, other support services. This reflects efforts to maximise the survey's contribution in terms of measuring 'tenant outcomes' over and above its core role of calibrating 'service quality'.

The NSHS generates jurisdiction-level results on each form of social housing provision. However, its sample design and size is insufficient to produce provider level results other than for state housing authorities (see Table 11). Largely stimulated by regulatory expectations applicable to community housing providers, therefore, provider-initiated or commissioned surveys have become widespread in recent years. Since 2012, the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (NSWFHA) has developed a standardised tenant satisfaction survey service now utilised by an increasing number of CHPs across Australia. The model is based on the UK's STAR survey (Housemark 2013) and involves mail-out questionnaires comprised of a range of core and optional questions for tenant self-completion. By 2015, 22 predominantly larger providers across four jurisdictions were subscribing to this service.

Australia's current (largely survey-based) approach to measuring social housing service outcomes has a number of important strengths. Where fieldwork and analysis is part of a centralised operation (e.g. through the NSHS and NSWFHA systems), methodological consistency facilitates reliable comparisons across jurisdictions and provider types—and also over time.[18] In the UK, where tenant satisfaction surveys and other tenant feedback measures

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[18] However, the different technical approach adopted for the NSHS 2012 resulted in a significantly lower response rate (16%), compromising the scope for time-series comparison with results for earlier and subsequent years (AIHW 2013, Appendix B).

have a long history, inconsistent fieldwork approaches and analytical practices have historically raised questions about the true comparability of resulting metrics (Pawson & Sosenko 2012).

However, as argued in our Positioning Paper (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.43–45), there is scope for enhancing current tenant survey practice in certain respects. These include:

→ The trialling of new forms of questions to gauge tenant views on landlord service quality, alongside the traditional 'overall satisfaction with landlord service' metric. By generating more discriminating responses such questions could enhance the survey's effectiveness in capturing perceived service quality.

→ The targeting of questions aimed at gauging the 'added value' of a social housing tenancy to recently housed tenants only (e.g. those rehoused 6–24 months prior to the survey).

→ The restructuring of NSHS sampling to incorporate a larger cohort of recently housed tenants so that questions specifically targeted at that group could generate results reportable by provider type at jurisdiction level.

4.2.2 Administratively derived 'tenant outcome' indicators

While a survey-based approach to outcomes measurement has its advantages, it also has limitations. In particular, it can only provide limited insights into landlord effectiveness with regards to social inclusion. Related to this dimension of the social landlord mission, an administratively-generated performance indicator of potential significance is 'tenancy sustainment'.

Such a measure aims to shed light on landlord effectiveness in assisting marginalised people to access and retain affordable housing in a community where they are connected into appropriate social and support networks. Tenancy sustainment metrics usually focus on the proportion of recently-housed tenants whose tenancy remains intact after a given time period (e.g. 12 months). This formulation rests on the assumption that a social housing tenancy is a precious benefit and that failure to 'sustain' this for a significant period is likely to reflect a problematic outcome, especially since this may well result in homelessness (given the highly disadvantaged status of many social housing entrants).

Tenancy sustainment measurement is well-established in the UK (Pawson & Munro 2010) and already applies to Australia's public housing authorities—as published in the NAHA National Agreement Performance Information report. This metric is derived from PHPs' administrative records and reported on an annual basis. In 2012–13, an 85 per cent tenancy sustainment rate for newly-housed public tenants of 'greatest needs' was recorded across Australia (SCRGSP 2013, Table NAHA.a.3). It is hard to see any reason why this metric could not be extended to cover larger CHPs—perhaps administered through NRSCH data collection.

However, not all social housing exits can be equated with 'tenancy failure'. Some may reflect positive social mobility for those concerned (Wiesel et al. 2014). Thus, a simple tenancy sustainment measure applicable to all new entrants to social housing is a potentially ambiguous indicator. As noted in Section 4.2.2, therefore, there is logic in restricting the measurement of tenancy sustainment to those recently housed tenants for whom loss of tenancy is most likely to be a problematic development—that is those with relatively high vulnerability (Pawson et al. 2014, pp.28–30).

Consistent with this thinking, the above-cited NAHA tenancy sustainment indicator measures the percentage of 'greatest needs' tenants accommodated in a given year and sustaining at tenancy for at least 12 months. This is annually measured and published for public housing (COAG 2013b). While there is a clear case for simply extending this to community housing, there is also scope for improving the monitoring regime by refining the way the indicator is targeted. Part of the problem is that the definition of tenants in 'greatest need' is rather wide—including households that were homeless at the point of allocation, living in housing inappropriate to needs, or subject to very high housing costs. Thus, the majority of new public

housing allocations (74% in 2012–13) are classed as such. Moreover, the highly variable proportion of 'greatest needs' allocations across jurisdictions strongly suggests an inconsistent application of the official definition. For example, in 2012–13 the rate of 'greatest needs' allocations ranged from 56 per cent in NSW to 97 per cent in the ACT and Queensland (AIHW 2013, Table G.2). In our Positioning Paper, we therefore argued that it would be desirable to develop a narrower and more specific definition of new tenants 'at risk' of tenancy failure (Pawson et al. 2014, p.44). This was explored with case study providers in phase 2 of the research—see Section 3.2 and Appendix 3).

Beyond the promotion of social inclusion, there are also growing expectations of social landlords in terms of economic inclusion—in particular, the re-connection of unemployed but work-capable working age tenants with the labour market. With this in mind, our Positioning Paper also advocated the development of an 'economic re-connection' performance indicator. Focusing on relevant tenants housed during a given period, the indicator would measure the proportion of such households containing persons in employment or training at the time of being housed, and again 12 months later. Again the desirability and feasibility of such an indicator was explored in the workshops with case study providers.

4.3   Comparing tenant satisfaction across housing providers

In this section we draw on our fieldwork with the eight case study housing providers in terms of the results specific to tenant satisfaction assessment practice and metrics. We also attempt to relate CHP satisfaction scores to the recorded expenditure levels revealed in Chapter 2.

4.3.1 Approaches to tenant satisfaction assessment

For all eight organisations, regular tenant satisfaction surveys were a central component of their approach to service outcome assessment. At the broadest level, the different surveys measured tenant views on:

→ The overall level of service received from their housing provider.

→ The level of specific services received in regards to:

  → value for money

  → property repairs and maintenance

  → communication and community engagement.

Four out of the six case study CHPs were subscribers to the NSWFHA tenant survey service (see above). The others ran their surveys in-house or commissioned them externally. The NSHS was the main source of housing service quality data for the two case study state housing providers. To complement survey-generated quantitative satisfaction ratings, and to yield more in-depth understanding of service user views, some of the case study organisations periodically employed more qualitative 'tenant feedback' methodologies. One case study CHP was considering the adoption of a formal 'panel' approach to measuring tenant feedback in an attempt to develop a more reliable method of gauging change over time. Another practice was to conduct neighbourhood forums involving 8–15 tenants on a monthly basis, with resulting service feedback reported to the Board.

Results of the most recently completed tenant satisfaction surveys across the six CHP case study organisations were made available to the research team. These results are considered in conjunction with the proportion of each CHP's housing management expenditure as devoted to tenancy management, property management, individual tenant support, and additional tenant and community services—as discussed in Chapter 2. The two sets of data are set out in Table 12. Satisfaction scores are calculated by summing the percentage of tenants who answered 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' except where separately noted.

Before commenting on the table in detail, it is worth noting the comparison between the satisfaction scores calibrated by these provider-specific surveys and national benchmark scores generated by the NSHS. For example, on the service outcomes 'headline measure'—'% satisfied with services provided by CHP'—the provider-specific surveys reported in Table 12 show satisfaction rates for the six case study organisations averaging 85 per cent. This is similar to the NSWFHA 2013/14 norm of 84 per cent. Case study CHP satisfaction ratings are also somewhat higher than the Australia-wide community housing satisfaction score as reported from the NSHS 2014—80 per cent (Productivity Commission 2015, Table G2). This might reflect that the case study organisations (and all of those participating in the NSWFHA system) are generally 'good performers'. Alternatively, it might be that some or all of the difference results from technical differences in sampling design and/or analytical practice.

One respect in which sampling design could differ relates to the scope of the surveys. The satisfaction scores reported in this chapter reflect all housing programs run by each CHP, some of which (e.g. transitional housing) lie outside of the scope of the expenditure exercise (see Chapter 2).

4.3.2 Relating satisfaction scores to housing management expenditure

For CHPs themselves, the benchmark possibly of greatest interest will be the 'minimum threshold' of 75 per cent as specified in NRSCH guidance (NRSCH 2014). All case study CHPs registered an overall satisfaction level above this minimum threshold for 2013/14 (or 2012/13). Table 12 explores whether any relationships might exist between satisfaction rates and the scale of resources each CHP devotes to housing management activities. On one reading of this table there may be some slight association between a CHP's total housing management expenditure per dwelling and their headline tenant satisfaction rate. The two highest expenditure organisations (CHPs 5 and 6) recorded the high rates of overall tenant satisfaction.

