Final Report

A critical review of evidence-based policy making

authored by

Lisel O'Dwyer

for the

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

Southern Research Centre

May 2004

AHURI Final Report No. 58

ISSN: 1834-7223

ISBN: 1 920941 25 8

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This material was produced with funding from the Australian Government and the Australian States and Territories. AHURI Ltd gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from the Australian, 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.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been increasing interest in Australia over the last two or three years in what has become known as “evidence-based policymaking”. This interest has stemmed from new policy developments in the UK, heralded by the Blair Labor Government. The British Government has been inspired by the international success of the evidence-based approach to health care and is keen to apply a similar approach to the public policy arena. At surface level at least, this appears to be a welcome change both in terms of improving public policy and for social science to make direct and meaningful contributions to policy making. A small number of Australian academicians and policy makers working in education, criminology and social work have begun to examine what is occurring in the UK and also the USA but housing and urban studies has been slower to contribute to the new debates. Could this be because Australian housing studies has not provided a sufficient evidence base for policy development? Is it related more to the policy process itself, or is there a problem in the production and transfer of research evidence? Why are we asking these questions now? This literature review attempts to address these questions by exploring the relevant literature. The review is based on the guidelines produced by the Campbell Collaboration and the Cochrane Collaboration. The review protocol (O'Dwyer 2003a) is available at www.ahuri.edu.au/. The focus of the Final Review is on examining evidence-based policy *per se* and determining its value and relevance for Australian housing policy and research. The research question is:

What is evidence-based policy making and how can it inform the making of Australian public policy, particularly housing policy?

The review has the following objectives:

- To show how evidence-based policy is distinct from other policy;
- To describe how it is formulated and developed;
- To show how the outcomes of academic research are communicated to policy makers;
- To report how policy makers receive and interpret the outcomes of specific types of research;
- To find why evidence-based policy has become prominent in a range of portfolios in other countries, but is largely restricted to health in Australia.

The material under review is largely of a conceptual or theoretical nature rather than empirical research and so the review itself is an amalgamation of the strengths of the narrative review and the systematic review formats. Reviews of the individual papers are presented in Appendices C and D.

Evidence-based public policy is based on research that has undergone some form of quality assurance and scrutiny. This distinguishes it from public policy based on more conventional policy development processes where intuitive appeal, tradition, politics, or the extension of existing practice may set the policy agenda. the assumption that evidence itself is a good thing, that it is meaningful, reliable and trustworthy. A difficulty is that in the social sciences in particular, interpretations of the strength and quality of evidence are fraught with disagreement. Even where there is consensus, the best available evidence may not meet the agreed standard. This has been a major topic of debate although progress has been made toward developing methods of assessing the quality of different types of evidence. the literature is supportive of an evidence-based approach, while those papers that take a more cautious or even negative position draw attention to potential pitfalls that can generally be remedied. The quality of the pro-evidence based policy literature also appears to be higher than that of the more critical papers. Much of the literature on evidence based policy making is located in the “grey

literature". While it may not be peer reviewed, this material is often highly relevant, high quality, up to date and less restricted in content and sentiment as more formal literature may be. Most of the existing recent literature is British.

A key theme is that there are many factors influencing policy making, but this does not mean we should not bother trying to improve the process and its elements. Evidence-based policy making shares many of the features of "ordinary" or traditional policy making but has a number of distinct characteristics. Four basic assumptions are that:

- evidence based policy is a meaningful concept;
- evidence should be available to policy-makers;
- evidence can be interpreted and used to inform policy development;
- policies based on evidence are better than policies that are not based on evidence. (after Reid 2003).

However, evidence may not even be the most important influence on policy. Other factors include:

- Prevailing public opinion;
- Organizational culture
- Incompatible timeframes in policy making and research
- Values and ideology of both researchers and policy makers
- Control of power
- Political goals
- How far new evidence departs from established or accepted knowledge
- How easy it is to change a policy in light of new evidence

It is not solely the use of evidence but the type of evidence used that is important.

There is actually no real evidence that evidence-based policy making is better than "traditional" policymaking. The recency of the evidence-based policy approach, combined with the lengthy timeframes required for most public policies to take effect, and then to be evaluated, can explain this paradox. Meanwhile, the weight and strength of the papers supporting evidence-based policy making suggest that it is at least as effective and beneficial as current policy making methods, and superior at best. There are broadly three types of policy fields which make different uses of evidence and research:

- Stable policy fields (areas where knowledge is reasonably settled; theoretical foundations are strong; governments broadly know what works; there is a strong evidence base and incremental improvement).
- Policy fields in flux (where the knowledge base is contested and there is disagreement over the most basic theoretical approaches).
- Inherently novel policy fields (the newness means there is no pre existing evidence base, e.g. regulation of biotechnology; privacy on the net)

Only in the first of these fields is policy really based on evidence, rather than just informed by it.

The evidence-based policy making literature is a rapidly expanding but somewhat repetitive collection. Most of the literature is positive about the benefits and future of this mode of policy making, but there are several papers making valid criticisms. There is a general consensus about ways to improve evidence-based policymaking:

- clarify the relative strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches;
- use of a more strategic approach to creating knowledge;
- disseminate knowledge effectively and promote wide access to it;
- develop ways to improve the uptake of evidence.

The need for agreement on what constitutes evidence in what context for different types of policy/practice questions is urgent.

This review concludes that the concept is worthwhile pursuing in Australian public policy generally but there may be difficulties in applying an evidence based approach to housing and urban policy. There is a need to improve the evidence base itself and to acknowledge that there are other important questions in policy development in addition to “what works”?

1 OVERVIEW

There has been increasing interest in Australia over the last two or three years in what has become known as “evidence-based policymaking”. This interest has stemmed from new policy developments in the UK, heralded by the Blair Labor Government. A number of UK government documents refer to the need to “modernize” government, making greater use of evidence:

> This Government expects more of policy makers. More new ideas, more willingness to question inherited ways of doing things, better use of evidence and research in policy making and better focus on policies that will deliver long-term goals ……
>
> Government should regard policy making as a continuous, learning process, not as a series of one-off initiatives. We will improve our use of evidence and research so that we understand better the problems we are trying to address. We must make more use of pilot schemes to encourage innovations and test whether they work. We will ensure that all policies and programmes are clearly specified and evaluated, and the lessons of success and failure are communicated and acted upon. Feedback from those who implement and deliver policies and services is essential too. We need to apply the disciplines of project management to the policy process (Prime Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Modernising Government, 1999:http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310-02.htm

There are many other references to evidence – particularly evidence produced by social scientists:

> Social sciences should be at the heart of policy making. We need a revolution in relations between governments and the social research community – we need social scientists to help to determine what works and why, and what types of policy initiatives are likely to be most effective (Blunkett 2000, www.dfee.gov.uk/newslist.htm)

The UK Government has been inspired by the international success of the evidence-based approach to health care and is keen to apply a similar approach to the public policy arena. At surface level at least, this appears to be a welcome change both in terms of improving public policy and for social science to make direct and meaningful contributions to policy making. Already within Australia, a small number of academicians and policy makers working in education, criminology and social work have begun to examine what is occurring in the UK and also the USA.

The USA has a longer history of collecting evidence for public policy, particularly through the use of randomized controlled trials and other careful large scale social interventions in the areas of education and criminology, but the nature or system of governance differs substantially from those of the UK and Australia. Although the USA has much to offers on ways to conduct social interventions and models of knowledge utilization, the American policy making processes and political system is less comparable with Australia’s than the British. Indeed, some commentators suggest that the American structure of governance is not conducive to the wider use of evidence in public policy.

While other social sciences have begun to look more closely, albeit tentatively, at what evidence-based policy making involves and what it offers researchers, housing and urban studies has been slower to contribute to the new debates. This is the case for both the UK and Australia. There are many possible reasons for this. One of these is given by Winter and Seelig (2001:17): “there are uncertainties about the nature of the policy making process and the extent to which extent evidence can inform it.” They also

point out that in spite of its obvious importance and role in social justice and social exclusion, housing has rarely been considered a policy priority in Australia. Could this be because Australian housing studies has not provided a sufficient evidence base for policy development? Is it related more to the policy process itself, or is there a problem in the production and transfer of research evidence? Why are we asking these questions now? Is it because it is fashionable (Stone 2003) or is it simply that the time is right? This literature review attempts to address these questions by exploring the relevant literature.

The term "evidence-based policy" has now become the standard term in the literature, obliging most commentators to continue using it. Many do note that it does give the impression of determinism, whereas evidence is not the only basis for policymaking. Preferred terms are "evidence informed" or "evidence influenced". Other critics of the term prefer "evidence based policymaking" so that it is clear that the term refers to a verb - an action or process, rather than a singular object (e.g. Webster 2002). This term is also occasionally used in the literature. There is relatively no discontent in the literature over the issue of verb or noun, but many writers do make a disclaimer about their use of "evidence-based". Whether or not writers use the noun or verb form of the term, many use the abbreviation "EBP" instead, and occasionally "EBPP" (evidence-based policy/making and practice) which tends to cover all bases.

The review is based on the guidelines produced by the Campbell Collaboration and the Cochrane Collaboration. The review protocol (O'Dwyer 2003a) is available at www.ahuri.edu.au.

2 OBJECTIVES

The focus of the Final Review is on examining evidence-based policy *per se* and determining its value and relevance for Australian housing policy and research. The research question, forming the basis for the structure of this Review Protocol, is:

What is evidence-based policy making and how can it inform the making of Australian public policy, particularly housing policy?

The review has the following objectives:

- To show how evidence-based policy is distinct from other policy;
- To describe how it is formulated and developed;
- To show how the outcomes of academic research are communicated to policy makers;
- To report how policy makers receive and interpret the outcomes of specific types of research;
- To find why evidence-based policy has become prominent in a range of portfolios in other countries, but is largely restricted to health in Australia.

The identification and quality assessment of relevant papers for the review follows the guidelines set out by the Cochrane Collaboration. Given that the material under review is largely of a conceptual or theoretical nature rather than empirical research with a clearly structured methodology, results and conclusion, the review itself is an amalgamation of the strengths of the narrative review and the systematic review formats. Reviews of the individual papers are presented in Appendices C and D. The material is divided into two main groups based on the author's view of evidence based policy. Each paper is presented in chronological order within its group, summarized and examined in the context of the research question. The strengths and weaknesses of each paper are identified within the text and a concluding comment is given as to the value of the paper in addressing the various objectives of the review. Section 4 then considers the findings of the individual papers as a whole in order to assess if and how evidence-based policy making could be used in Australian public policy making.

3 CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF PAPERS

Given that the judgement of only one researcher was involved in the construction of this review, and that the material is not empirical, there is an unavoidable degree of subjectivity in the allocation of quality ratings and thus papers selected, as is the case with any narrative review (see O'Dwyer 2003b).

Papers focusing evidence based policymaking within specific disciplines, such as education or criminology, were excluded from the preliminary reference list but are included if they are Australian, on the grounds that the authors are working within the broader Australian policy environment. However, the evaluative summaries presented in Appendix A for Australian papers should be noted and a small number of Australian studies are rated "B" on the grounds of quality and relevance.

3.1 Quality Ratings

The quality ratings are based on the method used by (Baldwin 2002) and are presented in Table 3-1. It should be noted that in the context of more theoretical or abstract literature, relevance and depth is as important a basis for inclusion as quality and that many otherwise papers which are of high quality in terms of their depth and argument are excluded if the issue of evidence based policy making is given only passing consideration.

Table 3-1: Quality Ratings

Category	Description	Status
Category A	Studies that meet the appraisal criteria well with no or very few flaws, most or all of content highly relevant, sophisticated discussion	Included in Final Review
Category B	Studies that meet all or most of the appraisal criteria but have some significant flaws, content not focused on evidence-based policy making, elementary level of discussion	Excluded, subject to the number of papers in Category A
Category C	Studies that include many and/or serious flaws that have the potential to affect the findings, mostly irrelevant upon reading of full paper	Excluded from review

Source: adapted from (Baldwin 2002) p. 32.

3.2 Ratings of Preliminary Reference List

Seventy-seven papers were identified on the basis of their keywords, field and country of origin. These were all read and rated against a range of criteria (Table 3.2) using the rating scale in Table 3.1. Their ratings and comments made against these criteria are presented in Appendix A. Only the 36 papers rated A were included in the final review. It is emphasized that many of the papers categorized as "B" are of excellent quality and represent a good source of further reading, but were excluded because they were of less direct relevance to the research question.

Table 3-2: Quality and Relevance Rating Criteria

Bibliographic details (ID)	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Considers limits of EBP	Formal or grey literature
Peer reviewed	Clear research question	Considers strengths of EBP	Quality category
Aims	Description of context	Driver of research question	
Background of author	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy	Considers ethical issues	
Conceptual or empirical	Considers alternative bases for policy	Evaluative summary	

3.3 Characteristics of Final Reference List

Table 3-3 shows that much of the literature on evidence based policy making is located in the "grey literature". While it may not be peer reviewed, this material is often highly relevant, high quality, up to date and less restricted in content and sentiment as more formal literature may be. Most of the existing recent literature is British but there is a great deal of American literature predating this review's cut off year of 2000.

Table 3-3: Type, Country and Author Background

Type of publication:	Refereed journal article/book	13
	Conference paper	9
	Working paper	13
	Other	3
Author(s)' nationality:	British	27
	American	2
	Australian	7
	Other	1
Author(s)' background:	Government	1
	Academic	32
	Private sector	4
Discipline	Policy studies	27
	Housing/urban	4
	Health	1
	Other social sciences	20
Number of authors with more than one paper		5

* Based on characteristics of individual papers; one author may appear more than once so his/her characteristics will be recorded more than once. With one exception, all of the authors of papers with multiple authors are based in the same country. The authors of such papers may represent more than one discipline

3.4 Potential Sources of Bias

None.

4 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Public Policy

Policy per se is the “translation of government's political priorities and principles into programmes and courses of action to deliver desired changes” (UK Cabinet Office 2001 Modern Policy-Making: Ensuring Policies Deliver Value for Money).

The classic definition of public policy is that it is concerned with “what governments do, why they do it and what difference it makes (Dye 1976:1, in Nutley and Webb 2000:14). It is government action (or inaction) in response to public concerns and problems. It is an encompassing term that includes all areas of policy and the general concepts, processes and techniques involved.

4.2 Policy Making

The policy process refers to “all aspects of what is involved in providing policy direction for the work of the public sector. These include the ideas which inform policy conception, the talk and work which goes into providing the formulation of policy directions and all the talk, work and collaboration which goes into translating these directions into practice” (Yeatman, 1998:9, in Nutley and Webb 2000:14)

4.3 Evidence-Based Policy Making

Evidence-based public policy is based on research that has undergone some form of quality assurance and scrutiny. This distinguishes it from public policy based on more conventional policy development processes where intuitive appeal, tradition, politics, or the extension of existing practice may set the policy agenda.

Definitions of evidence based policy making are generally cited in the following terms:

> The Government expects more of policy makers. More new ideas, more willingness to question inherited ways of doing things, better use of evidence and research in policy making and better focus on policies that will deliver long term goals.
>
> (Cabinet Office 1999a: Chapter 2 para 6)
>
> The advice and decisions of policy makers are based upon the best available evidence from a wide range of sources; all key stakeholders are involved at an early stage and throughout the policy’s development. All relevant evidence, including that from specialists, is available in an accessible and meaningful form to policy makers.
>
> (www.cmps.gov.uk)

A more informal definition is provided by (Pawson 2002):

> “Like all of the best ideas, the big idea here is a simple one – that research should attempt to pass on collective wisdom about the successes and failure of previous initiatives in particular policy domains. The prize is also a big one is that such an endeavour could provide the antidote to policy making’s frequent lapses into crowd pleasing, political pandering, window dressing and god-acting.”

Similarly, Mulgan describes evidence-based policy in the following terms:

> Governments have become ravenous for information and evidence. A few may still rely on gut instincts, astrological charts or yesterday's focus groups. But most recognize that their success – in the sense of achieving objectives and retaining the confidence of the public – now depends on much more systematic use of knowledge than it did in the past." Mulgan (2003)

Understanding of 'evidence-based policy' in the fields of research and policymaking tends to vary but Reid's (2003) study found that most policy makers used the term to imply that policy was significantly informed by evidence. The most common definition was "making significant use of research evidence to inform the development and implementation of your policies."

4.4 Evidence

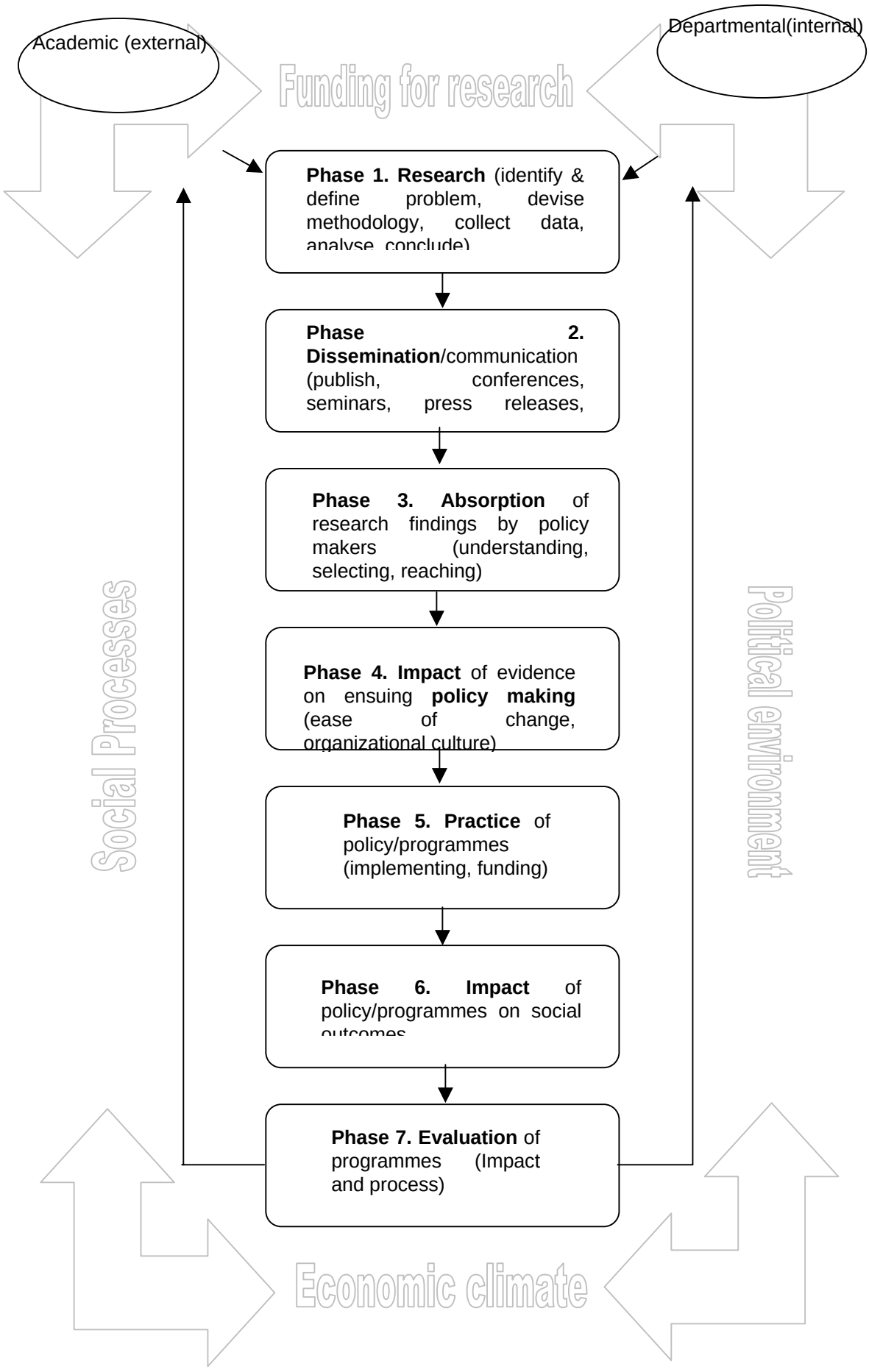
In turn, "evidence" is defined in the following terms:

> In practice, evidence is more plural than research. The Oxford English Dictionary offers as a definition of evidence, 'the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid'18. So availability and validity are the key issues (Solesbury 2001:8)
>
> ...practitioner knowledge, experience overseas, pilots and commissioned qualitative and quantitative research studies... (UK National Audit Office (2001), drawing together work from the White Paper, the Cabinet Office and the CMPS).
>
> …evidence takes the form of 'research', broadly defined. That is, evidence comprises the results of systematic investigation towards increasing the sum of knowledge…the accepted rules of evidence differ greatly between research cultures…. nevertheless the majority of research evidence considered in this text is the output from more formal and systematic enquiries, generated by government departments, research institutes, universities, charitable foundations, consultancy organizations and a variety of agencies and intermediaries…(Davies 2000)

4.5 The Evidence-Based Policy Making Process

Based on the literature, a simplified summary of the process is presented in Figure 4.1. It is noted that linear models of evidence based policy making depicting neat stages have drawn much criticism in the literature on the grounds of over simplification and so the role of context (political, social, and economic) is emphasized here. While this model may be unrealistically simple, it serves nevertheless to help communicate what evidence-based policy involves to readers unfamiliar with either the term or the process.

Figure 4-1: The Evidence-Based Policy Making Process



5 WHAT IS EVIDENCE BASED POLICY MAKING?

This section summarizes the main findings of the literature review and then relates these where possible to Australian housing policy.

In sum, it appears that there are two main strands in the literature; theoretical arguments for (or critical of) an evidence based approach to policy making; and 2. ways to improve the process. Both of these premises are themselves based on the assumption that evidence itself is a good thing, that it is meaningful, reliable and trustworthy. A difficulty is that in the social sciences in particular, interpretations of the strength and quality of evidence are fraught with disagreement. Even where there is consensus, the best available evidence may not meet the agreed standard. This has been a major topic of debate although progress has been made toward developing methods of assessing the quality of different types of evidence.

On the whole, it appears that the literature is supportive of an evidence-based approach, while those papers that take a more cautious or even negative position draw attention to potential pitfalls that can generally be remedied. The quality of the pro-evidence based policy literature also appears to be higher than that of the more critical papers (see Appendices A and B).

The main conclusion to be drawn from the literature is that there are many factors influencing policy making, but this does not mean we should not bother trying to improve the process and its elements.

5.1 How evidence-based policy is distinct from other policy

Evidence-based policy making shares many of the features of “ordinary” or traditional policy making. However it also has a number of distinct characteristics. Four basic assumptions are that:

- that evidence based policy is a meaningful concept;
- evidence should be available to policy-makers;
- evidence can be interpreted and used to inform policy development;
- policies based on evidence are better than policies that are not based on evidence. (after Reid 2003).

The literature identifies three main groups of players in the policy making process, all of which have slightly different views and goals:

- researchers,
- policy makers
- practitioners.

There are also the lesser roles of

- evaluators
- participants
- people who are affected by a policy.

Most of these groups do not know enough about each other to enable meaningful communication, but the main problem is seen as located between researchers and policy makers, who need to collaborate to get the maximum benefit from an evidence-based approach and to learn more about the other. The role of evaluators in policy making has generally been overlooked in favour of researchers in the rest of the literature, but Sanderson calls for them to be included as participants in the policy discourse. Like Nutley, Davies and Webb (2002), or Edwards and Nutley (2003) in

reference to researchers, Sanderson feels evaluators need to improve their communication skills and use the appropriate media for communication. They should take the role of advocate rather than neutral technician (Jenkins-Smith and Sabateri 1993, in Sanderson 2000:17).

It was not until the new emphasis on evidence bad policy in the UK rose to the fore that it became clear why the neglect of more direct use of research findings has been so pervasive. It has now been widely recognized in the literature that evidence is not the only input in policy-making (p. 286). A range of factors in addition to evidence influences policy, and evidence may not even be the most important. Other factors include:

- Prevailing public opinion;
- Organizational culture
- Incompatible timeframes in policy making and research
- Values and ideology of both researchers and policy makers
- Control of power
- Political goals
- How far new evidence departs from established or accepted knowledge
- How easy it is to change a policy in light of new evidence

As for policy making in general, the political environment influences evidence-based policymaking. The UK Cabinet Office (2001:15) reports that policy makers are not entirely convinced about the value of involving outside stakeholders in the design and testing of policy options. This is because during the early stage of formulating a policy a department may not yet be fully committed to it. Involving outside stakeholders may raise expectations or public criticism in cases when a pilot initiative does not work. Fear of leaks and premature publicity may also inhibit the range of consultation with stakeholders that would otherwise be useful.

Weiss identifies “four I’s” which characterize policy making in general:

- ideology (people’s basic values – of policy makers and wider society);
- interests (can be personal or organizational, such as personal career aspirations or maximizing budgets)
- institutional norms and practices (for example the US congress works largely through face to face contact – reading is not part of the norm and so written documents of research findings are likely to be ignored);
- prior information (policy makers already have information from various sources. New information at variance with existing beliefs must be strong enough to change them).

The explicit role of evidence in evidence-based policy as opposed to its implicit use (or non-use) in other models of policy making is obviously a key distinguishing characteristic. It is not merely the use of evidence but the type of evidence used that is important. The attention these two related issues have received from the social science research community (mainly in Britain but increasingly in Australia) suggests that social scientists see this approach as offering more opportunity to inform and influence policy making than other means. However, this can also be seen as an ideology: “The notion that public policy is evidence driven is itself a reflection of an ideology, the ideology of scientism (Doherty 2000:179-180).

Although there is a tendency for some proponents of evidence based policy making toward airy "motherhood" statements, their underlying premise is that evidence based (or evidence informed) policy is better than policy that is not informed by evidence. The problem is that there is actually no real evidence (with the exception of health) that this is so. Even (Davies 2000) acknowledge this irony. Although she is sympathetic to the aims of evidence based policy making, Reid (2003:20) comments:

> One might be surprised by the lack of evidence for evidence-based policymaking, either as a process which can take place or as a process which will lead to better policy outcomes. It might be argued that, far from being unideological, evidence-based policy is, in itself, a kind of ideology; and one for which there is remarkably little supporting evidence.

Clearly the recency of the evidence-based policy approach, combined with the lengthy timeframes required for most public policies to take effect, and then to be evaluated, can explain this paradox. In the meantime we must judge the potential of evidence based policy making as an approach to policy making and as an influence on social science research, on its theoretical merits rather than empirical outcomes.

If we assume, following the systematic review guidelines (see Appendices A-D) that the weight and strength of the papers supporting evidence-based policy making suggest that it is at least as effective and beneficial as current policy making methods, and superior at best (none have argued that it is worse), it appears that a central and national championing body is required. This will facilitate the concept and process becoming known in the social sciences, researchers and policy makers learning more about it (via conferences, journal articles, electronic discussion and the like) but foremostly, the formation of an evidence base. This role is fulfilled by a number of linked organizations in the UK, known as the Evidence Network. The USA has the newly established Campbell Collaboration in the USA, which as it proclaims, aims to do the same for social science as the Cochrane Collaboration has done for health. As preempted by Winter and Seelig (2001:4)

> the absence of an evidence base almost guarantees that policy development will be premised on other considerations. By definition, for evidence-based policy to be a reality, there must be an evidence base, and this can only be constructed through sound research which has immediate or potential 'policy relevance.'

Not only must there be sound research, (which arguably describes most Australian housing research), there must also be a coordinating body with the responsibility of locating, listing and briefly commenting on the quality or characteristics of the research and its findings. AHURI already partially fulfils this role but it would require considerable resources to establish an evidence base resembling those in the UK and US. A wider ranging social science organization might be more appropriate, rather than an organization specializing in housing and urban studies, and which could be seen as non-partisan when commenting on the quality of the research it has facilitated.

5.2 How evidence-based policy is formulated and developed

Various models described throughout the literature review (See Appendices C and D) go a considerable way in explaining how evidence-based policy is formulated and developed.

