

*Final Report*

# **Housing policy and sustainable urban development: evaluating the use of local housing strategies in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria**

authored by  
**Nicole Gurrán**

for the

**Australian Housing  
and Urban Research Institute**

University of Sydney Research Centre

June 2003

AHURI Final Report No. 39

ISSN: 1834-7223

ISBN: 1 920758 42 9



Australian Housing  
and Urban Research Institute

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This material was produced with funding from the Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian States and Territories. AHURI gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, without which this work would not have been possible.

## **DISCLAIMER**

AHURI Ltd is an independent, non-political body which has supported this project as part of its programme of research into housing and urban development, which it hopes will be of value to policy-makers, researchers, industry and communities. The opinions in this publication reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of AHURI Ltd, its Board or its funding organisations. No responsibility is accepted by AHURI Ltd or its Board or its funders for the accuracy or omission of any statement, opinion, advice or information in this publication.

## **AHURI FINAL REPORT SERIES**

AHURI Final Reports is a refereed series presenting the results of original research to a diverse readership of policy makers, researchers and practitioners.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>i</b>
The role of local government in housing .....	i
Research aims and approach.....	i
Key findings .....	ii
Housing Related Roles of Local Government.....	ii
Evaluating the Local Housing Strategy Model .....	ii
Constraints and opportunities implementing local housing strategies .....	ii
Role of Other Stakeholders.....	iii
Priorities for supporting and enhancing the role of local government in housing .....	iii
Building expertise and knowledge .....	iii
Developing and enabling a range of mechanisms and policy responses .....	iii
Enhancing strategy methodologies .....	iv
Establishing strong processes for collaboration .....	iv
<b>1 FROM HOUSING POLICY TO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Aims and methodology.....	2
1.3 Policy relevance.....	2
1.3.1 State initiatives .....	3
1.3.2 Local initiatives .....	3
1.4 Structure of the report .....	3
<b>2 SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE.4</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Sustainable Urban Development.....	4
2.1.1 Defining sustainability.....	4
2.1.2 Principles for sustainable environmental governance.....	5
2.1.3 Planning for sustainable settlements .....	6
2.1.4 Sustainability and housing policy .....	6
2.2 Sustainable urban development and local governance .....	7
2.2.1 Characteristics of local government in Australia.....	7
2.2.2 The arguments for and against greater local government involvement .....	7
2.2.3 What type of housing outcomes should local government promote? .....	8
2.3 Housing related functions of local government .....	8
2.3.1 Urban management and renewal.....	9
2.3.2 Responding to demographic and market trends.....	9
2.3.3 Responding to special needs .....	10
2.3.4 Integrated local area planning .....	10
2.3.5 Collaborative planning .....	10
2.4 National and International Research .....	10

2.4.1	Key themes.....	11
2.4.2	Changing urban governance.....	11
2.4.3	Tensions between central and local governments .....	11
2.4.4	Conflicts between housing policy and spatial planning .....	11
2.4.5	Divergence of local government approaches .....	12
2.5	International experiences .....	12
2.5.1	Urban Decline and Renewal .....	12
2.5.2	Affordable housing.....	13
2.5.3	Housing and special needs .....	13
2.5.4	Environmental Sustainability .....	14
2.6	Australian research .....	14
2.6.1	Barriers and opportunities .....	15
2.6.2	Summary of research.....	15
2.7	Local housing strategies – panacea or palliative?.....	16
2.7.1	Implementation and evaluation of local housing strategies .....	16
<b>3</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1	Research questions .....	18
3.2	Research methods .....	18
3.2.1	Literature review .....	18
3.2.2	Review of State legislation, policy and programs.....	18
3.2.3	Focus groups.....	19
3.2.4	Local Government Case Studies .....	20
3.2.5	Local government interviews.....	20
3.2.6	Analysis of local housing strategies .....	21
3.3	Case study profiles.....	22
3.3.1	Fairfield City Council (NSW) .....	23
3.3.2	Marrickville Council (NSW).....	23
3.3.3	Brisbane City Council (Queensland).....	23
3.3.4	Redland Shire Council (Queensland) .....	23
3.3.5	Moreland City Council (Victoria).....	24
3.3.6	City of Port Phillip Council (Victoria) .....	24
3.4	Summary of methodology and research outcomes.....	24
<b>4</b>	<b>FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSING ACTIVITIES IN NSW, QUEENSLAND AND VICTORIA.....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1	Overview of governance structures relating to housing and urban development in NSW, Queensland and Victoria .....	25
4.1.1	Local government housing policy and planning initiatives in NSW .....	25
4.1.2	Affordable housing in sustainable communities: Policy framework for increased local government involvement in Queensland .....	27
4.1.3	Towards a State and local government affordable housing strategy in Victoria .....	27

4.2	Planning systems.....	28
4.2.1	Environmental planning and assessment in NSW.....	29
4.2.2	Integrated planning in Queensland .....	30
4.2.3	Planning and environment framework in Victoria .....	31
4.3	Comparative evaluation .....	32
<b>5</b>	<b>HOUSING ROLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN NSW, QUEENSLAND AND VICTORIA.....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1	Housing related roles and activities of local councils .....	34
5.1.1	Planning framework.....	36
5.1.2	Facilitating social housing .....	37
5.1.3	Advocacy / information .....	37
5.1.4	Community development / service provision .....	37
5.1.5	Partnerships, joint ventures, and direct housing provision .....	38
5.2	Opportunities to enhance the exercise of local government housing roles .....	39
5.2.1	Information, guidance, and comprehensive policy direction.....	39
5.2.2	Support for a diversity of local government approaches .....	39
5.2.3	Resourcing and collaboration.....	39
5.3	Learning from local experience.....	40
<b>6</b>	<b>EVALUATING LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES .....</b>	<b>41</b>
6.1	Experience in housing strategy preparation .....	41
6.2	What makes an effective strategy?.....	42
6.2.1	Information sources .....	42
6.2.2	Content of housing strategies .....	43
6.2.3	Process for developing housing strategies .....	43
6.3	Evaluation of case study housing strategies and initiatives .....	43
6.3.1	Marrickville Council Urban Strategy 1996.....	45
6.3.2	City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy .....	46
6.3.3	Moreland Housing Strategy 1996 .....	46
6.3.4	Brisbane City Council housing initiatives .....	47
6.3.5	Redland Shire Council housing strategies .....	47
6.4	Evaluation of the housing strategies .....	48
6.5	Implementation experience.....	51
6.5.1	Implementation constraints and opportunities .....	51
6.6	Summary and conclusions.....	52
<b>7</b>	<b>SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN HOUSING .....</b>	<b>53</b>
7.1	Review of research findings .....	53
7.1.1	Housing Related Roles of Local Government.....	53
7.1.2	Evaluating the Local Housing Strategy Model .....	54
7.1.3	Constraints and opportunities implementing local housing strategies .....	55

7.1.4	Role of Other Stakeholders.....	56
7.2	Supporting and enhancing the role of local government.....	56
7.2.1	Building expertise and knowledge .....	56
7.2.2	Strengthening the Policy and Planning Framework.....	56
7.2.3	Enhancing housing strategy methodologies .....	57
7.2.4	Processes for collaboration .....	57
7.3	Future policy development and research .....	58
7.4	Conclusions.....	58
	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>ATTACHMENT ONE: LIST OF INTERVIEWS .....</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>ATTACHMENT TWO: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>67</b>

## List of Tables

Table One: Housing Activities of Local Governments .....	9
Table Two: Barriers and opportunities to local government involvement in housing (1990 – 2001) .....	15
Table Three: Local Government Case Studies .....	20
Table Four: Summary Characteristics of Case Study Local Government Areas .....	22
Table Five: Summary of programs and planning instruments relevant to local government involvement in housing in NSW, Queensland and Victoria .....	32
Table Six: Housing related activities and initiatives of participant councils .....	35
Table Seven: Use of local housing strategies .....	41
Table Eight: Local Housing Strategies prepared by participant councils (including draft strategies).....	41
Table Nine: Main reason for preparing local housing strategies .....	42
Table Ten: Evaluation of the housing strategies .....	48
Table Eleven: Implementation Experience .....	51
Table Twelve: Legislative, institutional, and political opportunities and constraints to implementing local housing strategies in NSW, Queensland and Victoria .....	55

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents research undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) University of Sydney Research Centre. The research investigates the institutional, legislative and political parameters affecting the housing activities of local governments in New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and Victoria. It also identifies opportunities to enhance this involvement.

### **The role of local government in housing**

Integrating housing policy objectives with the urban planning responsibilities of local governments is central to sustainable urban development. Local governments influence the private housing market through their planning and development control decisions, have strong connections to the local community, and are well positioned to facilitate a “whole of government” approach to housing outcomes (ALGA 1994, Purdon and Burke 1991). Despite this, councils in Australia have traditionally been unwilling to recognise the housing impacts of planning decisions, or to assume a proactive role in shaping housing outcomes (Paris 1990).

To encourage greater local engagement, ‘local housing strategies’ – incorporating an analysis of local housing supply, demand, future demographic and market trends, as well as recommendations for planning processes, land use plans and development regulations - have been promoted over the past decade (ALGA 1994, Purdon and Burke 1991, DUAP 1996, 2001b). Since this time, many local councils across Australia have prepared housing strategies, in some cases as a result of direct state intervention through planning legislation. However, there has been little critical investigation of the extent to which such strategies have met expectations in terms of more proactive, whole of government participation in housing policy objectives. There are also questions about the extent to which the strategies have been implemented in practice or led to changed housing outcomes on the ground. This is reflective of a broader gap in research concerning the contemporary role of Australian local government in shaping housing outcomes.

### **Research aims and approach**

This research aimed to address this gap by:

1. Analysing and comparing the housing related roles currently undertaken by local government in three Australian states (NSW, Queensland and Victoria);
2. Critically evaluating the implementation of local housing strategies in relation to defined housing needs and objectives, and identifying models of excellence and innovation;
3. Ascertaining the primary legislative, institutional, and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies, as well as factors contributing to success; and,
4. Reviewing the involvement of other local, regional, and state stakeholders / housing providers in the development and implementation local housing strategies and the implications of this for achieving a whole of government approach to sustainable urban development.

This report presents the findings of this research in relation to each of these research aims. With reference to focus groups and case study research involving local governments in metropolitan areas of New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and Victoria, the report presents the current policy framework influencing local government involvement in housing, discusses the range of housing related roles currently undertaken by local governments, outlines their experience in developing and implementing local housing strategies, and identifies examples of excellence and innovation. The report also identifies opportunities for Australian local governments to play greater role in whole of government approaches to sustainable urban development and management.



## Key findings

Key findings of the study are as follows.

### *Housing Related Roles of Local Government*

- Metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria undertake a variety of housing related roles, extending from the identification of land and development controls for more diverse and environmentally sustainable housing types, through to directly providing low cost housing stock within their areas. However, of these, the greatest emphasis is on the physical planning process, including managing land supply and assessing development proposals. To a lesser degree all councils represented in the study also undertake information gathering<sup>1</sup>, advocacy, and service co-ordination activities.
- There are significant differences in the housing related roles recognised by councils in each of the three states. These differences correlate to the policy and planning frameworks governing local government housing activities. In NSW, there is a longer history of state government initiatives to encourage and support local involvement in housing. These have resulted in demonstrable differences in the range of housing roles and activities undertaken by councils in Sydney in comparison to Brisbane and Melbourne.

### *Evaluating the Local Housing Strategy Model*

- The local housing strategy model has proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives, as councils with comprehensive strategies were also the most active in pursuing a range of housing initiatives. However, information about the implementation of housing strategies is limited, due to the lack of defined or measurable objectives or indicators for performance monitoring.
- There is significant variation in the format and content of strategies reviewed, although these variations do not appear to have affected the extent to which the strategy has been used – a short and strategic document may be just as effective as a lengthy analysis and plan. Of the documents analysed, all included an adequate analysis of housing need, but most failed to link the actual strategies or actions to the overall objectives or to the highest priority issues. There was also a failure to identify indicators for performance monitoring or to establish a process for ongoing review.

### *Constraints and opportunities implementing local housing strategies*

- Each of the states are characterised by different opportunities and constraints affecting the implementation of local housing strategies, although there are some commonalities, including the lack of clear state housing policies, legal uncertainty and barriers to the use of local planning mechanisms, and political / community opposition to housing initiatives.
- Key opportunities in NSW include a relatively strong state planning framework which supports the use of planning controls / provisions to promote diverse housing types; as well as the availability of state government funding for local housing initiatives. In Queensland, opportunities include the preparation of a state planning policy for housing; and the willingness of the state government to assist councils with data monitoring and policy development. However, many local governments in Queensland remain unwilling to undertake a strong housing role.

---

<sup>1</sup> Typical information maintained by councils includes broad social planning data like demographic statistics; numbers and locations of social service providers; housing market information like rent and sales prices; as well as physical planning data like numbers of residential development approvals; and potential redevelopment sites. In some cases, information to monitor particular dwelling supply such as boarding houses and caravan parks is also maintained by councils.

- The recently released metropolitan strategy for Melbourne represents a significant opportunity to leverage local government involvement in housing policy and planning. Constraints in Victoria are the lack of funding or dedicated support for local housing initiatives, community opposition to social housing, and a relatively weak statutory framework.

### *Role of Other Stakeholders*

- While all local housing strategies reviewed were developed through a process of community consultation, most have failed to provide a basis for ongoing collaboration between internal and external stakeholders at local, regional, and state levels. In particular, there are few examples of strong state / local government collaboration in developing and implementing local housing initiatives. There was also little evidence that private developers or low income resident groups (including private tenants), have been involved in the development or implementation of the housing strategies.
- Those councils who were able to leverage collaborative relationships with other service and housing providers (particularly Port Phillip and Brisbane City Council) were also most successful in developing and implementing a diverse and innovative range of local housing initiatives.
- In each of the three states, and at the national level, local government representative associations have been critical in influencing the housing activities of councils. This has been achieved by articulating policy positions regarding the need for local governments to be involved in housing, in initiating training programs, and in sponsoring or contributing to local government housing resource kits.

## **Priorities for supporting and enhancing the role of local government in housing**

A number of priorities for state housing authorities and planning agencies to support and enhancing the role of Australian local governments in housing, emerged through this research. They include building expertise and knowledge, strengthening the policy and planning framework, enhancing housing strategy methodologies, and developing processes for collaboration.

### *Building expertise and knowledge*

Priorities include:

- Encouraging and supporting local councils to prepare or review local housing strategies “in house”; and by providing information, guidance, and comprehensive policy direction, to build local government capacity;
- Developing standard housing definitions, data sets, and performance indicators for use in local, regional, and state level strategies; and,
- Providing more information, guidance, and policy direction to assist local planners implement state and regional housing objectives at the local level, including advice regarding strategies for community renewal, sustainable residential development, and managing the impacts of gentrification.

### *Developing and enabling a range of mechanisms and policy responses*

Priorities include:

- Supporting, clarifying and guiding the roles of local government through comprehensive state housing policies (such as the proposed Queensland State Planning Policy on housing);
- Articulating regional housing needs and priorities in metropolitan planning strategies and forums (as demonstrated by the recently released metropolitan strategy for Melbourne (“Melbourne 2030”));

- Including both “carrots” (eg. funding) and “sticks” (eg. regulation) to encourage local governments to undertake local housing strategies; and,
- Providing advice and enabling frameworks for negotiations with developers for contributions to the provision of affordable housing.

### *Enhancing strategy methodologies*

Priorities include:

- Incorporating standard definitions, data sets, and core performance indicators (which can be supplemented by local information), to support a regional approach to housing need;
- Explicitly linking housing strategies with existing land use plans and other corporate policies;
- Expanding the local housing strategy model to incorporate urban or neighbourhood renewal initiatives, by including issues such as health, education, training and the environment; and
- Assisting councils to establish effective and enduring processes for community engagement intergovernmental involvement in the development, review and implementation of local housing strategies.

### *Establishing strong processes for collaboration*

Priorities include:

- Engaging local councils in state and regional planning processes, particularly those relating to new residential development, infrastructure co-ordination, housing assistance, and resource allocation;
- Building community awareness and support for local governments’ role in strategic housing intervention;
- Utilising existing regional forums and planning processes as a basis for regional housing collaboration; and
- Establishing a process for data sharing between local governments and state agencies.

# 1 FROM HOUSING POLICY TO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments play an important role with respect to all aspects of housing policy – from the location and form of new dwellings, through to the co-ordination and provision of social and physical infrastructure for new and existing communities. For many years, local governments in Australia have been criticised for fulfilling these functions without regard to the long term social or environmental outcomes of their decisions, both within their own areas and in surrounding regions. Recently, however, local governments have emerged as leaders in a range of community building and sustainability initiatives throughout the world, and are now recognised as crucial players in achieving the new global Habitat Agenda of “sustainable human settlements” (UN-Habitat 1996, 2002).

This report presents research conducted by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) University of Sydney Research Centre to investigate the housing roles currently undertaken by local governments in New South Wales (NSW), Queensland, and Victoria. In addition to investigating the housing related activities and initiatives currently undertaken by local governments, the research also examines the institutional, legislative and political parameters affecting these roles, and identifies opportunities to enhance this involvement.

This final report is the third research output of the project. It includes a review of previous research on local government activities in housing, sets the policy context for Australian local government involvement in the delivery of housing policy outcomes, presents the results of the study, and outlines key opportunities to enhance local government involvement in housing.

Previous outputs of this project included a positioning paper<sup>2</sup> (which set out the conceptual framework, research aims, and methods for the study) and a work in progress report. In addition to these documents and this final report, the results of the study will also be disseminated through a summary findings paper and a series of seminars for local government.

## 1.1 Background

Over the past decade there has been mounting national and international pressure for local governments to play a more active role in shaping housing related outcomes through their planning and service delivery functions (DTLGR 2002, UN-Habitat 2002, RAPI 2000). This reflects the fact that decisions made at local government level have a crucial impact on the quantity, quality, and affordability of housing supply within a particular geographic area, yet are frequently made without an explicit policy framework for shaping or monitoring these outcomes (Purdon and Burke 1991).

In addition to the social imperatives associated with housing, there is growing awareness of the need to consider the environmental impacts of residential development. Local government authorities have a clear statutory responsibility to promote environmentally sustainable development and therefore are ideally placed to integrate these two policy areas in their decision making.

However, it is often difficult to assess or generalise about local government activities or experience due to the various institutional parameters within which they operate, and the diversity of social and geographic contexts that define them (Paris 1990). For these reasons evaluative, empirically based, research concerning the various roles played by local governments in urban development, environmental management, and housing, is limited. This study investigates these roles by examining recent local government experience in implementing local housing strategies.

---

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)

## **1.2 Aims and methodology**

Local housing strategies, incorporating an analysis of local housing need, market characteristics, and proposals for planning / policy intervention, are consistently advocated as a way of improving housing outcomes at the local level (eg. ALGA 1995, DTLGR 2000, DUAP 1996, MAV 1999). However, there has been little critical investigation of the extent to which such strategies have been implemented in practice or led to changed housing outcomes on the ground. Similarly, there has been little investigation of the relationship between social planning documents like housing strategies, and other, overtly environmental initiatives undertaken by local governments, such as those under the auspices of Local Agenda 21.

This project aimed to address these research gaps by:

- Analysing and comparing the housing related roles currently undertaken by local government in three Australian states;
- Critically evaluating the implementation of local housing strategies in relation to defined housing needs and objectives, and identifying models of excellence and innovation;
- Ascertaining the primary legislative, institutional, and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies, as well as factors contributing to success; and,
- Reviewing the involvement of other local, regional, and state stakeholders / housing providers in the development and implementation local housing strategies and the implications of this for achieving a whole of government approach to sustainable urban development.

The findings of the first research aim build on research carried out in the early 1990s by the National Housing Strategy and provide an empirical basis for understanding the contemporary role played by Australian local governments in housing. Research aim two enables a critical evaluation of current local housing strategy implementation, and provides a basis for identifying models of excellence and innovation to improve housing strategy methodologies. The third aim highlights opportunities to address constraints to housing strategy implementation. Typically these constraints relate to issues such as legislation, institutional capacity, and community awareness. The outcomes of research aim four assist in identifying opportunities to improve intergovernmental relationships between state and local governments in the development and implementation of housing policy.

Due to the wide variety of state and local government arrangements for housing and land use planning across the Australian states and territories, a comparative research approach was developed. This ensures that the research findings have broader applicability, offering the opportunity for different jurisdictions to learn from one another. The study is focused on the three eastern states: NSW, Queensland and Victoria, and in particular on councils in within the metropolitan regions surrounding each capital city. The methodology for the study combined three primary techniques: structured interviews with state and local government representatives; focus groups with local government planners and housing officers, and more detailed case study analysis. The study also reviewed existing State government policy and legislation affecting the role of local governments in urban development and housing in each of the three states.

## **1.3 Policy relevance**

This research focuses on intergovernmental relationships at the interface between housing policy and urban planning. It was developed in consultation with representatives of the NSW agencies responsible for social housing and land use planning (NSW Department of Housing and Planning NSW), as well as the NSW Local Government and Shires Associations (LGSA). The findings come at a time when the Victorian and Queensland State Governments are encouraging councils to undertake local housing strategies, and the recent release of 2001 ABS census data provides an opportunity for local governments in NSW to review their existing plans.

### *1.3.1 State initiatives*

PlanningNSW (and its previous incarnations) has played a strong role in promoting local government involvement in housing policy over the past decade. This includes introducing state planning policies to retain low cost housing; the provision of funding to local governments for housing initiatives; and establishing an Affordable Housing Advisory Service to develop low cost affordable rental housing with local government, community and private sector partners. In 1995 the department also introduced legislation requiring councils in metropolitan Sydney to prepare residential development strategies. While the emphasis of these strategies was on achieving urban consolidation objectives in line with local conditions and priorities, councils were required to analyse housing market trends, and identify strategies to provide a mix of housing choices appropriate to the needs of their locality. The strategies have now been in place for several years so it is feasible to evaluate their success in relation to defined housing and environmental outcomes. As well, new state planning policies with significant, and potentially conflicting, implications for local government involvement in housing (residential flat design and affordable housing) have recently been introduced.

Other states of Australia have traditionally taken a less overt role in encouraging local governments to address housing policy objectives through their urban planning activities. However, current metropolitan planning initiatives in Victoria are providing impetus for more proactive local government involvement in achieving housing policy objectives, such as affordability, appropriateness and choice (DOI 2001, 2002, OOH 2002). Similarly, the Queensland Department of Housing has released a policy on affordable housing and “sustainable communities”, which outlines a commitment to developing legislation, policy and planning strategies for implementation in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including local government (QDOH 2001). Further discussion of the policy framework and housing initiatives of the NSW State Government is provided in chapter four.