On the face of it, the above findings might suggest that CHP5 is a more 'cost-effective' organisation than CHP2—the latter spent the same as the former ($2723) but was less highly tenant-rated. However, many qualifications would be needed in suggesting such a conclusion. Firstly, the calibration of expenditure undertaken via this research was an experimental exercise which requires wider validation. Secondly, and related to the last point, the tenant satisfaction score cited by CHP5 in fact relates to a 'non-standard' proxy measure (see table footnote) and is therefore possibly not directly comparable with the scores for other landlords. Thirdly, and more importantly, there will be many intervening variables (e.g. differences in portfolio geography and tenant mix) that will make the provision of a standard level of service more or less costly for organisations operating in their own spatial, social and housing stock portfolio context. Finally, as the sample size, response rates and survey administration methods for each of the CHPs will have differed, the satisfaction rates (reported in Table 12) are not directly comparable. The broader point here is that data of these kinds constitute indicators calling for interpretation rather than measures conveying a definitive and unambiguous message.

As also demonstrated by Table 12, the scale of housing management expenditure dedicated to individual management fields bears little obvious relation with what might be considered corresponding outcomes as measured through tenant surveys. For example, while CHP4 devoted the highest expenditure to property management ($793 per dwelling per year) it evoked the (equal) lowest rate of satisfaction with repairs and maintenance (77%).

Table 12: Cross-CHP comparison of tenant satisfaction survey results

	NSW FHA avg	CHP1	CHP2	CHP3	CHP4	CHP5	CHP6
Year of satisfaction survey	13/14	13/14	13/14	13/14	12/13	13/14	13/14
Total unit housing management expenditure 2013/14 ($)		*2,444*	*2,723*	*2,691*	*2,635*	*2,723*	*2,813*
% satisfied with services provided by CHP	84	84	85	84	79	91	87
MF1—Tenancy management per dwelling ($)		*1,314*	*1,895*	*1,473*	*1,328*	*1,513*	*1,568*
% satisfied with value for money for rent paid	82	84	78	75	n/a	n/a	81
% satisfied with how CHP upholds their tenancy rights	83	85	87	82	n/a	n/a	84
MF2—Property management expenditure per dwelling ($)		*703*	*481*	*792*	*793*	*621*	*595*
% satisfied with repairs and maintenance conducted by CHP	76	77	80	81	77	84	77
MF3—Individual Tenant Support expenditure per dwelling ($)		*205*	*128*	*175*	*314*	*210*	*526*
% satisfied with communication with CHP	82	86	83	84	78	n/a	80
% satisfied with the way CHP involves tenants	76	81	81	81	n/a	n/a	67
% satisfied that CHP listens to tenants' view and acts on them	74	73	75	77	n/a	n/a	66
MF4—Additional tenant & community services expenditure per dwelling($)		*223*	*220*	*251*	*201*	*378*	*124*
% satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	84	86	84	84	n/a	n/a	82
% satisfied that tenants are able to influence CHP's decision-making	62	64	69	69	n/a	n/a	53

Source: Case study CHPs

Notes: '% satisfied' means the percentage of respondents opting for 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' in relation to the cited service, except in the case of CHP1 where it is the percentage of those who rated the relevant service as 'good or excellent'.

4.4 Administratively-generated tenant outcome measures

As discussed in Section 4.2.2, outcome performance measures derived from administratively-generated data are sometimes used to supplement tenant satisfaction ratings, especially as indicators of the success of lettings to 'greatest needs' clients. The most commonly reported of these is the measure of tenancy sustainment, though to date this is limited to public providers only. Another widely desired outcome is tenant economic re-connections, though this is much more difficult to measure.

4.4.1 Tenancy sustainment

Case study fieldwork findings

In our workshop discussions with case study landlords, we sounded out participants on the desirability and feasibility of recording tenancy sustainment statistics in relation to recently-housed tenants. The logic of such a metric as a 'social inclusion' indicator was universally acknowledged and a number of case study CHPs asserted that tenancy sustainment monitoring was already undertaken or could be easily initiated. Further discussions, however, revealed a lack of definitional consistency and rigour in such measurement. In effect, the data systems and recording practices which would be required to measure tenancy sustainment on a similar basis to public housing were not in place.

Case study landlords were also consulted on the feasibility of targeting tenancy sustainment measurement more specifically with respect to 'at risk' new tenants. It was, for example, suggested that this might be interpreted as relating to tenants with 'support needs' or those with recent experience of homelessness. However, while the logic of this approach was generally accepted, case study providers reported that data management system limitations meant that this would be difficult to achieve in practice, as well as necessarily requiring a substantial lead-in time. The technical challenge here arises from the need to connect tenancy records (where tenant end-dates are recorded) with application records (where a new tenant's former homelessness status would be recorded). This means that any central requirement for the collection of tenancy sustainment data measured on the basis suggested would probably need a considerable lead-in period.

Thus, none of the case study landlords were able to generate tenancy sustainment statistics according to our suggested definition.

From our workshop discussions, it was clear that cross-jurisdictional collaboration on further defining 'at risk' tenants and a more systematic approach to data collection is needed for a useful service outcome measure to complement tenant satisfaction scores to result. At least for CHPs in the states and territories covered by the NRSCH, one means of achieving that may be through the NRSCH performance data suite. This could be expanded to include measures such as tenancy sustainment, according to a definition sufficiently robust to facilitate a sector-wide cross-comparison.

Associated findings

Separately from the case study work, but also relevant to the above discussion, the research team was made aware of the recent work undertaken by NSW FACS in facilitating the identification and measurement of 'negative transitions' from social housing. The basis for this is provided by the newly developed framework for separately recording the reasons that tenancies end and the onward destinations of former tenants (see Section 1.3.4).

A 'negative transition' is defined as a move out of social housing resulting from a breach of tenancy conditions—such as eviction for rent arrears (Bermingham & Park, 2015). Arguably, this term could also be applied to a tenant-initiated move out of social housing where this involves a shift to short-term/temporary accommodation or family/friends. Contrastingly, the NSW framework defines a 'positive transformation' as involving a move out of social housing

where there is a tenant-initiated shift into home ownership or private rental, or where the exit is 'provider initiated'—such as non-renewal of an expiring fixed term tenancy on the basis that the tenant's improved economic situation makes it feasible for them to sustain the cost of private housing.

If the NSW public housing framework for recording tenancy endings could be extended throughout the national social housing system (e.g. through adoption under the NRSCH) this could possibly provide the basis for tenant outcome metrics related to, but distinct from those on simple tenancy sustainment.

4.4.2 Economic re-connection

Our case study work would suggest that Australia's social housing industry generally accepts the ethos that a social tenancy should serve as a platform for tenants to achieve better social and economic outcomes, rather than as a permanent housing solution (as exemplified in the slogan 'a pathway not a destination'). Significantly, 65 per cent of front-line staff participating in our online survey agreed with the proposition that: 'Our priority should be to help "more able" tenants transition out of social housing, making way for more disadvantaged applicants'. Only 7 per cent disagreed (see Table 9).

The notion that social landlords need to pay greater regard to assisting tenants to 'progress' to market housing may underlie the NSW Ministerial comment cited previously that 'Until now, success has been measured by sustaining tenancies, not by improving outcomes' (NSW FACS 2014). This statement raises some issues needing to be unpacked. First, perhaps inadvertently, it seems to cast doubt on the value of tenancy sustainment as a suitable measure of tenant outcomes in regards to vulnerable people at risk of 'tenancy failure' potentially leading to repeat homelessness. Second, it might be read as implying that those entering social housing are, by and large, work capable people who—once re-connected with the labour market—will be able to command incomes sufficient to make suitable private housing affordable. Given the growing dominance of vulnerable, disabled or elderly people within the cohort of social housing new tenants, this portrayal is inaccurate. The very small proportion of NSW public housing tenants whose expiring fixed term tenancies are not renewed (NSW Audit Office 2013) is further testament to the very limited scope that exists for transitioning social renters into (more expensive) market housing.

Setting aside the above arguments, our research findings as reported in Chapter 3 suggest that social landlord action to facilitate economic re-connection of (work capable) unemployed tenants is generally patchy and small in scale. Respondents in our front line staff survey (Section 3.4) predominantly agreed with the proposition: 'Our priority should be to help "more able" tenants transition out of social housing, making way for more disadvantaged applicants' (see Table 9).

Despite this—triangulating the picture which emerged from senior manager testimony—most survey respondents also felt that economic reconnection was not a major priority for their organisation (see Table 9). Moreover, most of the participating front line staff disagreed with the contention: 'We do a good job of promoting tenant employability'.