Nutley and Webb assert that we still know relatively little about the dynamics of the policy process and how research evidence impacts on this process. However, they draw on the work of Weiss (1979) to show a range of models describing this relationship. They include:

- The knowledge drive model (derived from the natural sciences);
- The problem solving model (directly applies specific study results to a pending decision);
- The interactive model (researchers are just one set of participants among many);
- The political model (research is used as political ammunition);
- The tactical model (research is used as a delaying tactic to avoid responsibility for unpopular policy outcomes);
- The enlightenment model (the indirect influence of research so that knowledge becomes more widely diffused over time. Pawson (2001); Mandell, Green and Linkcz (2001); and Weiss (2001) discuss this model further.

The enlightenment model is generally the most widely adopted view of how evidence and knowledge are involved in policy making. It is heartening for researchers to know that information does become known over time, although this model has also been criticized as too pessimistic. Reid (2003:55) argues that it seriously underestimates the importance of the presentational force of evidence-based policy. Stone (2003) claims that research and debate within the enlightenment model may take considerable time, even a generation, to reveal its influence.

No single model of the policy-evidence relationship can apply in all contexts. However, any direct use of research findings does appear to be limited, probably because of information overload in the policy process, and analysts' lack of power (Nutley and Webb 2000:30). Direct use is more likely if the implications of the findings are relatively non-controversial, if the changes are small scale of the environment of the program is stable and when a program is in crisis and no one knows what to do (Weiss 1998, in Nutley and Webb 2000:30). However, as Nutley and Webb point out, the enlightenment model is based on American processes and does not necessarily apply elsewhere. The USA has a fragmented and decentralized political system which results in short run, single-issue research projects and not long term policy planning. In contrast, the more "corporatist" systems of Europe (and Australia) are better at fostering dialogue between researchers, bureaucrats and politicians (Nutley and Webb 2000:31-32).

In spite of the "corporatist system" of Britain and Australia, the two countries have similar relationships between housing and urban research and policy – a long, but uneven and inconsistent association. The problem, according to Doherty (2000), lies with both researchers and policy makers. Researchers have employed inadequate methodologies and have neglected policy relevant concepts such as "cost-benefits". Unlike their British counterparts, Australian policy makers have defined terms such as "decent" and "affordable", but they have not specified how they are to be achieved (Maclennan and Moore, 1999; in Doherty 2000:167). Housing problems now tend to be absorbed into wider policy considerations, such as sustainability and social exclusion. Multifaceted problems involving housing can result in tensions between different stakeholders and also reduces the housing dimensions of the problem (Doherty 2000:177-78). This also means that the evidence required to deal with these problems must come from more areas than just housing.

Doherty observes that although there is now increasing convergence between major political parties, "ideological conflict runs deep in the development of housing policy" (Doherty 2000p.180). The influence of ideology is stronger in housing policy (and research) perhaps more than most other areas of public policy - it is important to recognize this because ideology can act as a filter for evidence. Many commentators point to the need for evidence to be strong enough to over ride prevailing beliefs (e.g. Weiss 2001). However, Doherty's work suggests that housing research may have a greater challenge (or difficulty) in contributing to evidence based policy than other areas of policy.

While the pro-evidence-based policymaking literature tends to portray it as a partnership between government policy makers and researchers, some writers (e.g. Curtain 2001) feel that the partnership is not equal. Increasing government reliance on outside sources of expertise suggests a risk that consultants may be chosen on their propensity to deliver the desired outcome. This puts the consultant in a difficult position because they have little bargaining power and know that their only choice is to forego the work; the commissioning department can always use the tenderer rated second (Curtain 2000b p.2).

There is also disagreement about who controls the research agenda. Critics of evidence-based policy making fear that policy makers will hold the balance of power in determining agendas.

Curtain (2003:) suggests that one way of clarifying where evidence is most likely to contribute to policy making is to refer to Mulgan's useful distinction between three types of policy fields. Each of these policy fields makes different uses of evidence and research:

- Stable policy fields (areas where knowledge is reasonably settled; theoretical foundations are strong; governments broadly know what works; there is a strong evidence base and incremental improvement).
- Policy fields in flux (where the knowledge base is contested and there is disagreement over the most basic theoretical approaches).
- Inherently novel policy fields (the newness means there is no pre existing evidence base, e.g. regulation of biotechnology; privacy on the net)

Mulgan claims that only in the first of these fields is policy really based on evidence, rather than just informed by it. In the other two situations (and housing policy could reasonably be described as the second of the three fields), evidence exists in relation to theories and concepts which, as Mulgan puts it, "are not alternatives to hard facts and evidence. They are only ways of making sense of them." Many commentators in the EBP debate (notably Pawson 2002 and Sanderson 2000) have mentioned the role of theory. Mulgan emphasizes the connection between research, theory and policy and notes that "When fields are in flux what we often need most is better theory – this is one reason why it is unwise for funding councils to concentrate all their resources on policy-relevant research".

Winter and Seelig (2001) note that the strength of Australian housing research is empirical rather than theoretical, but the development of an evidence base requires research that is theoretically informed as well as empirical. This implies that other social sciences that have developed evidence bases have been theoretically informed. While it is true that social sciences such as education and criminology do seem to have a fairly well developed theoretical basis, it is mostly empirical work that is collected for evidence databases. It is true that there is little theoretical research in Australian housing studies (but whether there can even be a "middle range" theory of housing, let alone an encompassing one, is still debated in the literature). It may be more fruitful and useful to incorporate housing into wider social theory. Much housing research in general (not just Australian) tends to be well grounded in a theoretical context. Appeals to the development of theory may be difficult to sell (and research in this area may also find attracting funds difficult) but such work would appear a necessary step. Linking theoretical development, empirical research and policy development could form another type of "bridge" (after Nutley 2003).

Pawson's (2001) idea of identifying program mechanisms that trigger change, rather than programs themselves, is a novel yet plausible idea that bears mention here. It appears to be a more realistic approach to providing evidence with a theoretical basis, rather than identifying "best buys", and is worth closer inspection by researchers. Pawson does suggest that some tweaking might be needed to downplay the theoretical

underpinnings when presenting and communicating conclusions based on this approach to policymakers (Pawson 2001).

There is considerable discussion in the literature about public participation in decision making. But it is not yet clear how public participation will affect evidence-based policy making. Weiss's guess is that it will reduce the impact of evidence because newly enfranchised groups will vote their interests first (p. 291). She concludes that movement toward wider participation in policy making means that researchers' findings will have to convince a wide swath of the public, if policy is to be truly evidence-based (p. 291)

5.3 How policy makers receive and interpret the outcomes of specific types of research

Governments have become increasingly receptive to certain types of evidence (Davies, Nutley and Smith 2000). They identify four kinds of evidence which have an impact on public policy making:

- descriptive data (such as unemployment rates, trade deficits, incidence and prevalence rates of parameters such as teenage pregnancy, high school retention rates, number of building approvals and time trends);
- analytic findings (which look for causal relationships and explanations);
- evaluative evidence (examines the effectiveness of existing policies and programs. Can be very influential but negative findings can face defensiveness and even hostility from stakeholders);
- policy analysis (influence depends on analyst's position in relation to power, but its value is evident by growing number of think tanks)

Evaluative evidence and analytic findings are becoming increasingly valued in Australia. However, both of these types of evidence can be difficult to produce in the social sciences, particularly housing and urban studies, as they often require the use of pilot projects. Such pilot housing and urban projects are uncommon in Australia. According to Curtain (2000b) this is because Australian public policy making is too conservative, but there are also ethical and practical difficulties. Sanderson claims that evaluations of pilot programs suggest there are significant limitations to their ability to convincingly answer "does it work?". These limitations are related to the time needed for the effects of new policies to be evident (especially in the case of changing attitudes and behaviour) and for impacts to be measured and isolated from other factors (especially exogenous change and the effects of other initiatives). There are also political considerations that constrain the length of time the pilot operates and hurry the evaluation process (p. 11). Other problems with evaluative evidence derived from pilot programs include variations in delivery of the program, lack of stability over time in the implementation of a policy, a greater level of commitment amongst staff, and generous resources to 'make' the pilot work. All of these factors mean that a pilot may not represent the policy as it will ultimately be implemented (p.12). Thus there are really two questions – "does it work?", and "can it be made to work?" Sanderson argues that policy makers tend to place more weight on the second of these questions.

The diversity of methods used to produce evidence in the social sciences, particularly those used by qualitative researchers, means that some bodies of evidence will be unfamiliar to public policy makers, and many dismissed. Those types of evidence most easily understood or familiar tend to be favoured (which usually means quantitative). Even where the whole range of evidence is received and understood by policy makers, we must recognize the distinction between "dissemination" and "impact" (dissemination being a more limited concept). Researchers tend to aim for impact, but usually have to be satisfied with influence or raising awareness.

Percy-Smith et al (2002:45) make the important point that the way an organization deals with unwelcome or unexpected results can indicate the extent to which it is serious about evidence based policy making. However, this point was not explored to any significant extent in the literature.

5.4 Why evidence-based policy making is largely restricted to health in Australia

There are a number of reasons why evidence-based policy making is largely restricted to health. This is also true for the UK and USA but is particularly so for Australia.

First, there is the difference in methodological approach between the physical sciences and the social sciences, which dictates the type of evidence that can be collected. Social science is much more vulnerable to error and bias, in comparison with the physical sciences. The difference is emphasized by the research traditions in the biomedical field, where the evidence-based approach first arose in practice. Not only are randomized controlled trials viewed as the 'gold standard' of evidence, they are possible to conduct. At the same time, policymakers prefer such "hard" or quantitative evidence because it is easily available and understood. It is favoured particularly when there is an excess of information. Research evidence in the social sciences covers a wide range of types of evidence (the commonly used definition of evidence from the UK Cabinet Office includes expert knowledge; published research; existing statistics; stakeholder consultations; previous policy evaluations; the Internet; outcomes from consultations; costings of policy options; output from economic and statistical modeling) whereas health research and policy is able to address this problem by creating a hierarchy of evidence and only using the top one or two levels. The insistence on data derived from randomized controlled trials in medicine has had the effect of devaluing qualitative research and evidence. There is a need for qualitative evidence to be summarized and synthesized with the same degree of rigor as randomized controlled trials to counter this perception. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative research and data are usually required for the highest quality of evidence in public policy (Davies 2000 p. 292).

However, Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz (2001) argue that even though experimental research designs are less vulnerable to methodological criticism than other designs and are also more readily understood by policy makers, potential users do not necessarily view their findings as more definite than findings from non-experimental research. This is because experimental findings are not necessarily less ambiguous than nonexperimental findings, and their size and importance may attract scrutinisation and reanalysis of the data.

Because of the dominance and influence of the health sciences in determining what constitutes evidence, Grayson sees evidence based public policy making as potentially dangerous because researchers will be open to unaccustomed challenges and dangers. These problems stem from the fact that social research evidence does not reflect the way most people perceive and experience the world. Social scientists may come under fire and need to be able to defend themselves by anticipating and developing strategies to prevent problems.

Second, the funding required to design studies of sufficient power and reliability is more likely to be granted in the health sciences than the social, partly due to medical dominance of research agendas but also political agendas (Germov 2002).

Third, the employment of an evidence-based approach is still in its preliminary stages in the social sciences internationally (namely the UK and USA) and is yet to fully penetrate the rest of the social scientific world.

Fourth, the degree to which the different social sciences are able to take up the approach depends at least partly on their methodological and research traditions and partly on the size of the discipline. Insofar as housing studies is a discipline (consisting as it does of researchers trained in a range of different social sciences), Australian housing studies has struggled to reach a 'critical mass' (Winter and Seelig 2001 p.6).

Finally, housing and urban policy has a number of features that make the idea of an 'evidence' based housing and urban policy problematic. As in many other public policy areas, it is difficult to link predictable outcomes with discrete interventions. It is difficult to isolate and measure the impact of interventions because generally both the interventions and the outcomes are complex. When housing and urban policy is targeted at a geographically defined area, as is often the case, there may be a displacement effect, (gains offset by losses elsewhere) and beneficiaries may not be persons living or working in the area. Displacement is a fundamental problem in evaluating area-based programs (Harrison 2001). Finding proof (or "what works") in many housing and urban issues is difficult because every problem area is different and might respond differently to similar mechanisms.

It may also be that some of the "seven enemies" of evidence-based policy making identified by Leicester (1999) have played a role in slowing the take up of evidence based policy making in Australia. These include:

- bureaucratic logic (doing things the way they have always been done);
- the bottom line (where numbers matter more than quality);
- consensus (where issues are decided on the basis of agreement and not evidence);
- politics (which considers what is possible rather than what might work best);
- civil service culture (distrust of information generated outside the system);
- cynicism;
- time.

Cynicism is linked with civil service culture and time as an enemy refers to the incongruence of timeframes for policy making and timeframes for research.

5.5 Concluding comments

The evidence-based policy making literature is a rapidly expanding but somewhat repetitive collection, (partly because of the prolific output of a small number of key commentators). Virtually all the papers begin with one of three quotes:

> Blunkett (2000)"...we need to be able to rely in social science and social scientists to tell us what works and why..."
>
> Milton Keynes "...there is nothing a government hates more than to be well informed..."
>
> or Tony Blair (1997) "...what matters is what works...".

However, for breadth of coverage, Davies, Nutley and Smith's (2000) edited collection is recommended as the best starting point for any further examination of evidence-based policymaking in different fields. It is an attempt to explain the basic components of evidence-based based policy making to policy makers while appeasing social scientists concerned about borrowing approaches and methods from the health sciences.

Most of the literature is positive about the benefits and future of this mode of policy making, but with one or two exceptions (see Appendix D), the more guarded and critical papers also make valuable contributions. Marston and Watts 2003, for example, make the point that there is a role for other forms of knowledge (such as coalface experience, tacit knowledge) which are not strictly "evidence".

There is a general consensus in the literature about ways to improve evidence-based policymaking. Nutley, Davies and Walter (2000) summarize these as:

- clarifying the relative strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches;
- using a more strategic approach to creating knowledge;
- disseminating knowledge effectively and promoting wide access to it;
- developing ways to improve the uptake of evidence.

The need for the development of some agreement as to "what constitutes evidence, in what context, for addressing different types of policy/practice questions" (Nutley et al 2002b: 3) is also seen by most commentators as urgent.

This review concurs with Sanderson (2002) who supports the concept and argues that the basic premise is sound – but also points out that we need to improve the evidence base itself and that there are other important questions in policy development. Sanderson acknowledges that questions such as "what is going on?", "What's the problem? "Is it better or worse than...?" are prior questions to "what works?" but cautions that the "what works" question alone is too bald and tends to exclude these other equally important questions (and the types of evidence needed to address them). This position is not too far removed from that of Marston and Watts.

Indeed, many proponents of evidence based policymaking (e.g. Weiss 2001; Johnson 2001) take pains to point out that evidence does not always prevail, and why it should not always prevail. There are occasions where there are practical reasons for why evidence based approach is not taken. These include expense, lack of staff capacity to gather evidence, or insurmountable difficulty in collecting the evidence. Sometimes there may be only one way to proceed and all are agreed on it. Johnston also comments that if the only policies and programs ever to be developed were ones based on evidence, there would not be any new ideas or innovation (Johnston 2001:6).

It appears however that the concept of evidence based policy making in housing and urban policy must take on a different meaning than in other areas of public policy, such as education. The difficulty of achieving evidence-based housing and urban policy reflects the limited available methodologies and analytical tools able to provide reliable and valid evidence.

Ethical issues arise in all areas of public policy. However, this issue is rarely mentioned in the EBP literature (which begs the question of whether it does happen as part and parcel of such policy making). Some writers suggest that the development of qualitative methods for evidence based policy making may provide principles and procedures which address ethics and justice.

We must acknowledge that "evidence-based policy making" is not synonymous with "good policy making", but that evidence based policy making is more likely to be good policymaking. It is possible to have bad evidence-based policy making if the evidence used is biased, flawed, ignored, or incomplete. Even if the input and utilization of evidence meets all requirements, policies using evidence as one of their directives can still be bad if their outcomes are unsuccessful (for what ever reason). The problem then is undermining the value of evidence as part of the policy making process if they are defended on the basis of having been "evidence based". This is why the term "evidence-based" is disliked by a number of commentators. On the other hand, an

appeal to evidence as part of the policy making process tends to focus attention on process only. It is generally agreed in the literature that good policy should be judged not only by its process but also by its outcomes. Therefore appeals to evidence based policy making as a process that should be adopted in Australia needs to also be aware of the definition of good policy per se.

> *…even when research does point to practical action, it takes more than knowledge and ideas to make policy. It takes imagination and creativity to transform ideas into workable proposal and it takes mobilization and political support to turn the proposals into policy.*
>
> -Weiss (2001:289)

6 REFERENCES

Baldwin, S., Wallace, A., Croucher, K. , Quilgars, D., and Mather, L. , (2002). *How effective are public and private safety nets in assisting mortgagors in unforeseen financial difficulties to avoid arrears and repossessions? Review Protocol*. ESRC Systematic Reviews in Social Policy and Social Care, University of York. http://www2.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/ESRC1881.pdf

Bickman, L., Ed. (2000). *Validity and Social Experimentation: Donald Campbell's Legacy*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Blunkett, D. (2000) *Blunkett rejects anti-intellectualism and welcomes sound ideas* http://www.dfee.gov.auk/newslist.htm

Boully, L. (2003). *Community participation - learnings from the Murray-Darling experience*. Facing the Future Conference,, 23-24 April, Canberra.apprn.org

Burrows, R., and Bradshaw, J. (2001). 'Evidence-based policy and practice'. *Environment and Planning A* **33**: 1345-1348.

Cordray, D. S. (2000). 'Enhancing the scope of experimental inquiry in intervention studies'. *Crime and Delinquency* **46**(3): 401-424.

Curtain, R. (2000b). 'Towards Greater Transparency in Policy-making'. *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*(96): 5. http://www.netspace.net.au/~curtain/pdf/cbpapol.pdf

Davies, H., Nutley, S. and Tilley, N. (2000). 'Debates on the role of experimentation', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S., and Smith, P. C. (Eds). *What Works? Evidence Based Policy and Practice in the Public Services*. Bristol, Policy Press

Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Introducing evidence-based policy and practice in public services', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. *What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services*. Bristol, Policy press

Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Learning from the past, prospects for the future', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. *What Works: Evidence-Baed Plicy and Practice in Public Services*. Bristol, Policy Press

Davies, H. T. O., Nutley, S. and Tilley, N.. (2000). 'Debates on the role of experimentation', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. *What Works: Evidence Based Policy and Practice in Public Services*. Bristol, Policy Press

Davies, P. (2000). 'Contributions from qualitative research', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). *What Works? Evidence-Based policy and practice in Public Services*. Bristol, Policy Press

Germov, J.(2002) *Second Opinion: An Introduction to Health Sociology*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Healy, A. (2002). 'Commentary: Evidence-based Policy-The Latest Form of Inertia and Control?' *Planning Theory and Practice* **3**(1): pp.97-98(2).

Johnston, C. (2001). *The influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities*. Local Economic Development. Glasgow, University of Glasgow

Lea, J. (1997). *From integration to exclusion: the development of crime prevention policy in the United Kingdom*. Estrategias alternativas a la resolución penal de los conflictos sociales, University of Barcelona, November 6.http://www.bunker8.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/misc/polis.htm

Marston, G., and Watts, R. (2003) *Tampering with the evidence: a critical appraisal of evidence-based policy* http://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/drawingboard/

Oakley, A. (1998). 'Public policy experimentation: lessons from America'. *Policy Studies* **19**(2): 93-114.

Oakley, A. (2000). 'A historical perspective on the use of randomised trials in social science settings'. *Crime and Delinquency* **46**(3): 315-29.

O'Dwyer, L. A. (2003a). *A Systematic Review of the Evidence-Based Policy Literature -*

Review Protocol. Melbourne, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute www.ahuri.edu.au

O'Dwyer, L. A. (2003b). *Systematic Reviews in Social Science - Background and Critique*. Melbourne, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute www.ahuri.edu.au

Pawson, R. (2001). *Evidence and Policy and Naming and Shaming*. Working Paper No. 5, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp5.pdf

Pawson, R. (2002). 'Evidence-based Policy: In Search of a Method'. *Evaluation April* **8**(2): pp.157-181(25).

Reid, F. (2003) *Evidence-based policy - where is the evidence for it?* http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/SPS/downloads/working_papers/sps03_fr.pdf

Solesbury, W. (2001). *Evidence Based Policy: Whence it came and where it's going*. Working Paper 1, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp1.pdf

Solesbury, W. (2002). 'The ascendancy of evidence'. *Planning Theory and Practice* **3**(1): 90-96.

UK Cabinet Office (2001). *Modern Policy Making: Ensuring Policies Deliver Value for Money* http://www.nao.gov.uk/publications/nao_reports/01-02/0102289.pdf

Winter, I. and Seelig, T. (2001) Housing research, policy relevance and a housing imagination in Australia, paper presented at the Housing Studies AssociationConference, Cardiff University, September. www.cf.ac.uk/cplan/conferences/hsa_sept01/winter&seelig.pdf

7 APPENDIX A. SUMMARY MATRIX OF REVIEWED LITERATURE IN FINAL REPORT (QUALITY/RELEVANCE CATEGORY A)

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
1. Curtain, R. (2000). 'Towards Greater Transparency in Policy-making'. Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration(96): 5. http://www.netspace.net.au/~curtain/pdf/cbpapol.pdf	No	Highlights difficulties in relationships between govts and consultants, lack of transparency	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x
2. Curtain, R. (2002) Report on the inaugural online discussion of the Australian Public Policy research Network - what is good public policy? http://www.apprn.org/pdf/WiGPrevised.pdf	No	To define good public policy in Australian context	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x
3. Curtain, R. (2003) Third on-line discussion: evidence-based policy making http://www.apprn.org/pdf/EBP_digest.zip	No	To explore conceptions of EBP amongt Australian professionals & policy makers	Public policy	c	x	y	y	n

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
4. Davies, H., and Nutley, S. (2002). Evidence-based policy and practice: moving from rhetoric to reality. RURU Department of Management University of St Andrews. http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ruru/Rhetoric%20to%20reality%20NF.pdf	No	Develops one particular conception f the EBP agenda, explore how UK public sector grapples with the issue	Davies: health and management; Nutley:management	c	y	y	y	y
5. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Introducing evidence-based policy and practice in public services', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy press	Yes	Set context for rest of book, introduces basic concepts and points raised in rest of book	Economics, Public policy	c	y	y	y	n

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A1. Curtain, R. (2000). 'Towards Greater Transparency in Policy-making'. Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration(96): 5. http://www.netspace.net.au/~curtain/pdf/cbpapol.pdf	y	n	y	Negative externalities for consultants	n	Some critical comments of policy process	f	A
2. Curtain, R. (2002) Report on the inaugural online discussion of the Australian Public Policy research Network - what is good public policy? http://www.apprn.org/pdf/WiGPrevised.pdf	y	y	y	Ways to improve poicy making in Aust	n	Good insights into realities at coalface	g	a
3. Curtain, R. (2003) Third on-line discussion: evidence-based policy making http://www.apprn.org/pdf/EBP_digest.zip	y	y	y	Should Aust pursue this road	y	Useful insights from insiders		
4. Davies, H., and Nutley, S. (2002). Evidence-based policy and practice: moving from rhetoric to reality. RURU Department of Management University of St Andrews. http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ruru/Rhetoric%20to%20reality%20NF.pdf	y	y	y	Advancing agenda of EBP where evidence is more influential	n	Suggests strategies for change	g	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
5. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Introducing evidence-based policy and practice in public services', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy press	n	y	y	Promote EBP	n	Brief intro but covers reasons why EBP now more important	f	a
Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
6. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Learning from the past, prospects for the future', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	Yes	Explores key issues based on what was learned	Economics, Public policy	c	y	y	y	x
7. Davies, P. (2000). Contributions from qualitative research. What Works? Evidence-Based policy and practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	Yes	Redresses demeaning of qualitative research and evidence	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
8. Doherty, J. (2000). Housing: linking theory and practice. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	Yes	Shows that relations between housing research and policy have been inconsistent in the past, and that research evidence has little impact on policy in present	Housing/geography	c	y	x	y	n
9. Edwards, M., and. Nutley, S. (2003). The Canberra Times	No	draw attention to conference	Public policy	c	y	n	n	x
A10. Fleer, M. (2000). An early childhood research agenda : voices from the field., (DETYA) Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra. URL: http://www.dest.gov.au/research/fellowship/docs/Marilyn_Fleer/MarilynFleer_report.pdf	No	Examines long term outcomes of early childhood education and informs policy on developing a early childhood research agenda	Education	e	x	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
6. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Learning from the past, prospects for the future', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	y	y	y	Promoting EBP	x	Realistic summary of present a and future	f	a
7. Davies, P. (2000). Contributions from qualitative research. What Works? Evidence-Based policy and practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	n	x	x	Derision toward anything other than data derived from RCTs	n	In depth considerati on of qualitative evidence	f	a
8. Doherty, J. (2000). Housing: linking theory and practice. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	y	y	y	Growing divergence between direction of housing studies and policy	n	Talks more about housing studies and research use than EBP per se	f	a
9. Edwards, M., and. Nutley, S. (2003). The Canberra Times	x	x	x	Promote confernce	n	Raises points not in formal literature	g	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A10. Fleer, M. (2000). An early childhood research agenda : voices from the field., (DETYA) Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra. URL: http://www.dest.gov.au/research/fellowship/docs/Marilyn_Fleer/MarilynFleer_report.pdf	n	x	n	Early chidlhood education as an investment /cost saving	n	Doesn't direclty address EBP apart from in acknowledgment but included because is Australian	g	a

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Desc. of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A11. Gorard, S. (2002). Warranting research claims for non-experimental evidence, Cardiff University School of Social Sciences http://www.cf.ac.uk/socsi/capacity/Papers/warranting.pdf	No	To show that conclusions can be over stated rather than poor quality research	Education	c	y	y	y	x
A12. 'Grayson, L. (2002). Evidence based policy and the quality of evidence: rethinking peer review. ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp7.pdf	No	Draws on biomedical experiences to consider quality assurance in social sciences	Public admin	c	Y	y	y	n
A13. 'Harrison, T. (2000). Urban policy: addressing wicked problems. What Works? Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	Yes	Summarizes evidence from urban policy & associated research, concentrates on policy for multifaceted urban problems	Urban &housing economics	c	n	x	y	y

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Desc. of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A14. Healy, A. (2002). 'Commentary: Evidence-based Policy-The Latest Form of Inertia and Control?' Planning Theory and Practice 3(A1): pp.97-98(2).	Yes	Explores Solesbury's views on EBP (i.e. that it is rising due to a shift in the nature of politics) from planning & regeneration perspective	Planning/regeneration	c	y	x	y	x
A15. Johnston, C. (2001). The influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities. Local Economic Development. Glasgow, University of Glasgow	No	To consider extent that experience informs regeneration vs. testing of experience	Economic development	e	y	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A11. Gorard, S. (2002). Warranting research claims for non-experimental evidence, Cardiff University School of Social Sciences http://www.cf.ac.uk/socsi/capacity/Papers/warranting.pdf	x	n	n	Need to consider "warrants"	n	Concerned with quality of research and quality of conclusions, a key aspect of evidence used in EBP	g	a
A12. Grayson, L. (2002). Evidence based policy and the quality of evidence: rethinking peer review. ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp7.pdf	y	y	y	Improving quality of published research	y	Concerned with ways of improving quality of evidence, peer review not a good indicator of quality	g	a
A13. 'Harrison, T. (2000). Urban policy: addressing wicked problems. What Works? Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy Press.	y	y	y	Difficulty of collecting evidence	n	Considers political dimensions of urban policy	f	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A14. Healy, A. (2002). 'Commentary: Evidence-based Policy-The Latest Form of Inertia and Control?' Planning Theory and Practice 3(1): pp.97-98(2).	x	y	y	Is the ascendancy of evidence due to the right reasons	n	Skeptical of motives for EBP	f	a
A15. Johnston, C. (2001). The influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities. Local Economic Development. Glasgow, University of Glasgow	n	y	y	Best ways to proceed with regeneration/learning from experience	n	Relates specifically to planning/urban studies	f	a