### *1.3.2 Local initiatives*

Many local councils have themselves undertaken initiatives to improve housing outcomes relating to affordability, accessibility, and housing choice. Notable examples include Waverley, North Sydney and Willoughby Councils in NSW, Port Phillip in Victoria and Brisbane City Council in Queensland, all of which have implemented innovative local housing projects. In 1995 the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) released a policy document acknowledging the central role of local government in the retention and promotion of adequate, appropriate, and secure housing outcomes through its statutory, strategic planning, and service delivery functions. It identified a lack of recognition by state governments of the importance and responsibilities of local government and called for clarification of this role relative to other spheres of government. It also identified a need to understand the implications of local government activities on local housing conditions. With the exception of a comprehensive toolkit to assist local councils in Victoria prepare local housing strategies (MAV 1999), there has been almost no research efforts to contribute to policy development in this area, since this time.

## **1.4 Structure of the report**

This report is structured in seven chapters. The following chapter introduces the conceptual framework for the study, outlining the connections between sustainable urban development, housing policy, and local governance. It summarises international and national research on local government housing related activities, highlighting common experiences and themes. Chapter three outlines the methodology for the present study, and introduces the case study councils. In chapter five, the NSW, Queensland, and Victorian State Government policy frameworks for local government involvement in housing are compared, with reference to the policy review, interviews, and focus groups. The sixth chapter focuses on the roles of local governments, drawing principally on the focus group and case study data. Chapter seven examines the use of local housing strategies in more detail, highlighting implementation experiences and models of best practice. The concluding chapter discusses the implications of these findings for supporting and

enhancing the role of local government in contributing to more sustainable housing outcomes as part of their broader urban development responsibilities.

## **2 SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

Although there is an historical nexus between housing policy and urban governance, evident during the early twentieth century town and country planning initiatives in Britain and the United States, local authorities in Australia have rarely played a proactive role in shaping housing outcomes through their planning functions (Paris 1990, 1993). Rather, they have been accused of catering to the demands of the private market, with little regard for the broader social and environmental consequences of planning decisions (Gleeson and Low 2000). To an extent, these criticisms relate to limitations within the planning system itself. Although planning instruments can encourage or deter certain dwelling types (through development controls), and affect the location and supply of housing (through zoning and density controls), most plans depend for their implementation on private sector investment in development. Planning regulations must therefore be made sufficiently attractive to private developers to be enacted. Even when local councils are in a position to utilise their powers to influence development objectives, there is often a reluctance to do so, due to the threat of political or legal challenge. In recent years this reluctance has been reinforced by a market based ideology that advocates less, rather than more government intervention in the urban development process (Gleeson and Low 2000, Taylor 1998).

However, declining Commonwealth funding for housing assistance, increasing housing need, and significant evidence of growing spatial inequality, makes it imperative to review the relationship between urban planning and the housing system, particularly at the local level. In addition, there is mounting pressure to integrate social policy objectives with broader environmental sustainability initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 (Brugman 1996, UN-Habitat 2002). These arguments are reviewed here. Firstly, principles of sustainable urban development and the implications for housing policy are discussed. These emphasise integrated decision making across social, economic, and environmental sectors, and identify local government as the key player in achieving environmentally sustainable development. For such a role to be achieved, it is necessary to understand the characteristics and parameters surrounding local governments, discussed with reference to Australia in section two. This is followed by an overview of arguments regarding local government involvement in housing and the type of housing policy outcomes they should promote. Five key opportunities for strategic intervention in achieving these outcomes are then conceptualised in section three.

### **2.1 Sustainable Urban Development**

It has become rare to find a policy or planning document that does not refer to the term “sustainability”, although its meaning is often difficult to pinpoint. Official definitions of “sustainability” emerged during the late 1980s in response to global concerns about environmental degradation and atmospheric pollution, although earlier notions can be traced to the UNESCO “Man and the Biosphere” (MAB) program established in 1971, which aimed to identify models for the sustainable management of human settlements (Bonnes 1998).

#### *2.1.1 Defining sustainability*

In its most general sense, “sustainability”, means ensuring that human activities do not compromise our essential social and natural support systems either now or in the future (Beatley 1995; Beatley and Manning 1997; Dixon and Fallon 1989). Perhaps the most widespread use of the term “sustainability” is in conjunction with the word “development”, as defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the “Brundtland Commission”) as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987). However, this definition has been criticised for its anthropological and development oriented focus (Beatley and Manning 1997; Harding 1998).

Many suggest that, like other aspirational terms such as “freedom”, or “justice”, notions of sustainability are likely to remain ambiguous (e.g. Beatley 1995; Lafferty 1996; Harding 1998). Central to the idea is the notion of fundamental physical and ecological limits to growth. When considered in relation to “natural” systems, like forests, soils, or ocean fisheries, “sustainability” implies a manner of utilising and managing these resources in a way that maintains the capacity for renewal (often described as “carrying capacity”). When considered in relation to social systems, “sustainability” means pursuing individual and community well being in a way that promotes equity both within and between generations. Rather than emphasising the economic growth model as a method for satisfying human needs and aspirations, sustainability principles emphasise the renewal and *enrichment* of natural and social forms of capital rather than their *exploitation* in the pursuit of private wealth (Beatley and Manning 1997; Gleeson and Low 2000).

In Australia, the phrase “ecologically” sustainable development is prevalent in official policy statements and environmental legislation, most frequently defined as “using, conserving and enhancing the community’s resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased”. (Commonwealth of Australia 1992). Although this definition still implies a model of economic growth, it also emphasises the connections between social and ecological wellbeing. Thus it provides a useful conceptual and policy framework for understanding the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of housing.

### 2.1.2 Principles for sustainable environmental governance

Until recently, the sustainability agenda has focused on the management of pollution and the use of renewable energy (e.g. Beder 1993; Harding 1998) rather than on land use and settlement planning, for which concrete standards have been far more difficult to conceptualise. However, in the past few years there have been a number of attempts to synthesise the key themes of sustainability as a set of principles relevant to environmental governance, including spatial land use planning. These principles incorporate expectations regarding the decision making “process” – that is, the development and implementation of government policy, as well as “outcomes” – that is, the social, environmental, and economic outcomes of these decisions.

In relation to the decision making processes, the first principle is that of integrated and participatory decision making. The principle draws on ecosystem theories, which emphasise the interdependence of social and ecological worlds. In practical terms this means that decision making systems must be capable of integrating a variety of potentially competing social, cultural, economic, and environmental considerations, across traditional sectoral and administrative boundaries, as well as space and time (Beder 1993; Harding 1998).

This leads to the second principle of sustainable governance, which is that a *spatial* rather than *sectoral* approach is needed, with a particular emphasis on the local level as the most appropriate spatial scale for integrated, participatory decision making to occur (Gleeson and Low 2000). This was a key theme to emerge at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which resulted in the Agenda 21 framework for local environmental action (Adams and Hine 1999, UN-Habitat 2002). In fact, it now appears that while the initial focus of Local Agenda 21 strategies was on environmental issues, locally based, participatory forms of decision making they encouraged, now provide a basis for addressing a broader range of issues under the new global Habitat Agenda of “sustainable human settlements” (UN-Habitat 1996, 2002).

The Habitat Agenda promotes the universal goals of “adequate shelter for all and making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive.” (UN-Habitat 1996, p. 1) Thus the third broad principle of sustainable governance explicitly combines the dual concepts of social and ecological wellbeing as central objectives in all decisions relating to urban development and land use (Beatley 1995, Beatley and Manning 1997). This generally includes a commitment to expanding access to affordable, adequate and appropriate and environmentally responsive forms of housing (Beatley 1995, Beatley and Manning 1997, UN-Habitat 1996).



### *2.1.3 Planning for sustainable settlements*

This has led to considerable debate about the sustainability of various urban forms (eg. Minnery 1992, Newton 2000, Burton 2000). It is generally argued that the particular pattern of human settlement in Australia, characterised by high rates of urbanisation but low density, is intensifying environmental problems associated with energy and water consumption, waste and pollution, and biodiversity loss (these problems were quantified in the latest Australian State of the Environment (SOE) Report 2001). Much recent environmental planning policy both in Australia and internationally has therefore aimed to concentrate populations in “compact cities” which conserve land and achieve efficiencies of scale in transport and resource use (eg. DTLGR 2000, DUAP 2001b). Compact city forms where residents live in close proximity work, shops and recreation, are also claimed to contribute to stronger social networks and “community cohesion” (Beatley and Manning 1997).

Evidence to support these assertions is somewhat limited (Burton 2000). Indeed, it is sometimes claimed that concentrated populations amplify environmental pressures associated with resource use, pollution, and biodiversity loss, while accentuating social problems like poverty, inequality, and crime (Australian SOE 2001). Furthermore, while compact cities might provide a greater diversity of housing type they may also be less affordable since land costs are also higher (Minnery 1992, Burton 2000).

In any case, the location, configuration, and construction of housing by definition have major impacts on land and resource use. Prescriptions for more sustainable patterns of residential development therefore emphasise subdivision layouts which minimise excavation and disruption to local biodiversity, and maximise freedom of access, safety and security, as well as housing designs which maximise energy collection and use, utilise integrated water systems and which minimise internal and external sources of pollution (Newman 2002, DUAP 2001). Innovative guides to assist local governments and developers achieve more sustainable patterns of subdivision and more energy efficient design in new residential development have recently emerged (eg. DUAP 2001b, 2001c). For the most part however, while these prescriptions may refer to some broader housing objectives, particularly affordability and housing mix, their emphasis is typically on managing the physical aspects of the development process.

### *2.1.4 Sustainability and housing policy*

Similarly, despite the significant environmental impacts associated with new housing production, and the replacement of inappropriate housing stock, the majority of housing policy documents appear focussed on the social and economic dimensions of meeting housing need (Priemus 1998). Indeed, while the term “sustainability” is used liberally in planning and policy documents produced by housing authorities in Australia, this generally relates to ongoing financial “sustainability” of operations, the capacity of a tenant to “sustain” their tenancy, and to describe the resilience of social networks within a particular community.

One potential convergence between social and ecological sustainability is in relation to the area of urban renewal and rehabilitation. As noted above, urban renewal and infill policies are now regarded important environmental strategies. The rehabilitation and reconfiguration of disadvantaged urban areas, particularly those with high concentrations of low income and public housing also provides a strategy for addressing social exclusion and poverty. Yet until recently, there have been few attempts to actively incorporate greater environmental sustainability in their design or rehabilitation (Morgan and Talbot 2000).

In summary, while the rhetoric of sustainable urban development emphasises an integrated approach to social and physical environments, in reality there are a number of institutional and disciplinary barriers to achieving sustainable decision making processes across multiple administrative and sectoral divisions. Consequently, the affordable and adequate housing agenda now falls squarely within the rubric of sustainable urban development, but the majority of environmental plans and urban development programs remain locked within traditional development paradigms (Gleeson & Low 2000).

## **2.2 Sustainable urban development and local governance**

In response to these issues, there is mounting national and international interest in the potential for local governments to play a more active role in implementing the sustainability agenda. Initially this was focussed on environmental projects through the preparation of Local Agenda 21 strategies, but attention has since moved to broader social and economic issues associated with human settlements (Brugman 1996). For example, the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) recently reaffirmed its commitment to recognising local authorities as their closest partners in implementing the Habitat Agenda of “ensuring adequate shelter for all and making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive” (UN-Habitat 2002, p. 5). Similarly, the United Kingdom’s Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLGR) national housing policy “Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All” emphasises the strategic role of local authorities, particularly in “meeting needs across all types of housing and integrating housing policy with wider social, economic and environmental policies” (DTLGR 2000, p. 6). In Australia, the Royal Australian Planning Institute’s (RAPI) national agenda for “Liveable Communities” identifies municipal councils as central players in addressing issues like affordable housing, inequality and social exclusion (RAPI 2000).

### *2.2.1 Characteristics of local government in Australia*

To understand the existing and potential housing roles of local government it is necessary to outline the broad parameters within which it operates. In comparison to other nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, local governments in Australia have limited policy, planning and service delivery responsibilities (Paris 1990). Not recognised in the Australian Constitution, local governments are regulated by state legislation, which defines their administrative, procedural and financial responsibilities. They are also subject to a variety of state laws (and agencies) for their particular urban development and environmental management functions.

For the most part, local government participation in broader State and Federal policy and resource allocation processes has been limited (Adams and Hine 1999, Stilwell and Troy 2000). This is symptomatic of a historical tension between the multiple levels of government in Australia, which “continues to bedevil attempts to plan the development of more efficient and equitable cities” (Stilwell and Troy 2000, p. 909). In particular, housing policy has represented a highly complex interaction between the three tiers of government in Australia. This is characterised by a historical reluctance of state governments to acknowledge local governments as anything more than a minor player with administrative responsibility for the narrow concerns like “roads, rates and rubbish” (Adams and Hine 1999).

### *2.2.2 The arguments for and against greater local government involvement*

Local councils themselves may be unwilling or unable to assume greater responsibilities. Many councils have limited capacity to undertake additional roles, and may lack the requisite human resources to do so (Purdon and Burke 1991). Others are wary of adopting a proactive or innovative position in relation to politically sensitive areas like housing, which has traditionally been identified as a State responsibility. Furthermore, the increasing pressures for local councils to be entrepreneurial, and to compete with surrounding localities for development investment, may conflict with broader social and environmental objectives (Dunn et al. 2001, Gleeson and Low 2000).

Despite these issues, there are several compelling reasons to encourage greater local government involvement in housing policy. Nationwide deregulation and fiscal reform have led to a devolution of both environmental and community service responsibilities to lower levels of government. Declining Commonwealth funds for housing assistance (under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), and significant evidence of growing spatial inequality linked to rising housing costs, also necessitate more proactive local government engagement (Affordable Housing National Research Consortium 2001, Queensland Department of Housing 2002).

A range of arguments in support of local government involvement in housing have been articulated in recent studies and policy documents (eg. MAV 1999, Purdon and Burke 1991, LGSA 1998, ALGA 1998). In summary these emphasise the strong role already played by local governments through their planning, development control, and service delivery functions, although implications of these are not always recognised (ALGA 1995). Secondly, the housing needs of a given population, and the characteristics of housing supply are complex, and vary markedly between local government areas. Therefore, local government is frequently in the best position to monitor and respond to local needs, often through participatory processes that in themselves contribute to greater community wellbeing (MAV 1999).

The trend towards greater entrepreneurialism noted above also provides an argument for more strategic local intervention in housing. Housing can be a significant factor in local economic growth – in addition to direct jobs in construction, attractive housing can bring new residents to an area. Similarly, a shortage of appropriate housing can reinforce employment problems as a barrier to establishing new industries. A strategic framework to ensure a timely supply of attractive and appropriate housing can therefore directly contribute to financial wellbeing.

### *2.2.3 What type of housing outcomes should local government promote?*

In advocating an enhanced role for local governments in relation to housing, it is important to clarify what this role should aim to achieve. At an international level, the UN-Habitat Agenda promotes “equal access to affordable, adequate housing for all persons and their families”, through locally appropriate responses, which respect the “carrying capacity of ecosystems” (UN-Habitat 2001). The national housing policy for England aims to “offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home and so promote social cohesion, wellbeing and self dependence”, within a wider agenda to “revitalise urban and rural areas and tackle social exclusion” (DTLGR 2000). The policy is closely integrated with the Department’s broader urban and rural planning strategies and supported by a dedicated national planning policy guidance note (PPG 3) on housing. This policy commences with a number of specific national government commitments, emphasising affordability, choice, and equity of access, as well as environmental sustainability in their provision.

These commitments recall the three objectives of Australia’s National Housing Strategy (NHS), which emphasised expanding the “range and supply of adequate, appropriate and affordable housing choices accessible to all Australians”, to “develop more efficient and effective housing provision and land development”, and “to achieve urban forms and structures” that contribute to “safe, quality and sustainable environments” (Commonwealth of Australia 1992). A number of the state local government associations have identified their own housing policy statements drawing on what has become known as the “adequate housing model” (Lawson 1995, LGSA 1998). This model identifies three key components of “adequate housing”: affordability, appropriateness, and availability. These components in turn incorporate issues like appropriate housing design for household size, life cycle, physical ability and culture; as well as the availability of housing supply in appropriate locations close to social networks, services and employment. In summary therefore, a local government housing policy would aim to achieve affordable, appropriate and adequate housing that is sensitive to existing and future community needs, and responsive to the built and natural environment.

## **2.3 Housing related functions of local government**

Broadly speaking, local government responsibilities for housing relate to identifying community needs, managing the supply of residential land and housing stock, coordinating the provision of infrastructure and services, and in some cases, directly providing housing to special needs groups. Thus they are concerned with both “production” and “consumption” aspects of housing (Beyer 1965). As shown in the diagram below, these aspects are closely related. However, they are often considered separately, particularly in Australia where Commonwealth and state governments have direct responsibility for housing assistance, and local governments for regulating aspects of production. To breach this division, a strategic framework for understanding current and projected housing need

within a particular locality, environmental constraints and opportunities, and economic trends, is required. For this to occur, local governments must consciously plan for and facilitate appropriate housing outcomes.

As shown in the table, in addition to their responsibilities for the location and supply of residential land; local governments regulate the configuration, design (and, potentially, tenure) of residential estates and dwellings; and manage change to existing housing supply (eg. redevelopment). As well, local governments intervene in a range of other factors that impact significantly on housing issues. This includes planning for or providing “hard” and “soft” infrastructure”, like transport, utilities, recreation, schools, hospitals, and community services. While these factors have a crucial impact of the quantity, quality and affordability of housing supply within a particular geographic area, they are frequently made without an explicit policy framework for shaping or monitoring these outcomes (MAV 1999).

**Table One: Housing Activities of Local Governments**

<b>PRODUCTION</b>	<b>CONSUMPTION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying land</li> <li>• Development controls</li> <li>• Environmental / social assessment</li> <li>• Facilitating land parcels and residential subdivision</li> <li>• “Streamlined” approvals</li> <li>• Active collaboration with other housing providers (private, public, community sector)</li> <li>• Planning mechanisms for affordable housing</li> <li>• Joint ventures</li> <li>• Donation of land</li> <li>• Production of housing units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and monitoring housing needs</li> <li>• Active collaboration with other housing providers (private, public, community sector)</li> <li>• Co-ordinating or delivering appropriate support services (eg. Services for the aged, homeless or crisis resource centres)</li> <li>• Information / advocacy</li> <li>• Financial assistance (eg. rate relief)</li> <li>• Managing local housing stock</li> </ul>

Sources: Purdon Associates 1991, BBC 1995, MAV 1999

Considered as opportunities for strategic intervention in the process of urban development, five, potentially competing functions can be identified:

### *2.3.1 Urban management and renewal*

- The conservation or renewal of existing housing and neighbourhoods through spatial planning and development controls is a traditional role for local governments (Nenno and Brophy 1983). Such strategies are associated with positive outcomes like improved amenity and community revitalisation, but also linked to gentrification and the loss of low income rental housing.

### *2.3.2 Responding to demographic and market trends*

- Responding to demographic and market trends influencing housing supply and demand within accelerating and declining localities is also a core local government function, although not always recognised or situated within an overall strategic planning framework (Nenno and Brophy 1983). Examples include the strategic spatial planning work undertaken by councils to identify existing, potential or underutilised sources of residential land, to manage the release of land, and to streamline or manage the development process. Identifying appropriate residential controls to encourage particular types of housing would also fall within this function, particularly where the objectives are to stimulate a declining housing market (eg. density bonuses to encourage the repopulation of inner city areas) or restrain an accelerating one (eg.

constraints on the conversion of low income housing or of rural land). In relation to this function, the connection between spatial planning decisions and housing market is crucial, but still poorly understood by governments (recognised by ALGA 1995).

### *2.3.3 Responding to special needs*

- This function includes protecting or facilitating supply of low to moderate income housing and housing for special needs, through planning mechanisms, financial incentives, or direct provision. Planning mechanisms to encourage affordable housing our housing for special needs groups include inclusionary zoning (requiring a certain proportion of all development within a zone to be “affordable”); betterment levies (which capture a proportion of profit obtained by zoning a land for a “higher” use); bonus systems (which allow development bonuses like increased floor space, in exchange for affordable housing); infrastructure charges and impact mitigation schemes (which aim to recoup the financial impacts of developments, associated with the loss of affordable housing supply). (See Purdon and Burke (1991) for a comprehensive discussion of these approaches). To a large extent many of these approaches are dependent on supportive legal frameworks and local political commitment.

### *2.3.4 Integrated local area planning*

- This function refers to the potential to integrate housing policies with broader social and environmental planning activities of local government. During the mid 1990s there was a particular emphasis on achieving this through what was termed “integrated local area planning” (BBC 1995). In addition to comprehensive land use planning, this implies integrating the range of functions undertaken by local governments such as economic and community development, environmental protection and conservation, infrastructure provision and social services, and corporate planning.

### *2.3.5 Collaborative planning*

- There is considerable potential for local governments to work with other levels of government and community partners to coordinate housing policies at regional and state levels. It is through such activities that a whole of government or “place management” approach to housing policy can be facilitated. Opportunities for collaboration include the development of regional studies and plans (such as the NSW Alpine Regional Strategy, which incorporates an explicit, intergovernmental commitment to address seasonal housing needs associated with fluctuating employment in the area); the preparation of local planning instruments, particularly those which include significant rezoning for residential land; and the regional allocation of housing assistance funds under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

Rather than actively engaging in these functions by facilitating or innovating to shape housing outcomes, it is often claimed that local governments have tended to play a passive role in reacting to market trends and preferences (Gleeson and Low 2000, Purdon and Burke 1991). The following chapter reviews these arguments in the light of existing national and international research.

## **2.4 National and International Research**

While there tends to be extensive research on social and environmental policy and practice at higher levels of government, critical investigation of local government activities is overdue (Adams and Hine 1999, Dunn et. al, Verhage 2002). This is partly due to the difficulty of generalising across the different institutional, social and environmental contexts that characterise local governments within Australia and internationally. Despite these differences, the literature that does exist points to a number of commonalities in the experiences of local governments, and highlights the similarity of trends in housing policies throughout the world. These are summarised in the following section, followed by a review of research describing the housing activities of local governments internationally and in Australia.

Both national and international research emphasises the need for housing policies to be situated within a strategic framework for implementation. At the local level therefore, “local

housing strategies” or their equivalent, are thought to be vital for effective local government engagement (Goss and Blackaby 1998, MAV 1999, Purdon and Burke 1991). To this end, there are now a number of “how to” guides to assist local authorities prepare housing strategies (eg. DUAP 1996, Goss and Blackaby 1998, MAV 1999). However, there is virtually no published research documenting local government experience in preparing these strategies or implementing them in practice. This research gap, and associated questions for investigation, is discussed in section four.

#### *2.4.1 Key themes*

Literature on local government involvement in housing tends to be historical – focussing on its changing role within housing or urban planning (eg. Hall 1996, Paris 1993) – or technical – focussing on specific mechanisms for local governments to use in achieving particular housing outcomes (such as affordability or energy efficiency). Overall four, interrelated themes emerge.