Where activity of this kind was in fact reported by case study landlords, it included facilitating work-capable tenant contacts with relevant training or employment agencies and, in a few cases, direct employment (see Chapter 3). To the extent that such activities were quantified at all, the focus tended to be on the number of those assisted (i.e. a throughput measure) rather than on program success rates (i.e. outcome measures). Moreover, calibrating such a 'success statistic' from administrative records would be extremely problematic due to definitional differences, types of program offered etc.

In our Positioning Paper (Pawson et al. 2014, p.44), we proposed one potential metric for measuring economic re-connection:

→ The change in the employment/training status of 'work capable' new tenants within 12 months of entering social housing.

This chimes with the NSW Social Housing Outcomes framework, which advocates measurement of 'the percentage of social housing tenants who gain employment', and 'the percentage of clients receiving social housing services that are unemployed and currently enrolled in some form of education or training'. Arguably, however, our proposed metric is a more focused indicator that contains a clearer and more targeted message about desirable social landlord practice. It also raises fewer questions regarding the counter-factual scenario (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of entry to social housing).

With individual program reporting and different ways of recording tenants' source of (and change in) income, none of the case study landlords were able to cite a comprehensive means of measuring economic re-connection outcomes.

As envisaged, most case study organisations emphasised that only a minority of new tenants could be considered 'work capable'. There was also general assent that the best way to identify and track the changing employment outcomes of those who were 'work capable' could be through Centrelink, relating specifically to a change of tenant household members' welfare benefit status. Such an approach could be used, for example, to determine what proportion of tenants assessed by Centrelink as being 'work capable' gain employment within a given period.

Another practical problem for any system reliant on landlord records would be that some work-capable tenants gaining employment may (coincidentally or not) depart from social housing, thus falling out of the monitored cohort. Furthermore, outcomes of connecting tenants to economic opportunities may take time to show. This is especially so for tenants who have been out of the workforce for extended periods (e.g. as a carer), where it may take time for them to upskill prior to seeking and sustaining employment. One case study CHP therefore suggested that monitoring of economic re-connection should focus on a longer period than 12 months (e.g. two years) in order to truly reflect employability program impacts.

4.5 Exploring the added value of social housing for recently housed tenants

As a means of exploring the added value (or 'non-shelter outcomes') associated with gaining a social housing tenancy, phase 2 of our study included a telephone survey of recently housed tenants. This focused on individuals who had entered social housing during the previous two to three years.[19] Participants were recruited with assistance from one CHP and one PHP. The survey focused on the respondents' self-reported changes to their housing and neighbourhood, employment and training, and children's educational outcomes since moving into their current tenancy. Basic demographic details (age groups, household size) were also collected. A total of 429 respondents completed the survey during April 2015. For those households who answered the phone a 72 per cent response rate was achieved. Taking into account households who did not answer their phone the response rate was 23 per cent. The survey form is included as Appendix 5. Further methodological details are given below in footnote.[20]

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[19] With a much smaller pool of tenants compared to the PHP, the definition of 'newly settles tenants' was relaxed to 'within the last three years' for the participating CHP.

[20] Recently housed tenants were invited to participate in the survey via a letter and were given the opportunity to opt out of participating. Conduct of the CATI survey was subcontracted to the research company Jetty Research.

Telephone numbers and contact names of 3741 new tenancies were supplied by the two housing providers following the opt-out exercise. From these, 1855 telephone numbers were randomly selected to participate (1614 public housing tenants and 241 community housing tenants).

The survey included a mix of pre-coded and open-ended questions, with an average interview time of 12 minutes. Responses to the open-ended questions were categorised by Jetty Research, with an SPSS file supplied to the research team for further analysis.

The demographic profiles of the public housing and community housing respondents contrasted starkly. By comparison with the former, the latter cohort contained a much higher proportion of older people and single person households (see Appendix 6). Mindful of these differences and with a primary interest in considering tenant experience across the whole social housing service system, the analyses presented below differentiate by household type rather than provider type.

4.5.1 Overall impacts of taking up a social housing tenancy

Respondents were asked a number of questions to gauge the impact of moving into social housing. Firstly, they were asked the following as an open question:

→ For you and your family, what do you think is the single most important change in your life since moving into your current property?

Responses were broadly coded into 16 categories, further differentiated into positive changes, negative changes—see Table 13.

Reassuringly for social landlords, the vast majority of reported changes (83%) were positive in nature: such as a more stable housing situation, better access to services, or improved health (see Table 13). At the same time, a small proportion of tenants (7%) cited negative impacts, especially loneliness and problematic location. These two latter issues might be connected. Perhaps significantly, however, the proportion of respondents highlighting an improved location (in various respects) as the single most significant impact of moving into social housing was substantially greater.

Table 13: Overall self-reported outcomes—single most important change in respondent's life since taking up social housing tenancy

	Lone person households (%)	Single-parent households (%)	Other family households (%)	Total (%)
Positive change				
Added safety / privacy	17	22	15	18
Happier / more stable environment	12	21	14	15
More suitable home	11	13	20	13
Peace of mind / sense of community	12	3	8	9
More personal income	7	15	8	9
Increased independence / control over circumstances	10	6	8	9
Closer to family and support	4	5	6	5
Closer to school / facilities / public transport	3	3	3	3
Better location / access	3	0	3	2
Improved health / better access to health services	3	0	2	2
Negative change				
Lonely / antisocial / lack of community	3	3	1	2
Worse location / access	1	3	5	2
Health deteriorated / worse access to health services	2	1	0	1
Further away from family and support	2	0	0	1
Other	7	5	5	6
No change	5	1	1	3
Total*	100	100	100	!00
N	229	103	86	418

* Column totals may vary slightly from 100 per cent due to rounding.

Source: New tenant survey 2015

Secondly, to probe tenant views about the quality of their housing and its management respondents were asked:

→ Thinking about its location, its condition and how it is managed, overall how would you rate your new housing compared to your previous home?

This time, when requested to rate their current situation with that prior to moving into social housing, most responses were fairly or very positive (see Table 14). It might be seen as concerning that 17 per cent of respondents—more than one in six—felt their current housing was in general inferior to their previous home. For some, that could possibly reflect having been housed following from family breakdown where the former home was a 'better house'.

Table 14: Change in housing outcomes since moving to current tenancy

	Lone person households (%)	Single-parent households (%)	Other family households (%)	Total (%)
Much better	60	44	57	55
A bit better	13	18	16	15
About the same	13	13	13	13
A bit worse	9	16	9	11
Much worse	6	8	5	6
Total*	100	100	100	100
N	235	106	87	428

* Column totals may vary slightly from 100 per cent due to rounding.

Source: New tenant survey 2015

To further explore these issues respondents were asked the following open-ended question:

→ What are the major differences between your current home and the one you last lived in? (multiple coded responses)

Again, most of the cited differences between previous and current homes were favourable in terms of the move (see Table 15). By far the most commonly cited 'negative' change was the move to a smaller home (41%). At the same time, almost as many respondents (35%) referred to the positive benefit of a larger social rental property than their former home.

Table 15: How have housing outcomes changed since moving to current tenancy

	Lone person households (%)	Single-parent households (%)	Other family households (%)	Total (%)
Positive changes				
Nicer / better condition	65	46	66	61
Better neighbourhood	49	32	48	44
Bigger	31	42	37	35
Cheaper	26	28	34	28
Bigger backyard	5	11	14	8
Previously homeless	3	2	3	3
Disabled access	3	1	1	2
Negative outcomes				
Smaller	46	27	45	41
Smaller backyard	15	11	14	14
Worse neighbourhood	10	22	13	14
Not as nice / worse condition	9	25	8	13
More expensive	9	11	11	10
Other	3	7	3	4
N	235	106	87	428

Note: Question allowed for multiple codes per respondent; percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who nominated each outcome.

Source: New tenant survey 2015,

To investigate more specifically the locational impacts of moving into social housing, respondents were asked, again via an open-ended question:

→ What are the major differences between your old neighbourhood and the one you're in now? (multiple coded responses)

Again, cited 'neighbourhood differences' were more frequently positive than negative with, for example, over a third considering their new locality as 'safer' and possessing a 'better sense of community' than their former neighbourhood (see Table 16). Substantially smaller proportions of respondents took the opposite view. Given some evidence that residence in social housing in Australia can be problematic because of an association with 'stigmatised neighbourhoods' (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008), this finding seems notable. Low dissatisfaction rates may be partly explained with reference to a previous location in the lowest cost segment of the private rental market or a tenant receiving a social housing allocation in a well-serviced, socially mixed neighbourhood. Importantly, neither of the two providers covered in the survey have extensive 'estate-style' property holdings. Also, it should be noted that not all of the 'moves into social housing' will necessarily have entailed moving between neighbourhoods.