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A16. Mandell, M., Greenberg, D., and Linksz, D. (2001). The politics of evidence: the use of knowledge from social experiments in U.S. policy making http://pro.harvard.edu/papers/025/025015GreenbergD.pdf	No	Consider ways that knowledge from social experiments has been used in policy making	Policy, health and social welfare	c	y	y	y	n
A17. Marston, G., and Watts, R. (2003) Tampering with the evidence: a critical appraisal of evidence-based policy http://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/drawingboard/	No	To offer a critical appraisal of the emergence of EBP discourse in Oz and its disciplinary and geographic origins	Social research	c	y	y	y	x
A18. 'McDonald, C. (2002). Forward via the Past: Evidence based practice as strategy in social work. paper presented to 'Tampering with the Evidence: Evidence Based Policy and Practice' Workshop, RMIT University, Melbourne, August 30.	No	Argues that evidence based practice is a political strategy used by an unstable occupational group in a context of institutional upheaval and that it won't help.	Social work	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A19. Mulgan, G. (2003). Government, knowledge and the business of policy-making. National Institute of Governance Conference Facing the Future , Canberra, 23-24 April.http://www.apprn.org	No	EBP is good but we need better methods to deal with different kind of knowledge	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x
A20. Nutley, S. (2003). Bridging the policy/research divide - reflections and lessons from the UK. paper presented at the National Institute of Governance Conference 'Facing the Future: Engaging stakeholders and citizens in developing public policy', Canberra, 23-24 April.www.apprn.org	No	Argues that policy should be better informed, need to invest in the process	Public policy	c	y	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A16. Mandell, M., Greenberg, D., and Linksz, D. (2001). The politics of evidence: the use of knowledge from social experiments in U.S. policy making http://pro.harvard.edu/papers/025/025015GreenbergD.pdf	y	x	x	Utilization of research	n	Good overview of different models used to view EBP	g	a
A17. Marston, G., and Watts, R. (2003) Tampering with the evidence: a critical appraisal of evidence-based policy http://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/drawingboard/	y	y	y	Growing popularity of EBP	n	Good critical review, Australian paper	g	a
A18. 'McDonald, C. (2002). Forward via the Past: Evidence based practice as strategy in social work. paper presented to 'Tampering with the Evidence: Evidence Based Policy and Practice' Workshop, RMIT University, Melbourne, August 30.	y	y	y	Take up of evidence based approach in SW	n	Very difficult to read, more to do with practice than policy, Australian	g	a
A19. Mulgan, G. (2003). Government, knowledge and the business of policy-making. National Institute of Governance Conference Facing the Future , Canberra, 23-24 April.http://www.apprn.org	n	n	y	Improving EBP making	n	Strongly positive and elaborates on common themes	g	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A20. Nutley, S. (2003). Bridging the policy/research divide - reflections and lessons from the UK. paper presented at the National Institute of Governance Conference 'Facing the Future: Engaging stakeholders and citizens in developing public policy', Canberra, 23-24 April.www.apprn.org	n	y	y	Inadequate mechanisms for bringing research and policy together	n	Repeats much material from previous work but some new points and clearer restatements	g	a

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A21. Nutley, S., and Webb, J. (2000). 'Evidence and the policy process', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	Yes	Overview of relationship between evidence and public policy, analyses the policy process to find how evidence feeds into policy making and implementation	Health management (Nutley), unknown (Webb)	c	y	x	y	y
A22. Nutley, S., Davies, H., and Walter, I. (2002). Evidence based policy and practice: cross sector lessons from the UK. Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference, Wellington New Zealand.http://www.rsnz.govt.nz/advisory/social_science/media/nutley.pdf	No	Highlights 4 requirements for improving evidence use and considering progress to date	Health management, public policy	c	y	y	y	n
A23. Parsons, W. (2002). From Muddling Through to Muddling Up Evidence Based Policy Making and the Modernisation of British Government. Proceedings of the 2002 Annual Political Studies Association Conference, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/parsons.pdf	No	To argue that EBP is all about management and control, not improving policy making	Economics /public policy	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A24. Pawson, R. (2002). 'Evidence-based Policy: The Promise of Realist Synthesis'. Evaluation 8(3): 340-358.	No	Sketch new methodological approach to EBP	Public policy/sociology	c	y	y	y	x
A25. Pawson, R. (2001). Evidence based policy: I. In search of a method. Working Paper 3, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp3.pdf	Yes	Examines/compares the logic of meta analysis and narrative reviews	Public policy/sociology	c	y	y	x	n

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A21. Nutley, S., and Webb, J. (2000). 'Evidence and the policy process', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	y	y	y	Tension between the use of evidence and the policy process	y	good introduction to the main debates	f	a
A22. Nutley, S., Davies, H., and Walter, I. (2002). Evidence based policy and practice: cross sector lessons from the UK. Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference, Wellington New Zealand.http://www.rsnz.govt.nz/advisory/social_science/media/nutley.pdf	y	y	y	How to make use of EBP	n	Useful overview, doesn't specifically address different sectors	g	a
A23. Parsons, W. (2002). From Muddling Through to Muddling Up Evidence Based Policy Making and the Modernisation of British Government. Proceedings of the 2002 Annual Political Studies Association Conference, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/parsons.pdf	x	y	n	Rise of EBP	n	Negative view of EBP, represents common misconceptions	g	a
A24. Pawson, R. (2002). 'Evidence-based Policy: The Promise of Realist Synthesis'. Evaluation 8(3): 340-358.	x	n	x	Better ways of evaluating policy interventions	n	Suggests a new way of deciding what works	g	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A25. Pawson, R. (2001). Evidence based policy: I. In search of a method. Working Paper 3, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp3.pdf	x	n	n	The most appropriate way to inform EBP	n	critical of metanalysis, makes some good points about logic	g	a

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A26. Pawson, R. (2001). Evidence and Policy and Naming and Shaming. Working Paper No. 5, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp5.pdf	No	To gauge effect of n &s strategy using a "realist synthesis" (as opposed to a SR)	Public policy/sociology	e	y	y	y	n
A27. Percy-Smith, J., Burden, T., Darlow, A., Dawson, L., Hawtin, M., and Ladi, S. (2002). Promoting change through research: The impact of research in local government. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/184263089X.pdf	No	To understand the way research influences policy and the kind of changes that were influenced at local authority level	Public policy/social welfare	e	n	y	y	x
A28. Perri (2002). 'Can policy making be evidence based?' MCC: Building Knowledge for Integrated Care 10(1): 3-8. http://www.elsc.org.uk/socialcareresource/managecc/feb2002/pages3-8.pdf	Yes	To understand how policy makers in different situation use information differently	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A29. Sanderson, I. (2001). 'Evaluation, policy learning and evidence based policy making'. Public Administration 80(1): 1-22.	Yes	Argues that it is important to ground policy making in more reliable knowledge of what works, in spite of challenges	Public policy	c	y	y	y	n
A30. 'Sanderson, I. (2000). Complexity Evaluation and Evidence-Based Policy. Paper for European Evaluation Society: Fourth Conference: Taking Evaluation to the People: Between Civil Society Public Management and the Polity, Lausanne Switzerland.	No	To argue for theory driven evaluation designs	Public policy	c	y	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A26. Pawson, R. (2001). Evidence and Policy and Naming and Shaming. Working Paper No. 5, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London. http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp5.pdf	y	y	y	How to present ideas so they are used in policy	n	An example of his realist synthesis/family of mechanisms idea	g	a
A27. Percy-Smith, J., Burden, T., Darlow, A., Dawson, L., Hawtin, M., and Ladi, S. (2002). Promoting change through research: The impact of research in local government. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/184263089X.pdf	x	x	x	Promoting change through research	x	Not directly related to EBP but it indirectly related in that dissemination and impact are part of EBP	g	a
A28. Perri (2002). 'Can policy making be evidence based?' MCC: Building Knowledge for Integrated Care 10(1): 3-8. http://www.elsc.org.uk/socialcareresource/managecc/feb2002/pages3-8.pdf	x	y	n	Role of evidence in policy	n	Brief but to the point, ha some interesting analogies of different types of policy makers	f	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A29. Sanderson, I. (2001). 'Evaluation, policy learning and evidence based policy making'. Public Administration 80(1): 1-22.	n	y	y	Role of theory in evaluation	n	Densely written, difficult to read but squarely on topic	f	a
A30. 'Sanderson, I. (2000). Complexity Evaluation and Evidence-Based Policy. Paper for European Evaluation Society: Fourth Conference: Taking Evaluation to the People: Between Civil Society Public Management and the Polity, Lausanne Switzerland.	y	y	y	Role of evaluation in EBP	y	Very similar points to Sanderson 2001. Dense and difficult to read	g	a

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A31. Sanderson, I. (2002).Making Sense of What Works: Evidence-Based Policy Making as instrumnetal rationality, Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Aberdeen Scotland April 5-7 2002.http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/sanderson.pdf	No	To identify research prioroties for Aust (1 is EBP)	Public policy	c	n	n	y	x
A32. Solesbury, W. (2001). Evidence Based Policy: Whence it came and where it's going. Working Paper 1, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp1.pdf	No	Looks at reasons why ther has been an increase in intetest in EBP	Social science	c	y	y	y	n
A33. Stone, D. (2003) Getting research into policy? http://www.gdnet.org/rapnet/pdf/Beyond%20Economics%20Stone.doc	Yes	To see if there is really a weak link between research and practice or if it is more complicated	Development	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	**Peer reviewed**	**Aims**	**Background of author**	**Conceptual or empirical/practical**	**Authors' ideological perspective clear**	**Clear research question**	**Description of context**	**Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy**
A34. Webster, A. (2002). Some features of evidence-based policymaking for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. ATSIC Inaugural National Policy Conference, Canberra.http://www.atsic.gov.au/Events/Previous_Events/National_Policy_Conference_2002/docs/Andrew_Webster.doc.	No	Examines features of the process of EBP making	ATSIC	c	y	y	y	x
A35. Weiss, C. H. (2001). What kind of evidence in evidence based policy? Third International, Inter-disciplinary Evidence-Baed Policies and Indicator Systems Conference, Univerity of Durham.http://cem.dur.ac.uk/eb2003/Carol%20Weiss%20COLUMNS%20WITHOUT%20SHADING.doc	No	Argue why evidence does not always prevail and why it shouldn't	Public policy	c	y	x	y	y
Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
A36. Young, K., Ashby, D., Boaz, A. , and Grayson, L. (2002). 'Social science and the evidence-based policy movement'. Social Policy and Society 1(3): 215-224.	Yes	Clarify meaning of term and address limitations of EBP strategies	Health, politics, public policy	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A31. Sanderson, I. (2002).Making Sense of What Works: Evidence-Based Policy Making as instrumnetal rationality, Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Aberdeen Scotland April 5-7 2002.http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/sanderson.pdf	x	x	x	x	x	Difficult to read but links all of the main stages of policy making process	g	a
A32. Solesbury, W. (2001). Evidence Based Policy: Whence it came and where it's going. Working Paper 1, ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice Queen Mary University of London http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp1.pdf	n	y	y	Scepticism of capacity of EBP to make sig diff	n	Represents the main misgivings in the literature	g	a
A33. Stone, D. (2003) Getting research into policy? http://www.gdnet.org/rapnet/pdf/Beyond%20Economics%20Stone.doc	x	y	y	Promoting use of research by policy makers	x	Focuses on important aspect of EBP process	f	a
A34. Webster, A. (2002). Some features of evidence-based policymaking for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. ATSIC Inaugural National Policy Conference, Canberra.http://www.atsic.gov.au/Events/Previous_Events/National_Policy_Conference_2002/docs/Andrew_Webster.doc.	y	n	y	Improving knowledge, research and policy in this area	y	Good examination of how EBP can work in improving indigenous related policies, shows good understanding of process	g	a

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
A35. Weiss, C. H. (2001). What kind of evidence in evidence based policy? Third International, Inter-disciplinary Evidence-Baed Policies and Indicator Systems Conference, Univerity of Durham.http://cem.dur.ac.uk/eb2003/Carol%20Weiss%20COLUMNS%20WITHOUT%20SHADING.doc	y	y	y	Rise of EBP	y	Raises useful points about how evidence is disseminated and used	g	a
A36. Young, K., Ashby, D., Boaz, A. , and Grayson, L. (2002). 'Social science and the evidence-based policy movement'. Social Policy and Society 1(3): 215-224.	y	y	y	Improve capacity of EBP	n	Improving capacity of social sciences to contribute to EBP	g	a

8 APPENDIX B. SUMMARY MATRIX OF REVIEWED LITERATURE IN PRELIMINARY REFERENCE LIST (QUALITY/RELEVANCE CATEGORY B AND C)

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B1. Addison, L. (2001). Exploring regional crime and socio-economic linkages. New Crimes or New Responses: 4th National Outlook Symposium on Crime in Australia, Canberra, ACT.URL: http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/outlook4/Addison.pdf	No	Encourage greater exploration of socio economic factors and lings to regional crime and need for better data collection	Govt	c	n	y	y	x
B2. Amann, R. (undated) Evidence-based policy: taking the vision forward www.publicnet.co.uk/publicnet/fe000829.htm, accessed 30.10.02.	No	To make the case for Ebb in British public policy	Govt	c	y	x	y	n
B3. Atkinson, R. (2002). Does Gentrification Help or Harm Urban Neighbourhoods? An Assessment of the Evidence-Base in the Context of the New Urban Agenda. CNR Summary 5. University of Bristol and University of Glasgow, ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research http://www.neighbourhoodcentre.org.uk/research/cnrpaperspdf/cnr5pap.pdf	No	Summarises literature on effects of gentrification (usually negative) and compares this with current policy encouraging gentrification	Social science/ urban studies	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B4. Bhatta, G. (2002). 'Evidence-based Analysis and the Work of Policy Shops'. Australian Journal of Public Administration 61(3): pp.98-105(08).	Yes	How to use evidence based analysis to inform policy	Public policy	c	n	n	n	n

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B1. Addison, L. (2001). Exploring regional crime and socio-economic linkages. New Crimes or New Responses: 4th National Outlook Symposium on Crime in Australia, Canberra, ACT.URL: http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/outlook4/Addison.pdf	x	x	x	Need to better inform policy	x	not focused on EBP, just on data issues	g	b
B2. Amann, R. (undated) Evidence-based policy: taking the vision forward www.publicnet.co.uk/publicnet/fe000829.htm, accessed 30.10.02.	n	n	y	Promoting EBP	n	touts party line on EBP	g	b
B3. Atkinson, R. (2002). Does Gentrification Help or Harm Urban Neighbourhoods? An Assessment of the Evidence-Base in the Context of the New Urban Agenda. CNR Summary 5. University of Bristol and University of Glasgow, ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research http://www.neighbourhoodcentre.org.uk/research/cnrpaperspdf/cnr5pap.pdf	x	x	x	Need for summary of gentrification research	n	comments on value of SRs and their use for EBP (cautious & qualified))	g	b
B4. Bhatta, G. (2002). 'Evidence-based Analysis and the Work of Policy Shops'. Australian Journal of Public Administration 61(3): pp.98-105(08).	n	n	n	Improving quality of policy advice	n	much rhetoric, not much substance	f	c

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B5. Boaz, A. and A., D. (2003) Fit for purpose? Assessing research quality for evidence based policy and practice http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp11.pdf	No	Argues that "fitness of purpose" of research, rather than its quality should determine use in EBP	Health	c	y	y	y	x
B6. Bohme, K. (2002). 'Much ado about evidence: reflections from policy making in the European Union'. Planning Theory and Practice 3(1): 98-101.	Yes	To establish what EBP from an outsider's perspective	Urban studies	c	y	y	y	n
B7. Boruch, R., and Foley, E. (2000). 'The honestly experimental society', in L. Bickman. Validity and Social Experimentation. New York, Sage	Yes	Advance understanding of field trials involving entities as the units of allocation in randomised experiments	Criminology, education	c	y	y	y	n

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B8. British Educational Research Association (2001). Academic freedom and evidence based policy http://www.bera.ac.uk/ri/no75/ri75_08.html November 2002	No	Debates links between EBP and academic freedom	Public policy (Wicks) and education (Bown and Hodkinson)	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B5. Boaz, A. and A., D. (2003) Fit for purpose? Assessing research quality for evidence based policy and practice http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp11.pdf	x	n	n	Research quality	n	concerned with quality for EBP, not EBP itself	g	b
B6. Bohme, K. (2002). 'Much ado about evidence: reflections from policy making in the European Union'. Planning Theory and Practice 3(1): 98-101.	y	y	y	What is appropriate evidence	n	looks at evidence use outside UK and US but not much substance	f	b
B7. Boruch, R., and Foley, E. (2000). 'The honestly experimental society', in L. Bickman. Validity and Social Experimentation. New York, Sage	n	n	x	How to better inform policy	y	excellent methodological explanation of value of field trials but not tied to EBP	f	b
B8. British Educational Research Association (2001). Academic freedom and evidence based policy http://www.bera.ac.uk/ri/no75/ri75_08.html November 2002	x	y	y	Relationships between govt and academia	n	n	g	b

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B9. Calvert, J. (2002). Making Academic Research Useful. NPRNet Conference March 2002 Rethinking Science Policy: Analytical Frameworks for Evidence-Based Policy, SPRU University of Sussex Brighton UK.	No	Examines effect of EBP approach on behaviour of scientists	Science	c	y	y	y	x
B10. Crewe, E., and Young, J. (2002). Bridging Research and Policy: Context Evidence and Links, Global Development Network http://www.gdnet.org/subpages/RAPNet/Documents/Bridging%20R&P%20WP.pdf	No	To promote and develop tools to promote EBP in international development	Development	c	y	y	y	n
B11. Curtain, R. (2000). 'Good Public Policy Making: How Australia Fares'. Agenda: a Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform 8(1): 3-46. http://www.netspace.net.au/~curtain/pdf/agenda.pdf Making: How Australia Fares	No	Identify key elements of public policy and see how Aust measures up	Public policy	e	y	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B12. Dabinet, G., Lawless, P., Rhodes, J., and Tyler, P. (2001). A review of the evidence base for regeneration policy and practice. 39. London, Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions.http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/research/summaries/03900/index	No	To review he evidence base for regeneration	Regional economics, social research and land economics	c	x	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B9. Calvert, J. (2002). Making Academic Research Useful. NPRNet Conference March 2002 Rethinking Science Policy: Analytical Frameworks for Evidence-Based Policy, SPRU University of Sussex Brighton UK.	y	y	y	Concern for future of basic research	x		g	b
B10. Crewe, E., and Young, J. (2002). Bridging Research and Policy: Context Evidence and Links, Global Development Network http://www.gdnet.org/subpages/RAPNet/Documents/Bridging%20R&P%20WP.pdf	n	n	n	Improving over seas development	x	takes EBP as a given, talks about ways to improve research-policy links for development policy	g	b
B11. Curtain, R. (2000). 'Good Public Policy Making: How Australia Fares'. Agenda: a Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform 8(1): 3-46. http://www.netspace.net.au/~curtain/pdf/agenda.pdf Making: How Australia Fares	y	n	y	Gauging quality of policy making in Oz	n	gives good overview of public policy in Aust but not related to EBP,	f	b

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B12. Dabinet, G., Lawless, P., Rhodes, J., and Tyler, P. (2001). A review of the evidence base for regeneration policy and practice. 39. London, Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions.http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/research/summaries/03900/index	n	n	n	Need to know how to improve the evidence base	n	Considers the availability and quality of evidence itself rather than the policy based on it	g	b

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B13. Davies, H., Laycock, G., Nutley, S., Sebba, J., and Sheldon, T. (2000). A strategic approach to research and development. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy	Yes	Compares sectors ability to generate and use information as evidence in policy	Range of social sciences	c	n	x	y	n
B14. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Learning from the past, prospects for the future', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	Yes	Explores key issues based on what was learned	Economics, public policy	c	y	y	y	x
B15. Falk, I. (2002). Social Capital Think Tank: A case study of evidence-based public policy development. Hobart, National Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia University of Tasmania http://www.apprn.org/pdf/Policy&SocialCapital.pdf	No	Responds to claim that commentators on social capital have weak policy prescriptions, provides case study of role of think tanks in context of a partnership approach to policy development	Education	e	n	y	y	n

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B16. Gowing, L. (2001). Evidence-based practice - From concepts to reality. Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/proceedings2001/gowing.pdf	No	Examine basic concepts of evidence based practice	Health	c	y	y	n	n

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B13. Davies, H., Laycock, G., Nutley, S., Sebba, J., and Sheldon, T. (2000). A strategic approach to research and development. What Works? Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. (eds). Bristol, Policy	n	y	y	Lack of connection between research and policy	n	R & D needs to be strategic, hampered by lack of research capacity, but bulk of chapter focuses on crime, health and education in Britain	f	b
B14. Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Smith, P. (2000). 'Learning from the past, prospects for the future', in H. T. O. Davies, Nutley, S. and Smith, P. C. What Works: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Public Services. Bristol, Policy Press	y	y	y	Promoting EBP	x	not much of substance	f	b
B15. Falk, I. (2002). Social Capital Think Tank: A case study of evidence-based public policy development. Hobart, National Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia University of Tasmania http://www.apprn.org/pdf/Policy&SocialCapital.pdf	y	n	n	Fostering social capital	n	not focused on EBP, more on social capital	g	b

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B16. Gowing, L. (2001). Evidence-based practice - From concepts to reality. Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/proceedings2001/gowing.pdf	n	n	n	How to evaluate evidence	n	very basic outline of concept associate with SRs more than EBP	f	b

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B17. Guray, C. (2001). Intervening in organisational systems: What can evidence-based service deliverers learn from action methods? Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/guray.pdf	No	How to intervene in an organizational system & what is requited to create a better system	Organizational psychology	c	x	x	x	x
B18. Hammersley, M. (2000). 'The sky is never blue for modernisers: the threat posed by David Blunkett's offer of partnership to social science'. Research Intelligence 72: 3. http://www.bera.ac.uk/ri/no72/ri72hammers.html	No	To show threat of new govt attitude to academic autonomy	Education	c	y	y	n	n
B19. Henke, R. (2000). Report on the International Conference on Social Science and Governance 20-21 March 2000. Final Report. Zeist the Netherlands, Netherlands Commission for UNESCO	No	Bring together wide audience, engage participants in debate and facilitate mutual understanding	Social policy	c	n	x	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B20. Innes, J. (2002). 'Improving policy making with information'. Planning Theory and Practice 3(1): 102-04.	Yes	Argues that research and evidence use depend on the political environment and structures	Urban development	c	y	n	n	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B17. Guray, C. (2001). Intervening in organisational systems: What can evidence-based service deliverers learn from action methods? Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/guray.pdf	x	x	x	not relevant	x	not relevant	f	c
B18. Hammersley, M. (2000). 'The sky is never blue for modernisers: the threat posed by David Blunkett's offer of partnership to social science'. Research Intelligence 72: 3. http://www.bera.ac.uk/ri/no72/ri72hammers.html	n	n	n	Use of academics researchers to provide evidence for policy making	y	brief, cursory, concern with effects on stifling academic freedom	g	b
B19. Henke, R. (2000). Report on the International Conference on Social Science and Governance 20-21 March 2000. Final Report. Zeist the Netherlands, Netherlands Commission for UNESCO	y	x	n	Summary of conference on social science and governance/r between research and policy	n	not directly relevant to EBP	g	c

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B20. Innes, J. (2002). 'Improving policy making with information'. Planning Theory and Practice 3(1): 102-04.	y	y	n	Info needs to be developed collaboratively	n	sketchy, thin	f	c

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B21. Johnston, C. (2001). The influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities. Local Economic Development. Glasgow, University of Glasgow	No	Looks at extent that experience determines regeneration activities	Land economics	e	y	y	y	y
B22. Leicester, G. Evidence-based policy, Scottish Council Foundation, reproduced by Management and Policy Association www.publicnetcouk/publicnet/fe000725htm	No	To praise govt EBP strategy and suggest new themes	Public policy	c	y	x	x	n
B23. Neilson, S. (2001). IDRC-Supported Research and Its Influence on Public Policy: Knowledge Utilisation and Public Policy Processes, Evaluation Unit IDRC Canada www.idrc.ca/evaluation/litreview_e.html	No	To examine influence of research on policy	Development studies	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B24. Nutley, S., Walter, I., and Davies, H. (2002). From knowing to doing: a framework for understanding the evidence-into-practice agenda. Discussion Paper 1, Research Unit for Research Utilisation Department of Management University of St. Andrews http://www.hebes.mdx.ac.uk/teaching/Research/PEPBL/NutleyPaper.17.pdf http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cppm/home.htm	No	To devise a schema to elucidate the key issues for implementing research utilisation and linking it to established bodies of knowledge	Public policy	c	y	x	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B21. Johnston, C. (2001). The influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities. Local Economic Development. Glasgow, University of Glasgow	n	y	y	Do developers use evidence in their regeneration activities	n	brief, better to use full thesis version	g	b
B22. Leicester, G. Evidence-based policy, Scottish Council Foundation, reproduced by Management and Policy Association www.publicnetcouk/publicnet/fe000725htm	n	n	n	How to improve policy making	n	not much in it, very brief	g	c

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B23. Neilson, S. (2001). IDRC-Supported Research and Its Influence on Public Policy: Knowledge Utilisation and Public Policy Processes, Evaluation Unit IDRC Canada www.idrc.ca/evaluation/litreview_e.html	x	x	x	Process of research disseminatio n and use	x	not directly related to EBP or quality of research	g	b
B24. Nutley, S., Walter, I., and Davies, H. (2002). From knowing to doing: a framework for understanding the evidence-into-practice agenda. Discussion Paper 1, Research Unit for Research Utilisation Department of Management University of St. Andrews http://www.hebes.mdx.ac.uk/teaching/Research/PEPBL/NutleyPaper.17.pdf http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cppm/home.htm	x	x	x	Need to use the knowledge from diff social sciences because unlikely to be any retreat from rational and evidence0-suported models	x	concerned with practice not policy	g	b

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B25. Oakley, A. (2000). "A historical perspective on the use of randomised trials in social science settings." Crime and Delinquency 46(3): 315-29.	Yes	Role of quant and qual research as evidence	Sociology/social policy	c	y	y	y	x
B26. Parkes, A., Kearns, A. , and Rowland, A. (2002). Determinants of Neighbourhood Dissatisfaction. CNR Summary 1, ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research University of Bristol and University of Glasgow.	No	Not relevant	Social sciences	e	x	x	x	x
B27. Robinson, P. (2000). 'Active labour-market policies: a case of evidence-based policy-making?' Oxford Review of Economic Policy 16(1): pp.13-26(14). based policy making?	Yes	To explain the recent enthusiasm of new labour market policies	Public policy	c	y	y	y	n
B28. Sanderson, I. (2000). "Evaluation in Complex Policy Systems." Evaluation 6(4): pp.433-454(22).	Yes	Argues for more attention to the theoretical basis of policy evaluation	Public policy	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B25. Oakley, A. (2000). "A historical perspective on the use of randomised trials in social science settings." Crime and Delinquency 46(3): 315-29.	x	x	x	Shows that interventions have not just been the historical province of medicine	y	a good paper but not directly relevant to EBP	f	b
B26. Parkes, A., Kearns, A. , and Rowland, A. (2002). Determinants of Neighbourhood Dissatisfaction. CNR Summary 1, ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research University of Bristol and University of Glasgow.	x	x	x	Neighbourhood satisfaction	x	irrelevant	g	c
B27. Robinson, P. (2000). 'Active labour-market policies: a case of evidence-based policy-making?' Oxford Review of Economic Policy 16(1): pp.13-26(14). based policy making?	y	x	n	Whether labour market programs were really based properly on evidence - concludes they were not	n	not directly about EBP itself, more to do with the validity of labour market policies per se	f	c
B28. Sanderson, I. (2000). "Evaluation in Complex Policy Systems." Evaluation 6(4): pp.433-454(22).	x	X	y	Failure of evaluation to be the basis of policy learning because it takes place in the context of rational top down perspectives	n	heavy going, relates more to evaluation of policy than policy making	f	b

