



**Positioning Paper**

# **Integration and social housing in Australia: challenges and options**

authored by

**Andrew Jones, Rhonda Phillips and Vivienne Milligan**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AHA	Aboriginal Housing Authority
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
APAIS	Australian Public Affairs and Information Service
ARHP	Aboriginal Rental Housing Program
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAFDP	Crisis Accommodation for Families in Distress Program
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
CHIP	Community Housing Infrastructure Program
CHP	Community Housing Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
FACS	Department of Family and Community Services
FACCSIA	Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
HPLGM	Housing, Planning and Local Government Ministers
ICHO	Indigenous Community Housing Organisations
IT	Information Technology
LGCHP	Local Government and Community Housing Program
MRAP	Mortgage and Rent Assistance Program
MRRS	Mortgage and Rent Relief Scheme
NCHF	National Community Housing Forum
PRHP	Pensioner Rental Housing Program
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SACHA	South Australian Community Housing Authority
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SHA	State Housing Authorities
SOMIH	State-owned and -managed Indigenous housing
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
TRSA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to examine the themes of policy and service integration in the provision of social housing in Australia. In particular it seeks to identify the factors driving policy interest in this issue and stakeholder views about integration issues, challenges, opportunities and risks. The study takes a critical approach to identifying whether and in which circumstances greater integration may be beneficial. This approach aims to identify some options and priorities that may contribute to greater policy coherence and service coordination while also preserving and promoting diversity, flexibility, choice and responsiveness in social housing.

Prior to the 1980s, social housing was essentially synonymous with public housing, which for many years had a central goal of providing affordable rental housing for low-income households. Since that time there has been a diversification of social housing providers and policy goals. Social housing now comprises a diverse mix of organisations across three sub-sectors: public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing. The goals of social housing are becoming more complex, due in part to a greater variety and complexity of housing needs and a long-term decline in funding.

Changes in social housing are generating complex policy and management questions, for example about the best ways to facilitate client access to multiple public and community housing services, link housing and support services for clients with complex needs and involve the market in housing assistance provision. Many of these questions concern inter-organisational and inter-sectoral relations. These are often depicted in the public sector management literature as problems of 'integration'. The term 'integration' is often used imprecisely, and is associated with a number of other words and phrases such as 'cooperation', 'collaboration', 'coordination', and 'joined-up government'. In this Positioning Paper we define 'integration' as:

structures and processes that attempt to bring together the participants in human services systems with the aim of achieving goals that cannot be achieved by those participants acting autonomously and separately. These goals include greater coherence and cohesion, efficiency, effectiveness, and consumer accessibility. These structures and processes may occur at the policy or the service delivery level, or both, and can involve several different modes and instruments of integration.

The 'problem' of integration is by no means unique to Australian social housing. Integration is a central issue in many complex human service systems. The form that the integration issue takes is shaped by the pattern of state and societal institutions in any particular context. In Australia the key institutional factors shaping the integration issue in human services include: the federal system of government; the structure of relations between the state and community organisations; and the role of the market sector in human services delivery.

The problems of integration in Australian social housing are set in this wider institutional milieu, but also have their own historical and structural context. The transition to multiple providers and multiple goals, referred to above, is occurring against a backdrop of highly contested changes to the role, structure and management of social housing. Historically, social housing in each of the states and territories has been strongly influenced and shaped by relations between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments, principally through the mechanism of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA). This Agreement has played a central role in establishing policy directions and allocating

financial resources for social housing in the states and territories. During the past decade the level of funds available for social housing through the CSHA has declined, and there has been greater emphasis on targeting of housing (especially public housing) provided through the CSHA to 'special needs' and 'greatest need' households. There has also been an emphasis on expansion of community housing, and on the provision of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) to social security income recipients who are tenants in the private rental market. At the same time, there has been increasing interest in linking the complex and fragmented Indigenous housing sector more closely with mainstream social housing.

The integration challenges in this context are many and complex. One step in sorting through this complexity is to employ the widely used distinction between integration at the policy level and integration at the service delivery level. Policy integration is concerned with issues of policy coherence, while service delivery integration is concerned with the capacity of services to work together at the local or regional delivery level to provide services to clients. A depiction of social housing in Australia and the integration challenges it faces is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

First, there are the challenges of integration that are internal to social housing – that is, relations among the three core sectors of public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing. The challenge is to ensure that the participants in social housing work together effectively to achieve greater cohesion, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and consumer accessibility.

Secondly, there are the challenges of effectively linking social housing with human services, including homelessness services. These linkages are of mounting importance as a consequence of the increasing focus of social housing on households and individuals with 'special needs' and those in 'greatest need'. Of particular significance are initiatives that seek to promote whole-of-government approaches to managing localities with a high proportion of social housing.

Thirdly, there are the challenges of effectively linking social housing with the wider set of policies, programs and services concerned with housing assistance and affordable housing. The integration challenge is to develop a coherent approach that links social housing provision with demand and supply side measures to improve housing affordability and expand affordable housing provision.

These three challenges are clearly interrelated, but represent different dimensions of the integration issue in Australian social housing. This classification is used as an organising framework throughout the research study. The study aims to examine the challenges associated with each of these three types of integration in Australian social housing. It will take a critical approach to identifying areas where integration may be beneficial, and to identifying some options and priorities that may be capable of strengthening integration while also preserving and promoting flexibility, choice and responsiveness.

The study draws on the international public sector management literature on integration to provide a framework for this analysis. This framework refers to the objectives, modes, instruments, implementation factors and outcomes of integration. These terms are introduced in this Positioning Paper (Chapter 3) and are used consistently throughout the project.

The overall research strategy is to identify and examine existing and potential structures and processes pertinent to integration in social housing by means of review of the relevant management and professional literature, analysis of relevant policy documents, and interviews and workshops with key informants drawn from key sectors and locations within social housing. The research has Australia-wide



relevance, but for reasons of economy detailed analysis is focused on three states only: New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. These states were chosen because they have had different types of structural arrangements for the management of social housing programs, and different emphases in their approach to integration issues. Analysis of the key integration challenges and options for social housing is based primarily on the experiences of these three states. However, it is intended that the national relevance and applicability of the study be tested via the AHURI user group process.

The current study does not provide a detailed analysis of all integration challenges facing Australian social housing. This would require a more detailed program of research and a number of discrete studies. The aim of this study is, rather, to identify the broad contours of the integration issue, and policy and service delivery challenges and options. This task is introduced in this Positioning Paper. The Final Report will provide a more detailed analysis of the policy and service delivery issues and options that could help to improve policy coherence and cohesive service delivery in social housing in the years ahead.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and aims

The aim of this study is to examine the themes of policy and service integration in the provision of social housing in Australia. In particular it seeks to identify the factors driving policy interest in this issue and stakeholder views about integration issues, challenges, opportunities and risks. It takes a critical approach to identifying whether and in which circumstances greater integration may be beneficial. This approach aims to identify some options and priorities that may contribute to greater policy coherence and service coordination while also preserving and promoting diversity, flexibility, choice and responsiveness in social housing.

Issues of integration were raised in the AHURI 2006 Research Agenda, which posed the questions:

What are the key challenges to be faced in amalgamating various providers of social housing into a single cohesive system at the State/Territory level? What are the principal advantages and disadvantages? (AHURI, 2005, p. 8).

The inclusion of this question in the AHURI research agenda reflects policy interest by State Housing Authorities (SHAs) in achieving improved 'integration' among the various providers of social housing in Australia. The most explicit articulation of this aspiration in Australia is the current Queensland policy project that aims to achieve 'One Social Housing System' by aligning policy and service delivery arrangements for all public, community and Indigenous housing programs (Queensland Department of Housing, 2005). Policy interest by SHAs in pursuing enhanced integration is evident across Australian jurisdictions in relation to a broader range of issues, including: coordinating public and community housing access (Hulse, Phillips and Burke, 2007); more closely linking Indigenous housing with other social housing programs (Australia, FACSIA, 2006a; Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2007); strengthening links between social housing and support agencies (Bleasdale 2006); and increasing the involvement of the market in affordable housing provision (Milligan et al., 2004).

Policy interest in the interrelations among public, community and Indigenous housing has its origins, in part, in the increasing diversity of social housing providers in Australia. Historically, most social housing in Australia has been owned and managed by the public housing authorities of each state and territory government. However, over time, social housing has become increasingly diverse with the entry of new types of providers including community housing organisations, local governments, state-owned and -managed Indigenous housing organisations, Indigenous community housing organisations, and affordable housing providers. This diversification is taking place in a context of declining resources for social housing, increasing targeting of public housing, and a broadening of objectives to include 'beyond shelter' as well as shelter outcomes. Diversification, which is likely to continue to increase, has led to growing interest in the processes involved in developing coherent, integrated approaches to managing social housing. Addressing these issues also requires consideration of the wider inter-organisational context of social housing, and the need to develop and sustain relations with cognate policy and service arrangements.

The foundations for this research are established in this Positioning Paper. In Chapter 1 the conceptual parameters of the study are established. The term 'social housing' is defined, and the key relations among social housing programs and providers, and with broader human services and housing policies and programs, are identified at a general level. The core meanings of 'integration' from the academic and management

literature are then introduced and linked to this context. Three broad arenas of integration in social housing are identified.

This broad understanding of the integration issue is developed further in chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2 the historical development and structures underpinning social housing are described. This chapter examines how social housing has developed over time, and identifies the factors that have led both to increasing diversification and to the impetus for greater integration. Chapter 3 examines the extensive public sector management literature on policy and service integration, and develops an analytical framework for critical examination of the integration issue in Australian social housing. This literature provides a theoretical and empirical evidence base to underpin consideration of how best to manage diversity in Australian social housing. Finally, in Chapter 4, details of the proposed study methodology are presented. This chapter identifies the key research questions based on the analysis in chapters 1 to 3, and describes the methods proposed to address these questions.

The research approach is characterised by two key emphases. First, there is a strong focus on policy and management relevance. The study aims to provide a theoretical and evidence base to inform those involved in developing and managing social housing. It aims to understand the policy concerns driving increasing policy attention to these issues, and to provide a research foundation to inform the development of policies and programs, management and service delivery structures, and practice methods and approaches. By clarifying the issues associated with the management of diversity, complexity and inter-sectoral relationships the study aims to contribute to the development of social housing so that it is well positioned to meet future needs and challenges.

Secondly, the research is predicated on a critical approach to the theme of integration. It is not assumed that 'more integration' is inherently desirable or necessarily advantageous for client or system outcomes. The research seeks to identify the motivations, opportunities and risks involved in different approaches to managing diversity, and to carefully assess the evidence about 'what works'. It seeks to identify potential implementation problems, to highlight the costs as well as the benefits of integration, and to identify the risks of unintended, adverse effects. Through this critical approach, the aim is to achieve a robust, evidence-based analysis of the potential of integration strategies to achieve a more effective social housing provision.

## **1.2 Social housing in Australia**

The focus of this study is Australian social housing. In this section we outline our definition of 'social housing' prior to a detailed discussion of its history and structure in Chapter 2. The term 'social housing' has come into common usage in Australia and internationally during the past two decades. The increasingly widespread use of this term signifies a growing perception that it is helpful to think holistically about housing provided through the 'social sector'. However, the term itself is often used imprecisely, and there is no one universally accepted meaning (Doling, 1997, p. 170; Reeves, 2005, p. 2). In the Australian context the term is commonly used to refer to housing provided through public and community housing, including Indigenous housing. This usage typically encompasses housing provided through cooperatives, housing associations, local governments, and religion-based organisations. The related term 'affordable housing' is also widely used to refer to some or all of these housing arrangements, but often refers as well to housing provided through the market sector that meets an 'affordability' criteria (Milligan, Phibbs, Fagan and Gurrán, 2004, pp. 3-4).

When defining concepts in the social sciences, it is typically easier to identify the broad territory encompassed by a word or phrase than it is to draw precise boundaries. This is certainly the case with the term 'social housing'. In this paper we propose to define social housing as:

'Those policies, organisations and services designed to provide long-term, not-for-profit, rental housing in order to achieve a diversity of social purposes encompassing both shelter and beyond shelter outcomes.'

The rationale for this definition is two-fold. Firstly, it reflects common usage of the term in Australia (Milligan, Phibbs, Fagan and Gurran, 2004, p. 3). There are many recent examples of the use of the term social housing in this way (e.g. Arthurson and Jacobs, 2004), and some housing authorities explicitly aspire to bring together the housing policies, organisations and services encompassed by this definition into a more cohesive 'social housing' system (e.g. Queensland Department of Housing, 2005). Secondly, the definition reflects wider, international usage that associates the term 'social housing' with rental housing provided according to non-market principles. From this perspective, social housing is housing that is 'decommodified', i.e. rents are not set primarily according to considerations of profit, dwellings are allocated according to principles of need, and the level and quality of social housing is influenced by public and societal rather than market objectives (Dolling, 1997, pp. 170-173; Reeves, 2005, p. 2).