Table 16: Differences between former and current neighbourhood

	Lone person households (%)	Single-parent households (%)	Other family households (%)	Total (%)
Positive differences				
Safer	38	32	38	37
Better sense of community / friendlier	38	29	43	37
Better shops / services	33	20	40	31
Better public transport	28	20	36	27
Quieter	3	4	6	4
Negative differences				
Worse sense of community / less friendly	14	18	10	14
Less safe	11	19	10	13
Worse public transport	7	9	7	7
Worse shops / services	8	8	6	7
Other	6	7	5	6
No difference	4	6	0	4
N	235	106	87	428

Note: Question allowed for multiple codes per respondent; percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who nominated each outcome.

Source: New tenant survey 2015.

4.5.2 Incidence of direct landlord assistance

To evoke feedback on landlord services to new tenants and, especially, to probe respondent perceptions of landlord help in promoting social inclusion, interviewers asked a series of questions about tenant experience of interactions with their housing provider. While most tenants reported that their landlord had been helpful as regards settling into their new home and in resolving specific problems, this perception was far from universal (see Table 17). Moreover, while half the respondents implied that they had no 'other issues' on which they could potentially have benefited from landlord help, the 28 per cent of responses indicating that no such help was provided might give cause for some concern.

Table 17: Experience of direct landlord assistance

	Aiding you to settle into your new home (%)	Fixing any problems with your new home or your tenancy (%)	Aiding you to deal with other issues (including making links to other agencies if needed) (%)
Rating of landlord assistance in:			
Very helpful	39	37	11
Quite helpful	22	23	11
Did not help	31	27	28
No help required	8	13	50
Total	100	100	100
N	429	429	429

Source: New tenant survey 2015

4.5.3 Employment and employability implications of moving into social housing

Especially given the growing expectation that the 'social landlord mission' should include re-connecting workless but work-capable tenants with employment, the survey included the following questions:

→ Thinking back to your situation before getting your current home:

  → Do you think that living in housing provided by [current housing provider] has helped you feel better able to work or seek work?

  → Do you think that living in housing provided by [current housing provider] has helped you feel better able to participate in study or work training?

A fifth of respondents (21%) responded positively to the question on working or seeking work. Although this might seem a relatively small proportion it needs to be borne in mind that 45 per cent of survey respondents were aged over 60 and 39 per cent reported themselves as medically unable to work. Also significant, however, is that only a very small number of respondents—2 per cent—reported that their sense of stronger engagement with employment was associated with direct assistance by their housing provider.

Likewise, 20 per cent of respondents reported feeling better able to participate in study or work training, having secured a social tenancy, but only 2 per cent connected this with any direct assistance received from their landlord. Only 1 per cent reported having received any employment training from their landlord.

Approaching these issues from a different angle, respondents were asked:

→ Thinking about the adults in your household, are they generally working more or less than when they were in the previous home?

Perhaps counter-intuitively, the general tendency was for tenants to be working less than had been true prior to taking their tenancy. As shown in Table 18, a fifth of respondents said that adults in their household were working less than before, whereas only 7 per cent said that the incidence of employment was higher.

Table 18: Change in incidence of employment since starting current tenancy

	Lone person households (n = 235)	Single-parent households (n = 106)	Other family households (n = 87)	Total (n = 428)
Working more	4	11	11	7
Working less	17	24	23	20
About the same	40	41	48	42
Unsure / Not applicable	39	25	17	31
Total*	100	100	100	100
N	235	106	87	428

* Column totals may vary slightly from 100 per cent due to rounding.

Source: New tenant survey 2015

However, the apparent conundrum outlined above is likely to be partly a product of the way that access to social housing is prioritised according to 'need'—that is personal circumstances or characteristics rendering an individual less able to secure suitable market housing. Thus, 45 per cent of respondents in households where adults worked less than previously reported that the onset of or physical deterioration as a result of illness and/or disability was a main cause. Other cited factors included change in circumstances that led to unemployment (26%), becoming pregnant and having child-minding duties (20%).

While beyond the scope of the survey, another factor influencing social tenant workforce participation that has been highlighted in previous research (see, e.g. Dockery et al. 2008) is the work disincentive generated by income-related rent setting.

To eliminate the influence of 'confounding factors' on such a measure it would be necessary to focus the comparison solely on new tenant households containing adults assessed as 'work capable' at the start of the tenancy—that is screening out all those tenants (quite possibly the majority) who had been prioritised for a tenancy specifically because of being affected by a circumstance (e.g. onset of serious illness or disability) degrading their employability.

4.5.4 Children's educational outcomes

International and local evidence suggests that housing plays a significant role in children's development and performance in school (Goux & Maurin 2005; Phibbs & Young 2005; Leventhal & Newman 2010). To what extent can a move to a social housing tenancy impact on this aspect of social welfare? To address this, relevant respondents[21] were asked:

→ Have you noticed any differences in how the child has performed at school since you moved into this dwelling?

  → Are they more motivated?

  → Are they getting better results?

As shown in Table 19, the balance between perceived improvement and perceived deterioration in children's educational outcomes were positive. Moreover, the proportion of respondents believing that gaining their tenancy had been beneficial in terms of motivation and/or performance was high, at almost half of all relevant households in each case.

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[21] It should be noted that only 78 of the 429 survey respondents involved households containing school age children

Table 19: Perceived change in children's educational outcomes

Perceived level of motivation	%	Perceived performance	%
More motivated	49	Better	46
Less motivated	14	Worse	9
No change	37	No change/unsure	45
Total	100	Total	100
N	78	N	78

Source: New tenant survey 2015

4.6   Chapter summary

There is a consensus expectation that agencies providing public services mandated by governments should operate in a transparent, contestable and accountable way. Quantifying service performance is, therefore, a fundamental requirement for service provider agencies. In the social housing field, the past 20 years has seen a growing emphasis on the measurement of service outcomes as well as inputs and outputs. In this realm, such outcomes measures are usually derived from surveys or from administrative records.

In Australia, social housing outcomes monitoring is substantially reliant on the two-yearly National Social Housing Survey that continues to provide a widely-respected benchmark on tenant satisfaction. However, there are a number of respects in which the survey could be enhanced.

A key outcome indicator shedding light on social landlord effectiveness on social inclusion is the measurement of tenancy sustainment. To improve its utility, this measure could be more precisely targeted, as well as being extended to encompass community housing providers as well as public housing providers.

A broad brush indication of landlord cost-effectiveness may be derived by relating an individual provider's tenant satisfaction ratings to its unit management expenditure and this is exemplified through our research. However, there are numerous qualifications that would need to be attached to any such assessment and, as illustrated in our working through of case study landlord data, these would include the questionable comparability of satisfaction statistics derived through non-standard survey methodologies.

Case study fieldwork confirmed support for the contention that measures of tenancy sustainment can be a useful indicator of social landlord effectiveness in regards to social inclusion, and that the existing measure applicable to public housing providers could and should be extended to larger CHPs. However, while there is widespread acceptance for the logic of more precisely targeting tenancy sustainment monitoring to focus on 'at risk' tenants, there is no consensus on how 'at risk' might be specifically defined for these purposes. Similarly, while the logic of our proposed measure of 'economic re-connection' was again generally acknowledged, it was clear that the feasibility of such a metric would depend on utilisation of Centrelink records.

Our survey of 429 tenants recently housed by two case study providers confirmed that a move into social housing was usually associated with 'positive changes' in tenants' lives. These included, that most respondents rated their new home as superior to their former dwelling, as well as indicating that the new 'home neighbourhood' tended to be seen as preferable to the applicant's former locality—especially in terms of 'safety' and 'friendliness'. However, less than a quarter rated their new landlord as 'helpful' in terms of aiding new tenants to address non-housing issues (e.g. making links with other agencies as required). Similarly, only a very small proportion (2%) reported that a stronger engagement with employment (since being housed) was associated with any direct assistance from their housing provider.

Moreover, the proportion of recently housed tenants reportedly 'working more' than prior to being housed in social housing (7%) was lower than the proportion working less in the current tenancy than previously (20%). This apparently paradoxical finding is likely to be partly a product of the way that access to social housing is prioritised according to 'need'. Thus, the onset of sudden need, such as disability or the imminence of a birth, while also being associated with a condition negatively impacting on the tenant's 'employability' might have materially contributed to a household's priority for a tenancy offer. This highlights the challenge inherent in attempting to gauge social landlords' success in economic reconnection and the necessity for targeting any such metric on those deemed 'work capable'.

5 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

In concluding this report let us revisit our original research questions (RQs) in the light of the evidence we have collected.

RQ1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing official measures of housing management inputs and service outcomes?

While official measures of social housing management inputs and service outcomes exist, these fall far short of providing an adequate basis for assessing landlord cost-effectiveness.