- A retreat from central government intervention in housing and urban development outcomes, observable in many industrial capitalist countries (Gleeson and Low 2000, Verhage 2002).
- Increasing tensions between central and local governments, particularly regarding responsibilities for policy setting and planning functions (Stilwell and Troy 2000).
- A diversity of local government approaches and activities apparent even at regional and district levels (Paris 1990).
- Conflicts between spatial planning objectives which focus on environmental outcomes, and housing policies, which tend to prioritise social needs (Priemus 1998).

These are discussed below.

#### *2.4.2 Changing urban governance*

In most industrialised, capitalist nations of the world, there has been a perceptible retreat by central governments from a significant interventionist role in planning and urban development. This has meant that local governments have had to assume increasing responsibility for social, economic, and environmental outcomes (Adams and Hine, 1999, Verhage 2002). To a greater or lesser degree local governments may have the institutional capacity and strategic policy framework to accommodate this shift, but evidence suggests that in most cases local governments have been unable or unwilling to take on this burden (Purdon and Burke 1991). Indeed, while the majority of a local government area is “reasonably well housed”, or stands to gain from increased property values associated with gentrification, there is unlikely to be strong political pressure for intervention. Furthermore, in a shrinking fiscal environment, the main mechanisms open to local governments are their land use planning and development control functions, yet the use of these powers is increasingly challenged by property developers and the housing industry (Gleeson and Low 2000, Verhage 2002).

#### *2.4.3 Tensions between central and local governments*

The majority of literature concerning local government involvement in housing identifies a tension in the relationship between “central” – either national, state, regional or provincial levels of government, and local authorities (eg. Paris 1993, Purdon and Burke 1991, Verhage 2002). This tension typically reflects a resentment on behalf of local authorities and their constituents to decisions that are perceived to be imposed from “above”, particularly where these decisions are regarded unresponsive to particular circumstances at the local level. Without delving into the entire literature on intergovernmental relationships, the consequences of this tension often result in perverse outcomes – like a complete “backlash” against central government policy at the local level, and strategies to “disempower” local governments at the state level (Mercer and Jotkowitz 2000).

#### *2.4.4 Conflicts between housing policy and spatial planning*

Similarly, apparent tensions between the housing policies of central governments and spatial planning objectives for implementation at the local level, have emerged (Priemus

1998). A symptom of this is the increasing move to identify market and financial approaches to housing provision while pursuing more rigorous environmental agendas. For example, Hugo Priemus (1998), writing about recent developments in the Netherlands, points to the loss of the “old coalition” between housing and spatial planning. He identifies a new alliance between spatial planning and environmental policy, as the result of an “attempt by the Dutch government to combine a market-oriented housing policy with substantial environment ambitions (which have limited market support)” (Priemus 1998, p.31). The consequences of this new “coalition” could include an “artificial” shortage of land and what he perceives to be the encouragement of higher housing densities in contrast to resident preferences. It could also lead to a conflict between environmental priorities (emphasising the conservation of land and resources), and social and economic objectives associated with stimulating new housing construction (Morgon and Talbot 2000).

#### *2.4.5 Divergence of local government approaches*

As noted above, it is difficult to generalise about the experiences of local governments internationally, and even within Australia, as these are highly contingent on particular institutional, socio-economic and environmental contexts. However, it is clear that even local governments within the same region or province, a remarkable diversity of approaches are common (Marcuse 1990). These conditions may encourage innovative responses to local needs and conditions, as revealed in a comparative analysis of NSW local government approaches to biodiversity conservation undertaken by the author (Gurran 2001). However, there is also evidence to suggest that some local governments also engage in “unneighbourly” behaviour by actively shifting social or environmental responsibilities to adjoining areas (Law 2001). There is obviously less potential for this where strong regional planning or policy frameworks exist, and these are increasingly advocated by central governments in the United Kingdom and Australia (eg. DTLGR 2000, DUAP 2001).

These themes are discussed in greater detail through the following review of international and national experience.

## **2.5 International experiences**

Much of the international literature germane to this study focuses on the use of planning mechanisms to retain or promote housing for low income or special needs groups, within the changing governance and policy contexts described above. These mechanisms tend to rely on local governments for their implementation, although state intervention is generally required to provide legislative or financial support.

### *2.5.1 Urban Decline and Renewal*

Recent studies conducted in the United States highlight the tensions associated with urban renewal strategies in inner city areas affected by concentrations of social and economic disadvantage (Cohen 2001, Newman and Ashton 2002). While there is a demonstrated need to enhance residential amenity and housing standards, and introduce new economic activity to address problems associated with concentrations of disadvantage, revitalisation strategies typically strive for the “gentrification solution”, by appealing to higher income buyers. Where these approaches are successful, the displacement of lower and middle income residents results. Similarly, public housing redevelopment projects such as HOPE VI, sponsored under the Federal Government’s department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), often result in a net loss of public housing stock, while contributing to increases in the real estate values of surrounding areas. So far the emphasis of these projects has also been in attracting higher income earners to achieve social mix. While such strategies may succeed in enhancing the physical appearance and character of formerly depressed neighbourhoods, they do not address the underlying causes of poverty (Newman and Ashton 2002). Rather, pressure on low income households is likely to increase, due to rising housing costs, and tensions between new homeowners and longer term residents, “where the latter are clearly viewed as a liability in terms of property values and neighbourhood stability” (p. 24).

A more equitable alternative to the “gentrification solution”, would be to ensure redeveloped areas remain accessible to those on lower and medium incomes. In a recent study of neighbourhood revitalisation approaches in Baltimore, Maryland, James Cohen (2001) argues in favour of a comprehensive “place” and “people oriented” planning approach, targeting current residents. Given that these residents are typically on lower incomes, he argues that “housing renovation must be accompanied by employment, economic development, health, public safety, and school-reform initiatives”, to ensure that enhanced housing opportunities are accessible to existing residents (p. 430). A key aspect of this strategy is engaging low income private tenants, as this group is frequently underrepresented in neighbourhood planning processes (DETR 2001, DTLGR 2002).

### *2.5.2 Affordable housing*

The American Planning Association (APA) has played an active role in drawing attention to the potential for local governments to stimulate supply of “low and moderate income” housing through measures like inclusionary zoning, trust funds, and taxation mechanisms (including measures to reduce the burden of developer contributions to infrastructure provision) (Pendall 1992, White 1995, Morris 2000). Other strategies endorsed by the APA include monitoring and conserving forms of low income shelter such as single room occupant housing, as well as using development agreements to establish affordable housing schemes. While tensions are identified between protecting environmental amenity, community character, and financing adequate public facilities, an extensive survey of local activities in metropolitan areas of the country identified a number of successful examples where local governments have managed to implement these agendas without compromising other community objectives (White 1995). Similar research commissioned by the APA in 2000 identified a number of examples where density bonuses for affordable housing have been used by municipalities in California, New Jersey, and Maryland, to implement affordable housing while still achieving urban design goals (Morris 2000).

Similar experiences have been documented in the United Kingdom. In recent years there has been a significant shift from local government’s direct role in housing provision to an emphasis on “enabling” the provision of affordable housing by Housing Authorities and the private market (Goodland 1994). A wide range of mechanisms are permissible, including the use of developer contributions to levy funds for affordable housing provision, the use of density controls to provide smaller housing units and facilitate entry points to the private housing market, and rezoning sites in rural areas that would not otherwise be developed (Smith 1999). A recent review of this experience highlighted conflicts between affordable housing and other planning objectives – for example, the use of former industrial sites for affordable housing rather than their retention for employment (Smith 1999). Despite this tension, in both the United States and United Kingdom it seems that developers and residents have come to accept affordability provisions within a few years of their implementation (Smith 1999, Marcuse 1990, White 1995).

### *2.5.3 Housing and special needs*

Beyond broad affordability measures, research detailing local government activities in relation to other special housing needs is limited. In the United States, there is evidence that many local governments are reluctant to provide for the needs of homeless populations and may even utilise options to shift homeless populations to neighbouring municipalities through mechanisms, which are increasingly punitive (Law 2001). It appears that such responses reflect public attitudes and perception of homelessness (Brinegar 2000), highlighting the political factors constraining local government activities. Spatial land use zones have historically been used to exclude lower income groups through restrictive covenants or controls, and there is evidence to suggest that such exclusionary tactics remain prevalent (Marcuse 1990). The increasing occurrence of “gated communities” is a particularly overt mechanism for establishing enclaves of wealth, yet it is rare to find strong local government policies for resisting their development (Sandercock 1998). Notable exceptions include the Columbus-Franklin County, Ohio, which has become a model for collaborative local planning for homelessness prevention and support (Roman 2002); and the city of Indianapolis, which has recently introduced a ten year Blueprint to “end homelessness” (Peterson 2002).



#### *2.5.4 Environmental Sustainability*

In recent years a body of research investigating what could be described as the “greening” of residential development policy has emerged. In the United Kingdom, a nationwide survey of local residential energy efficiency strategies found a wide variation in their quality and highlighted a range of constraints to their implementation (Jones, Leach and Wade 2000). The study did not consider the relationship between these strategies and other housing objectives such as affordability. Similarly, an international review of local government achievement in implementing the Habitat Agenda found that more than 1500 local governments in 49 countries have established “Local Agenda 21” processes, resulting in new planning tools and methods for assessment and monitoring of environmental impacts (Brugman 1996). However, there is almost no detailed discussion of the way in which these initiatives have been integrated with social objectives like affordable or appropriate housing (Morgon and Talbot 2000).

### **2.6 Australian research**

Since the late 1970s there has been periodic research and policy interest in the potential for local governments to play a more active role in shaping housing outcomes. The Australian Housing Research Council commissioned the first national study of local housing activities in 1978 (Purdon Associates 1991). The report found significant potential for enhanced involvement and recommended the amendment of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) to enable funding for this purpose. As a result, a number of individual housing studies were funded in Victoria and NSW during the 1980s. These focussed on specific housing needs and opportunities, but also tended to reflect more generally on the potential roles for local government. A major objective of these studies was to promote awareness within local authorities of their “direct” and “indirect” impacts on the housing market (Paris 1990).

A major review of this work was undertaken in 1991 as part of the background research for the National Housing Strategy (Purdon Associates 1991). This report aimed to document the existing role of local government in the delivery of housing services and proposed a range of policy options for enhancement. Despite some notable exceptions, the study concluded that the majority of local governments had been both inactive and resistant to innovation, responding to conservative public attitudes rather than attempting to influence community opinions. The report also observed increased community awareness of the potential for housing as an investment, and concern by individuals to protect this investment. This was often expressed as opposition to development thought to threaten property values (in many cases, housing perceived to cater to lower income or “undesirable” social groups), and a desire to encourage gentrification.

While the Purdon report and subsequent National Housing Strategy documents were comprehensive in documenting existing and potential roles for Australian local governments in Australia, the extent of this involvement was not fully investigated until 1994. At this time a national survey of 212 randomly selected councils attempted to determine the level and type of housing activities undertaken in different states and territories (Lawson 1994). The survey found that the issues most frequently considered by councils were physical planning considerations such as land availability, the quality of housing design and construction, and density. Issues considered least were household tenure, the implications of state and federal housing policies, affordability for low income earners, adequacy and appropriateness for special needs groups, and the energy efficiency of housing designs. The survey did find that almost half of Australian local governments had participated in partnership ventures to provide housing, most commonly with state / territory government and community housing groups. However, the majority of these partnerships targeted council employees or the aged, with very few examples of partnerships targeting other needs groups such as people at risk of homelessness, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, or new migrants (Lawson 1994, LGSA 1996).

In 1995 the Australian Local Government Association commissioned research to develop a national local government housing policy (BBC 1995). This research consisted of consultations with state governments and some case studies of good practice. It also

documented statutory and organisational arrangements for housing services in each state, although much of this material is now somewhat dated. As to be expected in a document intended to develop a national policy for local government involvement in housing, the report emphasised that local governments are already undertaking a significant role in influencing housing conditions. However, it was acknowledged that many councils are not fully aware of the impact that their planning and regulatory functions may have on the affordability and appropriateness of housing within their areas. A model continuum of housing roles, ranging from the awareness and identification of needs, through proactive planning and regulatory functions, the facilitation of housing outcomes, and direct provision and management of housing, was constructed to illustrate potential opportunities.

Since this time there has been very limited research on local government activities. The information that does exist suggests that active local government involvement in housing remains the exception rather than the norm. For example, a 1998 survey of local governments in Victoria found that only 15 respondents had undertaken a housing strategy and only 33 reported a reference to housing in their broader planning framework (MAV 1999). However, the potential to use local planning mechanisms to retain and provide affordable housing has been emphasised in a small number of national and state studies and policy documents (eg. NSW Affordable Housing Taskforce 1998; Cox and Miers 1998; DOI 2001).

### 2.6.1 *Barriers and opportunities*

Collectively this research has highlighted a number of barriers and opportunities affecting local government involvement in housing activities. These are summarised in the table below, and include a range of political, financial, institutional and legislative issues. Opportunities or success factors appear to be strong political support at both levels of government, dedicated resources and training, as well as flexibility to use enabling mechanisms such as planning controls.

**Table Two: Barriers and opportunities to local government involvement in housing (1990 – 2001)**

BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local politics / community attitudes, reluctance to innovate</li> <li>• Institutional barriers – lack of interaction between planners, community service staff</li> <li>• Lack of housing information, lack of skills to or funds to undertake housing research</li> <li>• Legislative constraints (eg. Uncertainty about the use of planning mechanisms)</li> <li>• Lack of funds for direct provision</li> <li>• Hostility / resentment towards state government policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political commitment and willingness to innovate</li> <li>• State government funding / incentives</li> <li>• Dedicated housing officer</li> <li>• Flexibility in planning controls</li> <li>• Resources to participate in partnerships / joint ventures</li> <li>• Strong support of state government for local activities</li> </ul>

Sources: Purdon Associates 1991, BBC 1995, Dominish 2001

On the other hand, factors limiting councils include a lack of locally aggregated housing information and data, negative community attitudes, and structural divisions within local government and between government agencies (Table 2).

### 2.6.2 *Summary of research*

In summary, both the national and international research points to opportunities for local governments to actively shape housing outcomes through both their physical planning and community service responsibilities. However, these opportunities are limited by tensions between central and local government, as well as between environmental and social planning policies. Despite significant contextual differences, the majority of this literature

and policy advocates the preparation of a local housing strategy (or equivalent) to address these problems (DTLGR 2002, LGSA 1998, Purdon and Associates 1991, Verhage 2002).

## **2.7 Local housing strategies – panacea or palliative?**

Local housing strategies enable local governments to undertake their activities within the context of a strategic framework for researching, planning, and responding to a range of matters including:

- population decline;
- housing market characteristics and change (eg. the type, tenure, and cost of housing)
- coordinated service delivery;
- protection of urban amenity;
- environmental sustainability and efficient land use; and,
- economic and community development (Goss and Blackaby 1998, MAV 1999).

Local housing strategies are common in many European countries and a requirement in the United Kingdom (DTLGR 2002, Goss and Blackaby 1998, Verhage 2002). The preparation of local housing strategies was a key recommendation of the National Housing Strategy and since this time both state governments and peak organizations have promoted their use (DUAP 1996, LGSA 1998, MAV 1999). The methodology for preparing housing strategies typically includes an identification of local housing needs and conditions (the “housing study”), the articulation of a vision or set of objectives (the “housing policy”), and concrete measures to implement these objectives (the “housing strategy”) (Goss and Blackaby 1998). Mechanisms for monitoring and review should also be identified, and the MAV proposes a range of indicators for this purpose. These relate to residential building activity (dwelling commencements), housing stock type, tenure structure and change, home purchase and rental affordability, measures of need and demand (MAV 1999).

The UK Department of Local Government, Transport and the Regions advises that the timeframe for monitoring and review of plans should be approximately every three to five years (DTLGR 2002). It also emphasises the need to integrate the range of issues across social and private housing tenures, particularly to address problems of neighbourhood decline (DTLGR 2001). Thus there is an emerging consensus that housing problems affecting existing, mixed tenure neighbourhoods need addressing as part of broader community renewal processes.

### *2.7.1 Implementation and evaluation of local housing strategies*

Despite the emphasis on monitoring and review, the extent to which local housing strategies have been successfully implemented in Australia, or indeed, internationally, is unknown. In fact, to date the existence of a strategy has itself been regarded as an indicator of a council’s commitment to housing policy. However, in December 2002, the US department of Housing and Urban Development released a comprehensive evaluation of local government housing plans and their implementation (HUD 2002). The evaluation, which used a similar methodology to this research<sup>3</sup>, found that all of the councils met the minimum standards in local plan preparation, including the use of data to support needs analysis, the identification of clear priorities and strategies, public participation processes and interagency co-ordination. However, there were also a number of weaknesses in keeping the plans up to date with current data, and with targeting those segments of the population with in the greatest need. Furthermore, there was a tendency for the housing plans to be “imposed” over pre-existing local plans, rather than incorporated within them. The review also found that interagency co-ordination at state and regional level failed in the majority of cases, and that provisions for monitoring implementation of the plans were extremely limited.

---

<sup>3</sup> Six metropolitan case studies, representing a diversity of housing markets and characteristics, were selected, and the methodology for their evaluation included interviews with local planners, site visits to each metropolitan centre, and documentary analysis of local housing plans (HUD 2002).

Although not directly analogous to this study, a recent review of Regional Housing Statements in the UK found that such documents (which incorporate an analysis of housing needs and strategic priorities) can play a critical role in broader strategic research and policy development on housing issues, although to date the majority of statements have been poorly integrated with other local and regional strategies (DTLGR 2001). Reasons for this included a failure to establish clear relationships with other regional and local agendas and documents, a failure to link defined housing priorities with actual strategies, and a lack of systematic feedback and review mechanisms.

With the exception of Chris Paris's review of Commonwealth funded housing studies (Paris 1990), there is no published research evaluating the quality or efficacy of housing strategies in Australia. The Paris study raised a number of questions about the local housing study process and methodology (which appeared poorly understood by councils), and there is little to suggest that these concerns have been addressed since this time. Similarly, aside from the exceptional "success stories", there appears to be little critical investigation of the extent to which the housing strategies that do exist have been implemented in practice or led to changed housing outcomes on the ground. Similarly, it is not known whether the strategies have met expectations in terms of more proactive, whole of government participation in housing policy objectives.

Given that the majority of councils in metropolitan Sydney, and to a lesser extent councils in other states and territories, have had some form of housing strategy in place for several years, it is now feasible to evaluate this experience. In particular, it is important to evaluate the extent to which these documents provide a basis for integrating housing policy with the broader environmental responsibilities and agendas of local government, such as land use planning. There is also a need understand whether the model itself has proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives. Evaluating the experience of housing strategy implementation will provide a basis for identifying examples of leading practice, as well as factors facilitating or constraining success. Thus, the investigation of local housing strategies provides a focus for examining the broader question of local government engagement in housing policy.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to address these issues by examining the housing related roles currently undertaken by local governments in metropolitan NSW, Queensland and Victoria. A comparative method was used to compare recent experiences in implementing local housing strategies or their equivalent, through focus groups, structured interviews, and detailed case study research.

### 3.1 Research questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. What are the various housing related functions undertaken by metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria and how do these relate to their broader environmental responsibilities and agendas, particularly land use planning?
2. To what extent has the local housing strategy model proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives, and what characteristics define successful strategies?
3. What are the primary legislative, institutional, and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies, as well as the key factors contributing to success?
4. How do other local, regional, and state stakeholders / housing providers facilitate or constrain the development and implementation local housing strategies within a whole of government approach to sustainable urban development?

### 3.2 Research methods

Due to the variation in housing and planning systems across Australia, and the potential implications of these differences for the implementation of housing policy, the study was limited to three states: Queensland, NSW and Victoria. These were chosen because of the complexities of housing need in each capital city, and for the opportunity to compare three distinctly different approaches to urban planning and housing policy. A metropolitan focus was selected for this study, as significant metropolitan planning initiatives, which may have implications for future local government involvement in housing policy, are underway in each of the three states. The need to distinguish between the metropolitan and rural housing contexts was also a reason for limiting the focus of this study. (Indeed, during the study, local government advocates identified a need for comparable research into the issues facing regional and rural councils in each of the three states).

#### 3.2.1 Literature review

A first step in this study was an investigation of research and literature relating to local government involvement in housing, both in Australia and internationally (presented in chapter two). The review involved a search of library catalogues, electronic databases, and private collections (as much of the Australian research is unpublished). The objectives of the review were to identify research or literature concerning the different housing related roles or activities undertaken by local governments in Australia and internationally; the political, institutional, and legislative factors that have constrained or supported them; and, the experiences of local governments in developing or implementing local housing strategies.

#### 3.2.2 Review of State legislation, policy and programs

As a key research objective was to identify legislative and institutional parameters influencing local government involvement in housing activities, a comprehensive analysis of State government legislation, policy, and programs was also undertaken. This included a review of State environmental planning laws and policies, metropolitan planning strategies, as well as relevant state housing policy or program initiatives. The review incorporates a close reading and analysis of the relevant instruments and policies, as well as interviews with state government representatives from housing, planning, and, where relevant, local government agencies. A more detailed analysis of local government planning instruments,

policies and programs was also conducted in relation to each case study (discussed further below).

### *Structured Interviews*

A total of 7 structured interviews were undertaken with representatives of state government and with local government associations<sup>4</sup>. These included the local government associations in NSW and Queensland (i.e. the NSW Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA), and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ). (The representative of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) attended the Melbourne focus group). Representatives of the state planning organizations in NSW and Queensland (PlanningNSW, the Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning; as well as the NSW and Queensland Departments of Housing were also interviewed for the study. Representatives of the Office of Housing within the Victorian Department of Human Services and the Department of Infrastructure attended the focus group in Melbourne.

Interviewees were asked to comment on:

- The extent of housing related activities undertaken by local governments within each state and any examples of good practice known by the interviewee;
- The main legislative, institutional and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies;
- The extent to which their agency or organisation encourages or supports local governments in undertaking a proactive housing role; and,
- Their perceptions of the factors facilitating or constraining this.

The interviews were conducted by the chief researcher and minuted and transcribed by her. A list of interviews undertaken to date is at attachment one.

### *3.2.3 Focus groups*

Three focus groups comprising local government planners and housing officers, peak bodies, and relevant state representatives, were held at university venues (associated with the AHURI research centres) in each capital city during June and July 2002. Participants for the focus groups were identified in consultation with the local government representative bodies and AHURI research centres in each state (a list of organizations and councils represented in each focus group is at attachment one). All councils selected had prepared a local housing strategy (or equivalent), or had undertaken some significant housing initiatives. Thus the focus groups were not meant to represent the range of local governments in each state, but rather, to learn from those who have already accumulated experience in developing and implementing a local housing strategy. The participants representing these councils at the focus groups included dedicated housing officers, urban planners, or social planners.