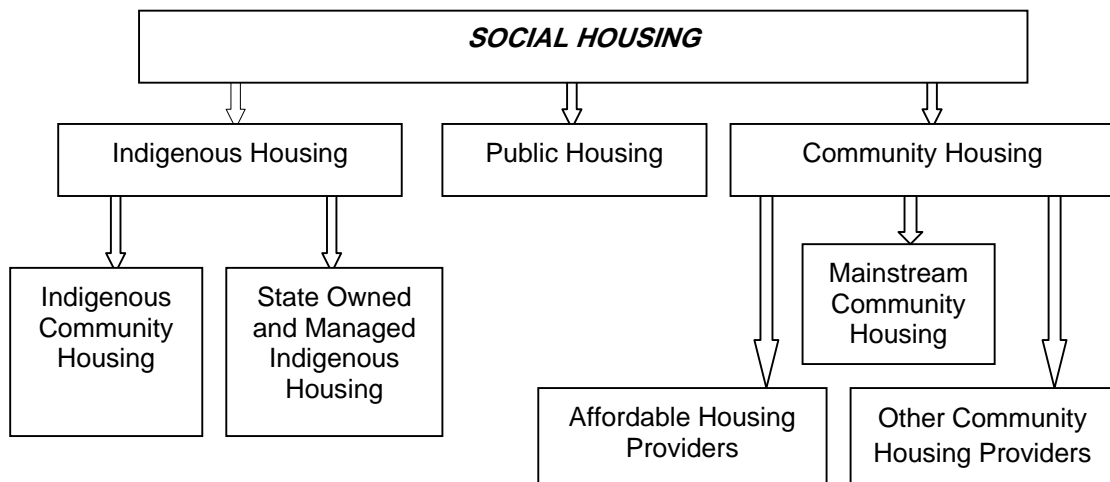
While this definition serves to identify the territory occupied by social housing, it must be acknowledged that this approach has a number of problematic features, and is open to debate. First, the question of whether the services covered by this definition are linked in a systematic fashion cannot be assumed. Indeed, some would question the desirability of close links among these sectors, preferring to emphasise the autonomy of particular sub-sets of services (e.g. community housing) and/or their links to other groups of services (e.g. Indigenous services, disability services). Secondly, the emphasis on 'long-term' housing excludes crisis, short-term and supported accommodation from the definition of social housing, and puts the focus on housing of a permanent or semi-permanent nature. Thirdly, the emphases on the 'decommodified' character of social housing can be questioned. It could be argued that there is increasing blurring of social and market sector provision as governments seek to expand 'affordable' housing through market sector providers. Finally, the identification of 'rental' housing as a distinguishing feature of social housing raises issues. Governments use housing assistance strategies based on other tenure forms, particularly home ownership, to achieve social purposes similar to those pursued through the social rental sector.

These issues indicate the difficulties in isolating 'social housing' from other policy and service arenas. This is not simply an academic problem, as these difficulties are also central to the management challenges of enhancing social housing integration (Halley, 1997). These challenges, which are the central concern of this study, inevitably involve definitional issues such as those outlined above. In the world of policy these are first and foremost pragmatic, strategic decisions guided by objectives and circumstances that will change over time.

Australian social housing is commonly viewed as comprising three main sub-sectors: public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing. This approach is followed by the Productivity Commission, which provides formal definitions of each of these sectors (Australia, SCRGSP, 2006, p. 16.10). The term 'public housing' is defined as 'dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities to provide affordable rental accommodation.' The term 'community housing' is defined as 'rental housing provided for low to moderate income or special

needs households, managed by community-based organisations that are at least partly subsidised by government'. This sector includes mainstream community housing organisations, the newer 'affordable housing' providers, and other community organisations that provide housing as part of a wider range of community services. It should be noted that, while the Productivity Commission's definition refers to government subsidy, some community organisations receive no direct public subsidy. 'Indigenous housing' is defined as 'State owned and managed housing targeted at Indigenous households and houses owned or leased and managed by Indigenous community housing organisations and community councils'. These constituent parts of social housing are portrayed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Australian social housing**



This portrayal of the components of social housing needs to be complemented by a mapping of the policy and service delivery context, as shown in Figure 2. In broad terms, social housing can be usefully viewed as having close linkages with two broader areas of policy and service provision. First, it is part of the set of public policies concerned with the provision of housing assistance and with housing affordability. This represents the housing policy context of social housing. Secondly, it is part of wider human services provision, where it provides the 'housing' component of approaches to meeting the needs of a wide range of social groups. These include relations with services providing crisis and supported accommodation for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These two sets of linkages shape social housing and are part of the broader challenges of inter-sectoral policy and service delivery coordination. The 'boundaries' between social housing and these contexts are inherently blurred and ever-changing. However, it is heuristically helpful to distinguish between social housing and these contexts. In practice these boundaries may be drawn somewhat differently in response to policy and management priorities at a particular time and in a particular jurisdiction. The complexity and fluidity of these boundary definitions is part of the reason that analysis of integration must include consideration of 'external' as well as 'internal' linkages.

**Figure 2: Australian social housing – external linkages**



### **1.3 Integration**

The term 'integration' has been given many different meanings in the international literature on public sector management and human services (Austin, 1997). The policy and academic discourse on integration has been described as 'a confused array of descriptive, normative, and explanatory theory' (Halley, 1997, p. 145), and there is wide agreement that the term is often used in a conceptually imprecise manner (e.g. Reitan, 1998; McDonald and Zetlin, 2004). The term is used to refer to a wide diversity of structures and processes, and with respect to both policies and service delivery. A recent Australian report on coordination and integration of human services commented that:

Given the level of interest in improving coordination of human services, it is surprising to discover how much vagueness, indeed fundamental disagreement, there is in defining even the most frequently used concepts such as 'collaboration', 'coordination' and 'integration' ... as they are currently used in policy discussions, service provision and everyday language (Fine, Pancharatnam and Thomson, 2000, p. 4).

There are a number of explanations for the lack of precision and multiplicity of meanings associated with the term 'integration'. First, integration is a longstanding theme in the study and practice of public policy and management, both in Australia and internationally, and over time has acquired many meanings. An aspiration for greater coherence in policy directions and administrative arrangements is an enduring theme in public policy and management. Within Australia, integration and related themes such as 'coordination' have been a focus of public sector management since at least the early 1970s, and arguably much longer (Brown and Keast, 2005). The term has had similar longevity in other countries, particularly the United States (Hassett and Austin, 1997). Definitions of integration tend to reflect local and temporal program or policy circumstances rather than having wider applicability, and several writers have traced the development of different approaches to integration over time (Agranoff, 1991; Brown and Keast, 2005; Waldfogel, 1997).

The meaning and significance of integration as a policy theme is also highly context-specific, shaped by the political institutions, service provision arrangements and dominant policy frameworks within particular nations. It has been shown, for example, that the nature of local partnerships – an important component of 'integration' – differs in accordance with types of welfare regimes, comprising different participants and types of relationships in comprehensive, corporatist, liberal or rudimentary welfare systems (Geddes, 2005). In Australia, the integration issue is shaped by the federal system and by the dominance of neo-liberal ideas that emphasise the roles of the market and community sectors, as well as the state sector, in service provision. The integration 'problem' in Australia involves the need to bring about policy and service

coherence in a system involving three levels of government, a large number of state organisations, and significant roles played by the state, community, market and informal sectors in service provision (Brown and Keast, 2005; Dollery and Wallis, 2001; Matheson, 2000; Quiggan, 1999). Geography and population distribution are other contextual factors that shape the nature of the integration issue in particular national contexts, including Australia.

A further factor shaping the somewhat imprecise conceptualisation of integration in many contexts is the term's symbolic appeal. It has been argued that the concept of integration has powerful symbolic qualities that perpetuate its continued use (Longoria, 2005, p. 123), and that service integration 'represents a veritable "holy grail" for many in the human services professions' (O'Looney, 1997, p. 32). Service coordination is often 'simply regarded as a matter of rationality', and 'calls for improved coordination are thus heard from the left, right and centre and have come to resemble a mantra that, if repeated often enough, will obliterate [lack of] coherence in human services' (Reitan 1998, p. 285). The difficulties and shortcomings experienced by those seeking to integrate policy or services, and complexities of definition, are viewed, from this perspective, as of little relevance: 'Pulling services together into a comprehensive package is [viewed as] such a patently sensible concept that it is difficult to reject, even in the face of evidence to the contrary' (Waldfoegel, 1997, p. 465). Demands for integration often therefore have a highly normative dimension in that they can assume 'that coordination and integration is preferable to differentiation, fragmentation and specialisation' (McDonald and Zetlin, 2004, p. 269). This can lead to lack of appreciation of the values of differentiation, diversity and fragmentation, and a tendency to treat integration and its opposites as either/or dichotomies (Halley, 1997). The case for greater integration can simply be 'an argument for centralisation in disguise' (Halley, 1997, p. 150).

The difficulties involved in conceptualising integration are compounded by the many other terms that form part of the discourse. There is a long history of terms such as 'cooperation', 'collaboration' and 'coordination' being used to refer to aspects of integration, and there have been many attempts to develop definitions and schema that clarify the meanings of these terms and distinguish them from one another (e.g. Agranoff, 1991; Fine et al., 2000; Hasset and Austin, 1997; Martinson, 1999; Wadfoegel, 1997; Walter and Petr, 2000). In the United Kingdom the concept of 'joined-up government' has been prominent since the 1990s and has spread to many other countries (Perri 6, 2004). The terminology of joined-up government has had some currency in the Australian context (e.g. Lake, 2005). However, there has been a stronger emphasis on the concept of 'whole of government' approaches to addressing policy and service issues (e.g. Arthurson, 2003; Farland, 2004). There has also been a strong emphasis on the importance of 'partnerships' between agencies and sectors that share common concerns or clients, and there is now a substantial Australian literature on partnerships in many fields including youth services (Griffiths, 2006), mental health (Keleher, 2006), and child protection (Darlington, Feeney and Rixon, 2005). The concept of 'place management' referring to integrated approaches to planning and/or service delivery focusing on a locality or region has also been widely used in Australia (Mant, 2000; Smyth and Reddel, 2000; Walsh, 2001).

These factors indicate that the concept of 'integration' is complex, and that usage of the term may reflect specific contexts, the term's symbolic significance and normative assumptions. In this Positioning Paper we define 'integration' as:

structures and processes that attempt to bring together the participants in human services systems with the aim of achieving goals that cannot be achieved by those participants acting autonomously and separately. These

goals include greater coherence and cohesion, efficiency, effectiveness, and consumer accessibility. These structures and processes may occur at the policy or service delivery levels, or both, and can involve several different modes and instruments of integration.

Several points can be noted about this definition. First, it is comprehensive in scope. It is focused on human services such as social housing, but within this context it encompasses all interventions designed to bring participants together to work jointly or collectively to achieve defined goals. Thus the definition includes structures such as formal agreements to work together, as well as shared processes relating to any aspects of the functioning of human services systems. The 'participants' in human services can be sectors, organisations, programs, professions or individuals. The definition includes collective activities at the strategic or policy level (policy and program integration), and those operating at the service delivery level (service delivery integration). It includes many activities that are labelled as 'cooperation', 'collaboration', 'coordination', 'partnerships', 'place management' and 'whole of government' initiatives, as well as those characterised directly as 'integration' activities.

The definition refers to the 'modes' and 'instruments' of integration. The term 'modes' of integration refers to the broad integration approach. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, it is common for definitions of integration to involve an integration 'continuum' in which 'integration' is viewed as the polar opposite to 'autonomy', with relations of 'cooperation', 'coordination', and 'collaboration' viewed as modes of integration along the continuum (e.g. Fine et al., 2000; Walter and Petr, 2000). While this has some value in identifying the repertoire of possible approaches, it has the disadvantage of associating the term 'integration' with significant reduction in autonomy for individual participants. Our somewhat different approach is to view integration as a generic term that refers to all approaches designed to bring participants in human services together. The modes (or types) of integration can be classified in terms of the origin of the impetus for integration – 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' (Martinson, 1999) – and in terms of the degree of integration involved – 'loosely coupled' or 'tightly coupled' (O'Looney, 1993). The 'instruments' of integration can be understood as specific integrative mechanisms. Examples include formal collaborative protocols, policy coordination and advisory committees, jointly funded services, common intake and referral processes, case conferences, coordinated care planning, shared client information systems, local inter-agency meetings, local action plans and so forth.

The definition assumes that all integration initiatives will be pursued in the name of greater coherence, cohesion, efficiency, effectiveness and/or accessibility to consumers. However, it does not presuppose that these are necessarily the outcomes of integration initiatives. The outcomes of integration are matters to be empirically analysed rather than assumed. Many integration initiatives fail to achieve their objectives due to implementation difficulties. Furthermore, the goals of integration may involve trade-offs amongst objectives, e.g. greater efficiency may come at a price of reduced access or choice for consumers. It is also important to emphasise that integration may or may not be an appropriate response to a problem, will always involve costs as well as benefits, and often will involve secondary or unintended consequences. Integration initiatives will always involve judgements concerning the values of coherence and cohesion relative to the values of differentiation, diversity and fragmentation. They will also involve consideration of effects on the relations of power, influence and authority among the participants in integrative activities. Each of these issues is explored further in Chapter 3.



## 1.4 Integrating social housing

The integration issues facing Australian social housing are many and complex. The mapping of the participants in social housing, and their external linkages, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, suggest that there are three main sets of integration challenges facing Australian social housing:

1. Integration challenges internal to social housing, i.e. relations among the three core sectors of public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing;
2. The challenges of effectively linking social housing with human services, including support services and homelessness services;
3. The challenges of effectively linking social housing with the wider set of policies, programs and services concerned with housing assistance and housing affordability.