Most problematic are the 'input' or 'cost' measures. Although statistics on 'net recurrent expenditure per dwelling' for public housing and community housing continue to be published annually by the Productivity Commission (e.g. Productivity Commission 2015), these are of little practical value. The shortcomings of this metric were explained in detail in our Positioning Paper (Pawson et al. 2014). In summary, the metric is too broad and complex to shed light on inter-jurisdictional or provider-type differences in housing management resource inputs. The problematic lack of inter-state consistency in housing accountancy practice is not a new discovery. In 2009 Housing Ministers directed officials to develop improved standards for financial reporting purposes (Housing Ministers Conference 2009, p.50; Pawson et al. 2014 pp.25–26). Unfortunately, however, this aspiration was never followed through.

Official measures of social housing service outcomes are less problematic in the sense that survey-generated metrics provide a valuable two-yearly snapshot on tenant satisfaction at a state level. Recently, largely stimulated by statutory regulation, tenant satisfaction data has begun to be routinely collected by larger CHPs, facilitating the collation of provider-level satisfaction statistics. However, neither in terms of fieldwork practice nor publication is such data integrated within any national reporting framework. Moreover, the central focus of such metrics is housing management service performance, rather than 'tenant outcomes'—or the 'added value' social landlords are expected to deliver in terms of social and economic inclusion.

RQ2. How should management expenditure per dwelling be defined, measured and disaggregated for application to a multi-provider system?

Under our proposed framework for quantifying social housing management expenditure 'housing management' is defined as focusing on 'landlord services' net of repairs and maintenance works expenditure. This is a 'purer' measure of the ongoing year to year resource cost of running a social housing portfolio. This is because it excludes the potentially distorting impacts of differences in repairs and maintenance expenditure needs attributable to the original design of buildings, to construction materials, or to historic maintenance inputs, and other variable operating costs that are beyond the control of landlords (e.g. insurance and property rates).

Within the 'housing management' domain we advocate the separate identification of expenditure associated with four distinct elements of the overall management task, namely: tenancy management, property management, individual tenant support (ITS) and additional tenant and community services (ATCS). This could facilitate meaningful benchmarking of social and private landlord management expenditure by enabling the exclusion from such a comparison of the housing management activities (ITS and ATCS) specific to social landlords. In this way the proposed framework is also consistent with the logic of the 2009 Henry Review's acknowledgement that welfare expenditure incurred by social landlords should be

separately funded (i.e. not from rental income—see Pawson et al. 2014 p.17). Only under a framework such as that proposed can such expenditure be quantified.

RQ3. How do social landlords seek to maximise added value on wellbeing outcomes?

Unlike for-profit providers of market rental housing, social landlords (whether government or not-for-profit) are tasked with supplying additional tenant and community services in support of social and economic inclusion policy objectives.

Faced with a growing number of tenancies involving people with special needs, Australian social landlords have been giving increasing priority to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies. This is as much a matter of landlord self-interest as one of contributing to an objective of tenant wellbeing/social inclusion. However, the effectiveness of varying landlord approaches to sustaining susceptible tenancies has not been well-researched. As this is reportedly an increasing cost pressure for all social landlords, having more robust appraisals of needs assessment approaches (such as those implemented through interviews and home visits) and support service models (e.g. case planning and referral processes) would be highly beneficial, along with having better outcome measures as discussed below.

Within the social housing sphere there is a growing sense that inherent within the social landlord role is the promotion of longer term, 'non-shelter' opportunities and outcomes for tenants. There is growing emphasis on enhancing tenant employability and capacity to move to an alternative tenure, such as by renting privately or contributing equity to their housing (e.g. via various shared ownership models). Arguably, this remains to be explicitly stated by Governments and regulators. Nonetheless, while social landlords (especially CHPs) appear willing to pursue this goal, the means of achieving it seem to be in their infancy (from our case studies). Furthermore, in a highly resource-constrained environment, it is unclear how such additional services can or should be funded.

For Australia's comparatively small CHP organisations, factors that could assist in generating the required efficiencies would be achieving a larger scale of operation while, at the same time, concentrating expansion in a limited number of service districts. The latter strategy will also help to improve the viability of social landlord contributions to 'social capital', which can result from their community-building and place-making activities in local communities.

RQ4. How can added value via tenancy management services be effectively quantified and measured?

This refers to the outcomes arising from social landlords' activity to add value by enhancing tenants' 'wellbeing outcomes' as discussed above. There is scope to make fuller use of survey instruments here, as proposed below and in the recommendations.

There is potential to more effectively use social landlords' administrative records to monitor their social inclusion impact in terms of tenancy sustainment rates for at risk households (see above).

The research also explored the feasibility of measuring the outcomes of social housing provider assistance in reconnecting work-capable tenants with employment. In practice, however, the definition and operationalisation of such a measure is highly complex. In the view of the research team, such a measure cannot be feasibly derived from social landlords' internal record systems. Rather, any metric of this kind would necessitate capture and analysis of Centrelink data. Exploring how this might be achieved would call for a separate project. In any case, as reported above, our fieldwork suggests that—albeit with some exceptions—social landlords tend to concentrate on social inclusion rather than economic reconnection.

RQ5. How should existing assessment methods and measures of housing management service outcomes be adapted to promote comparison across provider entities and provider types?

We advocate some modest enhancements to existing survey-based measures of housing management service outcomes. In particular, incorporating an increased emphasis on recently housed tenants would enable the National Social Housing Survey to delve deeper into how effectively social landlords assist new tenants in terms of social inclusion and economic reconnection.

Within the realm of administratively-generated performance metrics, it would be desirable to extend to larger CHPs the current obligation on PHPs to report on tenancy sustainment rates. Initially, this could focus on 'greatest need' new tenants—consistent with the current framework within which PHPs operate. Ideally, the remit of this metric would be narrowed for both types of providers to focus more specifically on 'at risk' tenants—such as those formerly homeless at the point of rehousing. Agreement on a precise definition of 'at risk' tenants would need to be negotiated directly by the state/territory governments and community housing industry bodies.

The capacity to compare housing management service outcomes for individual

CHP entities (i.e. below jurisdiction level for community housing) would call for the publication of data relating to (larger) CHPs at a finer level of detail than what has previously taken place.

Comparing the efficiency and effectiveness of social landlords

As to the broader question of how efficiency and effectiveness compare between public housing and community housing, some tentative conclusions emerged from the study. Relating outputs from our experimentally generated 'cost of provision' statistics for community housing (see Table 3) to estimates derived from published accounts for public housing (see Section 2.4.4), it would appear that typical housing management expenditure per dwelling for larger CHPs may be marginally higher than that for PHPs. In terms of portfolio size, however, the public housing entities concerned were between 20 times and 70 times larger than the average case study CHP—1700 mainstream social housing properties in management. Assuming that scale economies continue to operate as social landlord portfolios expand beyond this threshold, it would be expected that such growth should yield consequential unit expenditure reductions. Moreover, as shown in Table 11, CHPs continue to record significantly superior service outcomes in terms of tenant satisfaction ratings.

While assessing cost-effectiveness was referred to in the original research brief, we have argued that the cost-consequences analysis (CCA) model is the more suitable approach to economic appraisal of social landlord performance than either cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) or traditional cost-benefit analysis (CBA) (Pawson et al. 2014 p.13). Importantly, under the CCA model multiple outcomes are documented but there is no requirement to attribute dollar values to these (as in CBA), nor to make judgements on value for money. Interpretation can then allow for differences in costs and performance to be explained in relation to the operating environment (e.g. explaining differences by operating scale or by geographic factors, such as remoteness or stock sparsity). This has been described as a simpler and more transparent approach to economic evaluation often well suited to the 'real world conditions' of social policy programs (Frick & Kunz 2008, p.14.)

In developing appropriate metrics on an experimental basis, this research may provide the foundations for a meaningful application of CCA to social housing at some point in the future. To make this possible, however, further work on outcome measures is required.

5.2 Recommendations

Following from our conclusions, we have devised ten recommendations for Commonwealth and state/territory governments. An important underlying principle is consistency across all social housing providers and jurisdictions in the activities measured and the metrics themselves. Allocated into four categories of action, each of these proposals is briefly explained and justified below.

Government priority for improved measurement of social housing landlord costs and outcomes

Rec 1. Enhancing transparency on the costs of social housing provision and tenant outcomes should be a top priority for Commonwealth, state and territory governments (under the NAHA or any future funding agreement and/or administrative arrangements).

In developing a more contestable and accountable social housing system, the scope for meaningful comparison between provider types and entities is a fundamental necessity. This is widely recognised across the social/affordable housing industry and among policy-makers at both Commonwealth and state/territory levels.

Achieving improved transparency will require strong and persistent leadership from an appropriate place in government. The allocation of responsibility for ensuring that there is improved accountability for social housing service costs and outcomes should be an explicit consideration in the Reform of the Federation process currently underway.

Improving current metrics and streamlining collection processes

Rec 2. In establishing a meaningful measure of social housing costs of provision, the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP) should propose that the Productivity Commission replace the discredited ROGS 'net recurrent cost of provision' measures with a standardised and transparent accounting framework, comprising separate measures of management costs (possibly along the lines developed in this research), other operating expenditure (with repairs and maintenance spending specifically identified), and capital expenditure.