Of the nineteen councils invited to participate, fourteen local government representatives attended the Sydney group. Eleven councils were invited to the Melbourne focus group and of these seven participated. It proved more difficult to attract local council participants to the Brisbane focus group. Of the six councils invited (the Brisbane City Council and councils within the surrounding metropolitan area), only one (Pine Rivers Council) participated in the group itself. Two councils (Brisbane City Council and Redlands Shire Council) withdrew at the last minute due to unavoidable commitments but were subsequently interviewed for the study. Nevertheless a perception that housing policy work was beyond the scope of local government activities in Queensland clearly influenced the lower level of participation at this focus group.

The focus groups were facilitated by the chief researcher, who briefly introduced the study to participants then structured the discussion around three key themes: the housing related roles of local councils; experience in housing strategy preparation and implementation; and

---

<sup>4</sup> Three interviews were held in NSW and four in Queensland. Victorian representatives of state government and the local government associations attended the focus group in Melbourne.

housing relationships with other stakeholders. Within these broad themes, a number of specific questions / discussion prompts were covered. Participants were also able to raise additional issues within the general themes of the study.

Electronic whiteboards were used to enable participants to ensure that their comments were accurately represented and to provide a focus for the discussion. The proceedings of the focus groups were also minuted by the research assistant and recorded. In addition to the focus group discussion, participants completed a short questionnaire covering the history and implementation experiences associated with their housing strategies and other housing initiatives. This information was used to develop a comparative overview of local government initiatives and experiences in each state.

### 3.2.4 Local Government Case Studies

A total of twenty one councils were involved in this research, of which six were selected for more detailed case study analysis. The key criteria for their selection was that they represent different housing market characteristics in each of the metropolitan centres, and have some type of local housing strategy or defined housing initiative in place. The preliminary interviews and focus groups provided a basis for selecting two metropolitan councils fitting these criteria in each state (Table three).

**Table Three: Local Government Case Studies**

STATE	COUNCIL NAME	TYPE OF HOUSING STRATEGY / ACTIVITY
NSW	Fairfield Council	City Comprehensive housing strategy / residential development strategy (1997)
NSW	Marrickville Council	Comprehensive housing strategy, residential development strategy (1997)
QLD	Brisbane Council	City Affordable housing / joint venture; homelessness initiatives (1988 –)
QLD	Redland Council	Shire Draft aged and disability housing strategies (2002)
Victoria	Moreland Council	Comprehensive housing strategy (1996)
Victoria	City of Port Phillip Council	Comprehensive housing strategy (1997), joint ventures (1985 -)

The case study research involved collecting and analysing policy and planning documents; in depth interviews with council representatives; as well as site visits to specific housing projects and new or changing residential areas. A profile of the case studies is provided below.

### 3.2.5 Local government interviews

A total of nine interviews with local government representatives were conducted. In each case, a “chief informant” for the study was identified. All “chief informants” were senior council representatives with some responsibility for or involvement in urban planning and residential development. Due to the various local government structures, in some cases the “chief informant” was also responsible for, or had close involvement with, social or community service functions. In other cases the chief informant referred the researchers to other members of staff with these responsibilities. In the case of Brisbane City Council, where the influence of local politicians was identified as crucial to the implementation of housing initiatives, interviews were also held with councillors’ advisors.

All interviews were conducted by the principal investigator and transcribed by her. Participants were asked:

- to identify the key housing roles or activities undertaken by their Council, and the extent to these roles are carried out within a strategic overarching framework;
- to identify the key individuals or departments within council involved in the implementation of housing objectives, and their relationships with one another;

- to discuss Council's reasons for preparing a housing strategy (or equivalent), and their implementation experiences, with particular reference to:
  - the factors that have helped / constrained implementation
  - relationships with other stakeholders and levels of government
  - monitoring and evaluation – how is performance measured?

Participants were also asked more generally to comment on whether they believe a housing strategy is important for local governments to prepare, and if so, which characteristics would define a model of "best practice".

### 3.2.6 Analysis of local housing strategies

The local housing strategies of four of the case study councils<sup>5</sup> were subject to a detailed analysis and evaluation. This analysis was tailored to each housing strategy, taking into account differing objectives, approaches, and sources of data. In addition, a broad criteria for evaluation was developed to enable comparison between the strategies. The criteria draws on work contained in the recent Australian and international guides for preparing housing strategies (DTLGR 2002, Goss and Blackaby 1988, MAV 1999), as well as the advice of focus group participants (who were asked specifically to comment on what they regard as essential elements of an effective housing strategy). There are ten critical elements:

- Information - the extent, scope and appropriateness of information sources, and provisions to update strategies with new data;
- Vision - the stated aims and objectives of the strategies (including available evidence regarding whether or not these objectives are being achieved);
- Achievability - the actions or approaches contained within the strategies (and the extent to which these actions have been carried out);
- Collaboration - Evidence of, and provisions for, involvement of wide range of stakeholders in identifying and responding to housing issues;
- Sustainability – the extent to which the strategies encompass social, environmental, and economic dimensions of housing policy;
- Scale – appreciation of local, as well as regional, dimensions of housing;
- Appropriateness and diversity – a range of strategies appropriate for diverse housing needs;
- Monitoring and evaluation (and the results of any monitoring or evaluations conducted by councils); and,
- Connectivity – the extent to which the strategy is linked to other local, regional, and state strategies and plans.

To evaluate the implementation of the strategies, data regarding changes to planning instruments (eg. changes in the objectives of the plans, residential rezonings, changes in merit criteria for assessment of residential development, developer contribution levies for affordable housing etc.), changed policies regarding development assessment, or the introduction of new planning instruments (such as development control plans), was collated by the researchers through their documentary analyses and interviews with council representatives. Evidence of policy or program responses at the local government, or sub regional level was also sought in this way.

However, at the outset it was also anticipated that a range of housing data relevant to the stated objectives of the strategies could be analysed, including data relating to housing market trends (eg. increases or decreases in rents, vacancy rates, sale prices within the

---

<sup>5</sup> At the time the research was carried out, neither of the two Queensland case studies (Brisbane City and Redland Shire Councils) had formal housing strategies in place.



local government area), types of new residential developments approved (eg. housing for the aged, medium density, suburban release), and social housing issues such as the provision, availability, and appropriateness of public, community and Aboriginal housing within the local government area. However, the study has found that in most cases, such data is neither maintained by councils nor linked explicitly to objectives or strategies contained in their housing strategy. As noted above, a similar problem was identified in the recent evaluation of local housing plans in the United States (HUD 2002), and in the review of regional housing statements in the UK (DTLGR 2001).

### 3.3 Case study profiles

In line with the case study selection criteria, each of the councils selected for detailed analysis represent different housing market characteristics and issues within their metropolitan contexts<sup>6</sup>. These are summarised in table four. As shown in the table, the majority of councils in the study are affected by declining housing affordability, although this is particularly intense in the inner ring areas of Marrickville (NSW), Brisbane City (Queensland), and Port Phillip (Victoria). These areas are also those most affected by the loss of traditional sources of low income accommodation, such as boarding houses. The middle and outer ring councils are characterised by a lack of housing diversity (particularly Redland and Moreland Councils in Queensland and Victoria respectively), and concentrations of poor housing stock and social disadvantage (Fairfield and Redland Councils). A short profile of each study area is provided below.

**Table Four: Summary Characteristics of Case Study Local Government Areas**

	<i>Marrickville</i>	<i>Fairfield</i>	<i>Brisbane</i>	<i>Redland</i>	<i>Port Phillip</i>	<i>Moreland</i>
Area (km2)	17	100.54	1326.8	537.1	20.6	50.9
Population	73 431	181 936	888 449	114 601	80 157	131 359
Median income	\$400-\$449	\$200-\$299	\$300-\$399	\$300-\$399	\$500-\$599	\$300-\$399
Median house price	\$440 000	\$267 000	\$215 000	\$166 726	\$407 500 (St Kilda East)	\$297 000 (Coburg)
Median rent	\$300 2BU* \$235 2BH**	\$175 2BU \$145 2BH	\$150-199	\$1602BU \$1903BH	\$255 2BU \$310 2BH	\$171 2BU \$210 2BH
% Homes owned or purchasing	49.49%	63.26%	61.99%	72.04%	40.23%	64.69%
% Renting	37.93%	20.88%	28.3%	19.86%	43.13%	24.77%
% Social housing	2.57%	7.91%	4.07%	3.05%	4.78%	2.86%
Key housing issues	Affordability Loss of low income housing – eg. boarding houses	Affordability Poor access to services Concentrations of poor quality housing stock	Affordability Loss of low income housing Homelessness	Lack of housing diversity Concentrations of poor housing stock and social	Affordability Loss of low income housing	Affordability Lack of housing diversity

<sup>6</sup> Information contained in the case study profiles was collected as part of the interview / focus group process, unless otherwise referenced.

\* BU = Bedroom Unit

\*\* BH = Bedroom House

Sources: 2001 Census (ABS 2002); NSW Rent and Sales Report, September 2002, Office of Housing, Department of Human Services, Rental Report March 2002, Qld Residential Tenancy Authority, Real Estate Institute of Queensland 2002, Case study interviews.

### 3.3.1 *Fairfield City Council (NSW)*

Fairfield City Council is an outer ring council situated 32km south west of Sydney's Central Business District. Fairfield has the highest proportion of people from non-English speaking background of any LGA in NSW (69%, ABS 2001), as well as a high proportion of low income earners (the weekly median individual income is in the range of \$200-\$299 (ABS 2001)).

While Fairfield still contains some areas of rural land, the majority of the area has been developed and consists mainly of detached housing with pockets of greater density around the older established town centres. Between March 2001 and March 2002, the median dwelling price in Fairfield rose 14.6%, which was similar to the overall median for outer ring suburbs in Sydney at 14% (HousingNSW 2002). However, the area is also affected by concentrations of poor quality private and public housing stock in need of rehabilitation. Overall, there is a higher than average proportion of social housing stock in Fairfield (7.9%, ABS 2001), although there is still significant demand. For example, in 1996 the Fairfield area reportedly had the longest waiting list for social housing in Sydney (Fairfield City Council 1997).

### 3.3.2 *Marrickville Council (NSW)*

Marrickville Council is an inner ring local government area, situated between 4 and 10 km south west of Sydney's Central Business District. It has an extremely diverse population, with 42% from a non English speaking background (ABS 2001). The area has traditionally been a source of affordable housing for low and middle income earners and for new overseas immigrants, attracted by good access to physical and social services. It contained a large proportion of the city's industrial and manufacturing areas, many of which are now being converted to residential uses. In recent years, the area has experienced steep sales price increases (26.7% between March 2001 and March 2002) (HousingNSW 2002), and increasing pressure on low cost accommodation options, such as boarding houses.

### 3.3.3 *Brisbane City Council (Queensland)*

Brisbane City Council is the largest council in the case study, covering almost all of the Brisbane metropolitan area and containing a population of nearly 900 000 residents (ABS 2001). This population has been growing rapidly with over a 10% increase in total population since the 1996 Census. A proportion of this growth can be attributed to increasing density in the inner Brisbane areas. There are several also new release areas on the city fringe.

The process of urban renewal in inner Brisbane has contributed to significant affordability problems in areas that have traditionally housed a large proportion of low income residents. In particular, boarding houses are closing at a rapid rate due to increases in property prices, as well as the introduction of new fire and health regulations. Homelessness is also seen as a significant problem in the inner city areas.

### 3.3.4 *Redland Shire Council (Queensland)*

Redland Shire Council also contains a range of housing sub markets within its several villages and town centres. Although the median house price of \$166 726 (REIQ 2002) is significantly lower than the other areas in this study, local planners and real estate agents report a steep increase in housing costs over the past six months, particularly in areas well

serviced by employment and transport, such as Cleveland. Seasonal fluctuations caused by an influx of tourists during school holidays, also contribute to shortages of rental accommodation.

### *3.3.5 Moreland City Council (Victoria)*

Moreland City Council in Victoria has traditionally provided a source of more affordable housing for lower income households. However, in recent years availability has declined, such that only 10% of one and two bedroom rental dwellings in the area are affordable for households on statutory incomes (compared to 23% for Victoria overall) (DHS 2002). The area is characterised by detached dwellings (80% of total dwelling stock) (ABS 2001), and there is an identified need to increase the diversity of housing types by introducing more multi unit accommodation in strategic locations close to services and transport.

### *3.3.6 City of Port Phillip Council (Victoria)*

The City of Port Phillip is located in inner city Melbourne on the northern tip of Port Phillip Bay. The area is a popular recreational and tourist destination for local, interstate and international visitors, but also accommodates a diverse local population. House prices have risen steadily in recent years, and there has been significant new residential development, particularly along the foreshore area. It is currently estimated that less than two per cent of rental properties in the area are affordable for households on statutory incomes (DHS 2002), who, in 1996, accounted for 27.5% of the total population (City of Port Phillip 1997). As in the other inner city councils represented in this study, a major issue has been the loss of traditional low cost accommodation such as rooming houses, hotels, and residential flat buildings (in 1996 alone, the Council recorded a decline of 10% in the number of boarding houses within the local government area).

## **3.4 Summary of methodology and research outcomes**

This research examines the housing related roles currently undertaken by local governments in metropolitan NSW, Queensland and Victoria. The study also evaluates the use of local housing strategies as a vehicle for local governments to address their defined housing needs and objectives. Using a comparative methodology involving focus groups, interviews, and detailed case study analysis, the research highlights institutional, legislative and political parameters affecting local government involvement in housing, and opportunities to overcome these through four key approaches: building expertise and knowledge; developing and enabling a range of planning mechanisms and policy responses; enhancing housing strategy methodologies; and, establishing strong processes for local and regional collaboration.

This study was confined to metropolitan NSW, Queensland and Victoria, and there are limitations in transferring these findings regarding legislative frameworks to other geographical and institutional contexts. Furthermore, the diversity of local governments means that no study such as this can adequately reflect the range of experiences and innovations characterising the sector. However, the information presented here provides a basis for building on, replicating, and supporting the range of housing roles currently undertaken by Australian local governments. To this end, the practical findings of this research will be disseminated in a series of workshops specifically targeting local government planners.

## **4 FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSING ACTIVITIES IN NSW, QUEENSLAND AND VICTORIA**

This chapter compares the institutional parameters governing local housing activities in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. This information sets the context for the following chapters (which address the experiences of local governments involved in the study) and provides a basis for understanding the extent to which current legislative and institutional arrangements in each state might facilitate or constrain the implementation of local housing strategies. The information presented is drawn from the review of state government policy documents, strategies and plans relating to housing policy and urban planning, as well as the interviews with state government representatives and local government advocacy groups. Focus group participants were also invited to comment on the extent to which state government legislation, policies, programs, or planning processes supported or constrained the housing activities of local councils.

The first part of the chapter gives an overview of the governance structures relating to housing and urban development in each of the three states. These are then discussed in greater detail, with particular reference to the main housing policy and programs relevant to local government. The planning system of each state is also outlined, highlighting opportunities and constraints affecting the ability of local councils to influence housing outcomes through their planning decisions. The chapter concludes by identifying some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of the different state frameworks, a theme returned to in chapter seven.

### **4.1 Overview of governance structures relating to housing and urban development in NSW, Queensland and Victoria**

In each of the states, there is an administrative division between responsibilities for housing assistance (particularly the social housing system and related human services), and physical planning responsibilities associated with regulating residential development. In NSW and Queensland, separate Departments of Housing manage the social housing system and the allocation of Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) resources. In Victoria, these functions are undertaken by the Office of Housing, which is situated within the larger Department of Human Services. In Queensland and Victoria, responsibilities for urban planning and local governments are situated within the one department (the Departments of Local Government and Planning and Infrastructure respectively), while in NSW, these functions are also undertaken by discrete agencies (PlanningNSW and the Department of Local Government).

These administrative divisions mean that no one agency has overall responsibility for managing the housing system in its entirety. Thus an overarching state housing policy becomes critical to ensuring that the various housing related activities of each agency are co-ordinated and complementary. However, in recent years each of the three states have explicitly recognised the important role local governments can play in achieving better housing outcomes within their areas, and have sought to encourage this role through a range of program and policy initiatives.

#### *4.1.1 Local government housing policy and planning initiatives in NSW*

In NSW, four key housing initiatives resourced (or partially resourced) through housing assistance funds specifically engage local governments:

- the Local Government Housing Initiatives Program (LGHIP), which aims to assist local councils research housing needs and develop responsive strategies to address them;
- the Affordable Housing Program, under which the Affordable Housing Service has provided advice and information about affordable housing to local councils, developed a legal framework to facilitate the financing of affordable housing units, and promoted affordable housing partnerships and demonstration projects;

- the Boarding Housing Financial Assistance Program which provides cash grants for owners and operators of boarding houses to meet the costs of fire safety upgrading required under the Building Code of Australia, and thus aims to retain low cost housing opportunities within the private market; and,
- the Homeless Persons Information Centre and brokerage programs, which are managed by the City of Sydney Council.

The Local Government Housing Initiatives Program is of particular significance to the present study. The program was established in 1995 to:

- “promote greater awareness and participation by local government in assessing and monitoring local housing demand and supply in the promotion of affordable and appropriate housing;
- improve data on housing and housing needs
- provide a better understanding of local housing needs and the potential role of local government in responding to those needs
- Facilitate an intersectoral approach to residential planning and provision at the local level
- Develop planning initiatives which are responsive to local housing needs and consistent with key state planning policies and directions” (LenMac 2000, p. ix).

Over the past six years, the program has funded councils to employ housing officers, analyse current and future housing needs as well as housing provision, identify opportunities to increase housing supply and choice, and develop strategic options for affordable housing. During the program’s first two years of operation, a total of 64 of the state’s councils applied for funding, accounting for more than a third of NSW local governments (LenMac 2000). This indicates a significant level of willingness amongst NSW councils to engage in housing policy development at the time the program was introduced. Of the total applications however, the majority failed to meet the program’s objectives, and only 37% were funded. Of these, 61% were in metropolitan areas, and received an average of \$28, 550 each. About half of these projects aimed explicitly to develop local housing strategies, in many cases utilising a dedicated housing policy officer to manage this process. Most councils also gave some cash or in kind support to the project.

A review of the program’s first two years of operation (1994/5 and 1996/7) found that the program succeeded in raising local government awareness about housing issues and participation in housing policy processes, and providing a significant amount of data regarding local housing issues in NSW. However, the review found that few studies about planning mechanisms for affordable housing had developed into strategies, due in part to the absence of state government support, which was “seen as critical to motivating councils, and protecting them from legal action or alienating business and other stakeholder interests” (LenMac 2000, p xxi).

The review included a close analysis of housing policies and strategies funded under the program. This analysis found that while the information base supporting these strategies was adequate (involving both demographic, housing market, and consultative data), few mechanisms exist for the ongoing management of this information. The best projects drew on a range of data and information sources, incorporated indicators for monitoring performance, were linked to council planning strategies, and had defined implementation plans. However, the review identified few projects demonstrating these attributes. A key finding was that where councils had contributed some of their own resources to the project, greater local ownership and commitment was evident. Yet overall, the projects generally failed to engender strong collaborative and interagency approaches to housing policy, with many stakeholders failing to participate in steering committees, and most processes disbanding after the completing of the projects. Unfortunately, it appears that most proposals arising through the projects were never presented to councils for debate, and of those that were presented, in many cases their recommendations were rejected.

The program is now focusing on the development of regional strategies for sub regional groupings of councils in the greater metropolitan region.

#### *4.1.2 Affordable housing in sustainable communities: Policy framework for increased local government involvement in Queensland*

In June 2001 the Queensland Department of Housing released the “*Affordable Housing in Sustainable Communities Strategic Action Plan*”, to implement the Queensland Government’s housing policy commitment “ that all Queenslanders have access to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing, in diverse, cohesive and sustainable communities” (QDOH 2001, p i). The strategy aims to preserve the existing supply of affordable housing, promote new supply that is cheaper to produce, expand housing choices, and encourage a whole of government approach to planning for new residential development and existing communities.

Strategies identified in the plan relate to the planning system and process; the provision of data and support to local government, and the redevelopment of government land for affordable housing. Key features include:

- a review of statutory provisions to ensure they support affordable housing and “avoid adverse impacts of regulation on housing affordability and residential development”;
- the development of a State Planning Policy for housing (discussed further below);
- an intention to develop “model” planning scheme provisions for affordable housing;
- an undertaking to provide data to local councils by developing housing profiles for local areas, to support their planning schemes;
- a commitment to “work closely with local governments that wish to identify appropriate policies and strategies for ensuring the provision and retention of affordable housing”;
- the development of pilot partnership programs with local government (such as the Brisbane Housing Company joint venture affordable housing program); and,
- a proposal that State agencies and local governments contemplating the sale or redevelopment of lands in areas of identified high need, consider their potential use for affordable housing.

Many of these actions, such as the development of a state planning policy, and the provision of data and support for local government, are currently being undertaken by the Department, and these actions were welcomed by council representatives during the focus group and case study discussions. A related initiative, being developed by the Department in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland, is a housing policy tool kit to assist councils in undertaking housing studies or other housing related initiatives, including comprehensive strategies.

The Department of Housing’s Community Renewal Program focuses on disadvantaged communities, including areas where there are concentrations of poor quality private housing, and areas where there is indigenous housing owned by local councils; thus providing another potential opportunity for local government engagement in housing activities (QDOH 2000).

#### *4.1.3 Towards a State and local government affordable housing strategy in Victoria*

As in Queensland, the Office of Housing within the Victorian Department of Human Services has embarked on a process to promote a broader range of housing initiatives throughout the entire housing system. This has included the establishment of a steering committee dedicated to developing a state and local government affordable housing strategy, which delivered its final report in March 2002. The report emphasises the significant role already played by local governments in relation to housing, and aims to develop opportunities to further enhance this role, while recognising the diversity of local government experience and capacity. Specific recommendations of the committee included:

- the development of a comprehensive affordable housing strategy, prepared in partnership with local government,
- the establishment by the Office of Housing of a framework for local government involvement in planning for public and community housing;
- training support to assist local governments develop local housing policies;
- financial mechanisms and incentives (such as council rate rebates) to retain and promote affordable housing;
- strategies to build community support for social and affordable housing programs; and,
- involving local government in the Office of Housing's state wide neighbourhood renewal strategies.

At this stage, the Steering Committee recommendations have been “agreed in principle” by the Government, or deferred for further consideration. However, it was emphasised throughout the interviews and focus groups conducted for this research, that strong state government support is critical to motivating local council action and resolving legal uncertainties regarding their housing roles. On this point it is significant that several of the recommendations have been adopted in the recently released metropolitan strategy (discussed further below).

The Social Housing Innovations Project (SHIP) has been one avenue for local governments in Victoria to become involved in joint venture social housing projects. The project aims to expand the number of joint venture community housing arrangements in local governments, community housing, and other non government organizations. Eleven local governments applied for funding under the program's first round, and six were successful, including Port Phillip and Moreland councils (which are included as case studies for this research). Only five submissions were received from local governments for the second round of funding.