Each of these sets of challenges involves integration at both the policy and the service delivery level. Policy integration is concerned with issues of policy coherence, including opportunities for key participants (sectors, organisations, stakeholders) to take part in policy processes. Service delivery integration is concerned with the capacity of participants in service delivery to work together and develop partnerships at the local or regional level to provide services to clients.

On this basis, the key integration challenges in Australian social housing can be portrayed as in Table 1. These sets of integration challenges are clearly interrelated, but represent different dimensions of the integration issue. This research study aims to critically examine the challenges and options associated with each of these aspects of integration in Australian social housing.

**Table 1: Integration challenges for social housing**

	<i>Policy and management level</i>	<i>Service delivery level</i>
<i>Integration within social housing</i>	To develop structures and processes for ongoing policy development and management of social housing, including involvement of the three sectors (public housing, community housing, Indigenous housing).	To develop structures and processes to enable the three sectors to work together at the service delivery level to provide integrated services to clients in localities and regions.
<i>Linking with human services, including homelessness services</i>	To develop structures and processes that strategically link social housing policies with policies for other human services, including homelessness services.	To develop structures and processes that link social housing at the regional and local level to the provision of human services, including homelessness services.
<i>Linking with housing assistance and affordable housing</i>	To develop structures and processes that strategically link social housing policies with other policies concerned with housing assistance and housing affordability.	To develop structures and processes linking social housing at the regional and local level to the provision of housing assistance and affordable housing.

The first set of challenges, those to do with ‘internal’ integration, are centred on ensuring that the policy makers and service providers in social housing work together

effectively to achieve greater cohesion, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and consumer accessibility. At the policy level the challenge is to develop coherent policies to guide the future development of social housing and articulate the differentiation in roles between public, community and Indigenous housing. At the service delivery level, the 'internal' integration challenge is to develop structures and processes that enable public, community and Indigenous housing organisations to work together effectively. The issues are partly to do with local planning and coordination, and partly to do with service provision to consumers. Current 'internal' integration issues being discussed or implemented in various jurisdictions in Australia include:

- Coordinated client information and access;
- Improved access by Indigenous people to 'mainstream' public and community housing;
- Common approaches to eligibility, rent, tenure, eligibility and allocation priority; and
- Integrated capital works planning and portfolio management.

Secondly, there are the challenges of effectively linking social housing with human services, including homelessness services. These linkages are of mounting importance as a consequence of the increasing focus of social housing on households and individuals with 'special needs'. These linkages play a significant role in the overall effectiveness of human services, and are also important in sustaining tenancies. Examples of issues and current initiatives in this area include:

- Strategic linkages between social housing and other human service agencies through mechanisms such as joint service agreements, memorandums of understanding and creation of integrated health and human services government agencies;
- Service delivery linkages between homelessness and social housing services, including whole of government approaches to homelessness;
- Service delivery linkages between social housing providers and services working in areas such as disability, mental health and aged care;
- Whole-of-government approaches to 'Community Renewal' on public housing estates and in localities with a high proportion of social housing.

The third set of challenges are those to do with effectively linking social housing with the wider set of policies, programs and services concerned with housing assistance and housing affordability. On the demand side these include housing assistance policies and programs such as rent assistance, home ownership assistance, and various forms of assistance to private renters. On the supply side these include the range of policies, programs and initiatives to involve the market sector in affordable and social housing investment and provision. The integration challenges are both at the policy and service delivery level and include:

- Development of coherent and comprehensive national and state policy frameworks that integrate demand and supply side measures to improve housing affordability and expand affordable housing provision;
- Linkage of social housing provision and other strategies to expand the provision of affordable housing;
- Pathways for clients between social housing, private rental and home ownership.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

Identifying the potential for enhanced integration to benefit social housing provision is a complex task that necessarily involves consideration of both internal and external relations at both the policy and service delivery levels as summarised in Table 1. It requires careful definition and delineation of 'social housing' and of the concept of 'integration' as developed in the policy and management literature. This introductory chapter has proposed a definition of social housing that includes the public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing sectors (Figure 1). Social housing is portrayed as having close and overlapping relations with other human services, including homelessness services, as well as the set of policies, programs and services concerned with housing assistance and housing affordability (Figure 2).

This framework provides a focus and foundation for the research project. The next analytical tasks are to provide the historical and structural context of the integration issue in Australian social housing (Chapter 2), and to examine in greater detail the theory of integration as presented in the policy and management literature (Chapter 3). With these fundamentals in place, the proposed research methodology for the project will be outlined (Chapter 4).

## **2 INTEGRATING SOCIAL HOUSING: HISTORY AND STRUCTURE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The challenges of integration facing Australian social housing are embedded in the historical development of housing assistance policies and programs, and in the structures underpinning social housing provision. Australian social housing is the product of a complex history, and efforts to develop a more integrated approach to policy and service delivery must be cognisant of the historical context. In section 2.2 this history is briefly described, emphasising those aspects that impinge most directly on the integration issue. These include the central role that the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) has played in the development of public rental housing and social housing generally, the role of specific-purposes payments to the states, and the development of government housing programs outside the CSHA. These developments provide the backdrop to the contemporary structure of social housing, which is described in section 2.3 under the headings of role, delivery and administrative arrangements. The chapter concludes by summarising the ways in which the history and structure of social housing shape contemporary concerns to address integration issues.

### **2.2 The historical context**

#### *2.2.1 The CSHA and the evolution of public rental housing*

The CSHA has been the primary policy instrument for social housing in Australia since 1945 and has provided the institutional, financial and policy frameworks within which social housing has developed and operated. The changing nature of the CSHA therefore provides an important lens through which to examine the historical development of social housing, and particularly public rental housing.

The first phase of the CSHA from 1945 to 1955 established the primacy of building public rental housing as a means of providing housing assistance. The CSHA drove the orientation of the State Housing Authorities (SHAs) established in the Australian states in the late 1930s and 1940s towards the construction and management of rental housing (Milligan, 2003). There has been considerable debate about why the first CSHA focused on the construction of housing for rent. The Commonwealth Housing Commission, established in 1943 to investigate Australia's housing problems, had proposed a broader national policy framework involving an integrated approach to housing, land use planning and community development (Berry, 1988; Hayward, 1996). The choice of a narrower approach may have reflected immediate concerns about downturn in construction and substantial housing shortages (Carter, Milligan and Hall, 1988). The emphasis on rental housing may have been chosen also because home ownership was already being encouraged through mechanisms outside the CSHA such as mortgage finance from government banks and war service home loans for returned soldiers (Jones, 1983). Whatever the reasons, this was a key formative period, which established the involvement of the Australian and state governments in the provision of significant levels of public rental housing.

A major change of approach occurred in 1956, when a new CSHA introduced mechanisms for the sale on favourable terms to tenants of dwellings constructed under the CSHA. Similar arrangements were continued in the subsequent Agreements of 1961 and 1966. Building for sale was embraced by all jurisdictions, and became a central focus of the activities of SHAs. It has been reported that from 1945 to 1981, governments funded the purchase or construction of about 840,000

dwellings through the CSHA, which constituted about 18 per cent of the total housing stock in 1981. By 1981 only about 120,000 dwellings remained available for rental by SHAs (Jones, 1983, p. 268). This emphasis on sale of the public housing stock meant that public rental housing remained a relatively small part of the overall housing stock, rather than offering an alternative to home ownership for a significant portion of the population.

As the impact of this large-scale, long-term privatisation program unfolded, and as concern about poverty became an issue on the national political agenda in the early 1970s, there was a deepening focus on giving priority of assistance under the CSHA to those households deemed to be most in need (Carter, 1980; Paris, Williams and Stimson, 1985). Prior to the 1970s, SHAs had considerable discretion regarding eligibility requirements. Under the 1945 CSHA, SHAs were left to determine eligibility tests, while the 1956 Agreement required only that funds be used for families of low or moderate means. However, in 1973 new eligibility requirements prescribed that dwellings were to be allocated so as to ensure that the major portion of recipients satisfied a means test. The test provided for 85 per cent of allocations to families where the breadwinner earned less than 85 per cent of average weekly earnings (Pugh, 1976, pp. 71–2). This emphasis on low-income families has been maintained in all subsequent Agreements, despite attempts in the Agreements of 1984 and 1989, negotiated by the Hawke Labor Government, to restore the principle of ‘public housing as a choice for all’. The level of funding to make that goal feasible, particularly in the face of rising unemployment and the rise in demand that resulted from changes to state policies for providing housing and support for people with disabilities in the 1980s, was never achieved (Milligan, 2003).

Compounding this greater focus on those most in need, the 1973 CSHA also began a shift away from an emphasis on the construction of new housing towards a focus on providing assistance appropriate to the circumstances of individuals. One of the main enabling mechanisms introduced at that time was to allow SHAs to use their funds to purchase existing dwellings rather than build new ones. Later additional flexibility in the use of funds under the Agreement was introduced, such as provision of subsidies to individuals and other agencies. Gradually such changes have contributed to moves away from an emphasis on new housing supply through public housing and, in parallel, to a weakening of the land development and building charter and culture of SHAs.

The 1970s also marked a watershed in the way that the CSHA was used as a bridge to home ownership. From 1973, the discounted sale of new public housing was not allowed. This provision, together with growing demand for rental housing and concerns about housing-related poverty in the private rental market, tempered political enthusiasm for selling the remaining stock of public housing (Milligan, 2003). In the 1980s, the states began to use a proportion of CSHA funds to provide loans and/or subsidies to marginal home buyers. But this activity also declined after financial deregulation in the mid-1980s and the failure of the NSW Homefund scheme in the early 1990s. Today, sales to tenants and assistance to lower-income home purchasers form only a minor part of the business of most SHAs, although in some states, notably South Australia and Western Australia, modest home ownership programs have been retained, drawing mainly on state resources and revolving funds from earlier lending programs (AIHW, 2005, p. 310).

By the early 1990s, therefore, public rental housing had become a relatively small housing sector highly targeted at low-income households. In a search for policy alternatives, the 1990s was marked by a series of government and independent reviews of aspects of social housing (e.g. Australia, Industry Commission, 1993).

However, these reviews failed to bring about significant positive reform, despite making consistent arguments about key aspects of national policy, especially the case for maintaining the supply of social housing and the need to restructure subsidies for low-income tenants in both the private and social rental sectors (Milligan, 2003). Instead, successive Agreements in 1996, 1999 and 2003 have locked in objectives and policies for intensifying the targeting of social housing. Increasingly, social housing is targeted not only at low-income households (primarily those dependent on income support payments), but also those with special housing needs, such as people who are homeless, people with disabilities, aged people and people with mental health issues.

The national trend to tighter rationing occurred in tandem with a contraction in supply. The 1996 Agreement was the first to omit an explicit growth in supply objective (Milligan, 2003). In the decade since 1996, funding from Commonwealth and state sources under the CSHA has declined by around 31 per cent in real terms (AIHW, 2005, p. 287). There has been an emphasis on efficiency measures, increases in public housing rents, and in some jurisdictions less favourable terms of tenure. These measures notwithstanding, SHAs are experiencing structural financial difficulties, with deepening operating losses and/or further depletion of assets predicted as a result of the decline in subsidies and revenue per tenant in a highly targeted system (Hall and Berry, 2004).

### *2.2.2 The role of special-purpose payments to the states*

From the 1950s, the Commonwealth Government began diversifying its housing assistance measures partly through the mechanism of special-purpose funds offered to the states. The approach was extended in the 1980s. Table 2 provides a summary of the main special-purpose programs initiated by the Commonwealth Government for delivery by the states, and later incorporated in the CSHA, mostly in 1984. Generally, these programs appear to have been formulated to address Commonwealth Government priorities that were not being addressed by the states through existing programs. For example, the first special-purpose program for single aged pensioners in 1969 arose because the states had been reluctant to accommodate this group, due to their limited capacity to pay rent in a system where losses on rental operations were borne by the states. Special-purpose payments enabled the Commonwealth Government to direct funds to such priority areas without the need to negotiate these priorities with the states (Monro, 1998). Competing interests and priorities between the Commonwealth Government and the states (both collectively and individually) characterised intergovernmental relations under the CSHA throughout its early history (Pugh, 1976), and the intergovernmental politics of housing policy have continued to have a major impact on social housing policy (Caulfield, 2000; Parkin, 1992).

These special-purpose arrangements have left their mark on the administration and delivery of social housing. A sizeable component of the stock of housing under the CSHA continues to be earmarked for occupancy by particular groups. While this has helped to ensure minimum levels of provision for these groups, it has also created rigidities that affect decisions about the allocation, tenure, renewal, transfer and sale/disposal of tagged stock. A good example is in the crisis housing sector where it has been standard practice for households when their circumstances stabilise to have to forgo their 'CAP funded' short-term dwelling to take up a public- or community-managed rental dwelling designated for longer-term occupancy, perhaps in a different location. The rationale for providing assistance in different forms – for example, the decision to provide cash assistance to private tenants who are eligible for social housing rather than to make them an immediate offer of a public or community housing dwelling – has not always been well founded or applied consistently.