The significant administrative inputs involved in the annual collation of 'cost of provision' statistics by state and territory governments and the Productivity Commission are widely considered as serving little purpose. Policy decisions on social housing reform need to be informed by reliable and meaningful information on the resource inputs involved in providing social housing services—as incurred by public housing authorities, as well as by community housing providers. It is acknowledged that both the organisational scale and the recent administrative fragmentation of public housing present major challenges in accounting for this component of the social housing system. However, implementation of the 2009 Ministerial accounting reform accord (Housing Ministers Conference 2009, p.50) is long overdue. Given sufficient political and managerial commitment, the associated obstacles would not be ~~insurmountable~~ impossible to overcome.

In incorporating repairs and maintenance expenditure as part of the reformed ROGS social housing cost of provision framework, it is recommended that the Productivity Commission adopts the categories and definitions defined in the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH); that is, distinguishing between responsive maintenance and non-capitalised planned maintenance (see NRSCH Financial Performance Return).

Rec 3. For community housing 'cost of provision' statistics, the Productivity Commission should adopt as its primary source, metrics supplied through the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) (see next).

Historically, performance statistics for community housing for publication in the Productivity Commission's annual Report on Government Services have been sourced from state and territory governments. With the recent development of the NRSCH and the system's important role in a routine data collection from registered providers, it would be appropriate for relevant statistics to be collated by the Productivity Commission from this source.

Rec 4. Metrics based on the AHURI 'social housing management cost of provision metrics' (Figure 1) should be incorporated within the NRSCH data collection regime for Tier 1 and Tier 2 community housing providers (CHPs). For relevant CHPs in non-NRSCH jurisdictions

(Victoria and WA), equivalent data should be collected via state-level community housing registrars operating under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NRSCH.

Given the successful pilot on quantification of community housing 'cost of provision' (housing management element) undertaken in this study, it is recommended that a requirement to collate and submit such statistics is incorporated within the suite of indicators encompassed within the NRSCH Financial Performance Return. In finalising indicator definitions and recommended data collection procedures, Registrar representatives would need to engage with state and territory policy-maker colleagues responsible for both public and community housing. Such statistics could be collected on an annual or bi-annual basis from larger providers (possibly defined as Tier 1 and 2 landlords). Consultation with sector industry bodies would of course need to be factored into this process.

Rec 5. Alignment between the National Social Housing Survey (AIHW-managed) and community housing industry tenant satisfaction survey methodologies should be pursued to enable provider level scores to be meaningfully benchmarked against state level and national comparator statistics.

This proposal refers to the two sets of approaches to tenant satisfaction assessment that have developed separately over time. One, the NSHS, is a government-commissioned and managed system and the other (as developed for application to individual CHPs) is industry-led. In the interests of data validation, however, it would be desirable for methodologies to be aligned. This is primarily a matter for the AIHW and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations.

Rec 6. Respondent recruitment for future National Social Housing Surveys should be structured to ensure an adequate sample of recently housed tenants to:

→ *appropriately incorporate targeted questions (e.g. housing situation and landlord service before and after entry into social housing)*

→ *enable reporting of discrete findings for this group at national and state levels.*

This proposal would call for modification of the established NSHS sampling approach. It would also require that 'recently housed' is specifically defined. We would suggest this could refer to those granted a new tenancy in mainstream community housing (not 'transitional housing' or 'affordable housing') within the previous two years and not having held a social housing tenancy immediately prior to being housed. This would need to be considered by the AIHW in consultation with state and territory governments.

Rec 7. For larger CHPs, NRSCH data collection should incorporate a metric for tenancy sustainment equivalent to that collected by public housing authorities and previously reported by the Productivity Commission as a NAHA performance indicator in relation to homelessness (SCRGSP 2013).

The justification for extending this performance metric to CHPs has been outlined above. Ideally the coverage of this indicator should also be made more specific to 'at risk' tenants for both public and community housing providers.

Rec 8. In determining future housing research priorities, all governments should recognise the need for additional tenant outcome measures focused on the added value contributed by social landlords and the possible scope to inform such measures through data linkage involving administrative records held elsewhere in government (e.g. Centrelink).

As demonstrated through the research (see Chapter 4) there is only very limited scope for drawing on administrative record systems to monitor social landlords' effectiveness in aiding (work capable) tenant 'economic reconnection'. However, investigating the feasibility of data linkage focused on Centrelink records was beyond our project remit.

Disaggregating (large) community housing provider metrics

Rec 9. The NRSCH should move towards provider level publication of cost of provision, operational performance and service outcomes metrics for larger CHPs, with agreement from the non-NRSCH jurisdictions to do likewise.

This proposal refers to the current situation where officially published data on community housing performance is largely restricted to aggregate (state-level) statistics as included in the Productivity Commission's ROGS reports. Given their increasing scale and maturity, as well as their ongoing receipt of public benefits, there is a growing case for greater transparency of individual provider organisations' performance—partly as a discipline to further incentivise performance improvement.

Giving further consideration to applicability to (larger) Indigenous community housing providers

Rec 10. Larger Indigenous housing providers and government agencies that fund and regulate their operations should give further consideration to the potential application of the 'social housing management cost of provision metrics' framework in their sector. Government agencies will find comparisons across states with different management systems and maintenance regimes particularly useful.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Indigenous community housing sector is likely to manifest significant differences in its costs of service provision to both mainstream public and community housing providers, mainly for reasons of scale and remote service location. Importantly too, the achievement of culturally appropriate outcomes for Indigenous tenants is a focus of Indigenous organisations and their members. Nevertheless, there would be value in improving measurement of landlord efficiency and effectiveness within that sector through adoption of an appropriately customised framework and methodology. The framework developed and tested in this study could offer a starting point for intra-sectoral discussions on how to proceed. In recognition of the specialised role of Indigenous community housing providers, however, the aim should primarily be to improve performance measurement and accountability within that provider system rather than for purposes of comparison with mainstream providers.

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Appendix 1: Housing management expenditure data collection workbook (main sheet)

Organisation name

Dwellings in management

Management field	Salaries expenditure (in-house staff)					Non-salaries expenditure (incl. outsourced contributions to service)			Total expenditure	Expenditure per dwelling in management
	FTE	Salaries expenditure	Proportion of salaries expenditure	Pro rata overheads expenditure	Total salaries expenditure including overheads	Non salaries expenditure	Pro rata overheads expenditure	Total non-salaries expenditure including overheads		
Core social housing management activities										
Tenancy management										
Property and neighbourhood management										
Individual tenant support										
Additional tenant and community services										
Sub-total core social housing activities										
Other housing activities										
Property acquisition and development										
Disability support housing										
Fee-for-service operations										
Managing applications										
Other services and projects										
Sub-total other housing activities										
Sub-total all housing activities										
Corporate management overheads										
Excluded cost lines										
Total organisational expenditure										

Appendix 2: Housing management expenditure Activity Grouping Guidance

Field and definition	Examples of salaries expenditure	Examples of non salary expenditure
Core social housing management activities		
Tenancy management Expenditure associated with the management of tenancies, focused on shelter outcomes	Property letting, including tenant selection for a specific vacancy	Legal services (e.g. related to eviction action)
	New tenant induction	Relocation grants/allowances
	Managing leases, including handling tenant enquiries, interviews and home visits	Translation services
	Managing existing headleased properties	
	Rent reviews, rent collection and rent arrears management (including legal action)	
	Utilities payment collection	
	Income and tenancy reviews	
	Debt recovery including former tenant arrears	
	Managing anti-social behaviour - investigation and enforcement (including legal action)	
	Managing tenant transfers (handling transfer applications and 'landlord interest' moves)	
	Handling tenant complaints or appeals	
Property and neighbourhood management Expenditure associated with the management of properties, focused on shelter outcomes	Property inspections, including of common areas and grounds	Legal advice
	Managing responsive maintenance and repairs to dwellings, common areas, grounds	Security, including monitoring CCTV
	Managing vacant property for reletting, including works commissioning	Translation services
	Managing estate cleaning and grounds maintenance	Outsourced rental valuation service
	Procuring, programming and managing planned maintenance	
	Managing modifications to dwellings in response to specific client needs	
	Security, including monitoring CCTV	