## 4.2 Planning systems

In theory, local governments have significant opportunities to shape urban development, including housing outcomes, through their land use planning responsibilities. As discussed above, these opportunities include:

- identifying, in close consultation with their local communities, strategic social, economic, and environmental objectives for the future development or management of their areas;
- deciding, also in consultation with their local communities (and state or regional stakeholders) where new residential development should be located, having regard to these objectives, and to issues such as transportation, services, land capacity, and existing urban structure;
- setting the rules for the configuration and design of new residential development, and regulating changes to existing housing stock, including the range of factors that must be considered when a decision is made;
- assessing proposed residential developments against these rules, and against state and regional planning policy or regulations;
- specifying conditions to manage the social or environmental impact of approved developments, including developer contributions to fund community infrastructure, and, potentially, affordable housing;
- monitoring the implementation of their planning objectives, and if necessary, intervening where possible; and,
- ensuring that the legal planning framework complements Council's broader corporate objectives.

However, a number of limitations surround the exercise of these activities.

- state legislation, which governs the form and content of planning instruments, specifies the matters that must be considered when assessing a development (and which state government agencies must be involved), sets parameters for the establishment by councils of development conditions, and sets special provisions for the development activities of public authorities;
- in addition to conforming to state requirements, the parameters regulating local development must be sensitive to developer intentions and market demand;
- planning instruments generally contain rules to regulate development, but rarely specify proactive strategies or actions to encourage particular outcomes beyond the private development process;
- local plans, and development decisions made under them, must be endorsed by their communities, thus it is difficult to introduce plans or make decisions that are thought to threaten local amenity or property values; and,
- planning decisions are subject to legal appeal (although the parameters surrounding this are different in each state).

As each of these constraints relate to the particular planning arrangements of each state (or country) it is important to understand these arrangements in some detail. In each state, the planning system includes overarching legislation (which governs local plan making and development assessment), as well as state and regional policies or plans (which generally aim to ensure that matters of state importance are addressed by local governments during their plan making and development assessment activities). The latter may apply across the state or in specific geographic areas. Each state has a metropolitan strategy, which sets out environmental, social, and economic planning principles, and identify key urban development parameters relating to new land release, infrastructure and transportation.

#### 4.2.1 *Environmental planning and assessment in NSW*

The *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* was recently amended to include a commitment to promote and retain affordable housing in its overall objectives (s 5 (a) (viii)). The plan making provisions of the Act also state that local instruments may include arrangements for “providing, maintaining and retaining, and regulating any matter relating to, affordable housing” (s 26 (d)). When assessing a development application, a consent authority is required to consider any environmental planning instrument, or draft instrument, as well as “the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality” (s 79C). This latter clause has been interpreted by some councils to include the social impacts of development likely to reduce opportunities for low cost housing, although such interpretations depend on strong evidence and risk being overturned during appeal.

The Act also makes specific provision for development conditions requiring contributions or land for affordable housing (ss 94 (f) (g)), although these are tightly constrained by the operation of *State Environmental Planning Policy – Affordable Housing (SEPP 70)*. Other state instruments that provide for affordable housing include SEPPs 5, and 9, which, although attracting controversy and resistance amongst developers and local residents, still contribute to the stock of privately supplied accommodation options for groups with special needs. State Environmental Planning Policy 10 limits the demolition or change of use of boarding houses and low cost residential flats.

The regional planning strategy for the greater metropolitan area, “Shaping Our Cities: The Planning Strategy for the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast (1998)” aims to “manage the supply of new and redeveloped housing so as to create a compact urban structure with choice in home type and affordability” (p 5). The strategy focuses on the physical provision of the estimated 500,000 new homes needed for the next 20 – 30 years, and seeks to concentrate these homes around existing inner and middle ring areas. Councils are to implement these objectives through locally prepared residential development strategies.



Legislative backing for the preparation of such strategies was achieved by the introduction of SEPP 53 – Metropolitan Residential Development. This SEPP applies to councils in the greater metropolitan region without approved residential development strategies. As a result of the SEPP, the majority of NSW councils prepared such strategies, which incorporated baseline analyses of housing need and supply, and identified locations for multi-unit development in areas regarded to be well located in relation to transport, jobs and services. The SEPP has been extremely controversial, with many local residents opposing the introduction of medium density housing to their areas. A further criticism (raised by participants at the NSW focus group), is that the focus of the SEPP, and the residential strategies prepared under it, has been on the physical location and supply of housing, in relation to the government’s urban consolidation objectives, rather than broader social or affordability aspects of housing.

#### 4.2.2 *Integrated planning in Queensland*

In contrast to the NSW legislation, state planning Acts for Queensland and Victoria currently make little reference to social aspects of development process. The Queensland *Integrated Planning Act 1997* aims to achieve ecological sustainability by co-ordinating and integrating planning at local, regional and State levels, and managing the effects of development on the environment (s 1.2.1). The Act defines “ecological sustainability” as “a balance that integrates – (a) protection of ecological processes and natural systems at local, regional, State and wider levels; and (b) economic development; and (c) maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social wellbeing of people and communities” (s 1.3). State government interviewees indicated that expanding local government understanding and awareness of the social aspects of ecological sustainability was therefore critical to ensuring these are recognised as legitimate objectives of the planning process.

Local planning schemes made under the Act must identify desired environmental outcomes, include measures to facilitate these, and specify performance indicators to measure progress (ss 2.1.3 (b)(c)(d)). While the emphasis here is very much on environmental outcomes, these provisions do make way for more “proactive” strategies to be incorporated within local schemes, as well as a requirement that plan performance be monitored. Local schemes must also integrate state and regional “dimensions”, which includes any state planning policies. Thus the proposed state planning policy for housing will be of critical importance.

A discussion paper concerning the proposed state planning policy canvasses a number of measures including:

- a firm “head of power” to enable councils to promote affordable housing;
- a “clear link” between “ecological sustainability” and its social elements, particularly community wellbeing and the provision of affordable housing;
- a means for identifying priority locations for action;
- guidance for local government on good planning practice to facilitate well located affordable housing;
- introduction of a requirement for councils to consider the impacts of a proposal on housing affordability, during development assessment; and,
- legislative support for councils to use a range of planning mechanisms to encourage affordable housing (QDOH 2002).

Significantly, however, the policy contains few firm proposals to encourage greater state and local government collaboration. Both Queensland and Victoria allow public housing authorities to regulate their own development activities. In the case of Queensland, public housing proposals must only be exhibited publicly if they are considered to be “substantially inconsistent” with the planning scheme, whereby the Chief Executive of Housing must “have regard” to any public submissions before making their decision (s 5.6). In both states there are only minimum requirements for the housing authorities to inform local governments of their activities. While these provisions may streamline public housing

development processes, they are unlikely to contribute to a collaborative, whole of government approach to local planning, an issue raised consistently by representatives to the focus groups.

The *South East Queensland Regional Framework for Growth Management 2000 (1998)*, prepared by a regional planning committee, outlines a number of planning principles for urban growth, which should focus on existing areas and increase residential densities around transit areas. The Framework contains several references to affordable housing, and encourages councils to review their planning scheme provisions to ensure they provide choice in housing type, achieve higher densities, and encourage affordability. The document also outlines a commitment to innovative mechanisms that improve the supply of appropriate and affordable housing, and the establishment of an affordability index for councils to monitor housing outcomes. However, there are no details on how these commitments are to be achieved.

#### 4.2.3 *Planning and environment framework in Victoria*

The *Victorian Planning and Environment Act 1987* aims to “provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land”, provide for the “protection of natural and man made resources” and “ecological processes”, and “secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians” (s 4). Planning schemes prepared under the Act must seek to further these objectives, and may include strategic plans, policy statements, codes or guidelines relating to the use of land. The scheme must also include state standard provisions as well as those that are locally derived, and must comply with the State Planning Policy Framework. Clause 16 of this framework relates specifically to housing and currently contains generic objectives for residential development, medium density, rural living, and crisis accommodation. Each municipal council must also prepare a “Municipal Strategic Statement” outlining the strategic planning, land use and development objectives of the authority and strategies for achieving them.

When assessing a development, authorities are required to consider all objections and submissions and “any significant effects which the responsible authority considers the use or development may have on the environment” (s 60 (a)). In addition, there is a discretionary provision for councils to consider “any significant social and economic effects of the use or development”, and “any strategic plan, policy statement, code or guideline” which has been adopted by a public authority, “if the circumstances appear to so require” (s60 (b)). The discretionary nature of this provision has meant that the majority of councils in Victoria have failed to apply it. In fact, recent editions of Victoria’s Planning News (the planning institute’s Victorian division journal), have commented on the use of this clause in considering the social impacts of development on affordable housing. Only two Victorian councils are known to have introduced policies requiring developers to consider the social impacts of their developments (Maribryong City Council, in 2002, and the former St Kilda (now Port Phillip Council) in 1988, discussed further below) (Shaw 2002).

In addition to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, Victoria’s “ResCode” specifies standard controls for new development, although these are predominantly concerned with physical considerations such as neighbourhood character and environmental standards.

Melbourne’s regional strategy, *Melbourne 2030; Planning for Sustainable Growth* (DOI 2002), was released in late 2002 following an extensive period of consultation. The strategy aims to achieve a more compact city, by increasing densities in existing areas and around transportation nodes, and by controlling growth on the fringe by a designated urban growth boundary. Key elements include a commitment to “a fairer city”, incorporating a commitment to increasing the supply of well located affordable housing, and more equitable distribution of social infrastructure (Policy 6.1). Related initiatives include:

- monitoring supply of and demand for affordable housing at local and regional levels, and disseminating examples of best practice in affordable housing provision (6.1.1);
- increasing the supply of affordable housing through joint programs with the Regional Land Corporation, the Office of Housing, local councils and non government organizations (6.1.2); and,
- a commitment to “change the policy that governs the disposal of government land and buildings to best use rather than the highest price achievable, and base the policy on responsible criteria” (6.1.7).

The commitment to promoting affordable housing is reinforced by the implementation plans accompanying the strategy, which emphasise the role of local governments. Implementation arrangements include the establishment of regional housing working groups (including council representatives) to identify housing issues and needs on a regional basis. A key action identified for local government is the preparation of local housing strategies, policies and controls to implement the metropolitan strategy’s housing objectives.

### 4.3 Comparative evaluation

The above discussion highlights a number of differences in the planning and policy frameworks for housing and urban development in each state (summarised in table five).

**Table Five: Summary of programs and planning instruments relevant to local government involvement in housing in NSW, Queensland and Victoria**

<b>Planning Instrument / Program</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>Victoria</b>
Principle State Planning Legislation	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979	Integrated Planning Act 1997	Planning and Environment Act 1987
State planning policies / instruments relevant to housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 5 – Housing for Older People or People with a Disability, and SEPP 9 – Group Homes (relax development standards for these types of housing)</li> <li>• SEPP 10 – Retention of Low-Cost Rental Accommodation (requires council’s consent &amp; Director of Planning’s concurrence to demolish, alter or change the use of a boarding house or strata-subdivide a low cost residential flat building or boarding house).</li> <li>• SEPP 53 – Metropolitan Residential Development (Enables the Minister to alter local planning provisions to facilitate multi-unit development, in areas without an approved residential development strategy)</li> <li>• SEPP 70 – Affordable Housing (provides a legal</li> </ul>	Draft State Planning Policy for Affordable Housing and Residential Development (anticipated, yet exhibited)	State Planning Policy Framework (Clause 16 specifies generic objectives for the residential development of single dwellings, medium density, rural living, and crisis accommodation).

---

	framework for affordable housing provisions in certain local government areas).		
Metropolitan Strategies	Shaping Our Cities: The Planning Strategy for the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast (1998)	South East Queensland Regional Framework for Growth Management 2000 (1998)	Melbourne 2030 Planning for Sustainable Growth (2002)
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Housing Initiatives Program (currently funding regional groupings of councils in metropolitan Sydney to develop regional frameworks for housing)</li> <li>Affordable Housing Program (advice and information about affordable housing, facilitates demonstration projects)</li> <li>Boarding Housing Financial Assistance Program (cash grants to meet the costs of fire safety upgrading)</li> <li>Homeless Persons Information Centre (funded by State Government but managed by the City of Sydney Council)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing policy toolkit for local councils (being developed in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Housing Innovations Project (SHIP) funds joint venture social housing projects, for which councils are eligible.</li> </ul>

---

Of the three states, NSW has the longest history of encouraging local government involvement in housing, and has supported this through state policy initiatives, funding programs, and amendments to planning legislation. However, the legal framework remains fairly inflexible, and some planning policies appear contradictory to local councils (as raised during the focus groups). By contrast, both Queensland and Victoria are embarking on policy processes to encourage greater local government involvement in housing. While the range of initiatives proposed are both innovative and comprehensive, and largely supported by local governments represented in this study, the extent to which these proposals will be implemented remains unclear.

The following two chapters show how these different policy and planning frameworks have influenced the range of housing roles and activities undertaken by metropolitan councils in each of the three states.

## **5 HOUSING ROLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN NSW, QUEENSLAND AND VICTORIA**

This chapter draws on the results of the focus groups and case studies to discuss the housing related roles and activities currently undertaken by local governments in metropolitan NSW, Queensland and Victoria. It also discusses the different experiences and perspectives of local planners or housing officers in implementing these roles. Opportunities to enhance the exercise of local housing roles are identified in the concluding section.

### **5.1 Housing related roles and activities of local councils**

Local councils represented in this study believe they have a significant role to play in managing the location and supply of land for housing, guiding the characteristics of new housing developments, monitoring housing trends, and co-ordinating social support services for groups in housing need. Beyond these general responsibilities, a number of participants in each of the state focus groups identified additional roles for local councils, including promoting, providing, and retaining affordable housing, and in providing services for homeless people. In Victoria, participants believed local governments should aim to improve the quality and appropriateness of existing and new housing stock, and actively manage the mix of housing tenure to achieve social diversity.

In addition, participants in each of the three states recognised a role for councils in social or community development activities, particularly providing services for older people and people with a disability, and in facilitating employment and skills training schemes. In NSW and Victoria, participants explicitly identified a role for local governments in assisting low income tenants, including tenants of social housing, and contributing to community renewal programs within public, private, and mixed tenure estate, to local government involvement in housing. In addition, many participants perceived an important role for councils in advocacy and information provision. These included undertaking local housing research and using this as a basis for lobbying higher levels of government for additional social housing, as well as educating councillors, developers and the local community about local housing needs. These roles are summarised in table six.

**Table Six: Housing related activities and initiatives of participant councils**

<b>ACTIVITY / INITIATIVE</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
<b>Planning Framework</b>	
Review controls to ensure they provide for a variety of housing types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of councils at the focus group had undertaken, or intended to undertake, this process</li> </ul>
Planning scheme promotes / requires adaptable housing design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marrickville, Holroyd (NSW), Redland (Queensland)</li> </ul>
Specific mechanisms in planning scheme to retain / promote affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waverly, Willoughby, Randwick, Marrickville (NSW) Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City (Queensland)</li> </ul>
Planning incentives / negotiation / requirement to levy developer contributions for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waverly, Willoughby (NSW), Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Planning framework promotes energy / water efficiency in design and renovation of dwellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marrickville (NSW), Waverley (NSW)</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitating social housing</b>	
Identify suitable sites for social housing development / spot purchase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Planning assistance to streamline social housing development assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Donation of funds or land for the development of social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City, Waverley, Willoughby (NSW)</li> </ul>
Establishment of a trust fund for social housing ventures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy / information</b>	
Educating developers about more appropriate and environmentally sustainable housing types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairfield City Council (NSW), Port Phillip (Victoria)</li> </ul>
Media releases about the need for social / affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Charter / policy statement outlining council commitment to safe, secure, affordable and culturally appropriate housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brisbane City Council</li> </ul>
Maintaining local data about housing issues and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Marrickville, Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Housing advisory committees / reference groups involving community stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brisbane City Council</li> </ul>
<b>Community development / service provision</b>	
Services for homeless people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brisbane City Council</li> </ul>
Services for residents of caravan parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairfield (NSW), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
Co-ordinating services for low income / disadvantaged social and private housing tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All councils representatives at the focus groups undertook these activities</li> </ul>
Grants / rate relief to sustain financial viability of low cost accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships / joint ventures / direct housing provision</b>	
Contributing to community renewal processes in collaboration with social housing providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Fairfield (NSW), Brisbane City Council (Queensland)</li> </ul>

Joint venture social housing / affordable housing initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moreland, Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane City Council (NSW)</li> </ul>
Establishment of a not for profit housing company, in partnership with state government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brisbane City Council</li> </ul>

### 5.1.1 Planning framework

The majority of participants indicated that they had undertaken a review of their planning controls to ensure that they promote greater housing diversity and environmental objectives, although changes to planning schemes were often limited to rezoning well located areas for higher density residential development. Several councils have introduced controls or planning policies to encourage more environmentally sustainable residential development, including energy efficiency requirements for multiple dwellings, and reduced subdivision sizes for new release areas. Three councils indicated that they had introduced provisions in their planning schemes to ensure that a certain proportion of all new residential development (frequently 10%), conforms to the principles of universal design.

Seven councils in the study identified specific mechanisms in their planning framework to encourage the retention and development of new affordable housing. These ranged from identifying specific objectives to promote affordable housing, decision making criteria requiring a consent authority to consider the impact of a proposal on the availability of low cost housing, through to provisions to levy developer contributions to provide for affordable housing (Box 1). The latter are limited to councils in NSW, where such approaches are permitted under state legislation. In the other states, some councils have attempted to negotiate agreements with developers to provide a component of affordable housing, although to date, this has only been successful within the inner city areas of Brisbane and Port Phillip.

#### **Box 1: Examples of local planning schemes that contain innovative approaches to housing**

##### *Marrickville Local Environmental Plan 2001*

The Marrickville Local Environmental Plan 2001 includes objectives to encourage and retain housing affordability, diversity and choice (s 7(g)). These objectives are promoted in the plan by making boarding houses permissible in all residential zones, and by requiring consent authorities to consider the impact of a proposed development on low cost rental accommodation before making their decision (s 63).

##### *Moreland Planning Scheme*

The Moreland Planning Scheme details the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of housing. It argues that affordable housing can contribute to the economic vitality of neighbourhoods by “freeing up” consumer income (s26.06-1). The scheme attempts to promote affordable housing in Moreland by:

- supporting the continued viability of *non residential* uses within mixed – use areas, in an explicit attempt to control gentrification and maintain affordable housing in these areas; and,
- facilitating the development of affordable housing incentives, in accordance with the Moreland Housing Strategy (s26.06-1)

##### *Port Phillip Planning Scheme*

The Port Phillip Planning Scheme contains a number of specific aims relating to the provision of low cost housing and retaining rooming houses. There are controls to restrict the conversion of rooming houses, unless some provision for low income housing is retained (s 22.09-3), and an explicit direction for consent authorities to consider the impacts of proposed development on the diversity, and affordability of housing within the locality. On the other hand, forms of residential development that will satisfy a housing need identified in the housing strategy, are specifically encouraged.

##### *Waverley Local Environmental Plan 1996*

Waverley Local Environmental Plan 1996 includes explicit aims for affordable housing. These must be considered by the consent authority when assessing development, and include:

- to encourage the retention of existing affordable housing, including boarding houses and rental housing provided by residential flat buildings,
- to encourage the development of new affordable housing in a variety of types and tenures for all income groups

### *5.1.2 Facilitating social housing*

Five councils involved in the study were actively involved in facilitating new social housing developments. Moreland, Port Phillip, and Brisbane City Council identify suitable sites or properties for social housing acquisition or development, and in some cases, donate council land or financial resources. These councils also aim to assist social housing developers through the permit process. In the year 2000, the Brisbane City Council established a protocol between the Council's "City Assets" division and the Department of Housing, to inform the Department whenever land was available that council be used for public housing. Under this arrangement, the Department of Housing now has the first offer on surplus Council land (although the land use still sold at the valued rate).

### *5.1.3 Advocacy / information*

Specific advocacy activities undertaken by councils included educating developers about more appropriate and environmentally sustainable housing types. Fairfield City Council has introduced a guide for local builder / developers, while Port Phillip supports projects which provide examples of affordable, ecologically sensitive design. Many councils make good use of the local media to build public awareness of the need for affordable housing in their areas, thus building community support for new initiatives. The Brisbane City Council has prepared a charter detailing its commitment to ensuring that all members of the community have access to safe, secure, affordable and culturally appropriate housing, and are involved in decisions concerning places that are important to them, including traditional Aboriginal owners.

Typical information maintained by councils includes broad social planning data like demographic statistics; numbers and locations of social service providers; housing market information like rent and sales prices; as well as physical planning data like numbers of residential development approvals; and potential redevelopment sites. In some cases, information to monitor particular dwelling supply such as boarding houses and caravan parks is also maintained by councils (eg. Marrickville, Port Phillip, and Brisbane City councils).

### *5.1.4 Community development / service provision*

Like land use planning, co-ordinating infrastructure and services fall within the core roles of local councils. However, special initiatives undertaken by councils represented in the study included education and employment strategies to assist low income / disadvantaged residents, often in conjunction with other state or local service providers. Brisbane and Port Phillip councils also provide financial assistance to assist low cost housing providers comply with essential fire and safety provisions. Brisbane City, Fairfield, and Moreland councils are also developing strategies to improve services for residents of caravan parks.

Brisbane City Council has been particularly innovative in seeking to improve living conditions for the approximately 4000 residents living in the city's many caravan parks. The Council has compiled a demographic profile of caravan park residents, reviewed local laws regarding their location, design, and operating standards, and developed a



comprehensive internet site providing resources, advice and links for residents.<sup>7</sup> The Council also aims to protect caravan parks from the threat of redevelopment, in some cases intervening directly to stop this from occurring (John Eastgate, pers. com. 11/7/02).

The range of homelessness initiatives undertaken by the Brisbane City Council is also diverse. They have included working to improve the safety of homeless people in public spaces, improving infrastructure in public parks (such as a trial ablutions block in a New Farm Park and the introduction of storage racks in a south Brisbane park), as well as recognising and legitimising traditional indigenous meeting places. In 1999, the Council assisted in the conduct of a census of homeless people in the inner city, and in 2002, the Council announced new funding of \$1M for homeless initiatives including an information and referral project modelled on the City of Sydney's Homeless Persons Information Initiative and brokerage service.

#### *5.1.5 Partnerships, joint ventures, and direct housing provision*

Moreland, Port Phillip, Fairfield, and Brisbane City Councils, have all contributed to community renewal projects in collaboration with social housing providers. An example is the "Cabramatta Housing Renewal Project", in Fairfield. This is a pilot scheme to promote urban renewal of the residential areas surrounding the Cabramatta town centre. The project is intended to include a range of social strategies as well as urban improvement initiatives involving the Department of Housing, PlanningNSW, WSROC and the University of Western Sydney. Some councils have been involved in joint ventures with social housing providers. Moreland council is currently undertaking three joint venture projects in partnership with community housing providers.