Typically, funding levels under special-purpose programs have tended to drive output levels for specific groups, such as the aged, instead of local assessments of needs and a transparent method for deciding on an appropriate mix of products and services.

In 2005/06, funds for specific purposes accounted for 21 per cent of total annual Australian Government funding provided to the states and territories under the CSHA, down from 28 per cent in 1984/85 (Australia, FACSIA, 2006). The Australian Government has exercised a higher level of control over these specific-purpose programs than the core CSHA programs. In response to state representations, the 'tied' programs were reduced from five to three in 1996 and administrative requirements for those programs that were retained have been streamlined. This has reduced Australian Government control, lowered administrative costs, and given the states greater discretion over the mix of assistance that they provide. Nevertheless, these historical arrangements remain embedded in institutional structures and continue to influence stakeholder expectations. For example, Indigenous communities maintain pressure on SHAs to account separately for 'ARHP funded' housing even though this comprises less than half of the stock of social housing available to Indigenous households (Flatau and Cooper, 2005).

**Table 2: Australian Government specific-purpose housing initiatives incorporated into the CSHA**

<i>Program</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Current status</i>
Pensioner Rental Housing Program (PRHP)	Construction of specific-purpose housing for aged pensioners, broadened to include people with disabilities in 1974	1969	Folded into base CSHA funding 1996
Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP)	Construction of housing for rent by Aboriginal households	1979	Notionally tied subject to states satisfying conditions specified in program guidelines since 1996
Crisis Accommodation for Families in Distress Program (CAFDP), later Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)	Construction, purchase or lease of dwellings for short-term crisis accommodation for families in distress. Since 1984 CAP has also been linked to the Supported Accommodation Assistance program (SAAP) funded outside the CSHA. SAAP provides recurrent funding for support services to households in CAP properties	1982	Notionally tied subject to States satisfying conditions specified in program guidelines since 1996. Links to SAAP retained though loosened somewhat
Mortgage and Rent Relief Scheme (MRRS), later Mortgage and Rent Assistance Program (MRAP)	Temporary or short-term assistance for private tenants and low-income home buyers in severe financial difficulty, introduced in the context of rising interest rates and low vacancy rates in major cities	1982	Folded into base CSHA funding 1996 This is the only specific-purpose program required to be matched by the states.
Local Government and Community Housing Program (LGCHP), later Community Housing Program (CHP)	To foster the provision of social housing by local governments and not-for-profit community housing organisations	1984 as a new specific-purpose program within the 1984 CSHA	Notionally tied subject to states satisfying conditions specified in program guidelines since 1996.

Sources: AIHW 2005; Jones 1972, 1983; Monro 1998; Pugh 1976.

The trend to minimise the impact of 'tied' programs within the CSHA has been accompanied by other administrative changes such as the production of jointly developed State Housing Assistance Plans from 1989, which were succeeded by Bilateral Housing Agreements in 1999. Both models represented attempts by the Australian Government to give greater flexibility to the states, and to recognise geographical diversity and varying state priorities. From 1996, this planning and priority-setting process has also been accompanied by reporting of key housing outcomes on a nationally consistent basis (Australia, SCRGSP, 2005).

Of all the specific-purpose programs, the Community Housing Program (CHP) has the potential to have the most lasting impact on delivery arrangements for social housing in Australia. Community housing in its current form had its beginnings as an innovative and experimental model for community-based social housing provision in the late 1970s in several Australian states, notably South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales (Bisset and Milligan, 2004). In 1984 the Australian Government signalled its interest in sponsoring this development nationwide, by establishing the Local Government and Community Housing Program. Community housing grew slowly but steadily from that time in all jurisdictions. Today community-based providers manage an estimated 7 per cent of all CSHA-funded long-term social housing (AIHW, 2005). This growth has occurred not only through the application of CHP funds but also through the transfer of public and private rental housing to community management (Jacobs, Marston and Darcy, 2004) and state and territory investment in the sector.

There are mounting financial and social reasons for this trend to intensify. One reason is the leverage that non-government organisations can achieve to finance new social housing and other forms of affordable housing that are now being encouraged (see Milligan et al., 2004, 2007; HPLGM, 2006). A second reason is the demonstrated success of community housing organisations in meeting a range of performance benchmarks, such as high tenant satisfaction levels, and provision of supportive tenancies for households with special needs (SCRGSP, 2005). Third, moves here to transfer stock reflect a larger and longer international trend to transfers of former public housing to the not-for-profit housing sector, as have occurred in several other countries, including England, Scotland, the United States and the Netherlands. For these reasons it seems likely that community housing will be the main area of growth in social housing, although there are major questions concerning the form that this will take, including issues of regulation, ownership, and financial and policy settings.

In the context of consideration of the evolution of community housing, it is also important to draw attention to the substantial community-based housing sector for older people that was developed between 1954 and 1986 under the provisions of the Australian Government's *Aged Persons Homes Act*. This legislation enabled the Australian Government to provide capital funding for the construction of independent units for older people using non-government providers – thereby bypassing the states. This scheme generated the first form of government-funded community-owned and managed housing in Australia. McNelis (2004) estimated that around 34,700 independent living units for the aged were funded between 1954 and 1986 (when funding ceased), providing up to 27 per cent of social rental housing for older people today. Labelling it the 'forgotten social housing sector', McNelis notes that this sector has never been integrated with CSHA-funded community housing. Today many of the agencies that own this housing face financial challenges to maintain and modernise their housing, and there is a case for drawing this sector into the overall planning and development of social housing (Jones et al., 2007; McNelis, 2004).



### *2.2.3 Government housing programs outside the CSHA*

In the 60 years since the CSHA commenced, there have been many initiatives outside that framework that have shaped Australia's housing system, including diverse schemes to assist first home buyers and to promote home ownership, and Australian Government arrangements for providing housing for defence personnel and their families. For a brief period in the early 1970s and again in the first half of 1990s, national Labor governments also expanded the scope of national housing policy as part of their broader concern with urban infrastructure, housing supply and locational disadvantage issues (Milligan, 2003). From time to time, individual states have introduced particular housing initiatives, especially South Australia, which has a long history of using housing policy instruments as a component of its state economic development strategy (Kilner, 2005). Local government has generally played a limited role in direct housing provision and planning, although there are exceptions, such as Waverley (NSW), Port Phillip (formerly St Kilda, Victoria) and several non-metropolitan local authorities (Gurran, 2003).

The three main policy arenas where actions outside the CSHA have a major ongoing impact on social housing are the provision of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) through the social security system, the myriad of programs in the Indigenous housing sector, and programs to address issues associated with homelessness. These are discussed in turn below.

#### **Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)**

In 1958 the Australian Government introduced a small supplementary payment to single aged and invalid pensioners who were paying rent above a certain level, in recognition of their relatively high housing costs. Payment rates and coverage of the program were extended gradually (Hulse, 2002; Milligan, 2003). In 1982 there were about 500,000 recipients of CRA (Paris, 1984), and by June 2004 there were 949,700 recipients, approximately 24 per cent of all Centrelink clients, at a total annual cost to the Australian Government of nearly \$2 billion (AIHW, 2005). Initially, SHAs benefited from this payment because it was paid to eligible pensioners in public housing. However, from 1982 new entrants to public housing became ineligible on the grounds that rental rebates being provided by the states provided adequate coverage (Field, 1983). This decision adversely affected the financial position of the SHAs. It also entrenched a differential approach to the provision of housing assistance to similar low-income households in public and private rental accommodation, as rent rebates granted to public tenants are determined by an affordability benchmark while rent assistance payments for private tenants are not.

Since the late 1980s the Australian Government has boosted assistance to private tenants through CRA, while assistance provided to the states for public housing has been in decline. The rationale for this shift in policy was initially that it provided immediate relief to private tenants with affordability problems, and later that it provided greater choice to lower-income households and addressed to some degree horizontal equity issues between similar households in public and private tenure (Milligan, 2003). However, equity issues remain, despite significant increases in public housing rents. By 2004, 31 per cent of recipients of CRA were paying more than 30 per cent of their income (net of CRA) in rent, while all households in public housing were paying no more than 25 per cent of their income in rent (AIHW, 2005). A further consequence of differential subsidies in the two rental tenures is that it increases the demand for public housing. Nearly half of public tenants surveyed in 2003 cited private rental affordability and lower public housing rents as factors influencing their decision to move into public housing (AIHW, 2005). Differential subsidies also create affordability

barriers to mobility from public to private rental housing, although tenants in social housing managed by agencies other than SHAs are eligible to apply for CRA.

### **Indigenous housing programs**

The provision of housing for Indigenous Australians is one of the most complex parts of the housing assistance system. A series of past funding, governance and legislative models concerned with the provision of housing to Indigenous Australians in different geographical contexts (urban, regional and remote) have contributed to a confusion of roles and accountability across spheres and agencies of government, duplication and conflicts among community controlled organisations, inconsistencies across programs (for example in eligibility and rent setting), and major service coordination problems.

Between 1990 and 2004, responsibility for Indigenous housing in Australia was divided between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments. The Australian Government provided the majority of the funding, which was administered through a number of organisations. The states and territories administered funds under the tied CSHA Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TRSA) administered housing funds under the Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) and the Aboriginal Home Ownership program. Aboriginal Hostels Ltd was also involved in administering funds for Indigenous housing. The states and territories also directly managed some specified Indigenous housing, and Indigenous community housing organisations (ICHOs) sourced funding from a number of these agencies and programs. The states and territories made most funding decisions at the state level, but ATSIC funding decisions were split between the regional and national levels. These complexities impeded coordinated planning, resource allocation and service delivery. This situation was exacerbated by the emergence of additional Australian Government initiatives such as 'Housing for Health', and a program to involve the armed forces in housing construction in remote communities.

In 1992 the inaugural meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a 'National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders' (Australia, COAG, 1992) as the principal policy framework for negotiating Commonwealth–State agreements for Indigenous services. The commitment aimed to improve access by Indigenous people to mainstream services and to better coordinate services to Indigenous communities. This commitment led to the development of Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Agreements aimed at pooling of ARHP and CHIP funds and coordinated program delivery at the state and territory level. In 2001, Australian Housing Ministers issued a Statement entitled *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* (Australian Housing Ministers Conference, 2001). This agreement included, amongst other matters, objectives relating to improving the capacity of ICHOs, involvement of Indigenous people in planning and service delivery, and coordination of program administration.

The states and territories have taken various approaches to operationalising these policy directions and formalising joint planning and delivery arrangements. While some, such as New South Wales and South Australia, have established authorities based in legislation to administer Indigenous housing, others, such as Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland, have established advisory boards with varying levels of authority, and administrative units within state government departments. In Queensland, the administration of ARHP and CHIP funds were kept largely separate.

Since the abolition of ATSIC in 2004, the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) has assumed responsibility for the CHIP funding previously administered by ATSIC. This has led to a review of the program and the re-negotiation of joint agreements with the states and territories. It has also required the restructuring of Indigenous housing and infrastructure authorities and advisory boards where these included ATSIC representatives. These changes have coincided with a greater emphasis by the Australian Government on Indigenous housing and homeownership issues, and on stronger coordination of Indigenous housing programs (Australia, FaCSIA, 2006a).

### **Homelessness programs**

The Australian Government has been involved in the provision of services to people who are homeless since the passage of the *Homeless Persons Assistance Act* in 1974 (Fopp, 1996). In 1985 a range of services and programs for people experiencing homelessness or in need of crisis accommodation were amalgamated into the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). This is a national program jointly funded by the Australian and state and territory governments to provide transitional accommodation and support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It continues as the main instrument of Australian Government involvement in the provision of accommodation and support to those who are insecurely housed (AIHW, 2005, pp. 318–61). The Australian Government's response to homelessness is coordinated through the National Homelessness Strategy, and most of the states and territories have similar strategies or action plans to bring together agencies and programs that impinge on homelessness (AIHW, 2005).

A major, recurring and unresolved issue throughout the history of SAAP has been the limited options available to people exiting from SAAP services. Clearly, public and community housing are important options for people leaving SAAP services, and the limited availability of social housing for SAAP clients has been a major factor limiting its effectiveness (Fopp, 2002). Furthermore, evidence has accumulated of significant proportions of SAAP clients who enter public housing experiencing difficulties with their tenancies, and re-presenting to homelessness services within a short period of time (Kelly, 2005). Insecure housing is increasingly viewed as a priority criterion for access to public housing, and there is increasing attention given to the development of 'joined up' responses to homelessness including public housing authorities as well as a number of other state and community sector organisations (Lake, 2005).

## **2.3 The structure of social housing**

The historical developments briefly described in section 2.2 have resulted in a social housing sector that is small in size relative to the overall housing system, highly targeted at low-income and special needs households, and somewhat fragmented amongst a number of sectors. The sector is heavily reliant on funding from the national level, and has been shaped by the competing interests expressed through processes of intergovernmental relations. The core sector of public housing has been declining in size for some time and faces significant financial difficulties, and the main potential for growth appears to be in the community sector. Public subsidy for low-income renters has increasingly been channelled to CRA, although it is clear that many low-income private renters continue to have significant affordability problems. Indigenous housing programs have been characterised by confusion of roles, duplication, and major service coordination problems, and are often not well integrated with other parts of social housing. There is increasing pressure for scarce social housing resources to be directed to addressing problems associated with homelessness.