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B29. Saunders, P. (2002). Letter to National Research Priorities Taskforce on National Research Priorities. Submission 36, Social Policy Research Centre UNSW Sydney	No	Identify research priorities for Australia	Social policy	y	x	x	x	x
B30. Scott, A. (2001). Bridging the gap between research and decision-making: asking the right questions. Bridging the Gap conference. A.Scott University of Sussex UK.	No	Considers what determines effective research interventions in decision-making in area of environmental problems	Environmental studies	c	y	y	y	n
B31. Tomison, A. M. (2002). Evidence-based practice in child protection: What do we know and how do we better inform practice? What Works? Evidence Based Practice in Child and Family Services Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Biennial Conference, Bondi Beach NSW.http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/papers/tomison9.html	No	How to use Evidence-based practice to improve child protection	Family studies	c	y	y	y	y

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/ practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B32. UK Government (2000). Regeneration research summary: A review of the Evidence Base for Regeneration Policy and Practice.http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/research/summaries/03900/index.htm	No	To outline the evidence base for urban regeneration policy & practice	Govt	c	y	y	y	x
B33. UK Government (2001). Better Policy Delivery and Design: a Discussion Paper. London, Performance and Innovation Unit Cabinet Office	No	To encourage more rigorous thinking about Govt delivery issues	Govt	c	y	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B29. Saunders, P. (2002). Letter to National Research Priorities Taskforce on National Research Priorities. Submission 36, Social Policy Research Centre UNSW Sydney	x	x	x	x	x	Briefly identifies EBP as way to stengthen evidence base and how it can support beliefs and values	g	b
B30. Scott, A. (2001). Bridging the gap between research and decision-making: asking the right questions. Bridging the Gap conference. A.Scott University of Sussex UK.	y	y	n	Ways to improve communication and dissemination	n	very brief and undeveloped, certainly is in draft form	g	b
B31. Tomison, A. M. (2002). Evidence-based practice in child protection: What do we know and how do we better inform practice? What Works? Evidence Based Practice in Child and Family Services Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Biennial Conference, Bondi Beach NSW.http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/papers/tomison9.html	y	y	y	Value of EBP	y	focus on issues within child protection rather than EBP	g	b
B32. UK Government (2000). Regeneration research summary: A review of the Evidence Base for Regeneration Policy and Practice.http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/research/summaries/03900/index.htm	x	n	x	Gaps in evidence base	n	review of status of evidence	g	b

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B33. UK Government (2001). Better Policy Delivery and Design: a Discussion Paper. London, Performance and Innovation Unit Cabinet Office	x	x	x	Better policy making - find what works	x	not directly relevant to EBP, just considers policy in general	g	c

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B34. UK Government Public Service Delivery Analysis Team (2002). Adding It Up: Progress Report to the Head of the Home Civil Service. London, HM Treasury UK Govt http://www.addingitup.gov.uk/ebpf/	No	To report progress in improving rigorous analysis as demanded by policy makers and delivered by specialists	Public policy/govt	c	y	y	y	n
B35. Weiss, C. H. (2000). The experimenting society in a political world. Validity and Social Experimentation. L. Bickman. New York, Sage.	Yes	Compares Campbell's view with other influential social scientists	Education	c	n	x	y	n
B36. White, J. (2001). Cochrane Reviews and Evidence-Based Practice. Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.	No	Considers use of Cochrane reviews and dissemination process from evidence bases	Health	c	y	y	y	x

B37. Williams, C. C., Aldridge,T., Lee,R., Leyshon, A., Thrift,N., Tooke, J. (2001). "Bridges into Work? An Evaluation of Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS)." Policy Studies 22(2): 119-132.	Yes	To evaluate the success of local exchange and trading schemes to help unemployed	Geography	e		n	y	y	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B34. UK Government Public Service Delivery Analysis Team (2002). Adding It Up: Progress Report to the Head of the Home Civil Service. London, HM Treasury UK Govt http://www.addingitup.gov.uk/ebpf/	n	n	y	Facilitating development of EBP	n	basically self-back patting, shows commitment to EBP rather than discussion of EBP	g	b
B35. Weiss, C. H. (2000). The experimenting society in a political world. Validity and Social Experimentation. L. Bickman. New York, Sage.	y	x	x	need to improve evaluations and attention given to them	n	focuses on evaluation rather than the use of evaluation of evidence for policy	f	b
B36. White, J. (2001). Cochrane Reviews and Evidence-Based Practice. Systems Settings People: Workforce Development Challenges in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field, Flinders University Adelaide, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.	x	x	x	promoting use of Cochrane reviews	y	not directly relevant to EBP, just describes and favours Cochrane reviews	f	c
B37. Williams, C. C., Aldridge,T., Lee,R., Leyshon, A., Thrift,N., Tooke, J. (2001). "Bridges into Work? An Evaluation of Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS)." Policy Studies 22(2): 119-132	x	x	x	usefulness of LETS schemes	n	not directly relevant to EBP, does not discuss the relevance except in a passing comment	f	c

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B38. Wilson, W. J. (2002). Expanding the domain of policy relevant scholarship in the social sciences. London, London School of Economics.http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper52.pdf	No	To argue that social scientists need to do more than provide policy relevant research, the domain of policy relevant scholarship needs to be expanded	Public policy/academic	c	y	y	y	x
B39. Winter, I. and Seelig, T. (2001) Housing Research, Policy Relevance and a Housing Imagination in Australia, http://www.cf.ac.uk/cplan/conferences/hsa_sept01/winter&seelig.pdf	No	Describe AHURI,examines links between university research and policymaking	Sociology/housing, govt/housing	c	n	x	y	n
B40. Wolff, N. (2001). "Randomised trials of socially complex interventions: promise or peril?" Journal of Health Services Research and Policy 1 April 6(2): pp.123-126(124).	Yes	Examines assumption in RCT and its applicability to socially complex interventions	Community health	c	x	y	x	x

Bibliographic details	Peer reviewed	Aims	Background of author	Conceptual or empirical/practical	Authors' ideological perspective clear	Clear research question	Description of context	Considers cost effectiveness of EBP vs. other policy
B41.Yin, R. (2000). Rival explanations as an alternative to reforms as "experiments". Validity and Social Experimentation. L. Bickman. London, Sage.	Yes	Offers alternative research method for evaluating social change apart form experimental	Social science/public policy	c	x	x	x	x

Bibliographic details	Considers alternative bases for policy	Considers limits of EBP	Considers strengths of EBP	Driver of research question	Considers ethical issues	Evaluative summary	Formal or grey literature	Quality category
B38. Wilson, W. J. (2002). Expanding the domain of policy relevant scholarship in the social sciences. London, London School of Economics.http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper52.pdf	x	x	x	role of social science in policy	n	links between research and policy, esp non-empirical perspectives	g	b
B39. Winter, I. and Seelig, T. (2001) Housing Research, Policy Relevance and a Housing Imagination in Australia, http://www.cf.ac.uk/cplan/conferences/hsa_sept01/winter&seelig.pdf	n	n	n	current crossroads of housing studies	n	not directly focused on EBP	g	b
B40. Wolff, N. (2001). "Randomised trials of socially complex interventions: promise or peril?" Journal of Health Services Research and Policy 1 April 6(2): pp.123-126(124).	y	y	y	use of RCTs in social settings	y	not directly focused on EBP	f	b
B41.Yin, R. (2000). Rival explanations as an alternative to reforms as "experiments". Validity and Social Experimentation. L. Bickman. London, Sage.	x	x	x	x	x	not relevant, focuses on research designs only	f	c
B29. Saunders, P. (2002). Letter to National Research Priorities Taskforce on National Research Priorities. Submission 36, Social Policy Research Centre UNSW Sydney	No	Identify research priorities for Australia	Social policy	c	y	x	x	x

9 APPENDIX C. POSITIVE VIEWS OF EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

(see Appendix A for full bibliographic reference)

9.1 Davies, Nutley and Smith (2000)

This is the first chapter in an edited collection and spends considerable time describing the organization of the book and the content of each of the sixteen chapters. However, it does recount why evidence based policy has come to the fore in recent years (pp.1-2):

- Governments have become increasingly receptive to certain types of evidence;
- The election of the British Labor Government in 1997 on the basis of its philosophy of "what matters is what works";
- Increasing public and political skepticism toward governments and professionals;
- The growth of an increasingly well educated and well informed public;
- Greater availability of information;
- Growth in size and capabilities of research community;
- Increasing emphasis on productivity and international competitiveness;
- Increasing scrutiny and accountability in government.

They then highlight the key points of each chapter. These include:

- Questions of methodology;
- The range of influences on policy;
- Ways of generating, disseminating and incorporating evidence;
- The role of evidence in healthcare, education, criminology, welfare, transport, housing and urban policy,
- How research can meet demand for evidence;
- Ways to evaluate interventions;
- The failure of evidence to have much impact on policy making;
- How evidence can have more impact on policy making.

They conclude their introduction by acknowledging that the term "evidence-based" does not imply something "on which decisions hinge" (p.11) but that it represents more of an influence or awareness. The aim of the book is claimed to be to facilitate new insights by bringing diverse sectors together, but it could really be seen as an attempt to explain the basic components of evidence-based based policy making to policy makers while appeasing social scientists concerned about borrowing approaches and methods from the health sciences.

In sum, this chapter identifies most of the key issues involved in the debates surrounding evidence-based policy.

9.2 Nutley and Webb (2000)

While they are keen to see evidence based policy adopted more widely and used properly, the authors want to dispel any misconceptions that we are yet living in a scientifically guided society. They acknowledge the many examples of policy initiatives that seem to "either fly in the face of the best available research or at the very best, are based on flimsy evidence" (p.13). They therefore strive to present an overview of the possible relationship(s) between evidence and policy.

After presenting a short history of the relationship between research and public policy in the UK Nutley and Webb (2000) maintain that it is not entirely clear why it is that research evidence now has the opportunity to influence policy. Other writers such as Solesbury (2001), Mulgan (2003) or Marston and Watts (2003) ask the same question but are able to offer answers. Nutley and Watts (2000:22) identify the model of the ideal policy making process, as outlined by the UK Cabinet Office. It is intended to reflect the realities of policy making. It consists of nine features of a policy making process which should produce fully effective policies; three themes that a fully effective policy making process must encompass (vision, effectiveness and continuous improvements); nine core competencies that relate to each theme; and definition of the core competencies indicating the evidence that might be relevant to showing that the competencies are being met. According to the Cabinet Office, the nine core competencies encapsulate all the key elements of the policy making process:

- Forward looking (long term view);
- Outward looking (considers national and international situations);
- Innovative and creative;
- Using evidence;
- Inclusive;
- Joined up (looking beyond institutional boundaries);
- Evaluates;
- Reviews;
- Learns lessons.

While this model represents the policy making process, it is also possible to model the relationship between research and policy. Nutley and Webb (2000) show how selected models portray research evidence feeding into the process. The first of these is the rational model, consisting of five main stages where research evidence influences stages 2 and 3. This model is often criticized as unrealistic. An alternative is incrementalism (muddling through) where the process is piece meal and control is exerted by those with knowledge to influence others (after Lindblom 1959; in Nutley and Webb 2000:27). This model has in turn been criticized as politically naïve, resulting in various forms of mixed models (a middle ground between the previous two) and the garbage can model, where pre existing solutions can results in a search for problems to which they can become attached (p. 28).

Nutley and Webb assert that we still know relatively little about the dynamics of the policy process and how research evidence impacts on this process. However, they draw on the work of Weiss (1979) to show a range of models describing this relationship. They include:

- The knowledge drive model (derived from the natural sciences);
- The problem solving model (directly applies specific study results to a pending decision);
- The interactive model (researchers are just one set of participants among many);

- The political model (research is used as political ammunition);
- The tactical model (research is used as a delaying tactic to avoid responsibility for unpopular policy outcomes);
- The enlightenment model (the indirect influence of research). Pawson (2001); Mandell, Green and Linkcz (2001); and Weiss (2001) discuss this model further.

The enlightenment model is generally the most widely adopted view, although it has also been criticized as too pessimistic. However, the direct use of research findings does appear to be limited, probably because of information overload in the policy process, and analysts' lack of power (Nutley and Webb 2000:30). Direct use is more likely if the implications of the findings are relatively non-controversial, if the changes are small scale of the environment of the program is stable and when a program is in crisis and no one knows what to do (Weiss 1998, in Nutley and Webb 2000:30). However, as Nutley and Webb point out, the enlightenment model is based on American processes and does not necessarily apply elsewhere. The USA has a fragmented and decentralized political system which results in short run, single-issue research projects and not long term policy planning. In contrast, the more "corporatist" systems of Europe (and Australia) are better at fostering dialogue between researchers, bureaucrats and politicians (Nutley and Webb 2000:31-32).

Nutley and Webb (2002:32) introduce the concepts of "policy networks" which loose formal and informal relationships that shape agendas and decision making, and "policy communities", which have stable and restricted memberships. Frameworks vary across different policy areas. This is an interesting and useful view of policy making and it would appear that the policy network, the more open of the two models, is the usual mode of Australian housing policy making.

Nutley and Webb also note the importance of advocacy as a means by which research evidence becomes known within policy networks or communities (p. 33). This leads them to consider the relationship between evidence, policy and democracy. This section is rather brief (pp. 33-34) and can be summed up by Jenkins-Smith's observation that fears that experts would come to dominate the decision-making process and hence threaten democracy have not materialized (1990, in Nutley and Webb 2000). While Jenkins-Smith clearly came to this conclusion well before the rise of evidence-based policy making, Nutley and Webb refer to more recent thinking (e.g. Stoker 1999) which argues that social science and research evidence merely provide enlightenment rather than prescribe social engineering. They do not determine decisions because all knowledge is inconclusive, some problems are intractable to social science, learning needs to occur amongst ordinary citizens and democracy and participation are vital for good problem solving. This rationale, as it is presented here, is not particularly convincing, but other commentators have written more extensively on the necessity (and ethics) of public consultation and participation as a form of evidence in policy making (e.g. Johnston 2001, and Curtain 2002). On the other hand, the UK Cabinet Office (2001:15) reports that policy makers are not entirely convinced about the value of involving outside stakeholders in the design and testing of policy options. This is because during the early stage of formulating a policy a department may not yet be fully committed to it. Involving outside stakeholders may raise expectations or public criticism in cases when a pilot initiative does not work. Fear of leaks and premature publicity may also inhibit the range of consultation with stakeholders that would otherwise be useful.

This chapter is a good overview of the ways the research utilization and policy-making processes can be viewed.

9.3 Doherty (2000)

This is the only paper identified and selected for review which is of direct relevance to housing policy and research.

Doherty begins by noting that the long association between housing research and housing policy in Britain has been uneven and inconsistent. The problem, according to Doherty, lies with both researchers and policy makers. Researchers have employed inadequate methodologies and have neglected policy relevant concepts such as "cost-benefits". Policy makers have never clearly defined terms such as "decent" and "affordable", nor have they specified how they are to be achieved (Maclennan and Moore, 1999; cited in Doherty 2000:167).

Doherty identifies a paradox between the amount of housing research now taking place, and the impact of this research in housing policy formulation and implementation. He attributes this to the changing nature of housing policy with its involvement in issues beyond provision of shelter and the filtering role of political ideology. Moreover, the research being conducted is now more to do with evaluating operations at a more local level, rather than researching issues or setting the national policy agenda. This statement would seem to apply less to Australia than the UK but it does suggest that research considering broader issues needs to be protected.

Housing is no longer a key policy issue in the UK because past problems of shortages and unacceptable conditions have been resolved for the most part. Although affordability and shortages are again coming to the fore, the same could arguably be said of Australia, where the housing stock is generally younger and conditions less extreme. Housing problems now tend to be absorbed into wider policy considerations, such as sustainability and social exclusion. Multifaceted problems involving housing can result in tensions between different stakeholders and also reduces the housing dimensions of the problem (Doherty 2000:177-78). This also means that the evidence required to deal with these problems must come from more areas than just housing. Doherty feels that the challenge to housing researchers is to clearly understand how housing is involved in complex problems and its role in a multifaceted solution (p. 179).

This argument is not entirely convincing in the light of the considerable literature on the relationships between housing and gender, housing and the labour force and housing and wealth (amongst others), dating from at least the mid 1980s. However, it is true that housing cannot be "researched" in isolation of other social processes. Maclennan and Moore's call for housing researchers to use more "scientific" (apparently "quantitative") methodology such as cost benefit analysis (Doherty 2000:180) may or may not encourage attention to context.

Doherty then spends some time discussing general ideology and how it acts as a filter for evidence. He observes that although there is now increasing convergence between major political parties, "ideological conflict runs deep in the development of housing policy" (p.180). This point also pertains to Australia. Housing has traditionally tended to be seen as a consumption good by conservative governments and a public good by Labor governments (although neither commits itself to either position). Doherty acknowledges that Conservative administrations have accepted elements of a service approach by attempting to ensure the provision of a decent affordable housing for all, while Labor administrations have favoured a service approach but have been unwilling to challenge market provision (pp. 180-181). Again, there are clear parallels here with Australia, although the ideologies of provision tend to differ with the UK traditionally championing social housing, and Australia home ownership.

Housing as a public policy issue in Australia has much in common with the UK and Doherty makes some interesting points about how the role of ideology in public policy has affected housing policy – noting first that unlike health and education, housing as a public policy issue has never been fully taken on board and has only ever been partially decommodified. In the UK, both conservative and Labor governments have

increasingly adopted an ideology of "individualism", based on the notion that people must take responsibility for themselves and their actions. This perspective influences housing policy by discouraging state interference or assistance in individual affairs and by blaming the victim, and so averting the need for structural reforms.

Australian readers will relate to the following:

> In the realm of housing policy, individualism leads to privatization and the 'rolling back' of the state, of which Right to Buy is the clearest demonstration, now reinforced by large scale stock transfer of housing…. These developments have the effect of further residualisation particularly since no new investment is being made in replacement council housing (Doherty 2000:181).

Consequently, proposed solutions to the problems of residualisation (spatial concentration of disadvantaged households) reflect the way "ideology filters evidence in determining policy" (p.182). The best example of this in the housing arena is the creation of mixed tenure and mixed income communities. Doherty (2000:182) sees this type of policy as "consistent with an individualist ideology that views employed home owners as the epitome of respectability; individuals who have taken responsibility for themselves and can provide role models of exemplary behaviour for the seemingly 'feckless' residents of 'unbalanced' housing estates". The evidence on the efficacy such policies (which, according to Doherty, is considerable) has been ignored. Ideology has (apparently) prevailed over evidence.

Doherty concludes that the current "open government" policy "might" provide an opportunity for researchers to increase their influence on housing policy formulation, as the current government has indeed demonstrated commitment to this policy (p. 183). However, closer inspection of this policy (see http://www.dti.gov.uk/SMD3/og02-01d.htm or http://www.lcd.gov.uk/foi/ogcode981.htm) suggests that it is more about the public's access to information on government policies and administrative decisions than about an incoming flow of information and so Doherty's optimism may be misplaced. However, like most other commentators, he feels that influencing policy formulation is the responsibility of the research community as much as government. His final point is that the recent theoretical development in housing research and adoption of new approaches from other social sciences should be seen as useful for producing the complex evidence required for housing policy making.

This is a useful but tantalizingly brief presentation of the way the rhetoric and the practice of evidence based policymaking is (or is not) elucidated in UK housing policy. The most salient point is that ideology has particular significance in this area of public policy. This is of particular relevance to the adoption of Australian housing policy, given the historically strong ideology of homeownership. On the other hand, the influence of ideology is not unique to the use of an evidence-based policy making approach. In the context of other literature pointing to the need for evidence to be strong enough to over ride prevailing beliefs (e.g. Weiss 2001), Doherty's work suggests that housing research may have a greater challenge (or difficulty) in contributing to evidence based policy than other areas of policy.

9.4 Sanderson (2000)

Sanderson sees the increasing requirement for greater government accountability as the prime driver for the development of evaluative systems, used to produce evidence of performance. Evaluation will also help to promote more effective government by providing evidence of "what works " and informing policy learning and improvement. This fits well with the rational model of decision making in the policy process, with its "positivistic" epistemological foundation (p. 5). Sanderson is sympathetic toward the emerging "constructivist" or "interpretivist" position which recognizes the roles of knowledge and context and observes the difficulty in reconciling these with the practical

requirements of policymaking processes which assume “grounded knowledge” (p.6). However, he argues that a heightened sense of the world’s complexity actually increases the need for analytical and cognitive decision making.

The first half of this paper consists largely of lengthy quotations from other commentators and uncritical reporting of their views, rather than Sanderson’s own argument. This makes it rather uninspiring to read. Fortunately the paper is redeemed by its second half, which considers the contribution of piloting to evidence-based policy making.

According to Sanderson, evaluations of pilot programs suggest there are significant limitations to their ability to convincingly answer “does it work?”. These limitations are related to the time needed for the effects of new policies to be evident (especially in the case of changing attitudes and behaviour) and for impacts to be measured and isolated from other factors (especially exogenous change and the effects of other initiatives). There are also political considerations that constrain the length of time the pilot operates and hurry the evaluation process (p. 11). He also acknowledges the ethical problems associated with denying eligible people the benefits of the initiative (but see Bickman 2000 for a careful analysis of this issue, albeit in the American context). Other problems include variations in delivery, lack of stability over time in the implementation of a policy, a greater level of commitment amongst staff, and generous resources to ‘make’ the pilot work. All of these factors mean that a pilot may not represent the policy as it will ultimately be implemented (p.12). Thus there are really two questions – “does it work?”, and “can it be made to work?” Sanderson argues that policy makers tend to place more weight on the second of these questions and treat pilots as “trail blazing”. He then backtracks by saying that we need to be extremely cautious in making any claim that policy makers are not committed to piloting as genuine experimentation to find evidence about whether policies work (p.13). However, he does question the current approach to pilot evaluation. Suggested alternatives include the use of systematic reviews, genuine pilot experiments designed with evaluation needs in mind, which can collect robust evidence, and long term evaluations of policies themselves.

Like Pawson (2000), Sanderson draws on a theory-based approach that accounts for context, although in this case he is applying it to evaluation rather than Pawson’s program mechanisms. The analysis of context is crucial because the success of a policy may depend on the prevailing economic, social, institutional and political circumstances at any one time (p.14). Further, the key to understanding the effect of context is comparative analysis, not controlled experimental comparisons. Evaluation needs to address the different levels at which processes operate and effects are produced.

Given the UK Cabinet Office’s commitment to achieving “joined up” policies, (where policies across difference sectors are synchronized and complementary), evaluation needs a holistic approach. This approach should address the different levels at which processes operate and effects are produced (e.g. at the individual, household or community level) and use pluralistic methodologies. Sanderson emphasis the that the evaluation of policy interventions needs to be highly time sensitive, both in terms of the length of time needed for any effect, and the operation of social process and policy mechanisms which may be temporally discontinuous, due to different contexts. It also needs to account for all stakeholders. Considering all stakeholders calls for a participative approach so as to avoid top down evaluation. This may require capacity building especially for community groups (assuming the evaluators and the agencies commissioning them are committed to promoting their empowerment).

The role of evaluators in policy making has generally been overlooked in favour of researchers in the rest of the literature, but Sanderson calls for them to be included as participants in the policy discourse. Like Nutley, Davies and Webb (2002), or Edwards and Nutley (2003), in reference to researchers, Sanderson feels evaluators need to improve their communication skills and use the appropriate media for communication.

They should take the role of advocate rather than neutral technician (Jenkins-Smith and Sabateri 1993, in Sanderson 2000:17).

Though wordy, Sanderson's paper is important in highlighting the role of evaluation as part of the evidence in evidence-based policy making, and showing that evaluation of pilots or even longer standing policies is subject to many of the same influences as other forms of evidence.

9.5 Harrison (2000)

"Urban policy" refers to policy designed to arrest the economic and social decline of either parts of cities, whole settlements, or even (more recently), cities in general (Urban Task Force, in Harrison 2000:207). Harrison also uses the term "urban regeneration" interchangeably with "urban policy". Because urban policy has a cross sectional nature, involving other policy sectors (involving housing, transport, regional economics, planning and so on) as well as a varied range of stakeholders (central and local government, local communities, private sector, voluntary organizations and community), Harrison concentrates on the integrative or "holistic" nature of urban policy. He uses the city and the neighbourhood as the areal unit for discussing the evidence produced by the past 30 years of urban policy in the UK.

He comes straight to the point in the first paragraph by observing that that urban policy is has a number of features that make the idea of an 'evidence' based urban policy problematic. As in many other public policy areas, it is difficult to link predictable outcomes with discrete interventions. Urban policy has a strong political dimension, possibly because it has always been grounded in strong political philosophies in the absence of supporting evidence (p.207). It is also difficult to isolate and measure the impact of interventions because generally both the interventions and the outcomes are complex. Because urban policy is targeted at a geographically defined area, there may be a displacement effect, (gains offset by losses elsewhere) and beneficiaries may not be persons living or working in the area. Displacement is a fundamental problem in evaluating area-based programs.

Harrison sees a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods for triangulation and consideration of context as essential features of urban policy evaluation and cites some studies listed on the UK Department of Transport and the Regions website. He notes that these studies "do not go so far as to claim to *be* evidence-based policy" (italics mine) (p.214). It would be puzzling if monitoring or evaluation studies were themselves identified or defined as "policy" and suggests some confusion over the definition of evidence based policy making. Such evaluation studies are not intended to "be" a policy - they are instead the information that informs or supports it. As Harrison says later (p. 218), much of the data coming from the appraisal and evaluation requirements of urban funding is designed to ensures value for money and rigorous project management, and it also provides and evidence base for what works in urban policy. Many such studies have been conducted in the UK.

As urban policy is area-based, it must be able to identify areas with high levels of need. However, problems involved in identifying such areas include appropriate or up to date data (this is particularly a problem in Britain with its decennial Census); the value judgements and technical issues associated with combining different datasets to produce single indices.

The remainder of the chapter considers a selection of studies and draws conclusions about the extent to which they provide evidence about urban interventions that could be replicated.

Interestingly, Harrison reports on one study designed as a controlled experiment and conducted by the Department of Environment, based on Alice Coleman's work. Coleman is a right wing academic who has been decried in the urban studies and criminology literature, even described as "less than intellectually coherent" (Lea 1997). She was severely taken to task for her environmentally determinist conclusions and exaggerated importance of weak and insignificant correlations by peer reviewers. Therefore it is not surprising that Harrison reports there were was less benefit from design improvements than predicted by Coleman's work. He also notes the difficulty of using experimental trials as a means of obtaining evidence of 'what works' (p. 222). However, he does not acknowledge the many valid (even damning) criticisms of Coleman's work and its lack of a "warrant" (as Gorard 2002 would undoubtedly point out). The failure to obtain benefits from the suggested design improvements could be attributed more to the underlying premises than to the research design, especially given the success of social experiments in the US (e.g. (Oakley 1998; Cordray 2000; Davies 2000; Oakley 2000). Other the other hand, it is true, as Harrison claims (p. 223), that local context and other specific factors influence the effects of interventions and there is a such a range and variation in the factors involved that it is impossible to control for the effect of a specific intervention.

Harrison concludes that the concept of evidence based policy making in urban policy must take on a different meaning than in areas such as education. The difficulty of achieving evidence-based urban policy also reflects the limited available methodologies and analytical tools able to provide reliable and valid evidence. He feels that "softer" methodologies that account for context, local conditions and processes are most appropriate. Systematic reviews would be useful but difficult to conduct, given the range of different research designs (p. 225). The policy judgements based on the type of evidence that can be collected in this field would still be open to question, but this reinforces rather than negates the idea of evidence based urban policymaking. The use of evidence would help prevent politicization.

Harrison offers little in the way of constructive assistance of how to use evidence in urban policy making. Nor does he even tentatively suggest "what works", even within the limits of existing research and the difficulties posed by variable contexts. He points out the key difficulties in reconciling evidence based policy making and urban policy (many of which are shared by other policy areas) but disappointingly, does not go further than this.