Port Phillip, and its predecessor, the City of St Kilda, has operated its own community housing program since 1985, and has the largest local government community housing program in Australia (Spivak 1999). The Council uses this program to demonstrate best practice in residential development and management, involving residents in the design of their housing, undertaking post occupancy evaluations of community housing, and incorporating sustainable design and public art as features of council funded community housing programs. The Council is also committed to developing community housing for special needs groups, including the Gay and Lesbian community, women, Kooris, and people of a non English speaking background (Port Phillip 1997).

In 2001, the Brisbane City Council joined the Queensland Department of Housing to form the Brisbane Housing Company. This is a not for profit company which aims to:

- Promote the relief of poverty by providing affordable housing to members of the community in need, including members of very low, low and moderate income households;
- Provide an alternative housing option to other social, community and private sector housing providers; and,
- Work with existing local communities, other service providers, charities and all spheres of government to develop an integrated, co-ordinated and cooperative approach to housing issues (Brisbane Housing Company Project Team 2002, p. 9).

The company is comprised of two principle shareholders (the Queensland Housing Commission, holding two shares, and the Brisbane City Council, holding one share<sup>8</sup>), as well as a minimum of 7 community shareholders from the private, community, and church sectors, as well as other institutions such as Trade Unions or local businesses. The structure facilitates state and local government collaboration, as well as the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including the Queensland Division of the planning institute, in the promotion and provision of affordable housing.

---

<sup>7</sup> ([www.brisbane-stories.powerup.com.au](http://www.brisbane-stories.powerup.com.au)).

<sup>8</sup> The financial structure for the company includes a \$50M contribution by the State government, in addition to their existing public housing commitment, as well as a commitment of \$10M by the Brisbane City Council, which is to be partly "in kind" through the allocation of staff and the provision of land (David Cant pers. com. 9/7/02). As a "not for profit" entity, the Company is not liable for the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

So far, a demonstration affordable housing project comprising 70 units has been completed in the suburb of Bowen Hills, and a number of projects including medium density apartments and a boarding house rehabilitation, have commenced or are planned at several sites around the inner city areas of Spring Hill and the West End. The company intends to achieve 600 units of affordable housing within its first four years of operation.

## **5.2 Opportunities to enhance the exercise of local government housing roles**

Participants in the study identified a number of opportunities to enhance the exercise of local government roles, although they also acknowledged significant constraints. Despite strong commitment amongst council staff, in many local government areas the perception that housing is purely a state and federal government responsibility, remains prevalent. This is a major barrier to councillors endorsing a more proactive approach to facilitating affordable housing. This is reinforced by negative resident attitudes towards public and affordable housing, which is viewed by many as introducing “undesirable” elements to the community and threatening property values. Community opposition to new social and affordable housing initiatives is a particular issue in Victoria, where a single objection can delay the planning approvals process.

### *5.2.1 Information, guidance, and comprehensive policy direction*

Many participants raised the difficulties of trying to implement a range of apparently contradictory planning objectives at the local level. A key dilemma was that in promoting urban consolidation goals, particularly higher density residential developments, land prices were likely to rise, and existing affordable housing opportunities, including older residential flats, and boarding houses, come under pressure for redevelopment. Similarly, many planners were conscious of the impact urban enhancement strategies, including design initiatives and streetscape improvements, on gentrification and the displacement of lower and middle income residents. At the same time, the need to address problems associated with sub standard housing and concentrations of social disadvantage was also recognised. Participants at the NSW focus groups expressed the need for more information, guidance, and comprehensive policy direction to assist them respond to these issues.

### *5.2.2 Support for a diversity of local government approaches*

Many participants to the NSW focus groups noted that the use of planning mechanisms to secure developer contributions for affordable housing is not feasible in middle and outer metropolitan areas where land values are lower. They expressed the need for assistance in developing other approaches to promoting and retaining affordable housing opportunities through their planning schemes. In Victoria, the high cost to local councils of amending planning instruments was identified as a barrier to the introduction of new planning mechanisms for affordable housing. It was suggested that the state government assist by clarifying and strengthening aspects of the Victorian planning framework to support a variety of approaches. Examples could include introducing a legal requirement for councils to consider the social impacts of development, and establishing a framework for negotiation with developers about affordable housing retention or financing.

### *5.2.3 Resourcing and collaboration*

Not surprisingly, those councils who have received state government assistance, or been able to leverage internal funds for housing initiatives, were the most active in fulfilling the range of housing roles described above. In this respect the Local Government Housing Initiatives Program in NSW, has been significant in resourcing a number of strategic local housing activities. However, in the majority of cases funding did not extend beyond the preparation of a study or plan. As in Queensland and Victoria, the lack of dedicated staff or resources to implement housing initiatives means they are often delayed or abandoned.

A further issue is the lack of council staff skilled in both housing policy and land use planning, able to work across the various sections of the organization. The need for skills development and training, particularly for strategic land use planners and assessment officers within local councils, was emphasised. In Victoria, there was strong support for the

“how to” kit recently developed by the MAV, and the value of a similar kit recognised by participants in Brisbane.

Many participants expressed the need for greater local government involvement in housing advisory committees and planning processes operating at state, regional, and local levels. A process for data sharing between local governments and state agencies was also suggested. The local government data sets prepared by the Queensland Department of Housing provide a good model for this process.

### **5.3 Learning from local experience**

This chapter has highlighted the range of housing roles and activities currently undertaken by metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. In many cases, these activities are extensive and diverse, ranging from the innovative use of planning mechanisms to promote and retain certain housing forms, through to the establishment of non profit housing companies to provide more affordable housing within a local area. However, a number of constraints limit the extent to which these activities may be carried out or replicated by other local councils, including unsupportive community attitudes, and a lack of appropriate data, information, and resources. Opportunities to enhance the exercise of local government housing roles include providing clearer policy advice and guidance, assistance in developing a range of approaches to addressing local housing problems, dedicated resources and training, as well as new processes for state and local government collaboration. A key issue emerging from the focus groups and the case study councils, is the need for a more comprehensive approach identifying and addressing local housing concerns. The following chapter examines more closely the use of local housing strategies as a methodology for achieving these objectives.

## 6 EVALUATING LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES

This chapter evaluates local housing strategy implementation in greater detail, with particular reference to the case study councils. The first part of the chapter gives an overview of local government experience in preparing local housing strategies, drawing on the focus group and interview data. The second section outlines the key elements of effective strategies identified by focus group participants and by representatives of the case study councils. The housing strategies of the case study councils are then examined against these criteria. In section four, implementation experiences of the councils are discussed.

### 6.1 Experience in housing strategy preparation

As shown in table seven, 13 of the 21 councils represented in the study have prepared local housing strategies. Of those councils without a housing strategy, eight intend to prepare one in the near future, or have drafts in preparation (the majority of these were in Victoria). Only one council represented in the study has no plans to prepare a formal housing strategy at this stage (Pine Rivers).

**Table Seven: Use of local housing strategies**

	<b>No.</b>
1. Have local housing strategy (or equivalent)	13
2. Have a local housing strategy but intend to revise it in the near future	5
3. Don't have local housing strategy, but intend to prepare one in near future	8
4. Don't have local housing strategy & don't intend to prepare one in near future	1
Total Councils*	21

\* NB: Multiple response possible with questions one and two, so total councils does not equal total of responses.

All of the strategies have been prepared since 1996 (table eight), and four NSW councils and one in Victoria are now intending to revise their documents.

**Table Eight: Local Housing Strategies prepared by participant councils (including draft strategies)**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>NAME OF STRATEGY</b>	
Bankstown City Council	Bankstown Housing Strategy	1997
Blacktown City Council	Blacktown Residential Development Strategy	1997
Brisbane City Council	(Draft) Affordable Housing Strategy (Draft) Response to Homelessness Strategy 2002-2006	
City of Port Phillip Council	City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy	1997
Fairfield City Council	Fairfield Council Residential Development Strategy	1996
Holroyd City Council	Holroyd Housing Strategy	1997
Liverpool City Council	Liverpool Housing Strategy	1996
Manningham City Council	Manningham Residential Strategy	2002
Marrickville Council	Marrickville Council Urban Strategy	1996
	Marrickville Housing Needs Study; Housing Affordability and Appropriateness in Marrickville	1998
Moreland City Council	Moreland Housing Strategy	1996
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Triple A Housing Strategy	2002

Parramatta City Council	(Draft) Residential Housing Strategies	
Randwick City Council	Randwick Accessibility and Affordability Study	1999
Redland Shire Council	(Draft) Aged and Special Needs Accommodation Housing Strategy	
Waverley Council	Waverly Housing Study	1999
Willoughby Shire Council	Willoughby City Housing Policy	1998

A number of reasons for preparing local housing strategies were identified by participants (table nine).

**Table Nine: Main reason for preparing local housing strategies**

	<b>No.</b>
Strong council commitment to housing issues	8
To comply with state planning requirement (NSW)	4
To identify mismatches in housing supply and demand	3
To understand current & future housing need in LGA	2
To provide a strategic basis for integrating housing policy within land use planning scheme	2
State government funding provided (LGHIP)	2
To manage impacts of gentrification on existing communities	1
To identify potential locations for future housing supply	1
Total Councils*	13

\* NB: Multiple responses possible, so total councils does not equal total of responses.

The most common reason put forward was strong local council commitment to addressing housing issues (eight councils). Only four councils (all from NSW), indicated that their strategy was prepared solely to comply with the state government planning policy requirement (SEPP 53). Another trigger for the preparation of housing strategies was the provision of state funding (under the NSW Local Government Initiatives Program). This shows that both a “carrot” and “stick” approach to encouraging and supporting local government involvement may be effective.

## 6.2 What makes an effective strategy?

Focus group and case study participants were invited to identify what they regarded to be the elements of an effective housing strategy. As many of the participants were housing or planning professionals, with substantial experience in developing and implementing strategic housing policies, their combined perspectives provided a useful basis for developing an evaluative criteria to guide the preparation of new strategies, or evaluate existing ones.

Three key elements of effective strategies were identified, relating to information and data sources, the content of the document, and the process for their preparation.

### 6.2.1 Information sources

Effective housing strategies draw on comprehensive and diverse data sets (demographic, cultural, housing market, housing characteristics, special needs, environmental considerations, infrastructure, services, future government intentions). They should also include details about the State / regional context. Information about planning constraints and opportunities (including locations for housing development, provisions in planning instruments, and major planning processes) should be identified. Information that can be used to indicate housing issues and plan performance (such as a simple set of housing indicators) should also be included in strategies. The use of commonly understood definitions and indicators of housing need was regarded important for future benchmarking and for achieving co-ordinated regional and state wide approaches, although none of the participants had developed these for their own local or regional areas.

### 6.2.2 Content of housing strategies

Participants emphasised the need for housing strategies to make a clear statement of Council's housing related roles, while providing a strategic basis for comprehensive approaches across the whole housing market. A diversity of intervention strategies, rather than a single approach, was advocated. Strategies should also be clearly linked to other council plans, particularly development control framework but also social plans and corporate documents. A practical implementation plan, as well as clear benchmarks and performance indicators were also regarded as important (if often overlooked) components of effective housing strategies.

### 6.2.3 Process for developing housing strategies

Many participants believed that the process of developing a housing strategy was particularly crucial – both to building support for its implementation, as well as in generating more widespread awareness about housing issues. Key strategies include ensuring that there is internal agreement within council about the approach, timeframe, and participants in the planning process, as well as widespread involvement of external stakeholders. In addition, there should be extensive resident consultation, including community committees or reference groups, as well as representatives of housing and development industries. As raised more broadly above, it is essential to ensure that this process and subsequent implementation phases are appropriately resourced. Not surprisingly, those councils with dedicated, continuing housing officers fared best in this regard.

## 6.3 Evaluation of case study housing strategies and initiatives

This section evaluates the housing strategies of four of the case study councils<sup>9</sup> (Fairfield, Marrickville, Moreland and Port Phillip). As discussed in chapter three, the analysis was tailored to each housing strategy, taking into account differing objectives, approaches, and sources of data. Although neither of the Queensland case study councils have local housing strategies in place, both have undertaken a number of initiatives relating to housing in recent years. These initiatives are also reviewed in this section. Drawing on the advice of focus group participants (presented above) and work contained in the recent Australian and international guides for preparing housing strategies (DTLGR 2002, Goss and Blackaby 1988, MAV 1999), a general criteria for evaluating the strategies was developed. As stated above, the criteria encompasses ten critical elements:

- Information - the extent, scope and appropriateness of information sources, and provisions to update strategies with new data;
- Vision - the stated aims and objectives of the strategies (including available evidence regarding whether or not these objectives are being achieved);
- Achievability - the actions or approaches contained within the strategies (and the extent to which these actions have been carried out);
- Collaboration - Evidence of, and provisions for, involvement of wide range of stakeholders in identifying and responding to housing issues;
- Sustainability – the extent to which the strategies encompass social, environmental, and economic dimensions of housing policy;
- Scale – appreciation of local, as well as regional, dimensions of housing;
- Appropriateness and diversity – a range of strategies appropriate for diverse housing needs;
- Monitoring and evaluation (and the results of any monitoring or evaluations conducted by councils); and,

---

<sup>9</sup> At the time the research was carried out, neither of the two Queensland case studies (Brisbane City and Redland Shire Councils) had formal housing strategies in place.

- Connectivity – the extent to which the strategy is linked to other local, regional, and state strategies and plans.

To evaluate the achievability and implementation of the strategies, data regarding changes to planning instruments (eg. changes in the objectives of the plans, residential rezonings, changes in merit criteria for assessment of residential development, developer contribution levies for affordable housing etc.), changed policies regarding development assessment, or the introduction of new planning instruments (such as development control plans), was sought. It was also anticipated that a range of housing data relevant to the stated objectives of the strategies could be analysed, including data relating to housing market trends, and social housing issues such as the provision, availability, and appropriateness of public, community and Aboriginal housing within the local government area. However, the study has found that in most cases, such data is neither maintained by councils nor linked explicitly to objectives or actions contained in their housing strategy.

#### *Fairfield City Council Residential Development Strategy*

Fairfield City Council prepared the *Fairfield City Council Residential Development Strategy 1996* to comply with the State Government's urban consolidation policy (SEPP 53). A range of existing data sources were used to identify housing issues (including demographic information, discussions with state agencies including City Rail, the Department of Education, and the Department of Housing, and the region's social housing assistance plan). The key housing issues identified in the strategy included:

- a shortage of affordable housing stock and public housing relative to housing need;
- the poor quality of much private rental accommodation, and,
- “crime, violence, isolation and stigmatisation” associated with the design and concentration of public housing estates” (p. 28).

However, the document contains very few strategies to address these issues, focussing instead on identifying sites for new multi-unit housing. In doing so, there is a commitment to selecting sites without high proportions of existing public housing, so that new public housing stock can be provided without intensifying problems of concentration. The planning framework was also analysed to identify opportunities to improve approvals processes, which could be interpreted as an attempt to reduce costs associated with development.

The strategy also failed to consider the environmental capacity of the Fairfield area, or the structure of urban form dictated by the traditional pattern of subdivision (long narrow lots intended for terrace housing, which were amalgamated and used for detached dwellings). These lots are now being developed as medium density housing in the form of villas and duplexes, increasing problems of urban run off, and even salinity, as well as inconsistent, piecemeal development. Furthermore, the higher density areas zoned near railway stations have failed to be utilised by developers, suggesting insufficient demand for this housing form (Sharon Finland, pers. com 7/11/02).

There were no provisions for monitoring or evaluating the original strategy. Based on the interviews and documentary analysis, the following outcomes have resulted:

- Rezoning of land for higher levels of residential development (although not much of this development capacity has actually been realised in priority locations surrounding urban centres and transport nodes);
- The recognition of housing needs and objectives in Fairfield Council corporate plans and strategies; and,
- The commencement of an intergovernmental process targeting poor quality residential areas of Cabramatta.

The Council now proposes to review its housing strategy in the light of a recently completed urban capability assessment.

### 6.3.1 Marrickville Council Urban Strategy 1996

Marrickville council also prepared its residential strategy to comply with the NSW State Government's urban consolidation policy (State Environmental Planning Policy 53). The strategy (*Marrickville Council Urban Strategy 1996*) identifies a range of housing needs within the area (based on existing sources of data), and aims to promote a mix of housing stock, develop "affordable and sustainable residential development", and "identify special needs groups that experience housing stress and formulate policy initiatives" to respond to their needs" (Box 1). In addition to identifying suitable locations for increased residential development, the document highlighted the need for further research on housing issues within the area.

This became one of the first initiatives arising from the strategy, and in 1997 the Council was funded under the Local Government Housing Initiatives Program (LGHIP) to prepare a housing needs study (*Marrickville Housing Needs Study; Housing Affordability and Appropriateness in Marrickville 1988*). Subsequently, the Marrickville Local Environmental Plan was amended to implement new residential zones (as anticipated under the residential strategy). The inclusion of objectives and decision making criteria relating to housing affordability, diversity and choice (ss 7(g), 63) as well as new provisions making boarding houses permissible in all residential zones, were also actions arising from the residential strategy and housing needs study.

Other initiatives undertaken by the Council in response to this strategic framework, include encouraging more environmentally sustainable residential development (through the *Energy Smart Water Wise Development Control Policy*); and promoting adaptable housing design through a development control plan (*Marrickville Council Equity of Access Development Control Plan*).

In the year 2000, the Council introduced a process for monitoring the performance of these initiatives through an annual report of key residential development indicators (*Analysis of Key Indicators of Approved Residential Developments in the Marrickville Council Area*). These include:

- General indicators of new residential dwellings, including the number of new multi-unit dwellings; the number of dwellings in residential conversion of a former industrial building; and the number of dwellings in mixed residential / commercial developments;
- Indicators on the energy and water efficiency of new residential dwelling houses, multi-unit developments, and alterations and additions to existing dwelling houses;
- "Social Housing" indicators, which are defined as "those development approvals which affect the ability of low cost accommodation and the equity of access for people with a disability" (p 8).

In the two year period, improvements in many of these indicators were recorded. For example, between 2000 and 2001:

- There was almost a fourfold increase in the number of residential alterations and additions, and substantial increases in the number of new dwellings that incorporated energy efficiency and water saving measures;
- There was a net increase of 53 boarding house bedrooms (although only 15 of these recorded in 2001);
- The number of new adaptable units created increased from 15 in 2000 to 40 in 2001.

The Council signalled its intention to undertake more initiatives in relation to affordable housing, following the release of the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 70 (Affordable Housing). However, the SEPP's failure to provide an overarching framework for local councils to promote affordable housing means that the Council will need to prepare a specific plan in line with the requirements of the SEPP if the mechanisms are to be used.



### 6.3.2 *City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy*

The City of Port Phillip has a long tradition of housing initiatives to address the social impacts of gentrification. These initiatives build on the activities of its predecessors, the former Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, and St. Kilda councils. In May 1997 the Council completed a comprehensive Housing Strategy (*City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy 1997*). The Strategy includes a detailed study of demographic trends, special housing needs, dwelling types and tenure (including detailed statistics on the number and size of rooming houses, and the rate of their decline), and special residential services; as well as a comprehensive analysis of State, Federal and municipal policy relating to housing.

The document contains strategies for private residential use and development, public housing, community housing, residential care, and home ownership. There are also particular strategies for supporting the continued operation, and new development of low cost accommodation options, such as private rooming houses. These strategies are diverse, and range from identifying potential investors, to identifying protocols for statutory planners to manage applications for boarding house redevelopment. A key mechanism for achieving this is incorporating social impact considerations within planning permit assessment processes. In addition, there is a commitment to trialing incentives to developers for investment in boarding houses, such as “rate holidays”, parking dispensation, fast tracking approvals, and reduced infrastructure contributions.

A number of housing indicators are identified to provide a basis for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and the need for intervention. These include:

- dwelling characteristics and trends;
- subdivision levels of residential flats;
- numbers of rooming houses;
- rooming house rates of decline;
- supported accommodation beds;
- numbers of social housing dwellings, and proportions of social housing as a total of dwelling stock;
- house purchase affordability;
- private rental vacancy rates; and,
- building permits (per month).

Updated data relating to this information is not currently available. However, a number of actions contained in the housing strategy have been implemented. These relate to the amendment of the planning scheme, strategies relating to the provision of new community housing units and demonstration projects, and strategies relating to the retention of boarding houses.

### 6.3.3 *Moreland Housing Strategy 1996*

The Moreland City Council regards its role in the housing sector as understanding and responding to housing needs and facilitating housing outcomes (Moreland City Council 1996). In 1996 the Council completed a housing strategy (the *Moreland Housing Strategy 1996*), which sought to implement these roles by:

- researching local housing needs;
- advocating and facilitating housing services;
- educating about housing needs;
- identifying appropriate sites for affordable housing,
- encouraging and facilitating pilot housing projects, including joint venture arrangements;
- streamlining development approvals processes;

- reviewing development controls to promote affordable housing; and,
- establishing a Moreland Housing Trust to finance local housing development.

A housing co-ordinator was appointed to progress these strategies, in 1997 the council dedicated \$1.5 million to be used as seed funding for affordable housing initiatives. Unfortunately, the process of council amalgamation, and a long period without a housing officer, meant that many of these initiatives were delayed. Nevertheless, in addition to the establishment of the trust fund to seed affordable housing projects, a number of the strategy's key initiatives have now been implemented, including:

- amendments to the planning scheme to recognise the need for affordable housing the identification of sites for affordable housing, including council owned land;
- the commencement of three joint ventures under the Social Housing Innovations Program (SHIP);
- education and advocacy initiatives, including the use of media releases, to inform the community about the need for new affordable housing; and,
- a \$2000 subsidy for "shop top" housing conversions.

The Council now intends to revise the 1996 strategy in line with the new directions identified in Melbourne 2030 (DOI 2002b)

#### 6.3.4 *Brisbane City Council housing initiatives*

Over the past decade, the Brisbane City Council has demonstrated strong commitment to housing issues. These include:

- jointly establishing the Brisbane Housing Company with the Queensland Department of Housing;
- introducing provisions to retain housing affordability within inner city local plans;
- negotiating affordable housing contributions through developer agreements;
- introducing measures to assist boarding houses comply with new fire and safety regulations; and,
- a range of projects dealing with homelessness.

All of these projects have been developed without the umbrella of an overarching housing strategy, showing that political leadership, dedicated financial and human resources, and state government collaboration are the critical ingredients for successful local housing initiatives.

#### 6.3.5 *Redland Shire Council housing strategies*

Housing initiatives undertaken by Redland Shire Council are limited in comparison to those of Brisbane City Council and the other case studies represented in this research. This is reflective of the generally low level of Queensland local government involvement in strategic housing policy activities to date. Indeed, like many Councils in Queensland, the Council appears to be actively trying to extricate itself from a role in the direct provision of housing.

However, the Council has demonstrated leadership in relation to housing for people with a disability and older persons housing. It has recently completed a draft housing strategy for aged and special needs accommodation (the *Draft Redland Shire Aged and Special Needs Accommodation Housing Strategy*), although this has not yet been released for public comment. Council staff developed the strategy with the assistance of the Physical Disability Council.