Against this background, there have been important changes in recent years in the structure of social housing that impinge directly on the issue of integration and social housing. These are described below under three headings: the changing role, delivery and administration of social housing.

### *2.3.1 The changing role of social housing*

Social rental housing in Australia has always been a residual and marginalised tenure representing a small proportion of the country's housing stock (Hayward, 1996). However, the nature of the marginalisation of social housing has changed significantly over time as its role and tenant profile have been transformed.

As described in the preceding section, public rental housing in the decades immediate following the Second World War was the primary mode of social housing delivery. This was essentially a supply side strategy to overcome shortages of housing for returning soldiers, provide housing for the growing manufacturing workforce, support slum clearance, and, after the 1956 agreement, to provide a path into home ownership for lower-paid workers (Jones, 1972). The limited size of the public rental portfolio, together with social changes such as the rise in number of single parents and deinstitutionalisation, contributed to the re-casting of public housing as 'welfare housing' from the 1970s and 1980s (Paris et al., 1985). Public housing became essentially a safety net for income security recipients who could not afford to rent in the private rental sector or who faced other barriers to private renting.

Since the early 1990s, the public, community and Indigenous housing sectors have continued to move toward housing an increasing proportion of very low income and high needs households. Tenants are predominantly income security recipients, including older people, single parents, and people with a disability. Many tenants are also the clients of other government health and welfare agencies, and many have limited participation in the labour market. A significant proportion of new tenants are individuals who, prior to the deinstitutionalisation reforms of the 1980s, would have lived in residential facilities. These changes in the tenant profile of public housing occurred during a period of diminishing public investment in social housing. Since the mid-1990s, limited funding has resulted in pressure to further tighten rationing, and has constrained the capacity to reconfigure the housing portfolio to meet the needs of new tenant population groups (Hall and Berry, 2004).

In short, the predominant role of social rental housing has undergone three shifts during the past 60 years. From the 1940s to the 1960s it was predominantly concerned with supplying housing for low-wage workers and their families. During the 1970s and 1980s, its primary concern was to provide affordable, rental housing for low-income households, mainly income security recipients. Since the 1990s, the predominant role has been to provide tightly targeted, supportive housing responses to individuals and households with high and complex needs, many of whom are likely to be permanently outside the workforce.

One means of tracking these changes over the past decade is via the criteria used in CSHA performance reporting. National CSHA performance reporting commenced in 1995 and the preliminary framework included an indicator for targeting that measured need on the basis of income and housing affordability, i.e. the proportion of households who would have to pay 25 per cent, or 30 per cent, of their income in rent if they were housed in the private rental market (SCRGSP, 1995, pp. 132–4). However, by 2006 the number of targeting indicators had been increased to three: low

income, 'special needs'; and 'priority access to those in greatest need'<sup>1</sup>. This increased focus on measurement of targeting reflects the high level of formal commitment within the CSHA to targeting social housing to households with high and complex needs (Australia, SCRGSP, 2006, pp. 16.26, 16.30–1, 16.35).

The data measuring performance on these indicators are subject to many qualifications relating to consistency and completeness of data collection processes, and should therefore be treated with some caution. Nevertheless, they show a consistent pattern of increasing targeting over the past five years. The proportion of new households in public housing who are low income increased marginally from 89.5 per cent in 2000/01 to 90.0 per cent in 2004/05 (Australia, SCRGSP, 2006, p. 16.32). The comparable figures for state-owned and -managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) were 86.5 and 88.0 per cent, and in community housing the proportion of low-income households remained well above 90 per cent throughout the period (Australia, SCRGSP, 2006, p. 16.50 and 16.68). The changes in the other targeting measures are shown in Table 3. The table shows that all sectors have experienced a significant increase in the proportion of new allocations to households with 'special needs', with public housing experiencing the greatest change. Indigenous housing has also experienced a significant increase in those in 'greatest need'. These figures indicate ever-increasing targeting to high-needs households, and convergence in this emphasis among the three sectors.

This increasing targeting is associated with higher levels of interaction with other human services departments and agencies, and greater emphasis on the coordination of housing and support services for mutual clients with complex needs. This shift is illustrated by the increasing prominence given to links between housing and other social programs in recent CSHAs. The 2003 CSHA includes three of eleven objectives that explicitly address this issue. Objective 5 is 'to ensure housing assistance links effectively with other programs and provides better support for people with complex needs and has a role in preventing homelessness'. Objective 7 is concerned with facilitating tenants' access to employment, social and economic participation, and Objective 8 refers to consistency between social housing provision and other 'social and economic objectives of government' (Australia, FACS, 2003).

**Table 3: Changes in the targeting of social housing allocations, 2000/01 to 2004/05**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Change 2000/01 to 2004/05</i>		
	<i>Public housing</i>	<i>Community housing</i>	<i>SOMIH</i>
New tenancies allocated to households with 'special needs'	46.4% to 58.2% (+11.8%)	63.2% to 69.9% (+6.7%)	40.1% to 48.1% (+8%)
New tenancies allocated as 'priority access to those in greatest need'	35.9% to 37.7% (+1.8%)	80.8% to 78.9% (-1.9%)	21.0% to 27.5% (+6.5%)

Source: Australia, SCRGSP 2006, 16.26, Tables 16A.4, 16A.5, 16A.17, 16A.18, 16A.31, 16A.32.

SOMIH: state-owned and -managed Indigenous housing

<sup>1</sup> 'Low income' households essentially referred to households 'where all members receive an income equivalent to or below 100 percent of the government income support benefits at the pensioner rate'. 'Special needs' refers to households that have a household member with a disability, or a principal tenant aged 24 years or under or 75 years or older, or one of more Indigenous members. 'Priority access to those in greatest need' refers to low income households that at the time of allocation are homeless, in housing inappropriate to their needs, in housing adversely affecting their health or safety, or that have very high rental costs.

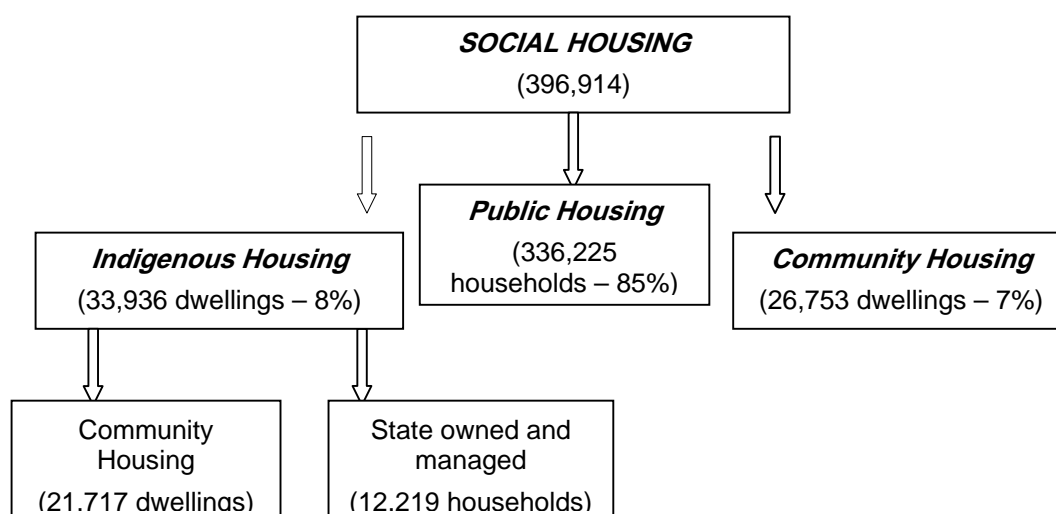
Other evidence of the changing focus of social housing is found in the research literature. At least 12 completed AHURI research projects have studied social housing clients with a range of high and complex needs, and several more deal with the implications of increased targeting to tenants with high and complex needs. The population groups that have been the topic of AHURI research include Indigenous families, Indigenous people who are homeless, recently arrived refugees, homeless young people and older people, ex-prisoners, people in later life, people with mental health issues, and older and younger people with disabilities. These reports make repeated reference to the need for improved integration and coordination between housing and support in areas of policy, planning, program design and service delivery (e.g. Bleasdale, 2006; Heintjes, 2006; O'Brien et al., 2002).

### *2.3.2 The changing delivery of social housing*

The changing role of social housing during the past decade has been accompanied by a gradual change in service delivery. The primary responsibility for social housing rests with the Australian states and territories, which operate within a shared policy and funding context as described in section 2.2. As a result there are broad similarities in the institutions, program structures and service delivery arrangements for social housing across Australia, although these are tempered by demographic, geographic, economic, social and political differences. During the past two decades, social housing in each of the states and territories has experienced a process of diversification of housing providers. The current pattern of provision at the national level is shown in Figure 3. While public housing remains the largest sector, the community housing and Indigenous housing sectors are increasing in size, and it is likely that diversification will continue during the next decade.

Until the 1980s, public housing authorities were near-monopoly social housing providers in Australia supplemented only by a small number of philanthropic, local authority, and religious-based housing organisations. The diversification of service delivery first gained momentum in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bisset and Milligan, 2004; Hulse and Burke, 2004; Milligan et al., 2004.) This was driven, in part, by policies supporting community housing that emerged in some states, especially New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The tied funding for community housing introduced in the 1984 CSHA provided a key impetus and a uniform national approach. Growth of the community housing sector has been reinforced by the expansion of funding earmarked for community housing in the CSHA in the early 1990s, and a requirement under the 2003 CSHA for a minimum of 5 per cent of funds to be used to leverage funding from the community and private sectors for social housing (Australia, FACS, 2003).

**Figure 3: Distribution of social rental housing households/dwellings, 2003/04**



Source: Based on Australia, SCRGSP, 2006, p. 16.11.

Over the past two decades, a variety of new community and affordable housing models and a significant number of providers have emerged. Nationally, community housing now comprises about 7 per cent of social housing delivered by about 1200 organisations, most of which are very small. Many of these organisations target very specific needs and/or population groups, while others have a generalist orientation. Community housing is expanding nationally as a result of its success in attracting new investment. All states are developing strategies that include initiatives to expand the scale and efficiency of the community housing sector, and to broaden the scope of their activities (Australia, SCRGSP 2006; Hall and Berry, 2004; Hulse and Burke, 2004; Milligan et al., 2004).

A number of factors have driven the expansion of community housing. The early expansion was in part a response to perceived shortcomings of public housing. From a managerialist perspective, the administration of public housing in the 1980s was widely perceived as centralised, unresponsive, bureaucratic, resistant to change, and providing a poor standard of tenancy and property management. Diversification through community housing was also a response to neo-liberal agendas to provide increased choice for consumers, contestability and innovation. A further driver was the perceived need to respond flexibly to a range of specific needs and issues that public housing was not addressing. Community housing was seen as a vehicle for initiating flexible and responsive housing forms and tenancy management styles for a range of emerging housing needs groups including homeless people, young people, people with mental health issues, people with intellectual and physical disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, dislocated boarding house residents, and immigrants.

Pressure for greater involvement by communities in identifying and addressing local needs was a further factor. Centralised, bureaucratic public housing administration was not geared to engage effectively with local communities, whereas community housing models had the potential to harness local knowledge and expertise to address local problems as well as create community ownership of housing initiatives. In this context, community housing had the potential to attract additional resources in the form of skills, land, funding and in-kind donations, especially from large charities, churches and local governments.

During the same period, national concern about poor-quality housing and overcrowding in Indigenous communities resulted in an increase in investment by national, state and territory governments in Indigenous housing. The primary focus of attention was in rural and remote areas, where much of the housing is managed by community organisations, including Indigenous community councils. There was also increasing policy attention, particularly in urban areas, to improving access by Indigenous people to mainstream housing programs.

The net effect has been an increasing diversification of social housing service delivery, where public housing remains in a dominant position but is in decline, while the relative scale and profile of the community and Indigenous housing sectors is expanding, albeit slowly and from a low base.

### *2.3.3 The changing administration of social housing*

Until the mid-1990s, the administration of social housing was predominantly governed through housing authorities in each state and territory, and the term 'State Housing Authority' (SHA) continues to be widely used to refer to the state and territory bodies responsible for social housing. SHAs were established in the 1930s and 1940s as legal entities such as trusts or commissions, as such structures facilitated the management of matters such as land ownership and development, trading, housing construction, and home lending. They also enabled financial transactions and assets to be quarantined within a fund separate from consolidated revenue. This was important in providing transparency for reporting to the Australian Government under the CSHA, as a means of providing a capital base of housing activities, and as a means of preventing leakage of housing funds and assets to other purposes. Changes in public administration have reduced the need for these legal structures and many have been abolished. For example, the NSW Housing Commission ceased to exist with the introduction of the NSW *Housing Act* in 1986. Similarly, the Queensland Housing Commission was abolished with the introduction of the *Housing Act 2003*.

The positioning of social housing in the machinery of government to some degree reflects government housing policy objectives and their changes over time. Until the late 1980s, housing tended to be associated with the objective of housing supply and the function was in some places incorporated into public works and construction departments. In some jurisdictions in the 1990s, housing policy was linked with urban planning and regional development and was organisationally positioned with local government or urban planning. Since the mid-1990s, it has been increasingly common for housing to be a vehicle for social policy objectives, situated within human service organisations. Nevertheless, organisational arrangements remain varied and subject to change, as has occurred most recently in South Australia (see below). At present, social housing is located within human services departments in the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. It is located with public works in Western Australia and local government in the Northern Territory. It is a stand-alone department in New South Wales and Queensland.