Field and definition	Examples of salaries expenditure	Examples of non salary expenditure
Individual tenant support Expenditure associated with supporting individual tenants and their families, as a contribution to tenancy sustainment and 'tenant welfare' outcomes	Tenant support visits primarily to identify or respond to individual support needs	Translation services
	Tenant referrals for personal support, counselling etc	
	Preparing case management plans	
	Negotiating/managing support partnerships	
	Responding to changing individual support needs	
	Managing tenancies at risk due to rent arrears or antisocial behaviour - supportive interventions	
Additional tenant and community services Expenditure associated with supporting communities of tenants, as a contribution to non-shelter outcomes	Supporting tenants to engage with employment or training	Event management
	Supporting tenant participation in housing/neighbourhood governance (arranging/attending meetings etc)	Scholarship and bursary programs
	Community development, place making and events, including culturally specific community activities	Translation services
	Direct provision of community services (e.g. employment, training, youth activities)	
	Referrals to community services (e.g. employment, training, youth activities)	
	Supporting tenants to move through the housing spectrum (e.g. home purchase)	
	Management of community volunteers	
Other housing activities		
Property acquisition and development Expenditure associated with acquisition, development and construction of new properties	Acquiring, planning, designing, developing and constructing new properties	

Field and definition	Examples of salaries expenditure	Examples of non salary expenditure
Disability support housing Expenditure directed services and projects supporting people with a disability	Acquisition and development and ongoing management of tenants and housing separate from mainstream social housing portfolio and specifically designed for disability	
Fee-for-service operations Expenditure associated with services managed on behalf of other organisations	Managing fee-for-service contracts	
Managing applications Expenditure associated with managing applications and waiting lists	Managing housing applications/waiting lists (unconnected with property letting process)	
	Housing advice and assistance for non tenants (including those not on waiting list)	
Other services and projects Other services and project expenditure with significant variance depending on locations, business models and policy decisions	Other non-mainstream housing activities, such as transitional housing, key worker housing, foyer housing, remote community housing and short term crisis accommodation)	
	Managing special projects	
	Procuring additional properties to headleasing programs	
Corporate management overheads		
Expenditure which contributes to the management of core or other social housing activities, but which is not directly attributable to a 'core housing management activity' or an 'other housing activity'	Business planning	Auditing
	Corporate governance, including Board remuneration	Finance assistance or advice
	Finance	ICT assistance or advice, including outsourced Helpdesk services
	Human resources	ICT capital costs, annualised over anticipated system/hardware lifetime
	ICT and records management	ICT software licences, annualised
	Internally run training	Legal advice not specific to tenancy management

Field and definition	Examples of salaries expenditure	Examples of non salary expenditure
	Payroll	Marketing
	Risk management	Payroll services
	Senior executive and management	Risk management assistance or advice
	Meeting regulatory and accreditation requirements	Training services
		Translation services
		Vehicle costs, annualised
		Staff-related general insurances, including public liability, workers compensation and professional indemnity
		Office running costs, including rent, strata fees, council rates, water rates, electricity charges, postage, stationery and equipment
Excluded cost lines		
Non-management expenditure	None expected (all salary expenditure should be allocated to one of the above fields)	Property costs for tenanted and vacant properties, including property maintenance, grounds maintenance, strata fees, council rates, property insurance, water rates, electricity charges, CCTV costs, graffiti removal, common area cleaning, parking management
		Direct provision of power and water to remote communities
		Write-offs of bad or doubtful debts
		Debt servicing costs
		Housing assets depreciation (ex GST)

Appendix 3: Topic guide—Housing management workshop on tenant services and outcomes metrics

1. Description of your organisation's structure, including:

   → Number of divisions, subsidiary(s), group members and their functions

   → Current stock profile (affordable housing, , transitional housing, social housing, other housing, non-housing activities)

   → What procurement methods (development, purchase, head lease private, head lease public, fee for service) apply to the social housing portfolio

   → What is the geographic distribution of your social housing stock?

   → What is the dwelling type, age and condition profile of your social housing stock?

   → What is the current social housing tenant profile?—by age group, disability, family/household type, Indigeneity, ethnic background

   → Number and roles of staff contributing directly to housing services (e.g. tenancy management, property management)

   → How are direct housing management services structured (teams, specialists, outsourcing)?

   → What are the workload expectations (e.g. tenancies per FTE staff)? Do these vary by location, client type etc?

   → Number and roles of staff contributing indirectly to housing services (e.g. back office)

   → Does your organisation outsource any of these housing (or related) services? What was the decision to outsource based on (e.g. did your organisation do a benchmarking study)?

2. What efficiency and effectiveness measurement framework does your organisation currently use?

   → What works well? What does not work well?

   → Are these benchmarked in any way?

   → Have you previously done, or do you plan to do any workload or activity costing analysis?

3. How does your organisation currently measure tenant outcomes (e.g. annual satisfaction survey)?

   → What is the range and scope of activities in which your organisation is engaged with providing personal support to individual tenants and/or members of their household?

   → Describe the various ways by which your organisation works towards tenancy sustainability

   → What is the range and scope of activities in which your organisation is engaged with in promoting the participation of tenants and their households in social and community activities?

   → What is the range and scope of activities in which your organisation is engaged with in promoting the participation of tenants and their households in education, training and/or employment?

4. Discussion of how housing management costs are currently recorded and compatibility with proposed measurement framework, as per project manual.

5. Discussion of approach to obtaining tenant outcomes information, as per project manual.

6. Agreement/plan on implementing proposed methodology.

Appendix 4: CHP frontline staff survey

The survey is designed for CHP housing management staff at the interface between the organisation and social housing tenants, that is responsible for tenancy management functions. It is not intended for specialist staff—e.g. in roles solely concerned with functions such as rent arrears management or community development. All responses are completely confidential: no individual respondent will be identified in any published report or feedback to participating organisations.

From your experience of how things work in your own organisation, please indicate how far you agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree):

Job title: _____ Organisation: _____

CHP roles and priorities

(5: Strongly agree / 4: Agree / 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree / 2: Disagree / 1: Strongly Disagree)

	Your response
1. As a community housing provider, we have important 'social' responsibilities to tenants which extend beyond providing an efficient tenancy management service	
2. As our organisation has grown it has begun to lose its tenant-centred philosophy and approach	
3. My main priority when relating to tenants is to enforce the rules (i.e. tenancy conditions)	
4. Growing staff workloads have reduced the organisation's capacity to help tenants deal with problems not directly related to their tenancy	
5. The expansion of our property portfolio has increased the time I spend travelling and reduced the time I spend with tenants	
6. There has been a shift in favour of property management over tenancy management in our organisation	
7. My organisation should make a stronger commitment to actively enhancing tenant welfare (e.g. in the Corporate/ Strategic Plan)	
8. The commitments our organisation makes to actively enhancing tenant welfare are not (yet) fully reflected in actual practice	

Individual tenant support

(5: Strongly agree / 4: Agree / 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree / 2: Disagree / 1: Strongly Disagree)

	Your response
9. The proportion of our tenants who have support needs has risen significantly in recent years	
10. Effectively identifying and meeting tenant support needs reduces the incidence of 'tenancy failure' and neighbour complaints	
11. The organisational priority placed on tenancy sustainment has increased in recent years	
12. In our organisation, the procedure for assessing tenant support needs is highly effective	
13. Additional training and/or specialist advice could help us assess tenant support needs more effectively	
14. 'Referring tenants for external support' usually means no more than providing the tenant with contact details for a relevant agency	
15. When a tenant is referred to an external support agency it is part of our job to make sure the tenant actually receives that support	
16. Improved partnerships between my organisation and external support agencies would help ensure that 'referred tenants' can access the help they need	
17. In practice, the bulk of directly provided tenant support relates to rent arrears repayment plans	

Promoting tenant employability

(5: Strongly agree / 4: Agree / 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree / 2: Disagree / 1: Strongly Disagree)

	Your response
18. Our priority should be to help 'more able' tenants transition out of social housing, making way for more disadvantaged applicants	
19. Actively working to enhance tenant 'employability' is not a major priority for our organisation	
20. We do a good job of promoting tenant employability	
21. The scope to enhance tenant employability is very limited, given the age profile, skill levels and other characteristics of our tenant population	
22. The most significant group of work capable tenants is single parents who could, potentially, (re) enter employment	
23. The income-related rent system discourages work capable tenants from seeking employment	

Tenant feedback and participation

(5: Strongly agree / 4: Agree / 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree / 2: Disagree / 1: Strongly Disagree)

	Your response
24. Tenant participation helps to reduce complaints	
25. We treat tenants 'as if they were customers' whose views and preferences influence the way that landlord services are delivered	
26. Tenant views and preferences have changed for the better the way that landlord services are delivered in our organisation	
27. Tenants are generally willing to put up with a substandard service	
28. As our organisation has grown we have started to lose touch with our communities	
29. Helping tenants to participate in community life is a higher priority for our organisation than facilitating involvement in decisions on how housing services are run	
30. Facilitating community development is an important element of our role as a social landlord	

If you have any comments to add please key them in below.

Thanks for your help.