The Council has also facilitated a comprehensive and innovative community planning process (*Redland Shire Vision 2005 & Beyond*). In 1998, the Council invited several internationally renowned planning experts and academics, (including (then) Associate Professor Leonie Sandercock, Professor John Friedmann, Professor Peter Newman, and Professor Emeritus David Yencken) to participate in this process. The process identified a

lack of housing choice and diversity, and declining affordability as a significant issue within the shire. Actions identified to address these issues included a commitment to undertake a housing needs study, and to try to educate developers about the need for more diverse housing types.











































To date these actions have not been implemented, and, like the other housing strategies reviewed here, the community plan fails to include provisions for evaluating the implementation of these commitments. However, there is evidence that they have influenced the preparation of the new Redland planning scheme (being prepared to comply with the recently introduced *Integrated Planning Act 1997*). While a draft plan has not yet been completed, proposed residential development strategies to be encouraged through the new scheme include encouraging a range of housing styles and accommodation types, responding to life cycle housing needs; residential mix and a variety of lot sizes to “maintain affordability”; and, “specialised, innovative and community-based housing types” (Redlands Shire 2002, p. 25).


There are also plans to develop a code for caravan parks, recognising their role in the provision of affordable housing and housing for older persons. However, Council officers emphasised the difficulty of introducing more proactive affordable housing strategies, citing community concerns that the Shire already has high concentrations of public housing, and resistance to proposals that appear to threaten property values or change the existing “character” of the area.



## 6.4 Evaluation of the housing strategies

Table ten summarises the extent to which each of the strategies reviewed meets the evaluation criteria developed above<sup>10</sup>. As shown in the table, only the Port Phillip strategy addresses all of the criterion. None of the other strategies contain clear visions, although most contain a section detailing objectives or aims (box two). Many of the actions or strategies contained in the documents are too broad to be truly regarded “achievable”, and as noted above, evidence of strategy implementation is limited. However, in each case some initiatives identified in the strategies have been carried out. Furthermore, all strategies acknowledge environmental objectives associated with urban consolidation and energy efficient design, and Port Phillip and Marrickville councils have implemented these objectives to some degree.

**Table Ten: Evaluation of the housing strategies**

<b>CRITERION</b>	<b>MARRICKVILLE</b>	<b>FAIRFIELD</b>	<b>PORT PHILLIP</b>	<b>MORELAND</b>
Information	 		 	
Vision			 	
Achievability			 	
Collaboration			 	
Sustainability	 		 	 
Scale	 		 	
Appropriateness and diversity			 	
Monitoring and evaluation				
Connectivity	 	 	 	

 Criterion partially addressed in strategy

  Criterion well addressed in strategy

<sup>10</sup> As neither Brisbane City or Redland Shire councils have completed housing strategies in place, it was not possible to include them in this component of the evaluation.

Although all strategies were prepared in consultation with community stakeholders, provisions for ongoing collaboration were limited or absent in the majority of strategies reviewed. Two of the strategies fail to appreciate broader regional housing issues and their potential impact on local conditions. Similarly, three of the four documents failed to incorporate a range of strategies to address diverse housing needs. Provisions for monitoring the performance of the strategies are absent in most documents, and although Port Phillip identifies a range of housing indicators for this purpose, so far these have not been updated or evaluated. Finally, a strength of most strategies was their close connections with other council plans and policies, particularly land use and development control plans. Analysis of council documents prepared following the housing strategies also showed that housing strategies were recognised and referred to other corporate planning processes.

## **Box 2: Extracts from local housing strategies**

City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy, 1997

### **3.1 MISSION STATEMENT**

The fundamental purpose of the Housing Strategy is:

*'To provide housing diversity which contributes to the maintenance of social diversity, and to achieve this by the provision and facilitation of affordable, accessible and suitable housing which meets the needs of all groups within the community, in particular those which are disadvantaged within or unable to adequately access the housing market'. (p. 15)*

Marrickville Council Urban Strategy 1996

### **1.2 Aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of the Residential Strategy are:

- to promote a mix of housing stock capable of meeting the diverse and changing needs of the community of Marrickville
- to identify opportunities for the development of affordable and sustainable residential development and housing choice
- to improve the quality of living areas by understanding the needs of the local community through a process of effective community consultation
- to provide the community with comprehensive guidelines for residential development that is sympathetic to the character of the area and promotes good design practice
- to identify special needs groups that experience housing stress and formulate policy initiatives to provide for appropriate housing needs
- to identify local and regional housing groups and improve networks and partnerships which will enable appropriate housing outcomes for special groups (p. 4)

Fairfield City Council Residential Development Strategy 1996

### **WHAT IS FAIRFIELD CITY'S RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?**

Fairfield City's Residential Development Strategy involves two components. Firstly it proposes focusing all future housing in those areas which if developed will: -

- offer reasonable access to a variety of services;
- reinforce the viability of existing centres;
- reduce or limit the need for car usage;
- maximise use of existing infrastructure;
- ensure more effective expenditure of Section 94 Contributions;
- result in cohesive streetscapes and neighbourhoods with distinct character;
- are economical and practical for multi-unit housing;
- permit increased public housing without further concentration of such;
- buttress population in those areas in which it is declining;
- enable elderly residents to remain within their established neighbourhood and
- will provide for community certainty and hence a sense of trust between the public and Fairfield City Council.

Secondly the strategy aims to achieve a density of 15 dwellings per hectare in those residential areas outside the multi-unit housing nodes. (p. 74)

Moreland Housing Strategy 1996

### **4. What is Moreland City Council's Role in Housing?**

The role of local government in the housing sector is a matter of choice and evolution. Traditionally local government has been involved in housing issues indirectly and in an inconsistent way. A key purpose of this policy is to clearly state the extent and nature of Council's role in the housing sector. This policy supports an approach which develops the level of commitment and involvement of Moreland gradually so that skills and experience can be developed by Council staff, community acceptance and support can be gauged and fostered and Council's role monitored in the context of changes in the three spheres of Australian government. This does not suggest that Council will take over or substitute for the role of public housing provider which remains with State and Federal agencies and depends on revenue collected by the Commonwealth. (p. 5)

## 6.5 Implementation experience

One of the central research questions of this study was the extent to which the housing strategy model has proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives. The study revealed that, amongst the NSW and Victorian councils represented, those with comprehensive housing strategies also tended to have been the most active in pursuing a range of housing initiatives. Furthermore, the majority of councils with housing strategies in place believe the strategy has been at least partially implemented (table eleven).

**Table Eleven: Implementation Experience**

	<b>No.</b>
Strategy has been / is being effectively implemented	5
Strategy has been partially implemented	5
Strategy has not been implemented	3
Total Councils	13

The majority of participants in the study endorsed the development of local housing strategies regarding them important to establishing a strategic and comprehensive approach to housing need.

### 6.5.1 Implementation constraints and opportunities

However, several people identified significant weaknesses in their council's local housing strategies, and the need to review them, particularly in the state of NSW. The main weaknesses associated with individual plans relate to outdated and insufficient data, as well as a lack of resources or process for implementation. Other factors constraining implementation included a conflict with the intentions of the state housing authority asset strategy (which is often unavailable to local councils) and the lack of support and involvement by councillors.

A key issue for many was the lack of adequate financial resources to implement a strategy once it had been prepared. In the case of Marrickville Council, while funds were secured under the Local Government Housing Initiatives (LGHIP) program to undertake a study of housing need and potential response strategies, the lack of follow on funding meant that the recommendations of the strategy were not taken up. Similarly, the difficulty of identifying staff with the requisite range of skills in housing policy as well as physical planning, was frequently identified as a barrier to housing strategy implementation.

As with all local government housing initiatives, community and political support was critical to effective implementation. Participants called for State governments to assist them in counteracting negative perceptions of social and affordable housing projects as a way of overcoming community opposition. Furthermore, the uncertain legal framework for planning mechanisms which promote or retain affordable housing was raised by participants in each state as a barrier to achieving certain strategies. Others pointed to the lack of legal status of housing strategies themselves, although some councils address this by including explicit references to housing strategies through their planning schemes.

A critical factor influencing the success of housing strategies is the relationships between state and local governments, as well as between local councils and other social housing providers. In areas where strong relationships exist, such as Port Phillip in Victoria, and Brisbane City, notable achievements have been made. By contrast, councils who reported difficulty in securing state government support and assistance, or who were poorly linked with local housing providers, were also less likely to demonstrate successful housing initiatives. This suggests that defined *processes* for intergovernmental collaboration around local and regional housing objectives may be just as important as the existence of a strategic document to structure local government activities.

## **6.6 Summary and conclusions**

This chapter has documented local council experience in preparing and implementing local housing strategies. It shows that local housing strategies are an important tool for addressing defined housing need, and presents evidence that the majority of councils who have housing strategies have made some progress towards their implementation. Despite this, there are a number of weaknesses in the strategies reviewed. In particular, actions are poorly linked to defined objectives and priorities, and there are few provisions for monitoring and evaluation. Opportunities to overcome these issues relate to strengthening local capacity, building community and political support for housing policy intervention, and improving local and regional collaboration. These are discussed further in the final chapter.

## 7 SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN HOUSING

This chapter reviews the key findings of the study in relation to each research question. It then identifies four key approaches for supporting and enhancing the role of Australian local governments in housing: building expertise and knowledge, strengthening the planning and policy framework, enhancing housing strategy methodologies, and developing processes for enhanced local, regional and state collaboration. Future policy development and research priorities are identified in conclusion.

### 7.1 Review of research findings

The research findings indicate that metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria, currently undertake a variety of housing related roles, although in most cases there are opportunities to enhance and extend these activities. Those councils with local housing strategies have had some success in implementing particular actions or initiatives identified within them, although the impact of these activities on identified housing need is difficult to measure. There are a number of legislative, institutional, and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies, while factors contributing to success include dedicated financial and human resources, as well as strong support by local councillors. While all councils undertake consultation processes when developing new plans or strategies, ongoing processes for involving other local, regional, and state stakeholders / housing providers in the development and implementation of local housing strategies have been difficult to establish.

#### 7.1.1 *Housing Related Roles of Local Government*

What are the various housing related roles undertaken by metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria and how do these relate to their broader environmental responsibilities and agendas, particularly land use planning? What are the main opportunities to enhance the exercise of these roles?

- Metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria undertake a variety of housing related roles, extending from the identification of land and development controls for more diverse and environmentally sustainable housing types, through to directly providing low cost housing stock within their areas. However, of these, the greatest emphasis is on the physical planning process, including managing land supply and assessing development proposals. To a lesser degree all councils represented in the study also undertake information gathering, advocacy, and service co-ordination activities.
- Many of the councils involved in the study are innovative in their activities but it is rare to find the full spectrum of possible housing roles fully undertaken in any one council. Similarly, connections between the housing activities undertaken of local councils and their broader environmental responsibilities, including land use planning, are limited.
- There are significant differences in the housing related roles recognised by councils in each of the three states. These differences correlate to the policy and planning frameworks governing local government housing activities. In NSW, there is a longer history of state government initiatives to encourage and support local involvement in housing. These have resulted in demonstrable differences in the range of housing roles and activities undertaken by councils in Sydney in comparison to Brisbane and Melbourne.
- In Queensland, few councils recognise a role in relation to strategic housing policy or planning activities. Those councils that have undertaken housing policy initiatives have done so in relation to specific housing policy issues rather than developing a comprehensive response. Given the significant population pressures affecting South East Queensland, further work to encourage and support local government engagement in strategic housing policy and planning in this state is crucial.



- Many councils within and surrounding Melbourne demonstrate considerable commitment to developing and implementing a range of local housing initiatives. These have ranged from directly providing community housing through to the introduction of financial mechanisms to encourage the retention and promotion of diverse housing types. Many councils have also prepared, or are in the process of preparing, local housing strategies to guide these activities. However, state government support and resourcing (such as the kind provided to councils in NSW under the Local Government Housing Initiatives Program) is needed to sustain this momentum.

### 7.1.2 *Evaluating the Local Housing Strategy Model*

To what extent has the local housing strategy model proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives, and what characteristics define successful strategies?

- The local housing strategy model has proved an effective vehicle for local governments to address defined housing needs and objectives, as councils with comprehensive strategies were also the most active in pursuing a range of housing initiatives. However, information about the implementation of housing strategies is limited, due to the lack of defined or measurable objectives or indicators for performance monitoring.
- The primary constraints and opportunities associated with implementing local housing strategies include a lack of clear state housing policies, legal uncertainty and barriers to the use of local planning mechanisms, and political / community opposition to housing initiatives. There are also a range of internal issues within local government, including the extent to which local councillors support the strategy, sufficient resources and trained staff, and collaborative relationships with other service and housing providers at the local level.
- There is significant variation in the format and content of strategies reviewed, although these variations do not appear to have affected the extent to which the strategy has been used – a short and strategic document may be just as effective as a lengthy analysis and plan. Of the documents analysed, all included an adequate analysis of housing need, but most failed to link the actual strategies or actions to the overall objectives or to the highest priority issues. There was also a failure to identify indicators for performance monitoring or to establish a process for review.

### 7.1.3 Constraints and opportunities implementing local housing strategies

What are the primary legislative, institutional, and political constraints to the implementation of housing strategies, as well as the key factors contributing to success?

- Each of the states is characterised by different opportunities and constraints affecting the implementation of local housing strategies (table 12), although there are some commonalities, including the lack of clear state housing policies, legal uncertainty and barriers to the use of local planning mechanisms, and political / community opposition to housing initiatives.

**Table Twelve: Legislative, institutional, and political opportunities and constraints to implementing local housing strategies in NSW, Queensland and Victoria**

	OPPORTUNITIES	CONSTRAINTS
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning controls / provisions to promote diverse housing types</li> <li>• A legal framework to levy developer funds for affordable housing</li> <li>• Requirement that consent authorities consider the social impacts of development (S79C EPAA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisions are unflexible and unpopular</li> <li>Legal framework requires Councils to undertake their own statutory planning process to take advantage of provisions</li> <li>Better social impact assessment methodologies are needed to demonstrate the social impacts of various development types on housing outcomes.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State government funding for local housing initiatives</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A draft state planning policy for housing</li> </ul>	Lack of a recognised role for local government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision to include proactive strategies in planning schemes</li> </ul>	Lack of trained staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive review of local planning schemes currently underway</li> </ul>	Lack of council mandate to prepare strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State government assistance with data and analysis</li> </ul>	State planning framework does not explicitly recognise social issues associated with development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release of local government tool kit</li> </ul>	Lack of funding support for local housing initiatives
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metropolitan strategy endorses local government role</li> </ul>	Lack of funding support for local housing initiatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to integrate state housing objectives within local planning scheme</li> </ul>	Lack of trained staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to establish developer agreements in certain locations</li> </ul>	Community opposition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for joint venture social housing projects (SHIP)</li> </ul>	Weak statutory framework
VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for joint venture social housing projects (SHIP)</li> </ul>	Social impact assessment voluntary
		Developer contributions must be voluntary

- As shown in table 12, key opportunities in NSW include a relatively strong state planning framework which supports the use of planning controls / provisions to promote diverse housing types; as well as the availability of state government funding for local housing initiatives.
- In Queensland, opportunities include the preparation of a state planning policy for housing; and the willingness of the state government to assist councils with data monitoring and policy development. However, many local governments in Queensland remain unwilling to undertake a strong housing role.
- The recently released metropolitan strategy for Melbourne represents a significant opportunity to leverage local government involvement in housing policy and planning. Constraints in Victoria are the lack of funding or dedicated support for local housing initiatives, community opposition to social housing, and a relatively weak statutory framework.

#### 7.1.4 Role of Other Stakeholders

How do other local, regional, and state stakeholders / housing providers facilitate or constrain the development and implementation of local housing strategies within a whole of government approach to sustainable urban development?

- While all local housing strategies reviewed were developed through a process of community consultation, most have failed to provide a basis for ongoing collaboration between internal and external stakeholders at local, regional, and state levels. In particular, there are few examples of strong state / local government collaboration in developing and implementing local housing initiatives. There was also little evidence that private developers or low income resident groups (including private tenants), have been involved in the development or implementation of the housing strategies.
- Many council representatives expressed disappointment that they had been unable to build strong relationships with social housing providers, particularly in relation to issues such as data sharing and asset management planning. Those councils who were able to leverage collaborative relationships with other service and housing providers (particularly Port Phillip and Brisbane City Council) were also most successful in developing and implementing a diverse and innovative range of local housing initiatives.
- In each of the three states, and at the national level, local government representative associations have been critical in influencing the housing activities of councils. This has been achieved by articulating policy positions regarding the need for local governments to be involved in housing, in initiating training programs, and in sponsoring or contributing to local government housing resource kits.

## 7.2 Supporting and enhancing the role of local government

Priorities for supporting and enhancing the role of Australian local governments in housing are: building expertise and knowledge, strengthening the policy and planning framework, enhancing housing strategy methodologies, and developing processes for local, regional, and state collaboration.

### 7.2.1 Building expertise and knowledge

This study highlighted the need to develop housing policy expertise and awareness amongst local government professional staff, particularly strategic planners and those responsible for assessing development. The process of preparing or reviewing a local housing strategy provides an ideal opportunity to develop such skills. Therefore it is important for local housing strategies to be prepared “in house”, although external organizations / individuals could support this process, with an emphasis on training and capacity building within the organization itself.

Professional / continuing training programs to develop the housing policy skills of urban planners, and to ensure that housing professionals have a working understanding of the land use planning process, are needed in each state, and planning curricula should be enhanced to support an essential component on housing needs analysis and response. Disseminating examples of leading practice is also an important strategy for building expertise and knowledge amongst the sector, with many participants indicating that they had followed the lead of other councils in developing housing strategies and initiatives.

Standard data sets and performance indicators should be developed to support state and regional approaches to identifying, responding to, and monitoring housing issues. These can then be used by local councils in developing and monitoring their own housing strategies.

### 7.2.2 Strengthening the Policy and Planning Framework

It is necessary to develop and enable a range of mechanisms and policy responses for councils, and support them develop these tools to suit their particular contexts. Here, legal mechanisms for retaining, promoting, financing, or providing certain housing types are particularly critical. Options include:

- Supporting, clarifying and guiding the roles of local government through comprehensive state housing policies (such as the proposed Queensland State Planning Policy on housing);
- Articulating regional housing needs and priorities in metropolitan planning strategies and forums (as demonstrated by the recently released metropolitan strategy for Melbourne (“Melbourne 2030”));
- Including both “carrots” (eg. funding) and “sticks” (eg. regulation) to encourage local governments to undertake local housing strategies; and,
- Providing advice and enabling frameworks for negotiations with developers for contributions to the provision of affordable housing.

A regional housing co-ordinator position within state planning agencies, and a regional planning / urban development co-ordinator within social housing agencies, would provide ongoing support for these approaches.

### *7.2.3 Enhancing housing strategy methodologies*

As stated above, it is beneficial for housing strategies to be prepared by council staff, as a basis for developing and retaining the skills needed to support their implementation. However, it may be appropriate for councils to identify a housing co-ordinator position, responsible for managing the strategy’s preparation (including consultation processes), and subsequently, for establishing links across council, as well as external stakeholders. The co-ordinator could also be consulted on major planning proposals that may impact on particular groups in housing need. This model has been successfully introduced by Moreland Council, in Victoria.

Given the multiplicity of local government contexts, it is important not to enforce a “template” style for local housing strategies. However, standard definitions, data sets, and core performance indicators (which can be supplemented by local information), are important to develop regional approaches to housing need.

There is potential for the housing strategy methodology to expand to provide a basis for urban or neighbourhood renewal, by including issues such as health, education, training and the environment. Such an approach is anticipated by Fairfield City Council in NSW.

### *7.2.4 Processes for collaboration*

A consistent theme in this research has been the need to strengthen relationships between state housing and planning agencies, local governments, and the broader community. Options include:

- Engaging local councils in state and regional planning processes, particularly those relating to new residential development, infrastructure co-ordination, housing assistance, and resource allocation;
- Building community awareness and support for local governments’ role in strategic housing intervention;
- Utilising existing regional forums and planning processes as a basis for regional housing collaboration; and
- Establishing a process for data sharing between local governments and state agencies.

A regional housing co-ordinator to support state / local government data sharing and facilitate regional and local collaborations, such as the approach now being introduced under the NSW Local Government Housing Initiatives Program, could provide a model for emulation in other states. Such a position could also assist councils establish relationships with broader social housing sector in their areas, as well as with private developers and low income private tenants.

The current regional planning initiatives in NSW and Victoria, and changes to the state planning framework in Queensland, provide opportunities for state and local governments to enhance their housing relationships, and to integrate housing strategies within these broader planning processes.

### **7.3 Future policy development and research**

Through the process of conducting this study, several additional areas for future research and policy development emerged. In some cases these were identified as priorities by focus group or case study participants, others have arisen through the analysis of the present data. As discussed above, there is a need to develop performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for local housing outcomes. The study has also highlighted a need for more research on strategies for enhancing residential environments and achieving urban consolidation objectives, while protecting sources of low cost accommodation. Representatives of state government agencies, and of local government associations, identified the need for comparable research on housing activities undertaken by rural and regional councils in Australia, where social, economic, and institutional contexts are extremely diverse. Finally, as community opposition (perceived or actual) remains one of the key barriers to implementing proactive housing strategies, research on the factors influencing community attitudes and support is a priority.