The machinery of government arrangements for components of social housing delivery have also varied. Several jurisdictions experimented with new internal functional arrangements that included the separation of tenancy management and property management or the separation of purchaser and provider roles. Two states, New South Wales and South Australia, established administratively separate structures for community and Indigenous housing. In 1991, South Australia created a statutory authority for community housing, named the South Australian Community Housing Authority (SACHA), and in 1998 it also established an Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) to coordinate and administer all Indigenous housing activities. However, in May 2006 these agencies were consolidated into a new entity called



Housing SA, which also encompasses other major housing programs including the South Australian Housing Trust (<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/>). In New South Wales from 1992 to 1999, housing policy and the administration of community and Indigenous housing were separated from public housing. In 1998 a statutory authority, the Aboriginal Housing Office, governed by an Aboriginal Board, was established with responsibility for funding and regulating community-based Indigenous housing services and for managing the assets acquired under the ARHP program in New South Wales. In 1999 all these functions, except for those of the Aboriginal Housing Office, were re-absorbed into the Department of Housing.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The integration challenges facing Australian social housing are embedded in its history and structure. The contemporary concern with integration reflects a number of historical processes, including the complex evolution of social housing goals, the diversification of providers during the past two decades, the increasing need to link social housing provision with wider social policies concerned with housing, the greater than ever prominence of relations with other human services, the growing complexities of managing multiple goals and multiple providers, and the ongoing constraint of limited financial resources for social housing provision. Each of these issues has a long history that continues to shape prospects and possibilities for improved integration.

It can be argued that the prominence of the integration issue at this time reflects a critical juncture in the historical development of Australian social housing. Prior to the 1980s, social housing was essentially synonymous with public housing, which for many years had a central goal of providing low-cost rental housing for lower-income households. Since the 1980s, this set of arrangements has been in a long-term process of transformation of goals and service provision. There are growing pressures for social housing organisations to collaborate with one another as well as with other human service organisations. Furthermore, changes in housing policy external to social housing, such as the growing significance of rent assistance and growing interest in strategies to promote housing affordability, have raised fundamental questions about the role of social housing providers and their links to the wider housing policy environment. The integration challenges that are arising as a consequence of these new circumstances are the central concerns of this research project.

## **3 INTEGRATION: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 1, integration was introduced as a concept referring to the inherent challenge in complex human service systems of bringing together the participants to achieve goals that cannot be achieved by organisations and individuals acting autonomously and separately. This discussion of the meaning of integration introduced a number of analytical categories: the objectives, modes, instruments, implementation factors, and outcomes of integration. The purpose of this chapter is to explore these aspects of integration in greater detail, in order to provide a conceptual framework for the study. This will be done by examining the ways in which these aspects of integration are dealt with in the academic and professional literature, and linking these to Australian social housing. The chapter will address the following questions:

1. What are the objectives of integration (section 3.2)?
2. What are the modes and instruments of integration (section 3.3)?
3. Which factors facilitate and impede implementation of integration (section 3.4)?
4. Which issues are involved in evaluating the outcomes of integration (section 3.5)?

The academic and management literature on human services integration and related themes is international in scope, and provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for consideration of human services integration issues within any particular national context. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the form that integration takes and the nature of the integration problem are heavily influenced by factors specific to particular national contexts. At the broadest level these factors include geography and the pattern of human settlement, and state and societal structures such as the system of government (e.g. federal or unitary) and the roles of the community, and market sectors. The nature of welfare regimes is also a key factor (Geddes, 2005; Wiseman, 2005). Liberal welfare regimes such as the UK, Australia and the USA have human services systems that typically involve a mix of state, community and market-based organisations in human services delivery. The impact of neo-liberal ideas during the past two decades has tended to expand the roles of the community and market sectors in human services delivery, bringing additional complexities to the integration issue.

A detailed examination of the characteristics of the wider Australian human services system is beyond the scope of this Positioning Paper. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are a number of distinctive characteristics of the Australian context that shape attempts to develop integrated human services systems, including enhanced integration of social housing provision. The Australian human services system has been described as 'a complex, contested and crowded policy and service delivery arena, which has presented special problems for achieving coordination and realising effective service delivery' (Brown and Keast, 2005, p. 507). These 'special problems' include: the complexity of national and state policy coordination arrangements, including intergovernmental relations (Farland, 2004; Keating and Wanna, 2000; Matheson, 2000; Monro, 2003); the contested relations between the state and community sector organisations (Casey and Dalton, 2006; Darcy, 1999; Dollery and Wallis, 2001; Edwards, 2001; Meagher and Healy 2003); the expansion during the past decade of the role of market sector organisations in human services delivery (Berry et al., 2006; Earles and Moon, 2000; Quiggin, 1999); the limited capacity of local integrative institutions, including local government (Dollery, Wallis

and Allan, 2006; Fincher, 1999; Lawson and Gleeson, 2005; McDonald and Zetlin, 2004; Walsh 2001); the existence of a distinct Indigenous service sector with complex links to mainstream human services (Neutze, 2000); and ongoing debate concerning the principles that should underpin the development and delivery of human services (Brown and Keast, 2005; Davis, 1997; Reddel, 2002 ). The impact of these factors on the integration challenges facing Australian social housing will be addressed in the Final Report.

### **3.2 The objectives of integration**

The starting point for the development of a critical analytical framework on integration is clarification of objectives. It was noted in Chapter 1 that reforms introduced in the name of integration may have a diversity of objectives that may be explicit or implicit, intended or unintended. The term 'integration' carries symbolic and normative assumptions that sometimes may obscure the objectives of policies and programs carried out in its name. Clarity of purpose is especially important in the Australian social housing context of multiple providers, multiple goals and rapid change under severe resource constraints.

Five broad sets of objectives with relevance to social housing have been identified from the literature as underpinning integration efforts. Policies, programs and initiatives carried out in the name of integration typically espouse one or more of the following objectives:

- Improved client outcomes
- Enhanced client access
- Greater equity and consistency
- Increased efficiency
- Enhanced accountability and control.

In the human services context, one of the most commonly espoused objectives of integration initiatives is improved outcomes for clients. Often this is associated with coordinating a range of services for people with complex or multiple needs. In social housing this may involve linking housing and support services for clients such as older people, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues, or homeless people, to ensure that housing is appropriate to their needs and that shelter and beyond-shelter needs are addressed. Specific integration initiatives may include joint needs assessment, inter-agency case management to ensure a match between client needs and service provision, ongoing coordination of client services, and joint approaches to prevention and early intervention (Dennis, Coccozza and Steademan, 1998; Fine et al., 2005; Martinson, 1999; Waldfogel, 1997). The locus of integration is typically the individual client.

A closely linked objective, also focused on clients, is enhanced client access. The increasing complexity of human services systems, with multiple and differentiated services and service providers, has led to concern about under-utilisation of services due to access barriers. This has resulted in numerous initiatives to facilitate information and access arrangements, and to simplify and standardise eligibility and prioritisation processes (Brown and Keast, 2003; Fine et al., 2005; Waldfogel, 1997). A contemporary example is the interest in common housing registers, which have been introduced in European and North American to coordinate access in multi-provider social housing contexts (Hulse et al., 2007; Mullins and Niner, 1996).

Integration initiatives such as common housing registers are also driven by a concern with issues of equity of access, and transparency and consistency in decision making

across service providers. These objectives are often associated with achieving a consistent approach to rationing of human services and management of individuals receiving services (Dennis et al., 1998; Waldfogel, 1997) Equity and consistency are particular concerns where a range of government and non-government organisations are involved in delivering similar services but with different policies and decision-making processes.

Many integration initiatives are also driven by efficiency objectives, although these are not always explicitly acknowledged. Efficiency may be a primary or secondary objective. The efficiency objectives may be to achieve cost savings or to increase productivity by 'doing more with less'. The application of information technology to improve efficiency through integrated service delivery is a common strategy in contemporary human services (Fine et al., 2005; Dennis et al., 1998), including shared databases and IT infrastructure. Efficiency may be considered from the perspective of service providers, but also from a client perspective. For example, the reduced costs of accessing services through 'one-stop shops' or information portals on the internet may be viewed as advantageous to clients.

Finally, integration may also be espoused in terms of enhanced accountability and control. Human services systems characterised by multiple providers, or by decentralised, diversified service delivery may pose accountability and control challenges for policy makers and program managers. There is often tension between flexible, discretionary local service delivery and the requirement or desire of managers for control and monitoring of client outcomes, equity, efficiency and probity (Dennis et al., 1998; O'Toole 1997). Integration in many circumstances involves the exercise of power, influence and authority, and it has been noted that 'the one that integrates will call the tune' (Luetz, 1999).

This listing of the possible objectives of integration serves a number of important purposes. First, it is important from a management perspective that the objectives of any particular integration initiative are fully understood as a foundation for effective program design and evaluation. For example, an integration initiative designed to achieve greater accountability will have different features to one designed to improve client outcomes. Secondly, the listing draws attention to the complexities involved in integration initiatives. Typically, programs or initiatives designed to achieve greater integration will have a number of objectives that may or may not be consistent or mutually supportive. Thirdly, understanding the diverse objectives of integration helps to identify potential implementation difficulties. Typically the parties involved in integration processes will place greater weight on one or another set of integration objectives, and integration strategies need to take account of this diversity. For example, community sector housing providers may be inclined to support an initiative such as common housing registers on the grounds of coordination of client access, but may be uncooperative if they view this as a process involving loss of autonomy and greater state control. This suggests that the objectives of integration need to be understood both as management objectives that need to be clearly articulated, and as factors that involve the values and interests of participants in human services integration processes.

### **3.3 Modes and instruments of integration**

Just as integration initiatives may be employed to address a variety of objectives, so they may be pursued in a variety of ways. It is useful to distinguish between the modes and instruments of integration. As indicated in section 1.3, the term 'modes' refers to broad approaches to integration, while 'instruments' are specific integrative mechanisms. The choice of modes and instruments is influenced by several factors,

including the objective being pursued, the institutional context, the relations of power, authority and influence among participants, value considerations, and the availability of resources.

### **Modes**

A number of classifications of broad approaches to integration are identified in the academic literature (Brown and Keast, 2005; O’Looney, 1993; Martinson, 1999). A common distinction, already identified in this paper, is between system-wide strategies of a strategic or policy nature and service delivery level strategies that focus on individual clients (Dennis et al., 1998). This distinction has been extended to include three levels: macro, involving national and state governments; meso, comprising the local service system; and micro, where the focus is individual staff and consumers (Fine et al., 2005). Others have suggested that different approaches to integration are required, depending on whether the focus is on agencies, programs, services or target populations (Martinson, 1999). Yet others have emphasised the scope of integration reforms as a factor determining approach, with distinctions made between project fixes, system fixes and systemic change (Dennis et al., 1998), and between incremental and radical integration (Yessian, 1995).

Each of these distinctions has some bearing on this study. However, two other classifications of broad approaches to integration appear to be particularly relevant to the Australian social housing context. These are the origins of the impetus for integration – ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ (Martinson, 1999), and the degree of integration involved – ‘loosely coupled’ or ‘tightly coupled’ (O’Looney, 1993).

The distinction drawn in the academic literature between ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ integration (Martinson, 1999) has particular relevance to Australian human services and social housing. Top-down integration refers to initiatives emanating from the authoritative and management core of human service systems, usually the political or administrative leadership of state organisations. These integration initiatives are mandated or directed by the political or administrative leadership and flow down to the service delivery level in the form of orders, instructions and guidelines. Those operating at the service delivery level are required or encouraged to integrate their activities with other organisations or groups. Top-down integration may be pursued in a highly directive manner or it may be implemented through processes of consultation and negotiation. It may involve all five of the objectives discussed in section 3.3, but is often particularly associated with the objectives of efficiency, accountability and control.

Top-down integration initiatives are undertaken in the context of the overall responsibilities of governments for human services provision (Brown and Keast, 2005). While top-down integration is often underpinned by political and administrative authority and control of resources, there are usually barriers to effective implementation that need to be addressed. It is argued that successful top-down implementation usually requires clear policy objectives, strong policy leadership and political resources, provision of a clear mandate for local implementation, understanding of the local service delivery context provision of financial and human resources at the local level, and extensive engagement with local service providers (Martinson, 1999). Lack of attention to such factors has often resulted in disappointing outcomes from top-down integration initiatives, especially in the United States (see section 3.2).

Bottom-up integration refers to integration initiatives emanating voluntarily from front-line service delivery organisations, irrespective of central mandate and support. Most local or regional service delivery systems have some informal integrative activities

such as referral pathways and inter-agency meetings, although extensive, formal linkages are less common. It has been suggested that bottom-up integration is often driven by resource scarcity and uncertainties in the political environment, as much as by the objective of improved outcomes and access for clients (Healy, 1998, pp. 134–9). There are numerous ways in which local agencies can link their services, both formal and informal. However, the preservation of organisational autonomy has been identified as a powerful factor impeding interagency collaboration and cooperation in many contexts (Healy, 1998).