9.6 Davies (2000)

As one of the chapters in Davies et al (2000), (Davies 2000) considers the role of qualitative research in evidence based policy making. He begins with the claim that both qualitative and quantitative data have a long history of contributing to social science and policy research (p.291). He then makes the valid observation that the insistence on data derived from randomized controlled trials in medicine has had the effect of devaluing qualitative research and evidence. The premise of the chapter is that both quantitative and qualitative research and data are usually required for the highest quality of evidence in public policy (p. 292). There are three parts in this chapter; describing what constitutes qualitative research; reviewing what constitutes evidence and exploring how qualitative research has informed policy. The last of these is of most relevance to this review.

The diversity of methods used by qualitative researchers may be unfamiliar to public policy makers. Davies makes the unusual assertion that there is a long and often heated debate within the social sciences about whether social science should have anything to do with policy concerns (p. 294).

Qualitative concerns are part of the process of determining precisely what the question is, because the question affects decisions on the most appropriate subjects, which interventions are to be investigated, what contextual and ethical issues are involved

and what outcomes are to be measured (p. 296). While it may surprise researchers who have conducted randomized controlled trials, Davies shows how qualitative issues are involved in randomly allocating subjects to experimental and control groups. Qualitative concerns can also determine appropriate and valid outcome measures. For example, employers may be more interested in students' problem solving skills than their qualifications. Qualitative research can also identify context specificity.

There is a need for qualitative evidence to be summarized and synthesized with the same degree of rigor as randomized controlled trials. This requires the development of a set of quality criteria. Qualitative data provides principles and procedures for EBP making by addressing the ethics and justice of pursuing a particular policy (p. 307). Ethical issues arise in all areas of public policy (p. 307). However, this issue is rarely mentioned in the EBP literature that begs the question of whether it does happen as part and parcel of such policy making.

This chapter gave good overviews of how qualitative research can shed light on many issues and overcome the limitations of quantitative research but in spite of the initial statement of the chapter's aims, it did not really explain or elaborate on how it is viewed or utilized by policy makers in any detail or meaningful fashion. It tends instead to cover much the same ground as many textbooks on research methods.

9.7 Curtain (2000b)

(Curtain 2000b) is a former internal researcher and policy maker who now runs a small consultancy specializing in applied public policy research in relation to training and labour market issues in Australia. His paper addresses the tension between Australian governments' (federal and State) capacity to produce innovative public policy and recent changes, namely the recent loss of experienced personnel and a lack of non government funded sources of policy advice. Curtain's paper paints an interesting backdrop of the current state of policy making in Australia. He notes that it has changed markedly in the second half of the 1990s, by outsourcing many of the larger service functions (e.g. the CES) and adopting a more strategic and integrated approach to policy making (p. 1). There has also been a decreased internal capacity to design, develop and implement new policy. This means an increasing reliance on outside sources of expertise. The problem here is that research-based policy development is a complex intellectual process that cannot be rigidly prescribed and requires the client to have confidence in the consultant to deliver the desired outcome. This puts the consultant in a difficult position because they have little bargaining power and know that their only choice is to forego the work; the commissioning department can always use the tenderer rated second (p.2).

In this situation, the client may tend to over control the research by "insisting on a highly prescriptive and unnecessarily detailed methodology, seeking to add additional requirements during the course of the study and shaping the final product to fit what is perceived by those on the steering committee as acceptable outcomes" (p. 2). Moreover, Curtain suggests that there may develop a tendency for work to be offered to consultants who may have less research or policy advice experience but are more pliant, with the result of a restricted capacity to provide good evidence-based policy advice (p.2). Sometimes commissioned reports may not even be released by departments, to the detriment of the consultant's profile. Curtain feels that a code of practice may be the best way to decide, conduct and conclude research and policy contracts.

The Australian policy situation is fragmented because ministers are only accountable to parliament. This discourages integration of departments and service delivery and encourages departments to look after their own interests. The emphasis on program output reporting and performance agreements between departmental head and ministers results in a piecemeal and short-term policy focus (Curtain 2000b:2). Also public services tend to be organized too much around the structure of provides and not

users. Defensiveness in protecting existing programs and policy directions, in spite of evidence they are not working, is related to the hierarchical structure of policy making and government. Curtain claims that senior managers in hierarchical organizations have already "made it" and are most likely to be conservative about new ideas. They have been associated with past policy actions and thus likely to defend them. More junior staff are also constrained by this risk aversive attitude (p. 3) Curtain also sees Australian public policy making as conservative in terms of policy formulation and implementation and this is reflected by the general absence of pilot or demonstration projects in public policy in Australia.

Curtain feels that there is often a lack of transparency in Australian policy making and the danger of this is that the circle of personnel involved in decision-making is limited and those who are able to provide insights can be cut out of the discussion. If there is a limit on what information is publicly available, this weakens the quality of decision making, leading to more mistakes and thus more defensiveness, creating a vicious circle (p. 5). Curtain's proposed code of practice specifies that the consultant should be allowed to publish the report at his or her own expense if the client decides not to do so, with acknowledgement that the report reflects the view of the consultant alone. The client's reservation could also be noted in the publication if necessary.

Curtain's paper gives some interesting insights into what goes on behind the scenes in Australian public policy making and bluntly states what some university based researchers may have felt but have not publicly expressed. His (and Hamel 1999's) observation that the market for new policy ideas is a monopsony (where there is a single buyer) is a point which deserves further attention.

9.8 Fleer (2000)

Fleer (2001) offers some policy directions stemming from a review of the field of early childhood education in Australia, while she was a Research Fellow based within DETYA. She states that this experience made her realize the importance of directing research efforts toward evidence based policy development. The study she worked on examined the perceived research needs of early childhood professionals, researchers and practitioners in the field with a view to informing policy for developing a research agenda in this field. The report does not specifically examine the value of an explicitly evidence based policy making approach in early childhood education but takes this as a given, and then identifies the gaps in existing knowledge. The chapter on "evidence-based policy development" reviews key studies in the field and concludes that there is a need for longitudinal Australian studies. Existing policy is based on the assumption that there are "shared universals" between early childhood education experiences in Australia and other countries.

This report would be of more use to researchers or policy makers focusing on early childhood education. It does not add much to our understanding of how evidence based policy making can, should or does occur in Australia, either in general, or in the field of early childhood education, beyond the observation that Australian education policy tends to be based on non-Australian knowledge. This is a charge that can be applied to many other areas of Australian public policy. Consequently, most of Fleer's policy implications involve calls for the Commonwealth to make greater investments in research, research infrastructure and research expertise.

9.9 Weiss (2001)

Weiss is one of the key figures in the evidence based policy literature and has been involved in debates surrounding evidence based policy since the late 1960s, particularly evaluation, knowledge utilization and the influence of research on policy. She speaks largely from the American perspective but offers many insights gleaned from the American experiences with social experiments to the UK and elsewhere. She also has research experience across a range of public policy areas from drug abuse to

education. This is a paper presented at the Third International, Inter-disciplinary Evidence-Based Policies and Indicator Systems Conference in the UK, where she focused on four key issues: the history of empirical research and theorizing on evidence-based policy; why evidence does not always prevail, and why it shouldn't; kinds of evidence social scientists believe decision makers should consider and some cautionary notes.

She recounts her experience in the late 1960s when she produced a lengthy and detailed evaluation of a program addressing black poverty in Harlem. Forty copies were sent to Washington, as it was a government funded evaluation, but for various reasons, the report was completely ignored. This experience led to her ongoing concern with research use. The reasons Weiss gives for the lack of impact appear no different to what might occur in the 2000s – the local agency administering the program was coming to the end of its grant and needed to implement whatever new programs were most likely to be funded – news about the past was of no interest. While the report would have been relevant in Washington, a new agency had been set up and the staff wanted to be innovative and find new directions.

Many other social scientists examined what became known as "knowledge utilization" since the late 1970s. In the early 1980s Weiss coined the term "enlightenment" to describe the process of research informing the climate of opinion, without necessarily changing policy or practice. Raised awareness (or enlightenment) led to changes in what was defined as important and changed many long-standing assumptions. Evaluation research in particular was good at challenging beliefs and highlighting new understandings about why things worked as they do. As Weiss (2001:285) puts it "…enough research percolated into the policy sphere enough of the time for officials to value research and want to keep supporting it. It was becoming a source of news about the world out there, a kind of continuing education for officials."

While it was heartening for researchers to know that information becomes known over time, the question remained of why the neglect of more direct use of research findings was so pervasive. It was not until the new emphasis on evidence bad policy in the UK rose to the fore that the answer to this question became clearer. It has now been widely recognized that evidence is not the only input in policy making (p. 286).

Weiss identifies "four I's" involved in policy making:

- ideology (people's basic values – of policy makers and wider society);
- interests (can be personal or organizational, such as personal career aspirations or maximizing budgets)
- institutional norms and practices (for example the US congress works largely through face to face contact – reading is not part of the norm and so written documents of research findings are likely to be ignored);
- prior information (policy makers already have information from various sources. New information at variance with existing beliefs must be strong enough to change them).

Weiss believes that the influence of research evidence on policy making is gaining ground, citing the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) case as an example. This is an instance where an evaluation of a long-standing national program on drug abuse education in schools, found the program to be ineffective. As a result, the program has been replaced in some schools and is undergoing revision in others.

There are four kinds of evidence which have an impact on public policy making:

- descriptive data (such as unemployment rates, trade deficits, incidence and prevalence rates of parameters such as teenage pregnancy, high school retention rates, number of building approvals and time trends);

- analytic findings (which look for causal relationships and explanations);
- evaluative evidence (examines the effectiveness of existing policies and programs. Can be very influential but negative findings can face defensiveness and even hostility from stakeholders);
- policy analysis (influence depends on analyst's position in relation to power, but its value is evident by growing number of think tanks)

The paper is overwhelmingly positive, even 'upbeat' as Weiss herself describes it (p. 290) but it does acknowledge the fallibility and time-limited character of social science research and how much more vulnerable social science is to error and bias, in comparison with the physical sciences. The final point covered in the paper is that much rhetoric surrounds public participation in decision making but it is not yet clear how public participation will affect evidence-based policy making. Weiss's guess is that it will reduce the impact of evidence because newly enfranchised groups will vote their interests first (p. 291). She concludes that movement toward wider participation in policy making means that researchers' findings will have to convince a wide swath of the public if policy is to be truly evidence-based (p. 291).

This paper is a useful summary of the realities surrounding evidence-based policy making and gives a good overview of the historical context. However, in spite of the question asked in the title "what kind of evidence in evidence based policy making?" the answer was relatively brief and is given less than a quarter of the paper's attention. The definition of evidence is a key issue in the evidence-based policy literature and is generally provided in concise terms in the introduction of most papers on the subject. But this paper's title suggests that the paper will unpack the term and explore it more fully and in this respect it fails to deliver. On the other hand, the absence of any in – depth analysis of the question may simply imply it is actually a relatively straightforward concept.

9.10 Pawson (2001a)

This paper introduces a new approach to evidence based policy making, which Pawson terms "realist synthesis". This refers to a "generative" understanding of causation – it is not programs that work but the resources they offer to enable their subjects to make them work. This is termed the "mechanism". This also solves one of the key problems involved with systematic reviews in the social sciences – properly comparing like with like (p. 6). Pawson cites Durlak and Wells (1997) and Towner (1996) as convincing examples of how comparing families of programs does not result in policy alternatives.

Realism assumes that each time a program mechanism is initiated (in different types of programs), it will result in both success and failure. Each program is then reviewed to identify the context of success and failure. Negative and positive outcomes are equally important – successful policy depends as much on avoiding errors as on repeating successes (p. 7). Pawson explains, with reference to Popper, how this perspective is consistent with the philosophy of science, as progress in science is falsificationist or analytically inductive (the best way to improve a theory is to search for negative instances). He asserts that identifying the scope and boundaries of an explanation is "absolutely crucial" to evaluation methodology because as we already know, programs work in limited circumstances. As Pawson puts it, "if we can discover where and why the bright idea fails, we have vital clues on when and how it can succeed." (p.8).

To emphasize the point, Pawson summarizes the differences between approaches using, meta analysis (via systematic review), narrative review and realist synthesis: meta-analysis performs calculations to reveal "best buys"; narrative review delivers text to understand exemplary cases; and realist synthesis delves into inconsistencies to build program theories (p.9). While his conception of narrative reviewing is debatable, as such reviews generally strive to resent a balanced case rather than just the exemplary cases, this is a useful clarification.

Pawson demonstrates that theory building (of a middle range nature) is more useful than assembling empirical generalizations, using "naming and shaming" as a brief example and then the use of incentives as a case study. Like existing approaches, realist synthesis also begins by compiling a database of systematically identified previous research, but these studies are identified by their underlying program theory. Therefore they represent many different policy sectors (including, health, housing, education, crime and so on). In the case study, the use of incentives is examined in the area of health (incentives to give up smoking), safety (incentives for poor households to install fire alarms), crime (providing income support to ex-convicts while finding a job), transport (free provision of bikes to reduce traffic congestion and pollution), housing (subsidies for home improvement for inadequate dwellings) and education (grants for disadvantaged students so as to widen university participation). Each of these incentive programs contributes a "contextual constraint" which Pawson then summarizes:

- Chaotic budgets;
- Exchange utility
- Technical problems and durability
- Widening ownership;
- Rival markets
- Demarcating users
- Policing the incentive;
- Bureaucratic constraints;
- External controls.

He acknowledges that the combinations of these elements will always be context dependent but argues that research should be able to identify a range of positive, middle range configurations - "theory and evidence work best when they meet in the middle" (p. 18). How policy makers will respond to "a tale of caution delivered at a modest level of abstraction" (p. 19) is another issue, which remains to be seen.

The idea of focusing on "policy mechanisms" and "contextual constraints" across different sectors rather than different programs with similar aims, is both logical and promising. It appears though that even though it may be a more realistic approach than identifying best buys, its practicality hinges on how well it its results are utilized by policy makers. It may be merely be that some tweaking is needed to downplay the theoretical underpinnings when presenting and communicating conclusions.

9.11 Pawson (2001b)

Pawson (2001) uses the policy intervention popularly known as "naming and shaming" to build a theory about the "whys and wherefores" which can then feed into decision making. He notes that some readers will be bemused by the notion that evidence-based policymaking should be based on theory rather than empirical or quantified results, but explains that since policymaking s a conceptual and self-revising process, it should be inspired by well grounded, middle range theory (p. 4). The paper considers six instances of naming and shaming which show cumulative and transferable lessons about the value of this policy and then considers how this knowledge can inform further

policy making. Like other evidence-based policy commentators (e.g. (Solesbury 2001; Marston 2003) Pawson feels that the question to be asked is not "what works?" but "what works for whom in what circumstances?" Otherwise, the inevitable answer is that outcomes of specific interventions are inconsistent. As an aside, here we see the main problem with applying the systematic review process as it is used in the health sciences to the social sciences. If we do not attempt to draw out the lessons of varying outcomes in a systematic review, the use of the rigorous methodology is wasted. The reviewer would have been better off conducting a narrative review, with its focus on identifying commonalities and divergences. As Pawson (2001) argues, systematic reviews are valuable for many reasons but they should consider "families of interventions" as the unit of analysis. A family of interventions is defined by the use of the same program theory and not the policy domain in which they are located. The policy of "naming and shaming" for example, can be used across many areas from health care to education to crime. Policies in any of these domains may be area-based, preventative or holistic, amongst other approaches. In the case of naming and shaming, the underlying theory is that exposure of a miscreant (whether institutional, corporate or individual) to the public will result in them improving their behaviour or performance.

The realist approach to examining interventions in the public policy arena is to look for weaknesses or failures. For example, naming and shaming will fail if the culprit is misidentified or the sanctions are too extreme or ineffective. The systematic review acknowledges that there will be both successes and failures, and addresses why this is so. The material used to inform reviews may come from a wide range of sources – for Pawson there is no hierarchy of evidence and systematic reviews need to "scavenge" for data wherever they can (p. 5). The aim of the review using the realist approach is transferable theory, because programs are not directly replicable or transferable but ideas are. Theories are built from a range of mechanisms and contexts that determine outcomes. Using the naming and shaming example, three mechanisms are identified: the nature of the sanction (which are shaming's best allies); the nature of the routing (which action pathways are most productive); and the nature of the disclosure (what should be disclosed and how). Contextual differences include: moral authority and the public interest (how norms and values surrounding the issue affect the degree of shaming); the constitution of and interrelationships between stakeholders (who can be shamed and who do the shaming); and problem obduracy and readiness of the remedy (the kinds of problems for which shaming results in change (pp. 7-9). Pawson (2001) uses five cases of naming and shaming to explore the mechanisms and contexts in light of their outcomes, including the Car Theft Index, (which lists the make, model and year of cars most likely to be stolen so that car manufacturers improve security features), publicity of poll tax protesters (public authorities name individuals in arrears for bills such as the poll tax), hospital report cards, sex offender registration, and the toxic releases inventory. By comparing the mechanisms, contexts and outcomes of each, Pawson is able to formulate broad theories about what works in what situations.

The final part of Pawson's paper is about how this theory development (or evidence) transfers into policy. His view of the extent to which this actually happens (i.e. degree of utilization) is in his words "for the most part negative, somewhat pessimistic, but undoubtedly realistic" (p. 19) on the basis that many studies show that policy makers generally use evidence indirectly and haphazardly. This is because there are so many other factors involved in policy making, as Nutley and Webb (2000); Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz (2001) and others also observe. However, Pawson also explains that this does not mean we may as well not bother – he does feel that Weiss' "enlightenment model" (in which research evidence becomes incorporated into the knowledge base over time) is valid, and that the realist approach may help move the drips of evidence percolation into a steady stream (p. 20). Yet as Stone (2003:10) points out, research and debate within the enlightenment model may take considerable

time, even a generation, to reveal its influence. Pawson does not seem to consider the timeframe dilemma.

Pawson's paper is a readable one, written in an informal style and peppered with humour and self confessed murdered metaphors. But it does make a contribution toward improving the way evidence should be presented to policy makers by presenting a way of making it more transferable (i.e. theory formulation); and it adds a dimension to the production of systematic reviews in the social sciences. The ideas in this paper are still in a relatively early stage of development but have set the scene for further work.

9.12 Johnston (2001)

The paper by Johnston (2001) is derived from her Master's thesis in local economic development at the University of Glasgow. Her research examines the influence of evidence based policy and practice on urban regeneration activities and so is one of less than a handful of papers specifically concerned with evidence-based policymaking in the context of urban and housing issues. The inclusion of this work as part of the Evidence Network's bibliography indicates the quality of this work (but perhaps also the paucity of research in this specific area).

The first chapter is a theoretical overview of evidence-based policy and practice as it has been used in health and social services. It also considers current government policy and its interest in evidence based practice in many areas of public policy. Thus it covers the same material as many other papers already included in this review. However, it also discusses what happens when an evidence based approach is not followed and this section warrants closer attention.

Johnston (2001:5) voices the initial reaction of many readers new to the concept of evidence-based policymaking; that it would seem to be the only way of informing and making policy. This is not actually so. Johnston recites Leicester (1999) who identified seven "enemies" of evidence-based policymaking: bureaucratic logic (doing things the way they have always been done); the bottom line (where numbers matter more than quality); consensus (where issues are decided on the basis of agreement and not evidence); politics (which considers what is possible rather than what might work best); civil service culture (distrust of information generated outside the system); cynicism and time. Leicester links cynicism in with civil service culture while the incongruence of timeframes for policy making and timeframes for research have been discussed elsewhere in this review (e.g. Curtain 2002; Edwards and Nutley 2003; Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz 2001; Percy-Smith et al 2002).

There are also occasions where there are practical reasons for why evidence based approach is not taken. These include expense, lack of staff capacity to gather evidence, or insurmountable difficulty in collecting the evidence. Sometimes there may be only one way to proceed and all are agreed on it (Johnston 2001:6).

Johnston also makes the important point in this section that if the only policies and programs ever to be developed were ones based on evidence, there would not be any new ideas or innovation. Therefore a good strategy is to pilot new ideas which seem worth pursuing on a small scale, and using the evidence from the pilot to inform a larger scale program (Johnston 2001:6).

On considering the evidence base for regeneration, Johnston distinguishes between general research evidence, which informs new policy, and evaluation evidence, which asses the impact and effectiveness of programs. It is evaluation evidence that most closely corresponds with the traditional view of an evidence base. This work also tends to be carried out by or on behalf of government departments and although disseminated to the range of stakeholders, evaluation reports do not tend to gain wide audiences (Johnston 2001:8).

To uncover the use of evidence in policy development and project implementation, she interviewed officers from 25 different organizations with a range of size, age and location. Only seven of the 25 organizations indicated the use of research in the form of literature searches, feasibility studies and looking at completed similar projects. But in all of these cases, the evidence was considered during the decision making process. However, 19 of the organizations did look for instances of similar programs and projects for implementation began. The main reason given for not looking for precedents was lack of time, although there was awareness that doing so would probably save time in the long run. Six of the 25 organizations also claimed that when they did examine other experiences it was difficult to transfer any of the information to their own projects. It was also commented by one of the offices that there is often community resistance to importing ideas that have worked elsewhere (Johnston 2001:25). The most important means of collecting evidence of precedents was found to be personal contacts, (24 out of 25) followed by the Internet (14 out of 25) and regeneration journals (12 out of 25).

Most of the interviewed officers did not critically evaluate the information they found and those that did were not overly rigorous. The tendency to minimize or disguise failures was said to make it difficult to assess projects on the basis of written material and so site visits were often used instead (or in addition) where possible (Johnston 2001:27).

Johnston concludes that finding proof (as part of the Oxford Dictionary definition of "evidence") in regeneration is difficult because as every problem area is different and might respond differently to similar mechanisms (pp. 30-31). This means that another part of the Oxford definition of evidence – "example" is the most commonly used form of evidence. When policy makers look for precedents, they are looking for examples, which are not expected to represent "what works". Moreover, they are very interested in what does not work as this can provide valuable lessons– this is obviously the opposite approach to that used in medicine.

Johnston's study also revealed that evaluations of major regeneration programs are priced publications only available direct from the publishers. This means they are difficult to obtain, especially after any length of time has passed. Evaluations and review of local" projects are generally sent to the relevant funding body and may be circulated locally but are not generally distributed. Substantial publications are unlikely to be read in detail by most staff anyway. However, material from the Joseph Rowntree foundation's website was seen as accessible and useful (Johnston 2001:33). However, many regeneration programs are not evaluated at all, especially those which are small scale with limited funding (p.36).

In her concluding chapter Johnston suggests that regeneration agencies are more likely to use evidence based approach than other types of organizations or departments because regeneration is still a relatively new activity (p. 35). This also suggests they are less likely to have the type of culture and structure that would inhibit evidence based policy making.

The final (and briefest) section of the report asks "is evidence-based policy and practice a better way?" Unfortunately, the answer is rather trite – a clear yes, with only rhetorical consideration of what the alternatives actually are (e.g. "Always working out ways of doing things from scratch?" p. 37). This is irksome given that earlier in the report Johnston identified a range of other approaches. To close the report she presents some quotations from her interviewees who were asked whether they thought an evidence based approach was feasible in the field of regeneration, and their answers suggest unfamiliarity with the definition of evidence based policy as presented by authors such as Davies, Nutley and Smith (2000): "If it isn't what the hell are we all doing?" "Absolutely, otherwise we are all reinventing the wheel" and so on. These responses strike a similar note to those given by the housing and policy researchers in non-English speaking countries contacted during the review, who took the term

"evidence-based policy" at face value, not recognizing that the term refers to specific processes, elements and factors.

On the whole, the report is a modest contribution to the evidence based policy-making literature, showing, not unexpectedly, that there are both constraints and benefits to using an evidence-based policymaking approach to regeneration. However, one is left wondering if there would have been any additional insights if the definition of evidence based policy making had been made clear to the interviewees. It would also have been useful to know if there are any portent characteristics of policy making specific to regeneration, in addition to the examination of the characteristics of the evidence in this area.

9.13 Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz (2001)

Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz 's paper is one of the few papers in this review that includes some empirical findings. The authors are also writing of the American experience. The paper addresses the ways that evidence obtained from social experiments is used in policy making and the factors accounting for variation in the type and amount of impact. Social experiments are seen by most commentators in the evidence-based policymaking debate as a rigorous means of obtaining evidence in the social arena – they are also a research strategy that is rarely used outside the USA. Although the prospect of conducting social experiments in Australia is doubtful, (on practical and ethical grounds) it is nonetheless useful to examine the conclusions drawn by this paper as they may offer useful insights and lessons which could not be obtained from alternative strategies. The question of ethics in social experimentation is a separate topic in itself and the reader is directed to (Bickman 2000) and (Davies 2000) for further discussion of the issue. It should be mentioned that there are also good ethical grounds in favour of conducting such research.

Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz begin by offering a three-part conceptual framework which unpacks and categorizes the factors influencing utilization. It is a reformulation of an earlier typology (Whiteman 1985; in Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz 2001:4) and consists of three "dimensions". The first part of this framework covers essentially the same areas as Nutley, Walter and Davies' (2002:19) summary of types of utilization. Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz' taxonomy however is couched in more jargonistic management terms such as "formative-concrete-substantive utilization" and "persuasive/advocacy-conceptual-elaborative utilization" (p. 5). The reader is advised to use the Nutley, Walter and Davies version for greater ease of understanding. However, the main point of the Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz taxonomy is to emphasize the point that research can be used in many different ways. While social experiments are generally expected to contribute to "formative-concrete-substantive utilization", or what Nutley, Walter and Davies (2002) would call "instrumental utilization", perhaps better termed as direct or practical utilization, they may also result in one or more of the variety of other utilization types.

Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz then point out some limitations of such categorizing (which Nutley, Walter and Davies do not). These include: the difficulty in distinguishing between some types of utilization, because which type occurs depends largely on the prior position of policy makers - and this is not always known; what counts as a use, or impact, is not always obvious (for example if the evidence from one experiment is used in more than one state, does this count as one use or more than one?); the virtual impossibility of uncovering every instance of utilization of any research; the reality that the categories are not mutually exclusive (for example, different policy makers may use the same evidence in different ways).

The second and third parts of Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz's conceptual framework consist of factors relating to the characteristics of the social experiment (definitiveness, timeliness, communicability and visibility, generalisability and relevance) and the characteristics of the policy environment (ideology, interests and information).

The authors make the interesting observation that even though an experimental research designs are les vulnerable to methodological criticism than other designs and are also more readily understood by policy makers, potential users do not necessarily view their findings as more definite than findings from non-experimental research. This is because experimental findings are not necessarily less ambiguous than nonexperimental findings, and their size and importance may attract scrutinisation and reanalysis of the data (p.10).

Timeliness is a recurrent theme in the evidence-based policymaking literature and indeed it would seem intuitively obvious that research findings are more like to be used if they reach policy makers during the decision making window. Clearly timeliness is more important for "concrete" or "instrumental" or practical uses than conceptual uses. It is perhaps consonant that the discord between research and policy time schedules has been recognized for several decades (e.g. Coleman 1979; in Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz 2001:11). Social experiments tend to need lengthy timeframes but sometimes they can help open or reopen policy windows (p.12).

Social experiments also tend to be more visible and their results easily reported but communication and visibility also depend on adequate dissemination, another common theme in the evidence-based policymaking literature. As Percy-Smith et al (2002) also found, the advocacy of research results by one or more key individuals (what Percy-Smith et al terms "champions") influences the concrete use of findings.

The fourth part of the conceptual framework is concerned with the ideology, interests and information characteristics of the policy environment. This section is brief and largely self-explanatory and does not lend any particularly novel insights. The authors report here Weiss's (1983:222) evidence that ideology and interests are typically only weakly affected by research findings (if at all), partly because research is only one of several competing sources of information used by policy makers. They conclude the section by making the rather obvious comment that some of the factors in the policy environment are dynamic (p.18).