### **7.4 Conclusions**

This study has reviewed the range of housing related roles currently undertaken by metropolitan councils in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Despite a widespread perception that local authorities are reluctant to undertake a proactive housing role (Paris 1990, 1993), many of the councils in this study have demonstrated significant innovation and leadership in addressing local housing needs. To date they have been largely unsupported in carrying out these activities, although the support that councils have received, particularly under the NSW Local Government Housing Initiatives Program, and the joint venture arrangements established in Queensland and Victoria, has resulted in a number of demonstrated outcomes. There is now an unprecedented opportunity to review existing and prepare new local housing strategies, as part of a broader policy movement away from traditional forms of housing assistance towards more collaborative, system wide approaches to sustainable urban development.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, G & Hine, M 1999, "Local Environmental Policy Making in Australia", in Walker, K J & Crowley, K (eds), *Australian Environmental Policy 2 Studies in Decline and Devolution*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Adelaide City Council 2002, *What sort of goods are neighbours? Social mix and a sustainable residential community in Adelaide*, A 'Green Paper' for the City Living Summit, Adelaide, 26 February 2002.
- Australian Local Government Association 1994 *National Local Government Housing Policy: Discussion Paper*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- Badcock, Blair 2001, *Thirty Years on: Gentrification and Class Changeover in Adelaide's Inner Suburbs* *Urban Studies*, August 2000, p. 1559.
- BBC Consulting Planners 1995, *Towards a National Local Government Housing Strategy*, prepared for Australian Local Government Association, ACT.
- Beately, T 1995, "Planning and Sustainability: The Elements of a New (Improved?) Paradigm", *Journal of Planning Literature*, vol. 9, no .4, pp. 383 – 395.
- Beatley, T. & Manning K 1997, *The Ecology of Place Planning for Environment, Economy and Community*, Island Press, Washington.
- Bell, C 2002, "Workforce Housing: The New Economic Imperative?", *Housing Facts and Findings*, Fannie Mae Foundation, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2002, pp. 3-4.
- Beyer, G H 1965 *Housing And Society*, Macmillan, New York,
- Beyer, G H 1965 *Housing And Society*, Macmillan, New York.
- Bonnes, M 1998 "The Ecological – Global Shift, Environmental Sustainability and the "Shifting Balances", in Teklenburg, J, van Anandel, J, Smeets, J & Seidel, A (eds), *Shifting Balances Changing Roles in Policy, Research and Design*, EIRASS, The Netherlands.
- Brugman, Jeb 1996 "Planning for Sustainability at the Local Government Level", *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 1996;16: p363-379, Elsevier Science, New York.
- Burton E, 2000, "The potential of the compact city for promoting social equity", in Williams K, Burton E, Jenks M 2000, *Achieving Sustainable Urban Form, An Introduction*, Routledge, New York.
- City of Melbourne 1997, *A Liveable City: A Social Housing Strategy for the City of Melbourne*.
- City of Port Phillip 1995, *The Evolution of the City of Port Phillip Housing Program*.
- City of Port Phillip 1997, *City of Port Phillip, Municipal Housing Strategy*, May 1997.
- City of Port Phillip 2000, *City of Port Phillip, Community Housing Program: Towards 2005*, November 2000.
- City of Port Phillip 2002, *2001/2002 Annual Report* .
- Cohen, J 2001, "Abandoned Housing: Exploring Lessons from Baltimore", *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 12, Issue 3, pp. 415 – 448.
- Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories 1996, *The National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity*, CDEST, Canberra.
- Commonwealth of Australia 1992, *National Housing Strategy Agenda for Action*, Australian Government Publisher, Canberra.
- Connellan, J 1996, "Local Government Redefines Its Role In Housing", *Urban Policy And Research*, Vol 14 No 2 p144-149.
- Cox, G & Meirs, S 1998, *Retention of Low Cost Housing: Options for State and Local Governments*, Shelter NSW, January 1998, Australia.

Crook, AD 1996, "Affordable housing and planning gain, linkage fees and the rational nexus: using the land use planning system in England and the USA to deliver housing subsidies", *International Planning Studies*, Vol. 1, 1, 1996, p49-71.

CSIRO 2001, *Australian State of the Environment Report 2001: Human Settlements*, CSIRO Publications, Melbourne.

Cullingworth, J B 1960, *Housing Needs and Housing Policy*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Davidson, Vicky 1987, *Local Government and Housing in Victoria: A Review*, Municipal Association of Victoria, Victoria.

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions 2002, *Effective housing strategies and Plans: Housing Strategies*, United Kingdom.

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and Department for Social Security 2000, *Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All*, United Kingdom.

Department of Human Services 2001, *Annual Report 2000-2001*.

Department of Human Services, Office of Housing 2001, *Summary of Housing Assistance Programs 1999-00*, January 2001.

Department of Human Services, Office of Housing 2002, *Rental Report, March 2002*.

Department of Infrastructure (DOI) 2001, *Housing Past Housing Futures, Technical Report 4, Planning Melbourne for the 21st Century*, Melbourne.

Department of Infrastructure 2000, *Housing Ourselves: The Story behind Housing in Victoria*, Background Paper, June 2000.

Department of Infrastructure 2002a, *List of Local Planning Policies in Victoria*, Victoria.

Department of Infrastructure 2002b, *Melbourne 2030; Planning for Sustainable Growth*.

Department of Infrastructure 2002c, *Metropolitan Strategy: A Vision for Melbourne*, Key Findings Report, [www.doi.vic.gov.au/DOI/Internet/planning.nsf](http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/DOI/Internet/planning.nsf), (accessed online 22/8/02).

Department of the Environment 1996, *Planning and Affordable Housing*, Circular from Department of the Environment, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1996, London.

Department of Transport and Regional Services 2001, "Strategic Land Use Planning Underpinning Local Government Planning and Development Assessment Systems and Processes", discussion paper prepared for the Development Assessment Forum, [online] ([www.dat.gov.au/wa-main.html](http://www.dat.gov.au/wa-main.html)) May 2001, DTRS, Morris Consultants, Canberra.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) 2001a, *Planfirst Review of plan making in NSW White Paper*, DUAP, Sydney.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) 2001b, *Sustainable Urban Settlement, Guidelines for Regional NSW*, DUAP, Sydney.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1998, *Shaping Our Cities: The planning strategy for the greater metropolitan region of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast*, December 1998.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001c, *Better Rural Residential Development*, DUAP, Sydney.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001d, *NSW Regional Alpine Strategy*, DUAP, Sydney

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and Office of Housing Policy 1996, *Local Government Housing Information Kit*, New South Wales.

Dixon, F. 1989, *The Concept of Sustainability: Origins, Extensions and Usefulness for Policy*, Division Working Paper, No. 1, World Bank Environment Division, Washington DC.

Doling, John 1997, *Comparative Housing Policy: Government and Housing in Advanced Industrialized Countries*, St Martin's Press, New York.

- Dominish, L 2001, *The 'too hard basket'? The struggle for local government to acquire affordable rental housing in Sydney*, Unpublished Honours Thesis, University of New South Wales.
- Ducker, R and Owens, D 2000, "A Smart Growth Toolbox for Local Governments", *Popular Government*, Fall 2000.
- Dunn, K, & Thompson, S, et al 2001, "Multicultural Policy within Local Government in Australia", *Urban Studies*, Vol 38, No. 13, 2477-2494.
- Ecoconsult (Australia) PTY LTD, 1992 *The National Housing Strategy; Housing Information Study*, Australia.
- Fairfield City Council 1996, *Residential Development Strategy*, December 1996.
- Fairfield City Council 2000, *Fairfield Community Profile 2000*, Chapter 10 Housing.
- Fairfield City Council 2001, *Narrow Lot Development: Rules and Guidelines*.
- Fairfield City Council 2002a, *2002 Annual Report*.
- Fairfield City Council 2002b, *Management Plan 2002/03 - 2004/05*.
- Fannie Mae Foundation 1999, "Downtown Housing as an Urban Redevelopment Tool: Hype or Hope?" *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol 10, Issue 2.
- Gleeson, B & Low, N 2000, *Australian Urban Planning New Challenges, New Agendas*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Goss, Sue & Blackaby, Bob 1998, *Designing Local Housing Strategies: A Good Practice Guide*, Chartered Institute of Housing and Local Government Association, May 1998.
- Gurran 2001, *Sustainable Territories, Communities and National Parks in New South Wales*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2001.
- Hall L, Bishop M 1999 "The Moral High Ground. Hard Times, Hard Planning", Congress Paper, Royal Australian Planning Institute, 27<sup>th</sup> National Congress, 19-22<sup>nd</sup> September 1999.
- Harding, R (ed.) 1998, *Environmental Decision-making*, The Federation Press, Sydney.
- Harrison, Malcolm 1998 "Minority ethnic housing associations and local housing strategies; An uncertain future?" *Local Government Studies*, Spring 1998, vol 24, One, p74-89.
- Heath, T 2002 "Residents rally to save park" *Coburg Moreland Leader*, November 4, 2002.
- HousingNSW 2002 *Rent and Sales Report*, June Quarter 2002 (No. 60).
- Howe, Brian 1999 "Local Government and Housing", *Parity*, Vol 12, 5, p5.
- Huttman, Elizabeth & Van Vliet, Willem 1988, *Handbook of Housing and the Built Environment in the United States*, Greenwood Press, New York.
- Jacobs, Keith 1999, *The Dynamics of Local Housing Policy; A Study of Council Housing Renewal in the London Borough of Hackney*, School of the Built Environment, University of Westminster, Ashgate Publishing.
- Jones, E, Leach, M & Wade, J 2000 Local Policies for DSM: the UK's home energy conservation act, *Energy policy*, Vol. 28, 3, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000, p201-211.
- Lafferty, W 1996, "The Politics of Sustainable Development: Global Norms for National Implementation", in Dryzek, J & Scholsberg D (eds) 1998, *Debating the Earth, The Environmental Politics Reader*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Lawson J 1994, *Australian Local Government Housing Survey*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Canberra.
- Lawson, J 1995, *Low cost housing opportunities: Case studies from the US and Canada*, AHURI Research Report, Australia
- Local Government and Shires Association 1996, *The housing activity of Local Government in NSW*, New South Wales



- Local Government and Shires Association 1996, *The housing activity of Local Government in NSW*, New South Wales.
- Local Government and Shires Association 1997a, *Adaptable Housing and Local Government*, July 1997, New South Wales.
- Local Government and Shires Association 1997b, *Homelessness, Housing and Local Government* October 1997, New South Wales.
- Local Government and Shires Association 1998, *Planning Tools to Improve Local Housing Outcomes, Seminar Notes*, Friday May 8 1998, New South Wales.
- Local Government and Shires Association 2001a, *Local Government Model Policy on Homelessness*, New South Wales.
- Local Government and Shires Association 2001b, *What Type of Housing Should NSW Local Government be encouraging? Discussion paper*, New South Wales.
- Maclennan, Duncan 1998, *Missing Links: the economy, cities and housing*, National Housing Federation, April 1998, London.
- Maclennan, Duncan 2001, *Putting Housing In Its Place A Vision For The Future*, National Housing Conference, Brisbane, Australia October 2001.
- Malpass, P 1992, "Housing policy and disabling of local authorities", in Birchall, J 1992, *Housing Policy in the 1990s*, Routledge, London.
- Marcuse, Peter 1990, "United States of America" in Van Vliet, Willem (1990) *International Handbook of Housing Policies and Practices*. Greenwood press, USA.
- Marrickville Council 1996, *Urban Strategy, 1996*.
- Marrickville Council 1998, *Marrickville Housing Needs Study: Housing affordability and appropriateness in Marrickville*, April 1998.
- Marrickville Council 2001, *Marrickville Local Environmental Plan 2001*.
- Marrickville Council 2002a, *Analysis of Key Indicators of Approved Residential Developments in the Marrickville Council Area 2001*, Report by Development and Environmental Services Division, May 2002.
- Marrickville Council 2002b, *Memorandum: Review of current boarding house controls*, 15th April 2002.
- Marrickville Council Library Services 1997, *Census 1996 News: Housing*.
- Mercer, D and Jotkowitz, B 2000, "Local Agenda 21 and Barriers to Sustainability at the Local Government Level In Victoria, Australia". *Australian Geographer*, July 2000, Sydney.
- Minnery, J 1992, *Urban form and development strategies: equity, environmental and economic implications*, The National Housing Strategy Background Paper 7, Commonwealth of Australia, 1992.
- Monro, Dugald 1997-98, *Public Rental Housing Policy: Lessons Learned from Overseas, Research Paper 6, Social Policy Group*, Australian Parliamentary Library, Australia.
- Moreland City Council 1996, *Moreland Housing Strategy*, Adopted 27th May 1996.
- Moreland City Council 2002a, *Annual Report 2002: Working in Partnership*.
- Moreland City Council 2002b, *Council Plan 2002–2005: Valuing Diversity; Improving Our Community*.
- Morgan and Talbot 2000, "Sustainable Social Housing for no extra cost?", in Williams K, Burton E, Jenks M 2000, *Achieving Sustainable Urban Form, An Introduction*, Routledge, New York.
- Morrison, Nicola 1996, *Securing Affordable Housing Through The Planning System*, Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom.

- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) 1999, *Housing: Your Basic Infrastructure*, Institute for Social research, Swinburne Institute of Technology, November 1999, Victoria.
- Nenno M and Brophy B 1982, *Housing and Local Government*, International City Municipal Association, Washington.
- Newman, K and Ashton, P 2002, "The 'New' Gentrification; Housing Policy, Local Politics, and Neighbourhood Change in Newark", Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Baltimore.
- Newton P 2000, "Housing Form, Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emmissions", in Williams K, Burton E, Jenks M 2000, *Achieving Sustainable Urban Form, An Introduction*, Routledge, New York.
- Newton P, 2002, "Urban Australia 2001", *Australian Planner*, Vol 39, No. 1 2002.
- Nicol, Chris 1998, "Collaboration and Coordination in Local Government: lessons from practice in housing and planning departments", *Local Government Studies*, Autumn 1998, Vol 24, 3 p. 51-66.
- NSW Department of Housing 1986, *Local Housing Research Kit*, Prepared by Economic and Planning Impact Consultants, Sydney.
- NSW Premiers Department 2002, *2002/2003 New South Wales Budget Commentary on the Housing Assistance Program*, June 2002.
- NSW State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70, *Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes)*, Commenced 1 June 2002.
- Office of Local Government 1991, *Local Housing Action: an overview and guide to good practices*, Office of Local Government, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, United Kingdom.
- Paris, C 1990 "Local Government, The State, and Housing Provision – Lessons from Australia", *Government and Housing – Developments in Seven Countries*, Vol 36 Urban Affairs Annual Reviews, United Kingdom.
- Paris, Chris 1993 *Housing Australia*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne, Australia.
- Peterson, B 2002, "The Faces of Homelessness Prompt a Call to Action in Indianapolis", *Housing Facts and Findings*, Fannie Mae Foundation, Vol. 4, No. 5, 2002, p 2.
- Planning NSW 2002, Boarding House Financial Assistance Program - Info Sheet [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/housing.html](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/housing.html) (accessed online 12/6/02)
- Prahran Malvern Community Housing Incorporated 1993, *Prahran Local Housing Strategy*, Prahran Malvern Community Housing Incorporated, Victoria.
- Priemus 1998, "Contradictions between Dutch Housing Policy and Spatial Planning", *Social and Geographie*, Vol 89, Issue 1, pp.31 – 43.
- Property Council of Australia, *Affordable Housing and the Development Industry: Position Paper*, Prepared by Scott Carver for PCA, December 1999.
- Purdon and Associates, Burke T 1991, *Local Government Role in Housing*, Office of Local Government, Canberra Australia.
- Purdon C and Burke T 1991, *Local Government and Housing, Background Paper 6 (Australian National Housing Strategy)*, Australian Government Publisher, Canberra.
- Queensland Department of Housing (QDOH) 2001, "Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities", Fact Sheet, accessed online@ [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au), June 11 2002.
- Queensland Department of Housing 2002a *Affordable Housing, Residential Development and Community Wellbeing*, Proposed Legislative Framework and State Planning Policy – Discussion Paper, Department of Housing, April 2002.
- Queensland Department of Housing 2002b, *Queensland State Planning Policy for Affordable Housing* - Discussion Paper, Department of Housing, May 2002.

- Randolph, B & Holloway, D 2002 *The Anatomy of Housing Stress in Sydney*, Urban Frontiers program Research Paper Nb. 6, January 2002. University of Western Sydney, New South Wales.
- Redland Shire Council 1996, *Corporate Plan 1996-2001: Reshaping Council*.
- Redland Shire Council 1998a, *Strategic Plan 1998*.
- Redland Shire Council 1998b, *Town Planning Scheme*.
- Redland Shire Council 2001, *Redland Shire Community Plan: Vision 2005 and Beyond*, June 2001 (Amended Edition).
- Redland Shire Council 2002a, *Community and Social Development Fact Sheet*.
- Redland Shire Council 2002b, *Corporate Plan 2002-2006: Council Strategic Direction and Priorities*.
- Redland Shire Council 2002c, *Residential Development Fact Sheet*.
- Redland Shire Council 2002d, *Statement of Proposals: Balancing Growth and Lifestyle in the Redlands*, May 2002.
- Roman, N 2002, "Why America Can End Homelessness in Ten Years", *Housing Facts and Findings*, Fannie Mae Foundation, Vol. 4, No. 5, 2002, pp 3 - 7.
- Royal Australian Planning Institute (RAPI) 2000, *Liveable Communities: A National Agenda*, RAPI Canberra.
- Smith, Stephanie 1997, *Pursuing Housing Objectives within Local Government Workshop Notes*, Local Government and Shires Association, 11 March 1997, New South Wales.
- Smith, Stephanie 1998, *Planning for Affordable Housing in England*, Local Government and Shires Association, New South Wales.
- South East Queensland Regional Planning Advisory Group 2001, *South East Queensland – Regional Framework for Growth Management*, 2001.
- Spivak, G 1999, "Achieving Real Choice in Housing in Port Phillip", *Victorian Planning News*, Sept. 1999, p4.
- Spivak, G 2000, *Sharing the Responsibility: The Role of Developer Contributions and Non-Profit Developers in the Provision of Lower Income Housing in California and its Implications for Victoria*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Swinburne University of Technology.
- Spivak, G 2002, "Port Phillip Building Recycling: Linking Historic Building Recycling with Community Housing- A Local Government Experience", *Trust News*, February 2002, p22-23.
- Stilwell, F and Troy, P 2000, "Multi Level Governance and Urban Development in Australia", *Urban Studies*, May 2000, p909.
- Taub, T 1990, "The future of affordable housing: Committee on Housing and affordable development", *The Urban Lawyer*, Vol..22, 4, 659-692.
- Taylor, N 1998, *Urban Planning Theory Since 1945*, Sage, London.
- UN-Habitat 1996, *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*, United Nations Human Settlement Program, Istanbul.
- UN-Habitat 2002, *The Role of Cities in National and International Development*, World Urban Forum, Nairobi.
- United Kingdom Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2000, *Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3: Housing*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2000, United Kingdom.
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2002, *Planning to Meet Local Housing Needs: The Role of HUD's Consolidated Planning Requirements in the 1990s, Final Report*, December 2002, The Urban Institute, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Centre, Washington.

Verhage, Roelof 2002, *Local Policy for Housing Development: European Experiences*, Ashgate, Hampshire, United Kingdom.

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils 1998, *WSROC Regional Housing project, Incorporating Local Housing Strategies*, May 1998, New South Wales.

Williams 2000, "Does intensifying cities make them more sustainable?" in Williams K, Burton E, Jenks M 2000, *Achieving Sustainable Urban Form, An Introduction*, Routledge, New York.

Williams K, Burton E, Jenks M 2000, *Achieving Sustainable Urban Form, An Introduction*, Routledge, New York.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987, *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press, New York.

## **ATTACHMENT ONE: LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

### **NSW**

Ms Stephanie Smith, Housing Policy Officer, NSW Local Government and Shires Association, 31/5/02

Ms Helen O'Loughlin, PlanningNSW, 5/6/02

Ms Jenny Norman, Policy and Strategy Directorate, NSW Department of Housing, 12/6/02

Mr Vince Connell, Manager Planning Services, Marrickville Council, 6/9/02

Ms Sharon Fingland, Strategic Planning, Fairfield City Council, 6/11/02

### **Queensland**

Mr David Cant, Project Manager, Brisbane Housing Company, Queensland Department of Housing, 9/7/02

Ms Olwyn Redshaw, Manager, Affordable Housing, Public Housing and Housing System Initiatives, Queensland Department of Housing, 9/7/02

Mr Jon Eastgate, Senior Project Officer, Housing and Social Diversity, Community and Lifestyle, Brisbane City Council, 10/7/02

Mr Neil Wilson, Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning, 10/7/02

Ms Lacey Thomson, Strategic Land Use Planning Advisor, Redland Shire Council, 11/7/02

Mr Mark Powney, Strategic Land Use Planning Advisor, Redland Shire Council, 11/7/02

Ms Desley Renton, Youth Policy Officer Planning and Research Branch, Local Government Association of Queensland Inc., 10/7/02

Mr David Mephram, Policy Liaison Officer, Community Policy Committee, Brisbane City Council, 10/7/02

Mr Jeremy Sollars, Policy Liaison Officer, Urban Planning Committee, Brisbane City Council, 10/7/02

### **Victoria**

Gary Spivak, Housing Development Officer, Port Philip City Council, 14/11/02

Anne Gardner, Residential Development Coordinator, Moreland City Council, 12/11/02

## **ATTACHMENT TWO: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

### **New South Wales Focus Group (University of Sydney, 28/6/02)**

Mr Mauricio Tapia, Senior Strategic Planner, Bankstown City Council  
Ms Stacey Quayle, Executive Strategic Planner, Blacktown City Council  
Ms Meryl Bishop, Manager City Planning, Botany Bay City Council  
Ms Sharon Fingland Program Manger, Accessible Cities, Fairfield City Council  
Mr Karu Wijaysinghe Strategic Planning, Holroyd City Council  
Mr Peter Prants, Community Projects Officer, Holroyd City Council  
Mr Milan Marecic, Urban Release Coordinator, Liverpool City Council  
Mr Barry Millwood, Principal Planner, Section 94, Liverpool City Council  
Ms Stephanie Smith, Housing Policy Officer, Local Government and Shires Association  
Ms Sue Ladd, Social Planner, Manly Council  
Ms Robin Eisermann Project Officer – Urban Design Planning, Parramatta City Council  
Ms Vanessa Whithington, Social Planner, Randwick City Council  
Ms Judy Stubbs, RMIT  
Ms Connie Lau, Strategic Planner (Social), Waverley Council  
Ms Lara Dominish, Housing Policy Officer, Willoughby Shire Council

### **Queensland Focus Group (AHURI Research Centre, QUT, 8/7/02)**

Ms Vanessa Berry, Planning Officer, Pine Rivers Shire Council  
Mr, Tim Skinner, Senior Housing Analyst, Affordable Housing Unit, Public Housing and Housing System Initiatives, Queensland Department of Housing  
Mr Mike Myers, Executive Director, Queensland Community Housing Coalition

### **Victorian Focus Group (AHURI Research Centre, RMIT, 1/7/02)**

Ms Anna Kijowska, Social Planner, City of Casey  
Ms Gabrielle O'Holloran, Strategic Planner, Manningham City Council  
Ms Anne Gardner, Residential Development Co-ordinator, Moreland City Council  
Ms Jenny McAffer, Social Planner, Mornington Peninsula  
Ms Ruth Spielman, Community Services Director, Whittlesea City Council  
Mr Kristian Hansen, Project Officer - Land Use Strategy, Shire of Yarra Ranges  
Ms Claire Hargreaves, Policy Analyst, Social & Cultural Policy, Municipal Association of Victoria  
Dr David Batten, Manager Housing Research, Department of Human Services, Office of Housing, Policy & Strategy  
Ms Denise Thorson, Project Officer, Metropolitan Strategy Team, Department of Infrastructure

## **AHURI Research Centres**

Sydney Research Centre  
UNSW-UWS Research Centre  
RMIT NATSEM Research Centre  
Swinburne-Monash Research Centre  
Queensland Research Centre  
Western Australia Research Centre  
Southern Research Centre

## **Affiliates**

Northern Territory University  
National Community Housing Forum



Australian Housing  
and Urban Research Institute

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute  
Level 7 20 Queen Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Phone +61 3 9613 5400 Fax +61 3 9629 8536  
Email [information@ahuri.edu.au](mailto:information@ahuri.edu.au) Web [www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)