The distinction between top-down and bottom-up integration is useful in that it draws attention to the different locations for integrative initiatives. Integration may be initiated at the core or at the periphery of human service systems. The evidence suggests that the barriers to successful integration are such that a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies may often be required to achieve integration outcomes. Top-down approaches need to pay attention to the incentives and disincentives to local agencies to engage in cooperative and coordinated activities, and to understanding local service delivery contexts. Bottom-up approaches may need external stimulation and support to overcome the strong tendency in many local organisations to prefer to operate with high levels of autonomy.

The modes of integration can also be 'loosely' or 'tightly' coupled (O'Looney, 1993). Tightly coupled integration is associated with standardisation and formalisation imposed through the exercise of authority. Loosely coupled integration is associated with shared goals, cooperation and collaboration, and flexible, fluid and voluntary relationships. To illustrate these differences, consider the adoption of an integrated approach to social housing applications in a local or regional context. A tightly integrated approach might involve the housing authority imposing a requirement for a standardised application form and process for use by all service providers. A loosely integrated approach might involve service providers voluntarily agreeing to use a common set of core questions in their application forms, sharing this information, and tailoring the process to the specific needs of individual services and their clients.

Tight integration is typically associated with values of efficiency, rationality and equity, while loose coupling emphasises values of responsiveness, innovation and strong links to community (Halley, 1997; Parsons, 2004). Tight integration may have the potential for adverse effects on the client, especially for vulnerable clients. They may reduce access points, lead to exclusion of clients who have had previous negative interactions with services, compromise client privacy, and lead to reluctance by some clients to declare risky or illegal behaviours. Where tight integration is accompanied by new information technologies, barriers may be created for those with limited literacy or technology skills (Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Reitan, 1998, p. 304; Yessian, 1995). By contrast, loose coupling may result in fragmentation and inefficiency (Longoria, 2005).

The distinction between loose and tight integration can be linked to contemporary interest in 'network governance'. The concept of network governance arises out of the increasing interdependence of the public, private and voluntary sectors, and the consequent need to explore new approaches to governance that stem from this interdependence (Stoker, 1998). Increasingly, human service delivery requires the participation and collaboration of a diversity of state, community and market organisations. In such circumstances, conventional hierarchical, command and control approaches are inadequate, and governments and state agencies are required to develop new forms of partnership to achieve their objectives. Traditional single organisation management approaches have to be overlaid with 'trans-organisational' management (Agranoff, 1991). New partnerships may take many forms (Rhodes,

1996). These may include 'tightly coupled' principal-agent relations in which governments contract out services to community and market sector providers with extensive processes of monitoring, accountability and control. But they may also involve the further development of 'loosely coupled' approaches to inter-organisational negotiation with greater emphasis on fostering collaboration and mediating the diverse interests of the partners. Over time there may develop a 'systematic coordination form of partnership in which organisations develop a shared vision and joint-working capacity that leads to the establishment of self-governing networks' (Rhodes, 1996, p. 22).

The key implication of this consideration of the modes of integration is that those seeking to achieve enhanced integration of social housing have a number of options at their disposal, and a number of choices to make. Social housing integration efforts require consideration of the options of top-down and bottom-up approaches, and 'loosely coupled' and 'tightly coupled' strategies. If, as seems likely, the role of non-state organisations in social housing provision continues to expand, and if, as also seems likely, links with other state agencies become increasingly significant, housing authorities will need to adopt integration strategies that reflect these emerging inter-dependencies.

### **Instruments**

The 'instruments' of integration can be understood as specific mechanisms or tools adopted to achieve integration objectives. Different types of mechanisms are typically associated with particular integration objectives and modes. The academic and management literature identifies a wide range of instruments that are employed in coordination and integration of human services (Healy 1999). These can be categorised in terms of the five main foci of integration activities: clients, providers, programs, organisations, and policies (Morgan, 1995; Yessian, 1995). The following listing is designed to illustrate the range of integration instruments that are available, rather than to provide a comprehensive inventory.

Integration instruments that are client or provider centred are mainly focused at the service delivery level. Client-centred instruments are primarily concerned with achieving outcomes for clients with multiple and complex needs, and with coordinating access arrangements. These instruments may include case management, case conferencing, consultation, cross-agency client information and referral protocols, and joint assessment processes. Provide-centred instruments involve processes and structures that facilitate inter-organisation collaboration at the service delivery level. They may include co-location, shared information systems, joint staff training, inter-agency meetings, common application processes, staff secondments, joint delivery processes, staff recruitment and volunteer programs (Healy, 1999, p. 135).

At the strategic level, integration instruments may be program, organisation or policy centred. Program-centred approaches focus on coordinating programs in an effort to direct their combined resources to addressing common problems or needs. These may include shared guidelines, common targeting strategies, or joint, coordinated or pooled funding arrangements. Instruments to integrate organisational activities primarily involve governance arrangements that cross organisational boundaries, including protocols and memoranda of understanding, ministerial or executive interagency coordination structures, advisory committees, reorganisation of agency responsibilities or structures, and agency amalgamations. Policy-centred instruments aim to achieve coherence between policy areas to achieve shared objectives, and avoid duplication and inefficiency. Policy and strategy documents of various kinds, together with policy units, are the most common instruments. These typically articulate common policy goals, and may also outline agreed funding and regulatory

arrangements, as well as other implementation factors (Dennis et al. 1998; Martinson, 1999; Morgan, 1995).

In summary, those seeking to pursue enhanced integration for social housing have a number of critical choices to make, with respect to both the modes and the instruments of integration. It is clear that multi-mode, multi-instrument strategies are required, given the complexity of the policy, management and service delivery context. It seems likely that successful integration will require interventions at both the policy/strategic and the service delivery levels, and will need to consider the interactions between these levels (Agranoff, 1991; Redburn, 1977). A key issue is whether integration will be pursued via loosely coupled or tightly coupled approaches, and careful consideration of the implications of theories of 'network governance' would appear to be particularly applicable. A further issue is the need to consider the full repertoire of integration instruments that are documented in the public sector management literature.

### **3.4 Implementing integration**

A clear message from the human services and public sector management literature is that integration projects are inherently difficult to implement and to sustain, and that replication of successful integration projects is also difficult (Corbett and Noyes, 2004). Integration, be it at the policy or service delivery level, is typically perceived by organisations and agencies to involve some degree of loss of autonomy, and typically some countervailing incentives or advantages are required to ensure active engagement in cooperative and collaborative activities (Healy, 1999). Achieving a more coherent or 'integrated' service delivery arrangement is not an end in itself, and human services participants should question the evidence of likely improvements in outcomes for consumers, evidence that is often not available (Martinson, 1999). Many integration initiatives require considerable effort to sustain once they have been established. Furthermore, integration often requires public sector managers to direct processes involving trans-organisational change comprising a range of public, community and market organisations, where authority may be indirect or contested (Agranoff, 1991, p. 53; Yessian, 1995). Some public sector managers are inexperienced in such processes. Public sector accountability and financing processes emphasises vertical rather than horizontal structures, and the 'silos' of government programs and administration are often identified as major factors inhibiting cross-organisational, cross-sector and cross-program integration.

Sitting beneath these wider structural factors are a range of equally critical micro-factors that have been identified in the public sector management literature as both enabling and impeding successful integration in the human services. Much of this literature also proposes guidelines and prescriptions for successful integration management (Agranoff, 1991; Austin, 1997; Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Dennis et al., 1998; Fine et al., 2005; Luetz 1999; Martinson, 1999; O'Looney, 1997; Waldfogel, 1997; Yessian 1995). A number of common themes emerge from this literature, although some are particularly relevant to specific integration contexts, objectives and modes. At a broad level, those factors most relevant to the Australian social housing context have been identified as:

- Leadership
- Trust and commitment
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Allocation of responsibility
- Multi-level interventions



- Shared infrastructure
- Adequate time and resources for change management.

Leadership has been widely identified as a key factor in integration processes. Formal leadership from those in positions of administrative and political authority is necessary to mobilise mandate and resources, as well as to overcome inertia, resistance, and risk aversion. Informal leadership also has a key role to play in gaining 'buy in' and commitment from a range of organisations, mediating inter-organisational tensions, and problem resolution (Agranoff, 1991; Fine et al., 2005; Martinson, 1999; O'Looney, 1997; Waldfogel, 1997).

Building trust and commitment at all levels within the participating organisations has been identified as an important means to 'cultivate the constituency for change' (Yessian, 1995), and establish robust and sustainable relationships (Corbett and Noyes 2004, p. 29; Ragan, 2003). Some strategies to build trust and commitment include: documenting and promoting potential benefits; encouraging cross-training of staff; effective communication and information sharing (Martinson, 1999); acknowledging and negotiating changes to staff status, roles and security (O'Looney, 1997); and establishing a shared vision and goal (Agranoff, 1991; Martinson, 1999). A long-term commitment that involves recognition that change often takes considerable time has also been identified as an important element of building trust and commitment (Dennis et al., 1998; Fine et al., 2005).

Effective and ongoing planning, monitoring and evaluation processes have also been identified as critical to successful integration efforts (Agranoff 1991; Calista, 1996; Dennis et al., 1998; Fine et al., 2005; Martinson, 1999). It has been argued that the planning process should establish a common vision and clear, realistic, and measurable objectives. There is a need for clear definition of the outcomes, services and target groups to be the focus of integration, articulation of the types of linkages to be pursued, and analysis of costs and benefits. Plans need to be jointly agreed by the key stakeholders and include defined and common performance indicators and measures. Performance should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and be used to recognise achievements and make changes where necessary. Evaluation should be undertaken of both the integration processes and the outcomes for service users (Martinson, 1999; Yessian, 1995).

Responsibility for leadership and management of integration processes in both the establishment and ongoing phases also needs to be clearly allocated both centrally and at the local level. This responsibility may rest with individuals, organisations or coordinating bodies who are accountable for implementation and ongoing performance. Effective change management needs to address stakeholder interests, including staff concerns about threats to their status and job security (Agranoff, 1991; Dennis et al., 1998; Martinson, 1999; Waldfogel, 1997).

A recurring theme in the literature is that integration interventions need to be multi-faceted and multi-level and mutually reinforcing. Local service integration generally requires various forms of systemic support such as a clear mandate and financial resources. Conversely, wider structural changes need to pay close attention to changes in service delivery design and practice. The use of blended and flexible program design and funding approaches to replace rigid, categorical approaches can be an important means of linking integration processes at the central and local levels (Agranoff, 1991; Dennis et al., 1998; Martinson, 1999).

Typically, successful integration involves a weakening of organisational boundaries and establishment of trans-organisational relationships. As already indicated, this requires a particular set of management skills that involve the capacity to manage

across organisational boundaries through processes of influence and negotiation. The development of shared infrastructure such as common funding, eligibility, information and training, as well as compatible management and client information systems have been identified as factors that enhance the likelihood of successful integration, especially at the service delivery level (Martinson, 1999).

Finally, a number of writers have emphasised that providing adequate time and resources to establish and sustain collaborative activities is a key, but often neglected, factor. Resources are required for facilities such as technical assistance, guidance and problem resolution, training and re-training, revising practices and procedures, upgrading or restructuring information technology systems, dedicated change management staff, relocation and new equipment (Martinson 1999; Dennis et al., 1998). A common impediment to successful integration is that while the benefits often appear to be intangible and long term, the costs are often substantial and immediate.

In summary, the successful implementation of integration initiatives in Australian social housing appears to rest on two sets of factors. First, there are the macro-structural factors linked to the wider Australian human services system, referred to in section 3.1. Implementing integration in the Australian context will be shaped by such structural factors as the complexities of national and state administrative arrangements, the contested relations between state and community sector organisations, the expansion of market sector human services provision, the limited capacity of local integrative institutions, and the existence of an Indigenous service sector alongside mainstream services. Secondly, there are the micro-administrative factors identified in this section, which draw attention to the skills, practices and processes required to effectively implement integration in such a complex inter-sector, inter-organisational, environment.

### **3.5 Evaluating the outcomes of integration**

A major challenge facing proponents of better integrated human services is to develop evaluation methods and tools that can demonstrate the positive outcomes of integration initiatives. The strong symbolic appeal of integration, discussed in Chapter 1, underscores the importance of robust evaluation. The objectives of integration presented in section 3.3 fall into two categories: those relating to improving the experience or outcomes for clients, and those relating to improving the functioning of service provision. Previous evaluations have tended to focus more on the latter, and generally there has been less focus in the international literature on the question of whether client outcomes have been enhanced (Longoria, 2005).

The evaluation literature provides conflicting evidence about whether client outcomes have been improved as a result of integration efforts. Some studies point to benefits for clients in terms of improved access to a wider range of services (Martinson, 1999). However, other reviews of the research and evaluation literature conclude that there is little compelling evidence linking enhanced client benefits to service integration reforms. To a large extent the lack of strong evidence can be explained by the absence of robust evaluation or poor data quality. Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy between the lack of a body of evidence of improved client outcomes and the high level of ideological commitment to integration from many practitioners and policy makers (Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Longoria, 2005).