The section on the case studies reports numerous examples of research utilization but no instances where findings from social experiments were pivotal to policy decisions. Occasionally the findings actually undercut support for the tested policy. This can of course be seen as a type of negative utilization. But even in these cases other factors seemed more influential in deciding not to implement tested programs (pp. 23-24). Nevertheless Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz found that even though findings from social experiments tend not to determine whether or not a program is adopted, they are often used in a variety of ways, including important and unforeseen ways (p. 24). However, the examples they give of these (pp. 24-26) do not seem particularly remarkable (e.g. feeding data into microsimulation models).

They then discuss the implications of the case study findings for the utilization of social experiments. Some pertinent observations are made here: one is that experiments are often initiated when an issue is "hot" but findings do not become available until the issue has cooled and the policy agenda has changed (p. 27). This is not unique to social experiments but to any type of longitudinal study. A second observation is that even when findings are timely, they become increasingly obsolete over time because of political, social and economic change (pp. 27-28). Still, this is common to any research study. A more unexpected finding was that any perception of lack of generalisability from social experiments does not seem to impede their utilization (p.29). Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz suggest that policy makers tend to just use whatever information is at hand if they feel it is relevant.

Another unexpected observation is that when the results of experiments were compatible with prevailing ideology, political interests and information from other sources, they tended to have relatively little impact and were used merely to aid policy makes in doing what they already wanted to do (p. 31). It would appear then that there is something of a Catch 22 situation – it is difficult to make much impact on policy making if the evidence presented is unfavourable to the prevailing ideology and political climate, but no impact can be made (or needs to be made) if conditions are compatible.

Much of the literature referred to by Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz is dated, but this shows that these issues have been considered in the USA for a long time and there is now a large accumulation of knowledge to draw on. On the other hand, the paper leaves us little the wiser about whether how the use of knowledge from social experiments in policy making differs from the use of knowledge gained from other means.

9.14 Curtain (2002)

Curtain was also the Online Discussion Moderator for the inaugural online discussion of the Australian Public Policy Research network, which discussed the question of "what is good public policy?" for one month in early 2002. There were 92 list members, of whom 19 made contributions to the discussion. In spite of the title of the network, most of the contributors were practitioners rather than researchers but the affiliation of the remaining 83 silent list members is not stated.

Several themes emerged from this discussion. These include the issue of whether good public policy should be or can be defined in terms of the presence of specific processes, or whether good policy should be judged in terms of its outcomes; and the issue of defining and measuring a good outcome.

The report begins by considering why there is a need for criteria to identify good public policy. It appears that the criteria currently used are very narrow – according to one contributor they may consist solely of the minister's approval. Measurement of policies' performance is then marked against the extent to which it "meets the Minister's needs as opposed to being good policy" (Roskam, in Curtain 2002:3).

The next issue addressed in the discussion is what is clearly bad policy. This may seem obvious but is worth spelling out nevertheless. According to Peter Scherer (head of the Social Policy Division of the OECD in Paris), bad polices may have one or more of four main characteristics: they are based on unrealistic assumptions about the economy or responses of individuals to economic incentives; their outcome is at variance with their goals; they have no demonstrable positive impact but absorb economic and social resources in their implementation; and they may be uncoordinated or contradictory with existing policies. Duncan Kerr (MP) then pointed out that in spite of the OECD's observation that free trade results in global polarization and compensatory measures should be taken, free trade is still advocated and no global compensatory measures have either been established or even seriously advocated. Curtain does not present Scherer's response to Kerr (if there was one) but in all probability Scherer agreed. Private health insurance rebates were cited as an example of policies with no demonstrable impact but which are resource intensive. Hal Colebatch commented that adherence to a set of espoused values or a formal process is an overly formal view of policy making which tends to discourage thinking about a policy as something more than just what ministers want (p.4).

This leads on to the next section - what criteria define good public policy? Is it a clear, transparent process and incontrovertible evidence? It is clear from the ensuing discussion that these are only some of the criteria. This echoes the literature which has constantly reiterated the point that evidence is only one influence on policy makers, who have many other factors to consider. One of these, not mentioned in the rest of the literature, is the need for long range thinking to address policy lags, an input which is

undermined by the short 3 year electoral cycle (p. 4). Meredith Edwards suggests that collaboration of policy researchers inside and outside government could result in identifying and funding longer-term research, (p. 4) but it is not clear from the brief excerpt presented in the report how or why this collaboration would result in such an outcome.

Timeliness is a key factor mentioned in the literature but the online discussion clarifies that this does not mean response time, but anticipation of problems in advance and preparation of appropriate policy responses so that they are able to be implemented immediately they become necessary. However, such policy making requires a considerable time frame and this needs to be recognized.

In relation to the need for policy makers to make use of available evidence, Brian Howe commented that policy needs to be based on evidence which is strong enough to overcome conventional or popular wisdom. George Jones made the point that complex problems require multiple sources of evidence ad that evidence based policy making is not just a matter of commissioning research or using internal knowledge. He also commented that it is better to learn from practice and not theory, which at first sight seems at odds with Pawson's ideal of developing transferable theories. It is important to recognize however that Jones and Pawson are referring to different parts of the evidence-based policy making process and different types of theory. Their positions are actually quite compatible. Pawson's theory formulation itself is what he calls "middle range" theory, prescriptive, transferable, based on practical outcomes and not intended to operate in a vacuum. It is possible that a better term than "theory" may be more appropriate in this context. Jones is likely to be referring to "broad range" theories, the type of theory generally conceived of as "academic" or "all other things being equal".

The rest of the discussion is not centred specifically on evidence based policy making but considers those factors identified in much of the literature as influences on policy making, along with evidence. It is worth presenting the key points in the rest of this paper given that it is concerned specifically with Australian public policy making and so sets a useful background for conclusions about evidence-based policymaking in Australia.

Participants also saw the involvement of other stakeholders in policy making as important for transparency. This applies to the policy making process (where local governments are also well placed to contribute) and the evaluation of policies. George Jones made the comment in this section that the "best test [of how successful a policy has been] is the satisfaction of the users/consumers/citizens" including the "hard to reach" groups (in Curtain 2002, p. 6).

Constraints on the policy making process need to be acknowledged, not ignored, and should be seen in a more positive light as guides and not as limits or obstacles (Mel Dubnick, in Curtain 2002:7). This view was strongly supported by other participants. Political pressure is an example of such a "constraint". On the other hand, the capacity to respond to public concerns and needs (in the long term) was also seen as an important defining characteristic of good policy. This should not be confused with defining good policy as policy that merely has support from the majority of voters.

Clearly there is an issue of balance. Values and pragmatism were seen as having some influence on the balance of factors in the policy making process, but there seemed to be some confusion over what "values" actually means – should they be they specific or general, explicit or implicit, shared or varying? Curtain tries to resolve the issue by distinguishing between general basic values that should shape policy making in general, and values in relation to specific areas of policy making, and it is the former we are concerned with in the context of this discussion. He suggests the general values should be:

- honesty (in relation to an assessment of all the available evidence and analysis);

- openness (n relation to the availability of information about different options);
- accountability (in terms of specified and measurable outcomes);
- viability in the long term.

The comment was also made that "To believe in the importance of evidence to policy making is not the same as believing in value-free evidence." (Gary Marks, in policy1bject EBP online discussion, www.apprn.org). Consequently, bad policy occurs "when a government acts directly and/or deliberately against any basic value (such as truth), either in the policy process or the policy product." (David de Carvalho, in Curtain 2002: 11).

While good policy may be characterized by the utilization of a good range of good evidence, its outcomes are also crucial. Duncan Kerr felt we should also ask "for whom is it good (or bad) policy?" (in Curtain 2002:9). But knowing the outcomes requires evaluation, via trials or pilots and this type of exercise has been largely absent in Australian policy making. According to Justin Wolfers, there have never been any genuine policy experiments in the area of labour markets in Australia at all (p. 9). This is probably true for most public policy sectors.

This report presents some extremely valuable and unique insights into the realities of public policy making in Australia. It is clear that at present Australian public policy making does not use evidence to the extent or in the same ways as do the UK and the US. The relationship between government and academic researchers needs to be closer, but this would seem to apply to some areas more than others. Housing is one area where this relationship is stronger than in others (such as employment and labour markets), but like many other areas it too is plagued by restrictions on access to data. These restrictions may be related to cost, privacy concerns, inadequate data collection or storage, or even withholding of original data. In contrast, US researchers have good access to administrative data, with a concurrent willingness by government to invest in collecting it.

Curtain concludes the report by highlighting the quality of the contributions to the online discussion. Even though he himself has worked in the area of public policy for many years, the online discussion was still able to reveal new insights for him into how the policy process works and how it ought to work.

9.15 Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002)

Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) are well known leading figures in the pro-evidence based policy making literature. As in much other work by these writers, policy and practice are considered together. No rationale for this is given in this brief paper but it could reasonably be assumed that this is because the process of utilizing evidence is similar for both.

That policy and practice should be informed by the best available evidence is taken as a given (a position defended in their other work). They focus in this paper on ways to improve evidence use in policy and practice, arguing that the existing models of evidence-based policy making are too simplistic and do not adequately describe the process or offer effective prescriptions.

Their paper begins by briefly considering the political impetus for the current interest in the role of evidence in the policy process – the election of the UK Labor Government in 1997. It then focuses on the key lessons that have become apparent from experiences so far. However, a caveat is given first – Nutley, Davies and Walter feel the term "evidence-based" policy can be misleading because it implies that evidence is the main, or only, basis for policy making, when in fact it is just one of the influences, with often a limited role. They would prefer the term "evidence-influenced" or "evidence aware" but are obliged to use the now conventional term of "evidence-based" policy making.

Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) see four requirements for improving evidence use in policy and practice. First is widespread agreement and recognition of what counts as evidence. This issue is a common theme not only in the evidence-based policymaking literature but also in the evidence based health practice literature. They report the definition used by the Cabinet Office Strategic Policy making Team (1999):

> Expert knowledge; published research; existing statistics; stakeholder consultations; previous policy evaluations; the Internet; outcomes from consultations; costings of policy options; output from economic and statistical modeling" (cited in Nutley, Davies and Walter 2002:2).

In this definition, research-based evidence is just one form of evidence in an eclectic range. The problem with such an inclusive definition is that it makes the task of selecting, assessing and prioritizing evidence much larger and more onerous. The field of health care has addressed this problem by using the hierarchy of evidence to rank the results of different types of research designs and in this way, screen out lesser quality sources of evidence. In this field, methodological rigor is easier to procure, and the outcomes are more obvious. As already detailed in(O'Dwyer 2003b) these factors do not apply in the social science and public policy arena.

Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002:3) suggest that there needs to be greater clarity about the relative strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches. This means that a "horses for courses" approach is necessary – i.e., knowing which what constitutes evidence in what context and which research technique is most appropriate to answer different types of questions. Methodological pluralism is argued to be the best strategy. For this to happen, the different stakeholders need to "come together" and agree on these issues. Nutley, Davies and Walter do not comment much on the likelihood of this happening, and whether it is likely to be fruitful if it did, although they cite an example of where this has actually happened. However, logically such agreement would have to occur on a case-by-case basis. If so, there would still remain the task of making the agreements transferable and available to the wider research and policy making community.

A second requirement for improving evidence use in policy making is a more strategic approach to creating more knowledge (p. 4). At present there are large gaps in the knowledge base with the research literature dominated by small ad hoc studies, some of dubious quality. Additional studies are usually research producer-driven rather than user-driven due to the traditional separation between the policy arena and the research community (Nutley, Davies and Walter 2002:4). This is an area in which Australia differs from the UK. As most Australian academic researchers well know, research funding has been geared toward the needs of industry and the social and economic benefit of the country for about a decade. However, funding constraints may still have had the effect of producing small, ad hoc studies and so the knowledge base in Australia is unlikely to be substantially better than in the UK.

Nutley, Davies and Walter (p. 5) then list a number of issues which need to be addressed in order to create more knowledge in a strategical fashion. Many of these will be familiar to most academic researchers as they are part of ongoing debates about research priorities, relationships between universities and government, while some are even part of undergraduate research methods courses. Examples include: the methodological characteristics of robust research; how the tensions between the desirability of 'independent' researchers and the need for close co operation (bordering on dependence) between research users and research providers can be managed; and how gaps in current knowledge provision should be prioritized. Nutley, Davies and Walter point to recent thinking in the evidence-based policymaking literature which emphasizes partnerships between the policy arena, practitioner communities and the research community as the way to address these issues (e.g. Davies and Nutley 2002). However, such partnerships already exist in Australia but it is not clear that they are able to address these issues any better than before.

Another common theme in the literature, and the third issue presented by Nutley, Davies and Walter, is that of effective dissemination of knowledge and wide access to it. Distilled research summaries are a more efficient and appropriate means of communicating a range of findings than is the absorption of many individual studies. Systematic reviews have been used for this purpose by organizations such as the Cochrane Collaboration, and the Campbell Collaboration but the cost of conducting these reviews is a major barrier. Nutley, Davies and Walter then briefly acknowledge some of the other problems associated with conducting systematic reviews in the social sciences (see O'Dwyer 2003b for further detail on these difficulties). They also observe that dissemination is not a single or simple process, as different messages may be needed for different audiences at different times and report previous findings that suggest that horizontal, vertical and hierarchical channels of communication need to be developed in tandem (p.5). A related (and important) observation is that not only should information be passively pushed out from the centre, we also need to develop strategies that encourage an active pull from end users (p. 6).

The fourth requirement outlined by Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) is the development of ways to improve the uptake of evidence. Under use of evidence can occur in spite of good dissemination when findings are not applied or not applied properly. Nutley, Davies and Walter's paper is the only one to suggest that overuse might also be a problem - they refer to evidence (Walshe and Rundall 2000) where tentative findings have spread rapidly or evidence of effectiveness is ambiguous or overstated. In the context of the rest of the literature, however, it would seem that this occurs rarely. They summaries four types of research utilization (p. 17) which are similar to Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz's (2001:4-5) utilization taxonomy: instrumental use of research which feeds directly in policy decision making; conceptual use which can change policy makers' understanding of a situation even if they are blocked from using them; mobilization of support where research is an instrument of persuasion; and wider influence, where the accumulation of knowledge ultimately contributes to large scale shifts in thinking and action.

Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) call for a better dialogue between policy makers and the research community – and as they say, this is a recurring theme in the literature. They recommend that policy makers build relationships with a number of different researchers (or research institutions) who can each offer different skills or perspectives. The significance (if any) of the direction of the relationship (i.e. initiated by the policy makers) is not elaborated on. However, they do state that such integrated partnership is not cheap or organizationally straightforward (p. 8). An interesting point also made in this section is that many of the recommendations in the literature for how to improve research utilization by policymakers are themselves not based on any evidence.

The main conclusion drawn in this paper is that viewing evidence-based policy making as a process where evidence is created by research experts and then drawn on as necessary by policy makers, is overly simplistic and fails to account for the range of possible relationships between research, knowledge, policy and practice (p. 9). In light of this comment, the author has constructed a somewhat more sophisticated (but still comprehendible) model of the evidence-based policy making process (Figure 1) which identifies all of these elements but also includes additional factors and influences which are also present. These are set against the wider economic, political, social or socio-demographic processes present at any time.

The Nutley, Davies and Walter paper is a good overview of the issues involved in improving evidence use, but the title of "cross sectoral Lessons from the UK" is somewhat misleading, as there is virtually no attention given to any particular sectors within the social policy milieu, beyond passing mention of "health care" and "public policy" (assuming that this is what is meant by "sector"). This does not detract from the paper's main argument but the selection of the title is puzzling, especially given the authors' awareness of the need for information to be identifiable.

9.16 Sanderson (2002)

Although it covers much the same ground as Sanderson (2000), this paper is strongly supportive of evidence based policymaking. It begins by outlining the reasons why public policy has become so concerned with evidence from social science in recent years, especially given that the relationship between the two has traditionally been problematical. This is attributed to an anti-intellectual political culture that has resisted the influence of rational knowledge, viewing academic research in the social sciences as irrelevant. The same points are made by Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) who refer to the sway of "conviction politics" in the UK, and by Solesbury (2002). Like Nutley, Davies and Walter, and Solesbury's views on evidence based public policy making overall which are positive but guarded (in varying ways), Sanderson (2002) supports the concept and argues that the basic premise is sound – but we need to improve the evidence base itself. Sanderson identifies a number of areas where there are impediments to the use and value of evidences and suggests means by which improvements should be made. First he acknowledges the epistemological debates about the basis of knowledge and how knowledge of the social world is socially constructed, and is culturally and historically contingent (pp.6-7). He then states his position with some well chosen appeals to realists, who argue that "there are social phenomena independent of cognition to be explained in terms of underlying mechanisms (which may not be directly observable (and that the task of social science is to understand the way in which mechanisms work in conjunction with contextual factors to generate social outcomes" (p.8). As Trigg (2001: 237, in Sanderson 2002:8) dryly states "….there is little point in furthering social science if it is useless in helping to deal with the human world in which we are situated." For Sanderson, the current interest in evidence based policy making represents a "force of optimism about the potential to achieve social progress through the application of reason" (p. 19).

The rest of Sanderson's paper is devoted to ways in which the evidence used in policy making may be improved, in terms of its source, type, collection and utilization. Evaluation of pilots programs and policy developments is seen as a key strategy. Good evaluation entails a combination of an assessment of impact and an analysis of implementation processes. As Sanderson puts it, (p. 10) evaluations should ask "does it work?" and "how can we best make it work?" They should be able to give policy makers feedback on outcomes, impacts, value for money, effectiveness of delivery modes and lessons in good practice. Which of the two questions is given more emphasis in individual cases depends on the weight policy makers give them and the extent to which sound evidence can be obtained (p. 11).

He considers the practical difficulties involved in answering the question "does it work?". These include: the time needed for the effects of new policies to be identified and measured (particularly in the case of changing behaviour, attitudes or institutional reform); the political interests in obtaining results as soon as possible;, which conflict with the interests of evaluation research; the difficulties in isolating the effects of programs from exogenous change and other initiatives; the ethical difficulties in using control groups to evaluate national initiatives; variation in the implementation of a policy in different areas; changes over time in the implementation of the initiative; it is difficult to define a discrete, standard intervention as is required by experimental designs; potential differences in resources devoted to the pilot versus those devoted to the wider program (which would make the pilot unrepresentative). This last scenario is more

likely if there is a strong political commitment to a policy so that it is given generous resourcing to make it work (Sanderson 2002:12). This would at least help to answer the question "how can we best make it work?" and indicate the value for money. Indeed, Sanderson acknowledges that this tends to be the question that is given the most weight by policy makers and politicians (2002:13). He then questions whether the UK government's commitment to evidence-based policy making means that it will use piloting as a way to obtain evidence about whether policies work, or whether pilots are used merely to demonstrate the efficacy of a committed course of action. There is a need therefore for greater clarity from government about the role of pilot programs and the purpose of evaluation.

Assuming that pilot experiments are used to genuinely obtain information to use as evidence to feed back into policy making, the design of the pilot must also consider evaluation design. This is already the case in the USA which ha a stronger tradition of experimentation, but is more uncertain in the UK due to the short term nature of policy making and the political culture, with its unsympathetic attitude toward "rational knowledge" (p. 14). Sanderson suggests that in light of these points, the best strategies to strengthen evidence based policy making are first, to ensure that all current relevant research and evaluation evidence is thoroughly reviewed, synthesized and used to inform policy thinking, following the example set by the Cochrane Collaboration in the area of health. Such research evidence also needs to be theoretically grounded so that understanding of what works and why is more transferable (p. 15). Second, there must be better generation of new evidence through long-term evaluation f new policy initiatives after the initial piloting. The UK government has already put long-term evaluations of recent initiatives in place (the NEW Deal for Communities Program, which is a key program in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Best Value regime for local government). The evaluations of these initiatives showed that there is a need for more innovative approaches to evaluation methodologies. However, it is not entirely clear what Sanderson feels was lacking in the evaluations of the NDC program to date. The evaluation of the Best Value strategy is still in progress and is taking place over five years, with a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods including multivariate statistical analysis and in-depth case study research.

There are two key points Sanderson makes about improving evaluation in order to contribute to the evidence base for policy development. The first is that "evaluation must move beyond its traditional concern with measuring effect sizes and degrees of goal achievement to embrace a theory-based approach to explanation" (pp. 17-18). Note that the value of the realist approach to evaluative research is a theme also given explicit attention by Pawson (2001:4) who explains how using this approach to systematic reviews results in a theory about how and why a particular policy will or will not succeed, rather than merely searching out exemplary initiatives and best buy interventions.

Sanderson's second key point is about finding ways for theory based evaluation to address causal attribution. Realistically, this is difficult to impossible in the context of complex social interventions, and so both Sanderson and Granger (1998, in Sanderson 2002:18) suggest that we should really be aiming for causal inferences instead. This would best be achieved through multi-method evaluation designs, an approach which was apparently championed by none other than Donald Campbell, best known for his association with experimental evaluation of social interventions (Campbell and Russo 1999:132-133, in Sanderson, 2002:18). In other words, evaluation should be about "practical reason" rather than just technical exercises, as indeed, should policy-making be (p.19).

Sanderson's paper is intellectually sophisticated. Placing the debate in a theoretical and political context, he argues firmly for the value of an evidence-based approach to policy making. The first half of the paper unpacks and examines virtually all of the elements of evidence based policy making and the wider context surrounding it in

some detail. The second half concentrates on what Sanderson sees as the most important issue still needing improvement – that of evaluation. He does not pay particular attention to the policy making process itself, but admittedly, this would merit a separate paper to itself. There is a degree of repetition in the paper, with some points being constantly reiterated (such as the short-term nature of policy making) but this could also be seen as a strength. In sum, this paper is important for readers seeking an in-depth discussion of the role of evidence and evaluation in policy making but it will be necessary to look elsewhere for material specifically on the impact of evidence on policy (Phase 4 in Figure 1), rather than the impact of policy directives on social outcomes as a form of evidence (Phase 7).

9.17 Webster (2002)

Webster views evidence based policymaking as ideal for policy making in indigenous affairs because by definition such policy making is a joint effort between governments and ATSI people and organizations. The aim of this paper is to examine how an evidence-based approach can enhance the quality of their dialogue. The premise is that a well-conceived evidence-based approach to policy making will improve dialogue and partnership.

The paper begins by recognizing the distinction between policy (which is a product) and policy making (which is a process). The term “evidence-based policy making” tends to acknowledge the importance of evidence while allowing for other influences, as is acknowledged by various models of policy making, including “muddling through”, the “garbage can”, and rhetorical/argumentative models (p.2). (see Perri (2002) for further detail on models of policy making).

Webster argues that an evidence-based approach using statistics and other research has great potential to enhance policy making in indigenous affairs (p.3) and that this can occur in several ways. One is by setting a context. Measures of disparities between the aboriginal population and the total Australian population (such as life expectancy) are an example. Context setting requires good statistical information. Another way is by establishing a basis for new policy interventions. Emerging policy issues are investigated to help inform decision-making. Finally, there is monitoring and evaluation of policies in place. He then applies these ways of informing policy making to indigenous policy making. When collecting information as evidence, which necessarily involves indigenous peoples directly, we must remember that there are over 60 different language groups across Australia with individual identities and cultures and so there is not always a consistent national view. As Webster puts it (p.6), “data from national surveys may be useful in setting the broad context for indigenous policy by additional evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, is required to inform decision making at the local level”. We also need to be aware of the discourse (language and culture) within which problems are framed, as this can shape the policy process, especially in terms of power relationships. This means that the policy agenda should include issues initiated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders themselves. ATSI peoples also need to develop their own statistical and analytical skills which will facilitate their inclusion in policy-making networks.

It is important to have a critical attitude toward evidence because evidence is a "lens through which policy makers view the world" (p.7). This is particular pertinent to the development of socioeconomic indicators – we cannot validly apply measures developed for the general population to the distinctive context of indigenous peoples. Webster also agrees with the UK Cabinet Office that a structured approach to policy making, (or "planning framework") is useful, as it would help to identify the stages at which government agencies and ATSI peoples and organizations connect in the policy making process (p.8). This also would help to develop a "policy community", consisting of indigenous and government policymakers, researchers and local community members, thus facilitating the flow of knowledge between evidence and policy. Evidence could then also enter the process through advocacy. According to Webster, current policy-research relationships need to be strengthened and new relationships established so as to achieve a more focused link between policy and research, while there could be greater collaboration between government agencies (p.9).

As in any policy making process, participants may hold divergent political beliefs and Webster acknowledges that this is especially likely to occur in indigenous policy making. However, evidence-based approach involving statistics and research data will tend to focus attention on the characteristics of people and their communities rather than on differences in visions amongst the policy makers. The evidence would act as a starting point and an anchor (even though it is inherently contestable) (pp. 9-10). Similarly, Webster also suggests that an evidence-based approach could help to bridge the current divide between the Coalition government's orientation toward service oriented policies, and ATSI organizations' rights-based policies (although he also acknowledges that there are elements of both in each perspectives). The planning framework involved in an evidence-based approach would identify both the service provision and governance dimensions of a program (p.10).

This paper makes a convincing case for the adoption of evidence based policy making in indigenous affairs, although the visions for what could be accomplished might be somewhat overly optimistic. However, Webster is clearly familiar with the major debates surrounding the issue of evidence based policy making in public policy.

9.18 Young, Ashby, Boaz and Grayson (2002)

Young et al (2002) notes the ongoing confusion about the meaning of the term. They strive to remedy this situation by outlining a number of models used to describe evidence-based policymaking as a way of exploring its underlying assumptions. Although some have slightly different labels, their models are (unsurprisingly) so similar to those described by Percy-Smith et al (2002) and Perri (2002) that it seems unnecessary to go beyond merely listing them. They are: the knowledge drive model, the problem solving model, the interactive model, the political/tactical model and the enlightenment model. Like Mandell, Greenberg and Linksz, (2001), and many others, Young et al (2002) prefer the enlightenment model, partly because it corresponds best with "'evidence-informed' rather than 'evidence-based' policy making" (p.217), and it is more consistent with good social research. The enlightenment model, like social science, seeks to understand, illuminate and explain, whereas the other models seek to provide policy solutions (p. 218).

Young et al observe that in the rush of enthusiasm for evidence-based policy making, policy makers tend to overlook the research evidence already available. This is known as the "paradox of policy analysis" (Shulock 1999, cited in Young et al 2002:218) – policy makers want more research evidence than they can digest, yet admit to preferring other sources of information. Meanwhile researchers produce reports that remain unread. Like Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002), Young et al attribute this paradox to a simplistic, linear view of the policy making process and p[point to all the other factors influencing policy making (competition, values, politics, public opinion and so on). They also argue that "policy research can be more effective as an instrument of the democratic process than of the decision making process" (p.218). In other words, policy research should contribute to an evidence based society and evidence-informed policy making. However, they acknowledge that accumulating and presenting evidence to society rather than policy makers will not be easy (p. 219).

In spite of their claim that systematic reviews do not sit well with the enlightenment model, (p. 219) Young et al (2002) then go on to describe the systematic review process, concluding this section by stating the systematic review provides a powerful driver for more rigorous research practices in social sciences. It can only be surmised that systematic reviews need some tweaking to make them more suitable for a policy making process based on the enlightenment model. What sorts of modifications and issues this involves have been addressed in a separate paper by Grayson (2002), one of the co-authors, but inexplicably, this paper is not cited in the Young et al paper.

Although it appears from the first part of the paper that the limitations faced by the evidence based policy movement are philosophical, technical and structural (hence the presentation of various policy making models and the favouring of the enlightenment model in particular), Young et al (2002) state on p. 221 that the main limitations are to do with capacity. There are two main types of capacity constraints: difficulty in retrieving information from a highly fragmented literature with variable terminology; and too few properly trained analysts. The Cochrane Collaboration spent ten years developing systematic review tools for medical researchers and practitioners and it is likely o take longer for the social sciences (p. 223). Young et al also see the lack of an infrastructure for establishing professional standards for evidence based policy research as a serious issue.