Appendix 5: New tenant survey

Q1. **Hi my name is (name), and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of the [organisation]. The [organisation] recently sent you a letter outlining a survey we're conducting for tenants who have been in their new residence less than 2 years. The survey takes 10-12 minutes and all answers are confidential. Participants will go into a prize draw to win a shopping gift card worth $500. Would you be willing to take part in this survey?**

Yes	1
No	555

Answer If Attribute 'No' from Q1 is SELECTED

Offer a CALL BACK.Explain survey if letter not received

Q2. **Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening**

End

Q3. **May I have your first name?**

Use DETAILS

Q4. **Thanks [Q3]. To kick things off, how long ago did you move into your current home?**

PROMPTED. Survey will terminate if they have been in their home more than 2 years

Less than 1 month	1	
1-3 months	2	
3-6 months	3	
6-12 months	4	
1-2 years	5	
More than 2 years	6	End

Q5. **May I have your postcode?**

If unsure, ask which suburb

Q6. **Including yourself, how many people are currently living in your home?**

UNPROMPTED

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
More than 8	9

Q7. **Now [Q3], the next group of questions is designed to get a brief understanding of each member of your household. So for person 1 being yourself may I have your…**

Q8. **Age range?**

0-8	1
9-12	2
13-17	3
18-29	4
30-39	5
40-49	6
50-59	7
60+	8

Q9. **Gender?**

Male	1
Female	2

Q10. **Current education?**

Primary School	1
High School	2
TAFE	3
University	4
Pre-school/kindergarten	5
None	6
OTHER	

Q11. **Current work status?**

Full-time	1
Part-time	2
Seeking work	3
Not seeking work	4
Medically unable	5

Q40. **Are there any children aged 9-17 who are still at school?**

Yes	1
No	555

Q41. **Thinking about the adults in your household, are they generally working more or less than when they were in the previous home?**

Working more	1
Working less	2
About the same	3
Unsure/Not applicable	4

Q42. **Why do you think they are working more?**
Answer If Attribute 'Working more' from Q41 is SELECTED

Q43. **Why do you think they are working less?**
Answer If Attribute 'Working less' from Q41 is SELECTED

Q44. **Have any of the adults in your house received any help with employment or training from Department of Housing staff?**

Yes	1
No	555
Unsure	666

Q45. **How many times have you moved house in the last two years?**

UNPROMPTED

Once	1
Twice	2
Three times	3
Four times	4
Five times	5
Six or more times	6
Unsure	666

Q46. **[Q3], what are the major differences between your current home and the one you last lived in?**

UNPROMPTED, though PROMPT if necessary

Bigger	1
Smaller	2
Nicer/better condition	3
Not as nice/worse condition	4
Better neighbourhood	5
Worse neighbourhood	6
Cheaper	7
More expensive	8
Bigger backyard	9
Smaller backyard	10
OTHER	

Q47. **Was your last home in the same neighbourhood as your current home?**

Yes	1
No	555

Q48. **What are the main differences between your old neighbourhood and the one you're in now?**
Do not answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q47 is SELECTED

Safer	1
Less safe	2
Better public transport	3
Worse public transport	4
Better shops/services	5
Worse shops/services	6
Better sense of community/friendlier	7
Worse sense of community/less friendly	8
OTHER	

Q49. **Thinking about your youngest child, how many schools had he or she attended in the two years before you moved into this dwelling?**
Answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q40 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED. EXCLUDES current school

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
More than 6	7
Unsure	666

Q50. **And have you noticed any difference in how the child is performing or enjoying school since you moved into this home?**
Answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q40 is SELECTED

Yes	1
No	555
Unsure	666

Q51. **Has there been any change in their motivation, such as how keen they are to go to school?**
Answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q40 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

Yes—more motivated	1
Yes—less motivated	2
No change	3

Q52. **And what about their school results, have they gotten better or worse?**
Answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q40 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED

Better	1
Worse	2
No change	3
Unsure/too early to say	4

Q53. **What do you think are the reasons for this?**
Answer If Attribute 'Yes' from Q40 is SELECTED

_____

_____

Q54. **[Q3], for you and your family, what do you think is the single most important change in your life since moving into your current property?**
PROBE

_____

_____

Q55. **Thinking about its location, its condition and how it is managed, overall how would you rate your new housing compared to your previous home?**

PROMPTED	
Much better	1
A bit better	2
About the same	3
A bit worse	4
Much worse	5

Q56. **Can you briefly axplain why?**
Answer If Attribute 'Much better' from Q55 is SELECTED OR
Answer If Attribute 'A bit better' from Q55 is SELECTED OR
Answer If Attribute 'A bit worse' from Q55 is SELECTED OR
Answer If Attribute 'Much worse' from Q55 is SELECTED
PROBE—brief response

_____

_____

Q57. **For the following three questions, I'd just like to know how helpful your landlord was in the following areas. In each case you can answer very helpful, quite helpful, did not help or not applicable. Firstly?**

Rate each option	Very helpful	Quite helpful	Did not help	n/a
How helpful was your landlord in helping you settle into your new home?	1	2	3	555
What about fixing any problems with your new home or tenancy?	1	2	3	555
What about in helping you deal with other issues, such as making contact with other agencies?	1	2	3	555

Q58. **To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement. 'I think my landlord cares about me and my family.'**

PROMPTED—except don't know	
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know	999

Q59. **Can you briefly explain why?**
PROBE

_____

_____

Q60. **Thinking back to your situation before getting your current home. Do you think that living in housing provided by the Department of Housing has helped you in of the following ways?**

IF YES verify which one

	Yes—with direct assistance from housing staff	Yes—no direct assistance	No	N/a
Feel more settled in general	1	2	555	555
Enjoy better health (including mental health and wellbeing)	1	2	555	555
Feel better able to work or seek work	1	2	555	555
Feel better able to participate in study or work training	1	2	555	555

Q61. **We're almost to the end [Q3]. Compared to your previous home, do you now feel more connected or less connected to your local community?**

UNPROMPTED

More connected	1
Less connected	2
About the same	3

Q62. **Can you briefly explain why?**
PROBE

_____

_____

Q63. **And finally [Q3], how likely would you be to recommend the Department of Housing to a friend living in public or community housing?**

PROMPTED

Very unlikely	1
Quite unlikely	2
Neither likely nor unlikely	3
Fairly likely	4
Very likely	5

Q65. **Thanks so much [Q3], that the end of the survey. Your name will be automatically entered into the prize draw. Winners will be contacted by phone. Your name and phone number will be separated from their survey responses prior to any analysis to protect your confidentiality. Thank you for your time and have a great afternoon/evening.**

Appendix 6: New tenant survey respondent characteristic overview

Table A1: Survey respondents by household type

	Public housing tenants		Community housing tenants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lone person households						
Lone person (no further detail)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Lone person (< 30 years-old)	3	1	0	0	3	1
Lone person (30–60 years-old)	71	21	18	19	89	21
Lone person (60+ years old)	94	28	49	52	143	33
Single-parent households						
Single-parent w/ children under 18	83	25	3	3	86	20
Single-parent w/ children 18+ only	12	4	8	9	20	5
Other family households						
Couple only	35	10	14	15	49	11
Couple w/ children under 18	23	7	0	0	23	5
Couples w/ children 18+ only	5	1	0	0	5	1
Three-generation household	8	2	2	2	10	2
Total	335	100	94	100	429	100

Source: New tenant survey 2015

Table A2: Age of survey respondents

	Public housing tenants		Community housing tenants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18–29	33	10	0	0	33	8
30–39	60	18	0	0	60	14
40–49	52	16	1	1	53	12
50–59	67	20	23	24	90	21
60+	122	37	70	74	192	45
Total	334	100	94	100	428	100

Source: New tenant survey 2015

Table A3： Current labour force status of survey respondents

	Public housing tenants		Community housing tenants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full-time	8	2	3	3	11	3
Part-time	24	7	6	6	30	7
Seeking work	47	14	6	6	53	12
Not seeking work	116	35	47	50	163	38
Medically unable	137	41	32	34	169	40
Total	332	100	94	100	426	100

Source: New tenant survey 2015

Table A4： Survey respondents' length of residence in current tenancy

	Public housing tenants		Community housing tenants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 1 month	2	1	0	0	2	0
1–3 months	3	1	1	1	4	1
3–6 months	6	2	10	11	16	4
6–12 months	124	37	18	19	142	33
1–2 years	200	60	45	48	245	57
More than two years	0	0	20	21	20	5
Total	335	100	94	100	429	100

Question: How long ago did you move into your current home?

Source: New tenant survey 2015

Table A5: Number of times survey respondents had relocated in the last two years

	Public housing tenants		Community housing tenants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Once	218	65	71	76	289	67
Twice	64	19	13	14	77	18
Three times	28	8	7	7	35	8
Four times	9	3	1	1	10	2
Five times	6	2	1	1	7	2
Six or more times	8	2	1	1	9	2
Unsure	2	1	0	0	2	0
Total	335	100	94	100	429	100

Question: How many times have you moved house in the last two years?

Source: New tenant survey 2015

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