Many evaluation studies have focused on the question of whether enhanced integration has been achieved, and the factors enhancing or impeding success. Consistent themes in this literature include: the tendency for the objectives of integration to be poorly specified; the need for clear, central mandates and support for service delivery level integration combined with flexibility of local implementation

approaches; and the need for long-term commitment to integration initiatives. This literature also emphasises the need for commitment of significant human and financial resources to achieve positive integration outcomes (Longoria, 2005). While some integration reforms have demonstrated improved efficiency and reduced duplication over the medium term, there are up-front costs in establishing integration mechanisms and ongoing transaction costs (Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Hassett and Austin, 1997). In some cases, the diversion of resources to integration appears to have reduced services available to clients, and has compromised service quality and accountability. Other issues that have arisen in integration processes include: conflicting visions and motivations for reform; fragmented reform efforts; proliferation of IT systems; over-centralised administration; confidentiality issues; and changing staff roles and role confusion (Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Hassett and Austin, 1997). This literature has played an important role in identifying the factors affecting the outcomes of integration initiatives (section 3.5). However, it is clear that there is a need for ongoing critical evaluation of the benefits and costs of integration, and in particular a need for greater attention to be paid to the relations between integration initiatives and client outcomes.

The evaluation of policies, programs and activities designed to enhance integration poses significant methodological challenges. Integration initiatives are often deeply embedded in service delivery contexts, making causation difficult to establish. Many of the factors that have been identified as significant determinants of outcomes are also context specific, making replication of findings difficult. 'Realist' evaluation approaches that emphasise the importance of context and longitudinal studies may be required to establish a sound evidence base. These issues will be addressed in greater detail in the Final Report.

### **3.6 Conclusions**

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for analysing the issue of integration and its application to social housing in Australia. The framework emphasises the importance of clarifying objectives, carefully selecting modes and instruments, applying strategies that facilitate implementation and manage implementation risks, and evaluating outcomes. This framework provides a series of analytical questions that can be applied to each of the three sets of challenges facing social housing, as well as to specific integration initiatives. The ways in which the framework will be used to guide the remainder of the project are discussed in Chapter 4.

The broad conclusions of this chapter are twofold. First, the chapter has demonstrated that those seeking to develop improved social housing integration are faced with a wide range of choices in terms of objectives, approaches, instruments, and implementation and evaluation strategies. Integration can be pursued for many purposes and through many means, and can have a variety of consequences. Integration is a complex goal involving many different approaches and processes. The aspiration to develop integrative mechanisms and processes is inherent in an increasingly diverse social housing context. However, the specific objectives and means of achieving integration clearly require ongoing deliberation.

Secondly, the chapter has underscored the necessity of a critical approach to integration. This analysis of the academic and management literature has shown that underlying the pervasive belief that integration is inherently desirable, is extensive debate and considerable uncertainty about the objectives, means and outcomes of integration. The challenges for those seeking to pursue enhanced integration include the need to clarify objectives, to consider the most appropriate modes and instruments that may be applicable in particular situations, to carefully consider the

factors that are likely to impinge on implementation, and to engage in ongoing evaluation of outcomes, especially outcomes for clients.

## **4 THE RESEARCH APPROACH**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The analysis presented in this Positioning Paper has shown that the challenge of addressing integration issues in Australian social housing is complex and multi-dimensional. In this Positioning Paper we have defined social housing, identifying the main participants in this sector and the key contiguous and overlapping policy and service contexts (1.2). We have defined the meaning of integration in this context (1.3), and identified the key areas of integration (1.4). We have provided an historical account of the development of social housing in Australia, and shown how this has shaped contemporary integration challenges (chapter 2). We have also provided a critical, analytical framework for analysis of where and how integration may be an appropriate response to policy and service delivery complexity. This framework addresses challenges and options for applying integration strategies in Australian social housing centred on the objectives, modes, instruments, implementation factors and outcomes of integration (Chapter 3).

In this final section we lay out a research strategy for further exploration of these issues in this research study. We begin by summarising the nature of the integration challenge in Australian social housing, and in so doing reiterate the significance of both the issue and the research study (4.2). We then detail our research strategy and define the research questions and the research methods (4.3). We conclude by restating the significance of the study, its distinctive contribution and its limitations (4.5).

### **4.2 Defining the integration challenge**

The issue of integration is an endemic problem in the provision of human services in Australia requiring continuous attention. This is reflected in the emphasis in public sector management practice and theory on themes such as ‘whole of government’, ‘joined-up government’, ‘policy coordination’, ‘partnerships’, and ‘place management’. All efforts to achieve coherence in human services policy and service delivery must address the issues involved in bringing together the participants to improve social outcomes.

While the integration issue is ubiquitous in Australian human services, it takes on a particular form and shape within specific service contexts. The particularities of social housing policy and service delivery in Australia have been identified in this Positioning Paper. Key factors shaping the social housing integration challenge in Australia include:

1. The predominant role of the CSHA, including a range of specific-purpose payments, in establishing policy direction and allocating resources for social housing in each state and territory;
2. The historical primacy of public rental housing in social housing delivery, and the contraction in size and increasingly targeted nature of this tenure;
3. The gradual expansion and anticipated further expansion of the size and role of the community housing sector in social housing, and the changing nature of this sector, including the new ‘affordable’ housing providers;
4. The development over the past two decades of a complex set of Indigenous housing providers and services, and increasing interest in linking this set of services more closely with mainstream social housing;

5. As a consequence of the diversification of social housing, a growing interest in policy integration at the state and territory level, and service delivery integration at the local and regional level;
6. As a consequence of the increasing level of targeting in the sector, a heightened concern with links between social housing and other human services, including homeless services;
7. As a result of the unmet demand for services, an increasing focus on the relationship between social housing, other housing assistance measures and affordable housing.

The integration challenge in Australian social housing is to bring together social housing participants, and build linkages with human services and housing policy and service delivery in order to maximise the coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility of social housing provision. As indicated in Chapter 1, the integration challenge in Australian social housing in fact comprises three sets of challenges: integration within social housing; external linkages to address tenant needs beyond housing; and linkages between social housing and other housing assistance and affordable housing supply measures. The purpose of this research study is to examine each of these integration challenges using the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3. In regard to each, we aim to critically examine the objectives of integration, the modes and instruments of integration, the issues involved in implementing integration, and the issues involved in evaluating the outcomes of integration.

### **4.3 The research strategy**

The overall research strategy is to identify and critically examine existing and potential structures and processes pertinent to integration in social housing by means of review of the relevant management and professional literature, analysis of relevant policy documents, and interviews and workshops with key informants drawn from key sectors and locations within social housing. The research has an Australia-wide focus and relevance, but for reasons of economy the analysis is focused on three states: New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. These states have been chosen because they have had different types of structural arrangements for the management of social housing programs, and different emphases in their approach to integration issues. They also comprise a high proportion of overall social housing provision in Australia: 64 per cent of all public housing dwellings (AIHW, 2005, p. 442). Analysis of the key challenges and options for integration in social housing is primarily based on the experiences of these three states, together with analysis of documents drawn from across all jurisdictions.

#### *4.3.1 The research questions*

The research questions for this study provide a broad framework for the research strategy and are partially addressed in this Positioning Paper. These questions are:

1. What are the factors driving policy interest in integration in the Australian social housing context?
2. What do stakeholders view as the key integration and linkage issues, challenges and opportunities for social housing?
3. Which objectives, modes and instruments have characterised integration initiatives in Australian social housing?
4. Which factors have facilitated and impeded the implementation of integration initiatives, and what is the evidence of successful or unsuccessful outcomes?

5. In which areas do enhanced integration have the greatest potential to benefit clients and improve the delivery of social housing?
6. Which principles and practices should underpin integration endeavours in social housing?

#### *4.3.2 The research methods*

The project comprises five stages. Stages 1 and 2 are reported in this Positioning Paper. Reports on all stages will be included in the Final Report. The five stages are:

1. Analysis of the policy context
2. Review of the international and Australian literature
3. State-level workshops
4. Key informant interviews and analysis of policy documents
5. Policy analysis and development of the Final Report.

Table 4 provides a summary of the key research questions and the data collection methods used to address them.

#### **Analysis of the policy context**

The first stage of the project was an analysis of the Australian policy and management context, focused on social housing. This was based on relevant policy documents and secondary sources. This analysis covered the historical development of social housing focusing on the factors that have led to diversification and that have given impetus to a concern with integration. It identified the key factors shaping the integration issue in the contemporary context. This analysis was reported in Chapter 2 of this Positioning Paper and in a summary form will also feature in the Final Report.

#### **Review of the international and Australian literature**

The second stage of the project was a detailed review of relevant English-language research and management literature on integration, focusing on the past 15 years. The most important sources are included in the reference list for this Positioning Paper. An analytical framework based on this literature that identifies the key issues associated with human services integration is presented in chapters 1 and 3 of this Positioning Paper, and will also feature in the Final Report. It distinguishes between the objectives, modes, instruments, implementation factors and outcomes of integration structures and processes.

#### **State-level workshops**

The third stage of the project comprises three workshops of social housing managers and practitioners, one in each of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. The objective of these workshops is to develop a wide-angle view of integration issues in each of these jurisdictions, including identification of key problems and initiatives, perceptions of successful and unsuccessful interventions, and perceptions of factors impacting on the integration issue.

The selection criteria for participants in the workshops include their expertise and experience in social housing policy, management and service delivery across the public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing sectors. Participants are being selected using the researchers' knowledge of key individuals in social housing in each of the three states, together with discussions with individuals holding leading positions in social housing. Each workshop involves between 15 and 20 individuals. This number is considered sufficient to include representation of key sectors and localities, and is an appropriate size for in-depth consideration of the issues involved.

The workshops are designed to provide participants with the opportunity to identify key integration issues for social housing in each state, and to discuss a wide range of issues relating to the objectives, modes, instruments, implementation and outcomes of integration. They are also designed to encourage dialogue across sectors and interest groups on the critical issues involved in managing social housing diversity. They are structured to elicit both common and divergent views, and to identify specific examples of integration issues and initiatives. It is intended that the workshops capture common issues and themes across the three states to inform a national perspective. The outcomes of the workshops will inform the final report.

### **Key informant interviews and analysis of policy documents**

Following the workshops, a series of key informant interviews will be conducted in each state to obtain more detailed information concerning issues and initiatives identified in the workshops. Key informants will include individuals with expertise and experience in social housing policy, management and service delivery in the public housing, community housing and Indigenous housing sectors. The number of interviews, and their focus, will depend on the specific information needs of the project. Many of those interviewed will be those who attended the workshops, who will therefore have already given considerable attention to the issues of concern to the research project. Material obtained from the interviews and focus groups will be supplemented with a review of relevant policy documents (plans, policies, program and administrative reviews, etc) and research reports (including relevant AHURI reports).

### **Policy analysis and development of the Final Report**

The Final Report will present the major findings of the research project using the three major integration challenges identified in section 1.4 and the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3 of the Positioning Paper as the main organising tools. The Final Report will include material from the Positioning Paper on the analytical framework, and historical, structural and human services contexts, so as to provide a comprehensive report on the project, and to draw together the theoretical framework and empirical findings. It is anticipated that the Final Report will pay particular attention to locating the findings relating to social housing in the wider context of the Australian housing and human services systems.



**Table 4: Key research questions and data collection methods**

<i>Research questions</i>	<i>Data collection methods</i>
1. What are the factors driving policy interest in integration in the Australian social housing context?	→ Analysis of policy context → Literature review
2. What do stakeholders view as the key integration and linkage issues, challenges and opportunities for social housing?	→ Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA → Key informant interviews
3. Which objectives, modes and instruments have characterised integration initiatives in Australian social housing?	→ Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA → Key informant interviews → Policy document analysis
4. Which factors have facilitated and impeded the implementation of integration initiatives, and what is the evidence of successful or unsuccessful outcomes?	→ Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA → Key informant interviews → Policy document analysis
5. In which areas do enhanced integration have the greatest potential to benefit clients and improve the delivery of social housing?	→ Literature review → Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA → Follow up with individual workshop participants → Key informant interviews
6. Which principles and practices should underpin integration endeavours in social housing?	→ Literature review → Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA → Key informant interviews

## 4.4 Conclusions

This is a study that aims to identify at a broad level the range of integration challenges facing social housing in Australia and to examine options for addressing these issues. It is a critical study in that it does not necessarily assume that an emphasis on integration will result in stated or intended outcomes. The study is being conducted in a policy context that has seen major change in the roles, delivery and administration of social housing during the past decade. Current trends towards multiple goals and multiple providers of social housing are likely to continue in the years ahead, and there will be a requirement to manage this increasing complexity at both the policy and service delivery levels.

Furthermore, the increasing targeting of social housing, particularly public housing, means that there are new management challenges to develop policy and service delivery linkages with a range of other human services providers, including homelessness services. The place of social housing in broader strategies to address housing affordability, including affordability in the private rental market, is also a central issue that raises questions about the role of social housing and its relationship with broader housing policy objectives. All these issues and developments raise integration issues. These challenges for social housing can also be viewed as part of the wider issue of cohesion and coherence in Australian human services.

The current study does not provide a detailed analysis of each of the integration challenges facing Australian social housing. Such an analysis would require a more detailed program of research and a number of discrete studies. The aim of this study is rather to identify the broad contours of the integration issue, and the policy and service delivery challenges and options associated with the changing social housing context. This Positioning Paper has begun the task of mapping these challenges and

options. The Final Report will provide a more detailed analysis of the challenges of managing complexity in Australian social housing.

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Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute  
Level 1 114 Flinders Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Phone +61 3 9660 2300 Fax +61 3 9663 5488  
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