They conclude their paper by calling, as does Nutley (2003), for two-way bridges to be built between research producers and the user community and by reiterating their view, shared by Winter and Seelig (2001), that the challenge is not for social scientists to respond to a government-se agenda but that researchers should seek to enlighten and inform society. The aim is for a broader evidence-informed society rather than evidence-based policy.

The paper's aim of clarifying the meaning of evidence based policy making is only partially met. Young et al do point out that the term itself contains two terms –one referring to the way policy is made and the other to the evidential nature of social science but the focus is more on models of policy making than what is meant by "evidence". If the lay reader were to start with this paper in the hopes of improving their understanding of the term's meaning, they are likely to remain unsatisfied. The main contribution of this paper to our understanding of evidence based policy making is in its vision for an evidence-informed society as the real goal of research, which will in effect result in better policy making. This is a laudable aim but perhaps somewhat premature at this stage in the evidence based policy making debates which are still pre occupied with more fundamental questions, such as what counts as evidence and how it should be presented.

9.19 Davies and Nutley (2002)

Consonant with this review's perception of Young et al's idealistic vision of an evidence-informed society, Davies and Nutley (2002) strive to take a realistic view of the evidence based policy-making agenda. They draw on the sector specific reviews published in Davies et al 2000 so there is a considerable overlap with existing literature. They also begin with the now familiar caveat that the term 'evidence-based' may obscure the only-limited role that evidence can, does or should play and that they would prefer the term "evidence – influenced" or "evidence-aware" but will continue the current practice of using "evidence-based policy and practice".

They identify four key requirements necessary to develop the evidence-based policy (and practice) agenda. These are:

- agreement as the nature of evidence;
- a strategic approach to the creation of evidence, together with the development of a cumulative knowledge base;
- effective dissemination of knowledge, together with development of effective means of access to knowledge;
- and initiative to increase the uptake of evidence in both policy and practice.

These observations are consistent with the rest of the literature. Each of these areas is then examined in some detail. After discussing the nature of evidence and noting the eclecticism and egalitarianism of sources of evidence in the social sciences, they conclude that there is a need to develop a "horses for courses" approach that also incorporates methodological pluralism. Moreover, all stakeholders need to broadly agree on these issues.

According to Davies and Nutley (2002:6-7), a strategic approach to knowledge creation requires quite a large number of issues to be addressed. The first of the points they list - appropriate and robust research designs – was already identified as part of their first requirement. The others are repeated, largely word for word, in Nutley, Davies and Walter(2002:5) and have already been listed in this review. Nevertheless, for the sake of including one or two points not already in Nutley, Davies and Walter, they are also presented here. They are: the appropriate balance between new primary research and exploitation of existing research through secondary analysis; balancing the need for rigor with the need for timely findings; ways of identifying and prioritizing knowledge gaps; ways of commissioning research to fill identified gaps; increasing research capacity and this availability of research-based information; the tensions between 'independent' research and the need for close cooperation between researchers and policy makers; and communicating research findings with users engaging in the process of research. The last of these points really represents two different issues and it is not clear why Davies and Nutley (2002:7) present them together. The ensuing discussion of these points adds little to what is already covered in Nutley, Davies and Walter(2002:5) and also Nutley (2003:13), where the concerns for independent research, for example, are again repeated word for word (and without any acknowledgement).

The remainder of the paper covers effective dissemination and initiative to increase the uptake of evidence. As this material is also already presented in Nutley, Davies and Walter (2002) (and in many other papers) it will not be repeated.

9.20 Curtain (2003)

Another online discussion specifically addressing evidence-based policymaking was organized by Curtain earlier this year (April-May) but generally this discussion did not disclose contributors' identities. The contributions to this discussion are available from Curtain's site http://www.apprn.org/ and must be downloaded as a zipfile, unzipped and opened in Word Pad. There is no formal organization or structure to this record of the discussion but there are many useful points made by the mostly anonymous contributors.

One of these is from a government researcher of ten years standing who notes the recent and increasing rhetoric of 'evidence-based' policy within government, while no department will take the responsibility for housing the type of "all of government" research (such as demographic and spatial analysis/ census analysis) that is of relevance across a wide range of government departments. The researcher points out that such research is not easily 'housed' in a single department, as they tend to see their role in terms of specific portfolios (such as transport, health, education). S/he also relates how the disbanding of a "general demographic" research team in favour of more "departmentally-relevant' research has had a negative impact on the production of various demographic publications (such as time-series trends, information for local government), in effect compromising the ability of many decision makers to develop 'evidence-based' policies.

The need for greater public participation and communication in policy making is a common theme in the literature and also appeared in this discussion. Dennis Quick remarked:

> …..there is a significant trove of expertise, intellectual capital and understanding of the essentials of public policy throughout the community at large. Such is not the sole province of academia, the bureaucracy and policy institutes. Indeed policy is broadened and made practical, in many cases, by its exposure to those who are at the other end of the process. (www.apprn.org Online discussion, 2003).

Richard Dennis of the Australia Institute (a think-tank and independent public policy research centre affiliated with the Australian National University) also made some interesting observations.

First he believes there is no doubt that evidence is important for policy making, and that more evidence, and improved analysis of existing evidence, can improve policy making further. However, he observes that evidence plays different roles in different areas of policy making. This may be due to:

- a lack of evidence concerning some policy issues;
- the culture of some policy making departments;
- the determination of democratically elected policy makers to implement policy that they believe to is most appropriate.

During a discussion held after the 'Facing the Future: Engaging stakeholders and citizens in developing public policy' conference in Canberra earlier this year, Dennis noticed that there are disparities in the conclusions drawn about the value of evidence-based policy making even within a small group of people with overlapping interests. He attributes these disparities to:

- differences about whether the conversation was about whether policy 'does' influence policy or whether evidence 'should' influence policy;
- differences in how to interpret individual examples of where evidence had, or had not, influenced policy;

- differences about what constitutes evidence.

He feels that the discussion gave him a greater understanding of the source of many misunderstandings and miscommunications in this field (see Parsons 2002 for examples of these).

He makes a good point about the impact on researchers' morale when new policies are announced which do not account for existing evidence:

> Working at a think-tank, my focus is on gathering and analyzing information with a view to informing either policy makers directly or the public at large. I am sure that most on this list can identify with the sense of frustration associated with hearing of a new policy that you feel certain will be ineffective because of your awareness of the evidence.

His experience with the willingness of policy makers to amend policies when new information is provided or the evidence suggests a change does not bode well for the prospect of evidence based policy making in Australia – many, maybe most, are unwilling to change (he does not state the area of policy in which this occurs).

Another useful observation from Dennis's experience is that while many policy makers may tend to ignore evidence in private, they are reluctant to be seen doing so in public. Therefore, it is better to present evidence in a public forum, as it is more likely to be utilized.

Dennis feels that all researchers have the capacity to influence public awareness and perception of the issues in which they have expertise, via the media. As he points out, the media and the public have two things in common when it comes to evidence about policy - one is that they are interested in any information that reveals public incompetence, inefficient policy design or the distribution of resources in a political rather than equitable manner. The other is that neither invests significant effort in discovering such information. Note that evidence *about* policy is distinct from evidence *for* policy, but such information does impact on evidence for policy by raising public awareness of available policy options and their possible or likely consequences. This enables the public to make informed decisions. Finally, Dennis refers briefly to pressure being placed on many researchers to confine their public statements to a very narrow area of expertise, which restricts the outflow on information – this may warrant further investigation.

Informal electronic discussions are a useful source of opinions and experiences, albeit anecdotal, which may not be aired in more formal channels but which lend insights into the realities of evidence-based policy making.

9.21 Mulgan (2003)

Mulgan explains the current interest in evidence based policymaking as related to the (supposedly) unideological nature of the current political climate (Mulgan 2003:2).

Using the term "knowledge" interchangeably with "evidence", he identifies nine types of knowledge:

- Statistical knowledge (for example of population size and migration)
- Policy knowledge (for example, what works in reducing reoffending)
- Scientific knowledge (for example on climate change)
- Professional knowledge (for example, on the impact of vaccination)
- Public opinion (for example quantitative poll data and qualitative data)
- Practitioner views and insights (for example how teachers view exams)
- Political knowledge (for example, the balance of opinion in the ruling party)

- Economic knowledge (for example which sectors are likely to grow or contract)
- Classic intelligence (for example on the capabilities and intentions of hostile states or terrorist networks)

Each type of knowledge has its own professionals and interpreters.

According to Mulgan, there are three conditions necessary for more effective use

of knowledge:

- processes that strengthen demand for analysis (e.g. competitive bids);
- good strategy skills, which include formal skills, particularly quantitative analytic ones;
- team working.

The ways knowledge is used vary greatly according to the state of knowledge. In turn, the state of knowledge itself varies, depending on the "field" . Mulgan categorizes three types of policy field:

Stable policy fields (areas where knowledge is reasonably settled; theoretical foundations are strong; governments broadly know what works; there is a strong evidence base and incremental improvement).

Policy fields in flux (where the knowledge base is contested and there is disagreement over the most basic theoretical approaches).

Inherently novel policy fields (the newness means there is no pre existing evidence base, e.g. regulation of biotechnology; privacy on the net)

Mulgan makes the astute comment that only in the first of these fields is policy really based on evidence, rather than just informed by it. In the other two situations (and housing policy could reasonably be described as the second of the three fields), evidence exists in relation to theories and concepts which, as Mulgan puts it, "are not alternatives to hard facts and evidence. They are the only ways of making sense of them." The role of theory has been mentioned by several commentators in the evidence-based policymaking debate (notably Pawson 2002 and Sanderson 2000) but Mulgan clarifies the connection between research, theory and policy: " When fields are in flux what we often need most is better theory – this is one reason why it is unwise for funding councils to concentrate all their resources on policy-relevant research".

This paper raises some new points in the debate and presents older ideas by reframing them in new ways.

9.22 Edwards and Nutley (2003)

Although a newspaper article is generally not considered a form of high quality evidence, this article is included in the review because it makes some provocative statements that have not appeared elsewhere in the literature. According to Edwards and Nutley, there is an uneasy relationship between researchers and policy makers and practitioners in Australia. Edward and Nutley maintain that policy practitioners are frustrated with the tendency for research to focus on issues not really relevant to the policy debate and to not account for the context of the debate when making suggestions for change. Further, even where relevant to the main policy and political debate, research can be driven by ideology in the guise of intellectual enquiry (Edwards and Nutley 2003). This claim is more often directed at policy makers than researchers in the evidence-based policy making literature.

Edwards and Nutley present the researcher's typical response: that the public sector is not interested in relevant available research and does not give adequate capacity for researchers to gain access to necessary data. In addition, government does not always identify or publicize its policy priorities, often has an anti intellectual approach to engaging with researchers, operates under short time frames to the detriment of long term policy and does not give researchers incentives to produce policy relevant material.

Some of these defenses are valid (e.g. lack of access to data), others are arguable (e.g. government's anti-intellectual approach). But Edwards and Nutley are correct to say that the two spheres have very different cultures and methods of communication which must be bridged if we are to achieve good policy outcomes. Edwards and Nutley see the evidence-based policy making approach to both research and policy as the bridge. But experience to date in building the bridge indicate a need for more investment in research, an opening up of policy processes and more ongoing interactions between the two worlds. The necessary relationship is not as simple as researchers reducing evidence which is then drawn on by policy makers – there must ongoing collaboration and interaction in developing knowledge, policy and practice, along with updating knowledge about what works for whom in what circumstances and why.

The issue of increasing public or consumer involvement in government policy making appears to be a vexed one. As several contributors to the online discussion of evidence-based policymaking on the apprn site have pointed out, it is very politically correct and often useful to encourage public involvement, but there are other competing (usually more compelling, enjoyable and immediately relevant) demands on people's time than being involved in public policy making. After reading Edwards and Nutley's article in the Canberra Times, a letter to the editor expressed the view that s/he could not imagine a better recipe for more chaotic government and that most people would prefer to get on with their lives, without having to be consulted about everything, while governments do the job they were elected to do.

Given the paucity of time these days, there is an understandable logic here, but as (Boully 2003) explains, public participation is functionally and morally central to democracy. It is an essential part of advising decision- makers of community needs and preferences and ensures that the public itself give some thought to key issues. Experience shows that it results in greater public trust in government as well as better public policy. It is also important to distinguish between consultation and participation. However, (Johnston 2001) also reports that a policy maker she interviewed also felt that local residents just want effective services and action without having to shout for them and they resent having to be consulted or become involved in what they see as government responsibilities. It has been long known that tends to be a class bias to these views and not unexpectedly, in Johnston's example the residents were of a lower socioeconomic status.

9.23 Nutley (2003)

The content of this paper by Nutley does not differ much from her previous work; it has the same thesis (that evidence based policy making is desirable but does not occur as much as it could), makes essentially the same arguments and follows the same themes. However, it does add to understanding by presenting some ideas in new ways and several new points appear.

The introduction duly begins with the statement that there is potential for policy decisions to be better informed by available evidence than has traditionally been the case and so to realize this potential we need to analyze the conditions that facilitate evidence-informed policy making. We need to both build more bridges, and remove the existing obstacles. Not just one, but many bridges can link researchers with relevant policy and practice networks.

One such bridge is represented by intermediary bodies with an advocate role (examples in Australia include organizations such as ACOSS). These can play a key role in disseminating and promoting the utilization of research for policy making. Another is partnership arrangements. Particularly if they are involved throughout a project, partnerships appear to increase both the quality of research and its impact.

In reference to the need to remove obstacles to research utilization, Nutley groups explanations for why research has little impact on policy under three main headings:

- Problems relating to research;
- Problems relating to the policy-making process;
- Problems with the interactions between these two worlds.

Problems relating particularly to social research in the past have included insufficient funding but in the UK there has recently been an overall increase in level of funding for social research (the ESRC budget is due to increase from GBP 72m in 2001/2 to 92m in 2003/4). Policy focused research is a designated part of this funding. There is now a shortage of suitably qualified researchers in the UK but Nutley feels that the prospects for a more strategically focused evidence base are encouraging, as more academic departments become involved in such research. She acknowledges other commentators' concerns that this may be a dangerous course for social science research if research priorities become too closely allied to political priorities, because with the large increases in funding for social research come increased expectations about the contributions that research evidence can make to improving policy success. However, she does not really offer any solution to this risk, except to reassuringly say that some of these expectations will probably be unrealistic and so need to be "managed accordingly" (p.3).

What counts as evidence and how it should be collected is an ongoing theme in the literature, usually championed by proponents of either randomized experiments or theory-based evaluation methods. In spite of the considerable attention to methodology in the literature, Nutley suggests that we still need to ask whether either of these approaches is capable of delivering definitive evidence about what works. (Other writers such as Pawson, would disagree that this is the main question, preferring to focus on how, why and in what circumstances).

Nutley argues that both randomized and theory-based approaches have limitations in terms of their internal persuasiveness and external applicability. There are dangers in generalizing from experimental to other contexts, while it is difficult to articulate theoretical assumptions and hypotheses and to measure changes and effects in theory-based evaluation. She suggests, rather unconvincingly, that the latter may be addressed by more integration between researchers and policymakers. Over time, this would foster better cross-boundary understandings.

Nutley concludes by emphasizing that there is still a place for curiosity-driven, "blue skies" research, as new insights and innovations often depend on this.

Nutley's paper covers much the same ground as previous papers, (e.g. there are more factors than evidence which will influence policy, strengths and weaknesses of systematic reviews), albeit with a slightly different focus but it does present a clear identification and summary of the problems affecting research utilization. A key point made more clearly here than in her previous papers is that "neither definitive research evidence nor rational decision making are essential requirements for the development of more evidence-informed policy". (p2) This is an important counter to arguments that the concept of evidence based policy making is fundamentally flawed because it is supposedly based on a rational model of policy making.

10 AMBIVALENT AND CRITICAL VIEWS OF EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

10.1 Perri (2002)

Perri (2002) asks whether policy making can be evidence based. He then observes that in spite of the call for more evidence based interventions by ministers, white papers and ministerial speeches continue to be loosely based on past lessons, and new initiatives are extended nationally even before pilot projects have been completed or evaluated (p.3). In spite of this seemingly contradictory behaviour, he argues that policy makers do make use of evidence, but not in the same ways as academic researchers or other professionals. Moreover, he argues that this is as it should be. To support this assertion, he argues that while policy makers have to deal with excesses of information (as do most other professionals), they are in the distinctive position of having to have decisions be acceptable to the wider public, key constituencies and other interests. In addition, the task of defining, selecting and using evidence must be undertaken under specific institutional constraints, the nature of which can vary.

Perri identifies four different situations; the “poker players”, who strive to enhance their own positions by exclusive ownership and acquisition of information; the “chess players”, who need to compete with other departments in a hierarchical system, where the rules governing moves are tightly defined; the “snap players”, who have no control over how the cards are dealt, where the opportunities for influence are random and the game of the policy process has little structure. Snap players are usually backbencher or councillors who have few incentives to work together or trust each other. Finally, there are the “football players” who form factions. These factions share an ideological commitment and act opportunistically, using information as a football. Perri’s policy making game players all derive from two basic social organization dimensions (after Durkheim and Douglas) – regulation and integration (Durkheim), or grid and group (Douglas) or as Perri suggests, strong and weak institutional constraints and bonds to others.

Perri’s answer to the original question of whether policy making can be evidence based is to say that policy making always makes use of some information as evidence but there is a plurality of things that count as evidence and what counts depends on where policy makes are situated, or which game is being played. Perri rejects the notion that all policy making should be reduced to technical calculations and costed options. “Better policy making is more likely to come from the frank acknowledgement that in a democracy we positively want a system that gives recognition to each kind of evidence and judgment, to each kind of interest, and not just to those who control the slide rule.”(pp.7-8). In other words, it appears that the answer to the question is “yes, but the evidence used depends on which type of game is being played”.

While the typology of institutional settings is a useful way of describing policy making environments and influences and goes some way toward explaining why and how different types of evidence are used , the answer to the second question Perri poses at the beginning of the paper - “what price evidence-based policy?” is not really answered. Perhaps it is just rhetoric, used as a catchy title for the introduction to the paper. Otherwise, we would have expected some offerings of what the alternatives would be if the “price” is too high, and what the price actually is. In terms of contributing to our understanding of what evidence-based policy making is, it is a useful and readable paper, but not a paper that can stand alone from the rest of the literature.

10.2 McDonald (2002)

While on the theme of paying prices, McDonald (2002) argues in her paper on evidence based practice in social work that social work has paid a price to engage evidence in its "search for institutional fitness". That price is the rejection of its heritage. While the paper is concerned more with the use of evidence in practice rather than in policy making, there are some common themes shared between "evidence based policy" and evidence based practice". For example, McDonald suggests that the new concern for the role of evidence in social work is "a political strategy articulated by an unstable occupational group in a context of institutional upheaval". In other words, it is a strategy to gain regard, status and recognition by other professions, the state and the wider community. She argues that at as a strategy, it will probably be unsuccessful, because social works' role as mediator between the state and individuals or families means that "contested and divergent knowledges" are drawn on. These knowledges are apparently beyond the bounds of evidence-based practice – according to McDonald the types of activity allowed within a framework of evidence-based practice are only a small part of social work and it asks the wrong questions. McDonald also suggests that evidence based practice is only one of four, possibly five other responses that social work could make in relation to current tribulations. She sees a conflict between the need for social work to move forward, and evidence based practice, which encourages a retreat to the past before moving forward ("forward via the past").

McDonalds paper is jargonistic and the argument difficult to follow due to a rather obtuse writing style. It is also not clear why a retreat to the past, as represented by evidence-based practice, cannot be seen as building on or including social work's "heritage", the rejection of which she claims is the price of adopting an evidence based practice approach.

10.3 Solesbury (2001)

Solesbury (2001) presents a balanced view of the rise of evidence-based policy making in the UK. Like Marston and Watts, he asks "why now? ...Is there something in the UK worlds of research, of practice or of policy that has impelled the ascendancy of a concern with the role of evidence in public policy and practice?" It would appear from the responses of non-British European researchers during the course of this project that yes, there is something unique to the UK. Along with many others, Solesbury points to the strong support given to an evidence based approach to policy making by the Blair Labor Government, with its pragmatic, anti-ideological stance. While it may seem that this rationale does not apply to Australia at the same time, given the current Coalition government, there are two distinct scenarios here, as intimated in the review of McDonald's paper. The adoption of both evidence based policy and evidence based practice has occurred in the UK. But in Australia, so far, only evidence-based practice has made any significant inroad. Solesbury also comments that the concept of evidence based policy and practice has not entered in political discourse in other European or North American states either, but does not offer any reasons for why not.

Solesbury begins by observing the utilitarian turn in research over the last decade, which has been driven largely by changes in funding sources, now increasingly provided by government departments. As has also occurred in with the Australian Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK has bowed to the demands of government which views academic research as a means to economic and social development more than an as a cultural end in itself (p.4). On the whole, researchers have co operated with these changes, not least because of a greater desire to engage with rather than merely observe society – to make a real contribution and to have the results of their work used to make a difference. Concurrently there has been a greater awareness in the both government and the research community that past research may still have a lot offer of value - as Solesbury (2002:5) puts it "social science is very bad at the cumulation and the re-use of past research results....often the disregard of past research is more a matter of ignorance or fashion". This is why there has been such interest in the use of systematic reviews in social science recently.

Having argued that pragmatism in British policymaking has replaced ideology, with the focus on "what works", Solesbury goes on point out that "what works" is not all that matters. There are other important questions in policy development requiring research that is descriptive, analytical, diagnostic, theoretical and prescriptive. He acknowledges that questions such as "what is going on?", "What's the problem? "Is it better or worse than...?" are prior questions to "what works?" but cautions that the "what works" question alone is too bald and it tends to exclude these other equally important questions (and the type of evidence needed to address them). This is an important point which deserves further recognition in the evidence based policy-making debate but unfortunately Solesbury does not develop it further in this paper.

This leads Solesbury on to the issue of what counts as evidence. He argues that evidence is more plural than merely research (and that even "research" is more plural than "academic research"). The availability and validity of knowledge and information are key issues in what constitutes evidence but not all knowledge has equal validity. For example, personal experience may a key way of obtaining knowledge, but it is very context specific and thus not necessarily valid to a wider group. Therefore, we need to ask three questions in judging validity: how relevant is this to what we are seeking to understand or decide? How representative is this of the population that concerns us? How reliable, how well founded is it? Only a fairly cursory treatment is given to the issue of what counts as evidence, but as this is not the focus of the paper and it is something that has been addressed by a number of other writers, Solesbury cannot be taken to task.

Solesbury concludes that the new drive for evidence-based policymaking provides opportunities for researchers but we need to be modest in our claims to be able to make a difference. In sum, this paper raised some useful points, although being a relatively brief paper the points were not discussed in any great depth. In addition, the issue of where evidence-based policymaking is going (which is part of the title) was not really addressed.

10.4 Healy (2002)

(Healy 2002) is a brief commentary on (Solesbury 2002) from the perspective of a planning and regeneration researcher. Healy questions how real the newfound enthusiasm for evidence-based policy is. He notes that it is clear that research is increasingly being driven by policy requirements, and that research evidence is necessary because experience and personal observation are no longer sufficient, but there is a sense that this is a very short term perspective occurring at the expense of more forward looking research (p.97). Also, while research may support policy it may not have much impact on policy shifts. Evaluation research is flourishing with the new concern for assessing whether or not a policy or initiative works. This concern which may be genuine but evaluation research may also be merely an obligation or a

justification. Healy also fears that national evidence will replace local evidence, or official will replace the less formal. He also makes the observation that there is nothing really new in basing policy on firm evidence (a fact which is also acknowledged by evidence-based policymaking proponents) and that perhaps the word “evidence” just has a semantic appeal. Healy is not convinced that there really is a new appeal to evidence (although like most of us, he would like to think so). Many of Healy’s fears have been pre empted and discussed in much of the pro-evidence-based policymaking literature and it is not clear from his brief commentary how familiar he is with this material. It would be interesting to see a more expanded rationale for his distrust in light of this wider literature.

10.5 Percy-Smith, Burden, Darlow, Dawson, Hawtin and Ladi (2002)

Unlike the majority of the literature on evidence-based policymaking, Percy-Smith et al’s (2002) report is a report on an empirical study of the impact of research in local government in the UK, rather than a conceptual paper. It begins with an overview of models of policymaking, because these affect the way the relationship between research and policy is understood. Percy-Smith lists four types of models: the rational model, where policy making is a rational process and ideas rather than interests shape politics; the incremental model which sees the policy process as essentially irrational and where information may contribute to policy at any stage of the process; the mixed-scanning approach, which is a marriage of the two previous approaches and argues that fundamental decisions should adopt a rationalist approach and routine decisions a more incremental approach; and the garbage-can approach, where knowledge is not necessarily seen as a positive input for policy making. There is some similarity here with Perri’s “game” models; particularly between the chess game and the rational model, and the “snap” game and the incremental model.

Percy-Smith et al then summarize the main reasons for a lack of connection between research and policy in the past – the research agenda has been led by researchers rather than policy makers, the research community and policy makes have different styles of work, use different methods, have different time scales and compose reports differently; and there has been a lack of demand for research findings because they were not thought relevant to real politics. Now, there has been convergence such that policy makers see the importance of using evidence and feel they should be partners in its production, while researchers recognize that their research needs to be within a convenient time and methodological framework and is more likely to be used if it is consistent with current political ideology.

They then go on to make the important point that there is a distinction between “dissemination” and “impact” (dissemination being a more limited concept). Researchers tend to aim for impact, but we usually have to be satisfied with influence or awareness amongst policy makers.

Twelve research questions were asked, but the underlying aims of the research were to examine the ways local authorities use research to inform policy development at corporate level; explore how research is used at different levels from policy through to front-line delivery within individual policy service areas; and to investigate how the value and usefulness of research can be enhanced in supporting change within local authorities. The research methods used were a survey and a series of case studies. The survey was sent to all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wale and had a response rate of 56%, which covered 245 authorities. Questionnaires were sent to more than one officer in each authority so the total number of returned questionnaires was 696. Five authorities representing various criteria were selected for the case studies (p. 8).

Alarmingly, a widespread lack of clarity about what constitutes research was found with many local government officers holding extreme views at each end of the spectrum – some defining it extremely loosely, others viewing it as "something academics do" and not relevant to them.

In order for research evidence to have any impact on policy making, it must first be disseminated. The most common form of dissemination of research produced by in-house research staff within their organization was email or intranet (20%), followed by newsletters (15%), circulation of reports (14%) and communication through management (13%). Other means such as seminars, databases, and libraries were used by 5% of research staff. About 70% of both front-line staff and policy officers/senior staff are made aware of external research through the initiative of individual officers, followed by information from the head of service or another senior manage (64% for front line staff and 70% of senior staff). Thirty-four per cent of both types of staff are made aware of external research via information from a department information/research officer. The percentages of each type of staff made aware of external research through various means were remarkably similar (see Table 6, p.19) yet based on this table Percy-Smith et al comment that senior staff were more likely than frontline staff to be made aware of external research (p. 19).

Percy-Smith et al also suggest that since there is such heavy reliance on the initiatives and networks of individual officers, rather than formal, systematic processes, it is likely that important and potentially relevant research materials do not always get to the right people at the right time. Another key finding was that many officers lack the skill and capacity for evaluating the reliability of the research or interpreting and applying research undertaken elsewhere.

Percy-Smith et al (2002:45) make the important point that the way an organization deals with unwelcome or unexpected results can indicate the extent to which it is serious about evidence based policy making. However, this point was not explored to any significant extent in the research.

The report presents a generally worrying picture of the degree to which research evidence is used at local government level, but also makes several useful observations, such as the role of a receptive organizational culture. Elected members were widely perceived by officers as being unsympathetic to research, especially if it is not relevant to their particular locality and it was clear that members themselves did not find research very useful. Percy-Smith et al offer a number of suggestions for building an "evidence culture (p.55), such as research managers and other key officers identifying and addressing the disincentives limiting the effective use of research and evidence, and appropriate staff development and training. They also point out that building an evidence culture does not necessarily mean more research needs to be done, but that existing research evidence needs to be used more effectively.

Another useful observation relevant to the research question being addressed in this review is the tension between central government's prescription of evidence-based policy making (and inherent top down identification of priorities and actions and targets), and local autonomy. Yet while centrally produced research was regarded as important, not much practical use is made of it at the local level. Percy-Smith found almost no examples of major policy shifts that were the result of research (local or otherwise) (2002:50). However, they concluded that a number of criteria must be met in order for research to have any impact on policy making: it must be available at the right time; it must be produced by a trusted and authoritative source; produce unambiguous findings with clear implications for action; be related to an issue that is a current local priority; be clearly relevant to the locality; be consistent with national guidance priorities; not significantly challenge the direction of existing policy; and be "championed" by a senior officer or member (Percy-Smith 2002:51). In saying so, Percy-Smith (2002:55) also acknowledge that even if research is properly integrated into the policy making process, the main drivers of policy "will and probably should"

continue to be political values, local needs and priorities and central government requirements. Producers of research also need to be aware that publication (even electronically) does not equate with access; dissemination does not mean the target audience has been reached; and reaching the target audience is not the same as having an impact.

In sum, Percy-Smith et al's report makes a significant contribution to assessing how research use and evidence –based policy should occur at the local government level, which at present is a neglected area of the evidence based-policy making debate. The report also shows that the adoption of such a strategy may be more difficult for this level of government for a range of reasons.

10.6 Parsons (2002)

Parsons does not mince words in claiming from the outset of his paper that "policy making in liberal democracies has, for the most part, been more about 'muddling through' rather than a process in which the social or policy sciences have had an influential part to play" (p.1). This term has also been used to describe Australian housing policy (Yates 1997). Yates asked whether the 1990s and its new governance signaled the end of muddling through, but according to Parsons, little would have changed.

Parsons argues that the UK government's adoption of evidence based policy making is a missed opportunity for improving government and it has only served to make the relationship between knowledge and policy making more muddled rather than less confused. It is researchers who have missed the opportunity because governments intend to use evidence based policy making to enhance their control of the policy making process, rather than to help improve social science's capacities to influence the 'practices of democracy' (p.2). Kemeny (1992) shared similar concerns about research being dictated by policy makers (in Winter and Seelig 2001:4). However, it could also be argued that academic researchers' agendas may not be relevant to the "coalface of social change" (Winter and Seelig 2001:8).

Parson's synopsis of evidence based policymaking, though expressed in sardonic terms, is basically correct:

> evidence-based policy making is inspired by the belief that, despite the mess, there does indeed exist some firm ground upon which can be laid 'hard facts' to support the grand edifice of modernized policy making. The mess can be mapped and occupied. It is possible and desirable to move policy making out of the realm of muddling through to a new firm ground where policy could be driven by evidence, rather than political ideology or prejudice. (Parsons 2002:p.3)

However, he sees evidence-based policymaking as a step backward because of its assumptions that positivism will result in a "promised policy dry ground" (p.3). Parson's apparent unawareness of the role of theory and eclectic methodologies may explain this view. He states "....Schön 's point about the swampy lowlands was, given that policy making does indeed take place in such territory, our strategy should be to take account of the very forms of knowledge which evidence-based policymaking seems to consider as irrelevant".p6. However, in his defence, he seems to take Blunkett's statement on what constitutes evidence quite literally:

> We're not interested in worthless correlations based on small samples from which it is impossible to draw generalisable conclusions. We welcome studies which combine large scale, quantitative information on effect sizes which allow us to generalise, with in-depth case studies which provide insights into how processes work. (Blunkett 2000)

and uses it to launch the rest of his argument, which is vehemently ant-quantitative and pro-participant and democracy. It is ironic that his assertion that more emphasis should be placed on organizations making the best use of local knowledge and their learning experiences (p.5) is actually consistent with evidence-based policy making as envisaged by writers such as Davies and Nutley.

At times Parsons appears to exaggerate the claims made in the rest of the evidence-based policy literature. For example, he states that “the claim that government can actually possess the kind of knowledge sufficient for it to arrive at 'national solutions' to policy problems is both erroneous and dangerous to democracy.” But he does not cite any references which state that governments can unequivocally solve national problems merely by collecting sufficient information – this is an extreme oversimplification.

According to Parsons, it is an “utterly facile belief that we can increase our capacities to know and to control simply because we have increased our capacities to manage information and 'evidence'.”p.6 He may have a valid point about the capacity to control, but there is no escaping that knowledge (of any kind) requires information.

Parson’s difficulty in seeing how non-linearity, continuous adaptation and learning can be reconciled with the actual practice of policy makers or the philosophy espoused in government calls for evidence based policy making belies his misconceptions of what is involved. He believes it involves target setting and an “inherent top-downness”(p.9) and contrasts this with Schon’s (1970) conception of ideal, democratic policymaking, where there is an ongoing process of learning at all levels and between all levels (cited in Parsons 2002:10). Yet such learning is precisely what writers such as Nutley and Davies (2000) have called for. He also states that policy making is characterized as an ideology/ value free zone in which professional policy makers are only interested in what works(p.11). Again, this assertion ignores the many papers (some of which are in this review) pointing to the role of ideology and values in policy making.

He assumes on p.10 that modernizing involves professionalizing and this means mechanizing. Not only is the link between modernizing and mechanizing tenuous but the aim of evidence-based policymaking is also democratization (in theory at least). Indeed, Sanderson (2000:1) argues that governments are turning to evidence for legitimacy because this is no longer guaranteed by democratic political processes (p.1).

There are many similarly excessive claims throughout the paper, such as “for evidence-based policy making, values, like naughty children, must be seen, but never heard.....It is about efficiency, effectiveness and economy in delivery, rather than ethics” .p11

This is an entertaining paper to read, but its emotive expression and apparent misunderstandings do little to enhance credibility. Parson argues as if evidence-based policymaking is diametrically opposed to democracy, learning, public participation and openness when these are (ostensibly) its very goals. While others have expressed more cautious misgivings about the risks to these aspects of democracy, and others have argued that they are not at risk at all, Parsons is firm in his views of evidence based policy as managerialist. Nutley (2003) maintains that critics with extreme views, such as Parsons, have focused on examples of policy development which run counter to the best available evidence. She also believes that they make the erroneous assumptions that research can provide objective answers to policy questions and that policy making can become a more rational process. It is clear from the pro-evidence based policy making literature that neither of these claims have actually been made.

10.7 Gorard (2002)

Gorard (2002) paper is not directly concerned with evidence-based policymaking itself, nor with the quality of type of evidence used to inform it. Instead, he concentrates on an aspect of research that is often overlooked and which has important implications for evidence-based policymaking – drawing unwarranted conclusions, or over claiming the implications of research findings. He argues that there needs to be a clear and direct link between results and conclusions and that critics of evidence-based policymaking may actually be identifying the absence of such a link. This is precisely what (Burrows 2001) are doing in their critique of neighbourhood based policy initiatives in general, and McCulloch (2001; cited in Burrows and Bradshaw 2001:1346) in particular.

He begins by briefly considering types of evidence (experimental and alternative types of evidence) and identifies them as "active" and "passive" approaches to research, (p. 3). Experimental trials alone tend to focus attention on one effect to the neglect of complex causal mechanisms, although the model of an experiment can still useful in passive designs. Gorard is alarmed by how often passive researchers tend to make comparisons over time and place on the basis of one observation and are believed and cited by others (2002:4). He also calls for the need for a transparent written protocol in all research so that findings can be replicated (at least to the extent that this is possible, given individual researchers' interpretations of events and the literature).

Gorard feels that for passive studies, there is a need for an explicit "warrant", but a warrant may also be useful when conclusions are counter-intuitive or challenge the accepted knowledge in a field (p.5). A warrant is defined as the crucial link between the findings and the conclusions ostensibly drawn from them. The absence of a warrant leaves some social science research open to the (oft valid) accusation that the difference between social and natural science is often used as an excuse for lack of rigor and over emphasis on value-judgments. Without a warrant, research papers can merely present research as a rhetorical backdrop for previously held opinions. The Scottish Minister for Education (Humes and Bryce 2001; cited in Gorard 2002:5) highlighted this issue. Gorard presents an example of such research in Waslander and Thrupp (1995).

Gorard clarifies the distinction between the warrant and conclusions in these terms: "when we have evidence like X, we can make a claim like Y. It [the warrant] can be challenged, but unlike a challenge to the evidence it is not about quality but rather about the relevance of the evidence to the conclusion. ...Only a clear and robust warrant, along with high quality and relevant research, provide the necessary foundation for changing in evidence-informed policy..." (2002:6). Warrants contain a causal claim (if policy maker does X, Y will ensue) and they may be part of the research design but are independent of any particular method of data collection. Warrants are helpful in persuading skeptical readers rather than "playing to a gallery of existing converts" (Gorard 2002:6).

Gorard then presents a page or so addressing objections to scientific approaches in informing policy, making some astute observations on the utilization process. One of these is that strategies for packaging results for easy digestibility and dissemination will fail if the findings are not seen as trustworthy. Good social science is the same as any kind of science – it should share the same norms such as explicit hypotheses, sound designs, appropriate measures, quality data and logical analyses. Some will condemn this as "positivist" but as Gorard points out, the point is that the results of research need to be acceptable as true (as they are in natural science). If research descriptions are not intended to be true, then they do not have warranted assertability. This does not mean there is no room for multiple perspectives, nor does it mean that anything can be true. Gorard (2002:9) concludes by stating that when we present research findings, we need to indicate the extent to which we would be prepared to bet on them being true, or the extent to which we would want others to rely on them being true. This is

part of the warrant. Further, being “a little cavalier” in producing results is acceptable if they are presented conservatively, in line with their likelihood of truth.

This paper fleshes out the deeper considerations involved when calling for research and evidence to inform policy. Researchers and policy makers should not accept conclusions uncritically at face value in any case, but the concept and presence of a clear warrant makes judgment of the validity of conclusions much easier for them. The readability of this paper is good and it is well peppered with references, derived mostly from the field of education. This is not necessarily a weakness, as Gorard’s argument appears to apply to any social science discipline, but does suggest that there may be a need to investigate the use of warrants in other fields, certainly in housing research.

10.8 Grayson (2002)

The essence of Grayson’s argument was presented in O’Dwyer (2003b) but deserves closer attention here. The driver of this paper is the quality of the evidence used in evidence-based policy making. Publication peer review is one of the main factors determining quality and the problems connected with this method of quality control are identified, along with possible solutions. Grayson feels that an effective peer review system is important for two main reasons: one is quality assurance, while the other is protection for social scientists who play along with the “dangerous game” of evidence based policy making (p.2).

Grayson sees evidence based policy making as potentially dangerous because experiences from the health and natural sciences shows that researchers can be open to unaccustomed challenges and dangers. These problems stem from the fact that research evidence does not reflect the way most people perceive and experience the world. Social scientists may come under fire and need to be able to defend themselves by anticipating and developing strategies to prevent problems. They need to be able to demonstrate the “unimpeachable standing of their own work *within its own terms of reference*” (p.4, italics in original). Clearly Gorard’s concept of warrants is relevant and valuable in this respect.

Grayson points to education as one area in particular where the quality of research has been found wanting within its own terms of reference, for reasons such as sampling bias, lack of triangulation, methodologies rarely reported, partisanship in conduct and presentation of research and adulation of ‘great thinkers’ (p. 4). Yet all the papers in which these deficiencies were identified had been peer reviewed and published in prestigious journals. Such problems can be found across the social sciences. This raises questions about peer review as a means of quality assurance and hence about the quality of the research used as evidence for evidence based policymaking. It cannot be assumed that peer review guarantees quality. An additional problem for the social sciences is that not all relevant evidence (e.g. government publications or grey literature) is peer reviewed at all (although it can be high quality nonetheless).

Grayson suggests that one reason why the quality of research in peer reviewed journals may be poor, (more so now than in the past), is because publishing is now less about knowledge dissemination and more about academic status (p. 6). Further, peer review is

- slow (due to the number of manuscripts, in turn driven by the increasing need to publish, and to delays while papers are revised)
- expensive (reviewing is very time consuming for referees, and overall time spent on reviewing increases if a paper is sent to more than one journal in turn)
- prone to bias (toward papers reporting positive or statistically significant results, toward age, gender, nationality or institution or against heretical or dissenting views)

- open to abuse (which may be unconscious but may include theft of ideas, lack of anonymity due to small pool of suitable reviewers, tendency to publish on higher impact or fashionable subjects to improve rating in citation indices)
- occasionally incompetent (overlooking or failing to detect errors)
- unable to detect fraud (including honorary authorship).

These points are important (and worrying) given that policy makers tend to prefer evidence from peer reviewed sources (Schotland et al, in Grayson 2002:10). More effective peer review methods are necessary. Without them, Grayson feels that social scientists are vulnerable to the risks inherent in a closer relationship with the users of researcher. These risks include accusations of politicization, being forced into a narrow "what works" mould that could restrict innovative thinking, and the wider public reputation of social science.

Not all journals have a clear policy on what constitutes peer review. Grayson (2002:11) reports a study showing that 60 per cent of editors do not conceal the identity of the author (although 88 per cent conceal the reviewer's identity), although it has also been found that even where the identity is concealed, it is revealed by clues in the paper, especially when the field is very specialized (Alderson et al 2001: cited in Grayson 2002:12).

Grayson reports Armstrong's (1997) paper suggesting ways to overcome the weaknesses with the peer review process, such as: seeking informal peer review before submitting a manuscript; researchers taking greater responsibility for producing and presenting useful work; electronic publication using open and post publication peer review where authors could withdraw work if it is poorly reviewed; separate posting of data and accounts of research methods on the Internet with only the findings and their implications published in a paper journal; leaving the decision of whether to publish entirely with the editor and not the reviewers; use of structured rating sheets; requiring full disclosure of methods, data, and sources of funding.

Grayson's paper is of particular practical relevance to policy makers who have already embarked on evidence based policy making, but it also serves as a warning to social scientists contributing to the process. Like Stone (2003) and Gorard (2002), Grayson is not against evidence based policy making but encourages researchers and policy makers to be critical and cautious rather than take the process at face value.

10.9 Stone (2003)

Stone (2003) argues that the idea of bridging research and policy is predicated on the notion that there is a 'weak link' between these two elements (e.g. Nutley 2003). She attempts to identify exactly where and what the weak link is and concludes that there are generally two weak links: one is in researchers' poor understanding of policy-making dynamics; the other is policy makers' degree of knowledge utilization. The latter is due to a range of factors peculiar to leadership styles, institutional architecture and political culture of a particular country or policy domain.

Stone's background is in development studies. Like Marston and Watts (2003) and Solesbury (2001), Stone asks why knowledge has become so central to policy debates recently, but specifically in development. There is some overlap with the reasons cited by other commentators but there are also some factors unique to development matters. These include:

- the withdrawal of state from the delivery of development programs with more emphasis placed on non-government organizations. This has required NGOs to expand their research and analytic capacity, and is paralleled by demands from donors and governments for improved transparency and evaluation;

- the need for NGOs to reinvent and market themselves as knowledgeable so they can promote partnership and address funding constraints;
- increasing reliance by elected representatives and generalist bureaucrats on the specialized knowledge of expert individuals and scholarly associations;
- the need for a global approach to many current development questions, which is facilitated by the sharing of knowledge between NGOs all over the world. Such sharing is made feasible by advances in communication technology and the transnational mobility of development professionals.

Stone recognizes that the interaction between the supply of research and the demand for research does not occur in a vacuum but within policy environments and around institutions which shape opportunities for research utilization (p. 4). This theme was explored at a workshop attended by the range of stakeholders in development. It was concluded that no answers or solutions can be rationally devised but that there is a need for case studies to illustrate the diverse ways research influences policy (p. 5).

She then goes on to recount the familiar cry of researchers that nobody listens to their policy relevant observations and explanations, and of policy makers who find much academic research irrelevant, esoteric and theoretical, and notes there has been a great deal written on this subject (p.5). Indeed, there are even two longstanding journals addressing the research and policy nexus (*Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion and Utilization*, and *Knowledge, Technology and Policy*).

An evaluation of the research functions of the different organizations involved in development issues contests the view that researchers and policy makers live in different worlds (p.6). The dividing line is becoming more blurred as there are professional requirements for research skills for NGO leaders, officers of professional associations and government bureaucrats, while more researchers also wear the hat of practitioner. But it is the differences between different groups in conceptualizing the policy-research relationship that has generated different recommendations for bridging research and policy (p.7).

Stone identifies no fewer than twelve ways to explain why research is not utilized in policy making, particularly as it pertains to development. It is worth noting the underlying similarity but also the larger range and different weights of these perspectives with those cited by other writers. These explanations may not be mutually exclusive and show that there are many possible routes to bridging research and policy, depending on the starting point. The starting points include:

- A public goods problem (an inadequate supply of policy relevant research);
- Lack of access to research, data and analysis for both researchers and policy makers;
- Researchers' poor policy comprehension toward the policy process and how research can be relevant to the process;
- Ineffective communication of their work by researchers ;
- Ignorance of politicians;
- Anti-intellectualism in government (fear of the critical power of ideas – ostensibly a problem more common in developing countries than in the developed world);
- Government inability or lack of capacity to absorb research;
- Politicization of research (findings can be misquoted, decontextualised or used selectively);

- Societal disconnection of researchers and policy makers from each other and from those the research is about;
- Domains of research relevance, impact and influence (e.g. researchers may have a huge impact on the media but no input into policy development)
- Power relations (contested validity of knowledge, censorship and ideology – the relationship between knowledge and power in developing countries is less clear)
- Perceptions of the validity of research influenced by different ways of knowing (e.g. between indigenous and Western understandings of the world).

As Curtain (2003) also comments, Stone's discussion of the issues goes beyond a simple view of researchers failing to communicate well and policy makers being resistant to new information. However, her twelve starting points can also be distilled into three basic groups: supply side (points 1 to 4); demand side (5 to 8) and social and political context (9-12). Stone offers a number of strategies for addressing the problems in each group (e.g. training activities for researchers in how to write a policy brief , online reporting services, sabbaticals for public servants in universities, in house training etc) which have been covered elsewhere (e.g. Percy-Smith et al 2002). It should be noted that many of these strategies are already in use in Australia, but there may be problems with their scale or frequency.

One of Stone's more innovative ideas is the use of an intermediary, "with a flair for interpreting and communicating the technical or theoretical work" (p.10). Similarly, a "research editor" could be used within government to select the high quality and relevant research (p.11), presumably at least one in each department or unit.

Stone then claims that "the very idea of 'bridging research and policy' is actually false because it presents a biased view of two autonomous communities and the twelve points she has already presented tend to perpetuate the input-output image of two worlds needing to be bridged. Research and policy should be viewed as "mutually constitutive" in the sense that knowledge is power (p.12). While it may seem to the reader that there are two obviously distinct entities, one of which tends to have the knowledge and the other the power, Stone argues that power resides in research not just because it is synchronized with the policy preferences of political leaders, but because it provides a foundation for "counter-discourses" as well as the dubious sounding "alternative sites of resistance" (p.12). Although it has certain logic and appeal, this section is not entirely convincing and the argument needs to be developed further.

Stone presents five "mainstream" models of utilization after noting that the neat and linear model of the policy process showing linked stages should be treated as no more than a heuristic device, because in reality, policy making is messy and chaotic. Such a model cannot explain why policy change occurs or when research might play a decisive role (p.13). The mainstream models include:

- the rational (or rational-comprehensive) model (depicting a local and ordered sequence of policy making phases, assumes that researchers have time and access to full information which will produce the best policy);
- the muddling through model (where policies are gradually modified in a series of steps due to conservative decision making and researchers are sidelined);
- the knowledge utilization (enlightenment) model (where research is rarely makes a determining impact on policy making but accumulated findings gradually alter perceptions of problems and effects of interventions).

- policy paradigms (the prevailing paradigm defines the problems to be addressed and how to do so, research is subordinate to political interests, a shift occurs when there is increased policy failure);
- network approaches (public policy recognizes the role of non-state stakeholders and researchers work with decision-makers to achieve common goals.

Given the language and expression used in the section on network approaches (pp. 17-18), Stone clearly favours situations where the network approach is most apt, but she also accepts that none of the models is correct. They each emphasis different features of how knowledge is modified by a policy context. So many factors are involved that it is impossible to identify any common patterns or set of steps in bridging policy and research. This does not mean Stone has a negative view of research utilization, as she recognizes many positive instances (p.19), but she does conclude that research is not a panacea for policy and that social and economic problems will persist.

This paper is a useful contribution to our understanding of evidence-based policymaking, delving somewhat deeper than others into utilization mechanisms and setting them in context. Its main contribution is bringing attention to the specific characteristics of international development and international aid policy.

10.10 Marston and Watts (2003)

Marston and Watts (2003) recognize that the enthusiasm for evidence-based policymaking stems largely from the biomedical model. They also ask the obvious question that if there is such enthusiasm for evidence in policy making now, what does this imply about the use of evidence in the past? They also recognize that policy making is also a political process and suggest that advocates of evidence-based policymaking often overlook this fact. This is one of the few papers to appraise the evidence-based policymaking discourse in Australia critically.

The paper unpacks the concept very well and drawing on Young et al (2002), immediately recognizes the two parts of the term. Marston and Watts consider both dimensions of the term, each of which is loaded with a range of implicit assumptions. They argue that these assumptions play a critical role in the arguments generally used to support evidence-based policymaking. They also maintain that these assumptions could be detrimental to a “reasonable and democratic evidence-based approach to policy making” (p.2).

After noting the biomedical and UK origins of evidence-based policymaking, Marston and Watts comment on the UK situation, identifying the evidence-based policy making process there as aligned with the second of the two dimensions of evidence-based policy making, i.e. the evidential nature of social science. They characterize this approach as “instrumentalist” and “knowledge driven” (after Young et al 2002), where the underlying assumption is that knowledge should lead policy. But not only is evidence-based policy making to draw more on the results of good social science, it could also be seen as a tool for government, raising questions about relationships between government and universities, intellectual property rights and academic freedom (p.3). Ironically, from the government point of view, evidence-based policy making is mooted as being apolitical, neutral and separate from political ideology and therefore a desirable or useful concept to both promote and utilize. Marston and Watts take exception to this assumption of neutrality and suggest that the reason that evidence-based policy making discourse has become so popular so quickly is the increased targeting, rationing of services and the shift towards outcomes based funding in the human services sector. Service delivery models must be ever more competitive and demonstrate value for money. In blunt terms, they maintain that “evidence-based policy making cannot be separated from a broader political context where efficiency has become a primary political value, replacing discussions of justice and interest with

discussions of what is possible and practical, with means rather than ends, with methods rather than truth" (p.5). To be fair, however, it is difficult to argue that efficiency should not be seen as important. It is also doubtful that efficiency is mutually exclusive or incompatible with possibility and practicality. Nor is efficiency the province of any particular political ideology.

They also point out that the interest in evidence-based policy making may simply be due to the intuitive and common sense nature of the term (p.5). Plainly, as they say, it is difficult to argue that policy should not be based on evidence! The term also lends cheap and easy rhetoric (Tilley and Laycock 2000:13) and has scientific, scholarly and rational connotations. The main thrust of Marston and Watt's paper is that it cannot and should not be assumed that "evidence-based" policy making produced better outcomes than policy based on hunches, intuition or any other method, because policy making per se can never be divorced from politics, and because evidence-based policy making is inextricably tied to "…knowledge/power games about who gets to speak the truth for whom and what types of knowledge are considered closest to the truth…" (p.5). In other words, there is a danger that "evidence-based policy making" could become a way for policy elites to exert strategic control over what constitutes knowledge about social problems, redefining knowledge to exclude or devalue practice based wisdom, professional judgment and the voices of ordinary citizens (p.6). Knowledge should not be narrowly defined in terms of seemingly objective scientific criteria (p.6).

Other commentators (e.g. Davies and Nutley 2002) claim that there is still room within an evidence-based policy making approach for knowledge obtained by means other than empirical experiments or other forms of interventions, but this does not really address the point Marston and Watts are making – that it is not the source of the knowledge (i.e. whether quantitative or qualitative research methods were used), but that there are other forms of knowledge that are also important, (coalface experience, tacit knowledge) but which are not strictly "evidence". They quote from Parsons (2001:104) who also argues that what works is often not a question of facts or evidence, but values:

> "evidence-based policy making should be about the process of understanding context and clarifying values, not simply assembling hard facts. This requires a policy process that is open and democratic and which can facilitate a process of deliberation and public learning rather than control."

However, Marston and Watts suggest that the physical separation of policy development and direct service delivery means that it is difficult for tacit knowledge and experience of what works at the coalface to be incorporated into decision-making processes. Even if this can happen in practical terms, there are still problems in the way "scientific evidence" is understood by managers and technocrats and the failure to incorporate other schools of thought or theoretical models of policy making. Part of the reason for why "hard" or quantitative evidence is favoured is because it is the most easily available and understood and thus is favoured particularly when there is an excess of information, as is increasingly the case. In selecting which sources of evidence to inform policy, policy makers are making judgments about what is most appropriate – and these judgments are influenced by the views of relevant Ministers, previous policy directions and external vested interests (p.7). In turn, the evidence they collect has been produced by researchers who are themselves actors influenced by politics, government, media and the wider academic research community. Marston and Watts maintain "Policy making remains a contested and contingent site where various types of evidence and forms of knowledge come into play and come up against power relations and established hegemonies about what constitutes the 'truth'".

In uncovering the assumptions underlying each type of evidence-based policy making, Marston and Watts acknowledge that we need to have belief systems in order to deal with the sheer plenitude of the world. Our use of assumptions helps to filter what we

perceive and understand and therefore, Marston and Watts agree with Popper (1972) that there can never be value-free data. However, as is the nature of assumptions, they are difficult to identify and generally not explicitly articulated in either research or policy making. Marston and Watts propose a series of questions (p.10) which will identify the core assumptions of policy oriented research (or the policy making process) and use them to expose the assumptions inherent in current policy oriented crime research and to show that these assumptions play a role in selecting certain kinds of evidence and in warranting the use of evidence to underpin the conclusions. For example, the category of "inadequate parental supervision" reflects the researchers' own moral and political values, while the use of a technical approach to risk management of the criminogenic is advocated, ignoring questions of government mismanagement or the failure to invest in social and physical infrastructure. A scientific approach to deterring "at risk" persons has merely produced a "careless proliferation" of social research categories expressed in terms of numbers that ignores underlying systemic forces. This in turn shapes the determination of policies in a particular way – in this case, way to maintain a social order rather than fundamental systemic change.

In their conclusion, Marston and Watts point out that they do not oppose the idea of evidence-based policy making, nor are they suggesting that policymaking is an irrational process where research evidence is irrelevant. But they do warn of the need to critically evaluate the assumptions that are constituted and pass off as evidence, and that the shift to evidence-based policy making is no guarantee of either good research or good policy. Finally, the feel that in Australia there is a real risk that the idea of evidence will be used to support pre-determined outcomes because of the dominance of rational accounts of policymaking. This is a particularly pertinent to housing policy, where the dollar values involved are considerable.

This paper is convincing and presents a sophisticated elucidation of several of the main issues within the evidence-based policy making debate- namely, why now? What is evidence, and what other factors are involved in policy making? It is the only paper to evaluate the concept of evidence-based policy making critically in the Australian context and makes a worthy contribution to the debate. It is also backed by an impressive, in-depth list of references. The main criticism of the paper is that rather less attention is given to the first dimension of the definition of evidence-based policy making (the way in which policy is made) than to the second. A more minor criticism is that the case study of evidence, argument and assumptions is itself somewhat "rhetorically charged". While it is accepted that this case study is presented in the context of demonstrating its underlying assumptions, which Marston and Watts clearly view as flawed, this part of the paper does not really acknowledge or address the difficulties of the case study's authors would face in presenting any other type of analysis and conclusions.

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

AHURI
Australian Housing
and Urban Research Institute

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
Level 1 114 Flinders Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000
Phone +61 3 9660 2300 Fax +61 3 9663 5488
Email information@ahuri.edu.au Web www.ahuri.edu.au