Positioning Paper

Community development and the delivery of housing assistance in non-metropolitan Australia: a literature review and pilot study

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for the
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INTRODUCTION

This Positioning Paper provides the conceptual and policy context for research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre, examining the role of housing assistance in community development in non-metropolitan Australia.

This Positioning Paper is the first product of this research project and its purpose is not to provide answers to the questions posed in the research brief, but instead to finalise or 'bed down' the conceptual framework. It also aims to relate this work to other studies around Australia and internationally.

This Positioning Paper finds that:

- AHURI funded research by Gleeson and Carmichael (2001) (http://www.ahuri.edu.au/pubs/positioning/pp_regdisad.pdf) provides an important context or background for understanding regional disadvantage and policies to address regional disadvantage in Australia, but regional disadvantage is not synonymous with attempts to engage in community development. Community development embraces more than just strategies intended to address economic well-being: it includes initiatives aimed at enhancing social capital, strategies aimed at empowering the most disadvantaged within society, and the use of local resources to meet collective objectives;

- Following in the work of Haughton (1999) and others, community development is best thought of as a three stage action agenda, comprised of

    1. At the level of the subsistence economy attention is given to the non-market and informal sector activity. The intention is to help individuals with basic survival and to build up local kinship and friendship networks;

    2. The local market economy is addressed by promoting self-employment, small business development and community initiatives, such as co-operatives. Here the objective is to develop an integrated economy where businesses trade amongst themselves thereby reducing the leakage of expenditure and increasing the range of economic activities within the community;

    3. At the level of the global economy, community development can provide training and work experience to help people overcome social exclusion and assist individuals move into jobs with globally-active firms. Community development is also seen to serve a role in lobbying to ensure the provision, and maintenance, of services.

- Importantly, successful community development strategies must pay attention to the subsistence needs and social networks of the poorest members of the community, as well as attract inward investment and market the community internationally;

- Housing is an under-explored topic in the regional development literature and regional development debates. Housing can be seen to influence the economic development of communities in at least three ways:

    1. First, lower housing costs outside the capital cities keep the cost of labour lower in non-metropolitan communities than in the capital cities and therefore add to the ability of these regions and urban centres to attract and retain businesses;

2. Second, the over-supply of housing in some areas – especially public housing – can be seen to impede labour mobility by encouraging households to remain in cities and regions where employment opportunities are limited, if not negligible;

3. Third, the insufficient supply of housing in fast-growing regions can impede development. This includes forcing new businesses to other regions, imposing additional costs on established firms, or promoting the leakage of expenditure from the region as workers commute into the region.

- Housing also makes a significant contribution to the social development of communities. It provides the foundation for neighbourhood networks, and can offer a focus for community action and empowerment;

- Social exclusion was recognised to be a useful concept, extending our understanding of disadvantage beyond the simple measurement of poverty to a focus on the relationship between that section of the population who are marginalised and the social, economic and cultural institutions of society;

- The review of the literature on social exclusion reinforced the need to engage in genuine community development, including the development of a long-term commitment by agencies to actions to improve the well being of these communities. International and national work also highlighted the need for the real sharing of power and responsibility between local communities and government decision makers.

- Economic and social circumstances in the three case studies considered in this project – Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge – highlight the need for a better understanding of the interaction between housing assistance and community development in non-metropolitan centres. Each has a vulnerable population and social housing is a significant part of the housing stock in all cases.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   Aims Of The Research

This Positioning Paper provides the conceptual and policy context for research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre into the role of housing assistance in community development in non-metropolitan Australia.

The aims of this project are to:

1. Produce a detailed statement on how housing policy can be more effectively integrated with policies designed to address regional disadvantage and policies designed to bring about better housing and regional economic outcomes;

2. review the national policy literature on cost effective approaches to regional disadvantage;

3. transfer the knowledge of the successful regional disadvantage interventions reviewed as part of the AHURI project *Responding to Regional Disadvantage: What Can be Learned From Overseas Experience?* http://www.ahuri.edu.au/pubs/positioning/pp_regdisad.pdf to non-metropolitan localities in South Australia;

4. document and analyse the policy responses to regional disadvantage currently employed in Australia and particularly South Australia;

5. document and analyse the current relationship between housing programs and strategies to address regional disadvantage in Australia and particularly South Australia;

6. document and analyse the role of housing in selected local economies, both as a positive and as a negative factor;

7. identify the potential for adopting alternative strategies to address regional disadvantage based on the international literature, and the benefits these alternatives could provide with respect to quality of life for residents and savings for governments.

This research aims to make a substantial contribution to policy development in the area of community development and the delivery of non-metropolitan housing by:

1. documenting the state of knowledge internationally and in Australia on the range of possible responses to regional disadvantage;

2. performing an evaluative role in identifying models of intervention that could be considered 'best practice';

3. showing how the delivery of housing assistance could make a more positive contribution to the social and economic policy goals of governments;

4. producing guidelines on the range of housing-related regional development strategies available to policy makers and how and when each of them could be most productively applied.

1.2   Methodology For The Research Project

The methodology for this research project is based around a review of the relevant Australian and international literature and the analysis of housing and regional development policy in three case study sites in non-metropolitan South Australia: Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge.

This study has incorporated a literature review as a way of discovering different models or approaches to the integration of housing assistance with community development in non-metropolitan areas. This aspect of the research was especially concerned to investigate the

state of knowledge of housing in community development outside large cities. Much has been written about the integration of community development objectives in the redevelopment of urban housing (see, for example, the special issue of *Housing Studies* in 1998 edited by Marsh and Mullins) but the comparable literature for smaller centres has little, if any, profile. This reflects a number of factors including: the smallness of the Australian housing literature; the pre-eminence of urban regeneration and urban issues in both the British and the North American literature; and, the focus on very small settlements within the rural housing literature. The literature review has focussed on work produced both in Australia and in other nations, and particular attention was given to publications produced by supra-national bodies such as the European Union and the OECD. This element of our work was integrated with a related research project being undertaken by Brendan Gleeson and Chris Carmichael entitled *Responding to Regional Disadvantage: What Can Be Learned from the Overseas Experience?* http://www.ahuri.edu.au/pubs/positioning/pp_regdisad.pdf.

The analysis of the relationship between housing and community development in three case studies constituted the second element of this project. The three case studies are Murray Bridge, Whyalla and Port Lincoln. Each is a regional city within South Australia (Beer, Bolam and Maude, 1994) with populations ranging from just over 12,000 persons, to slightly more than 20,000 persons. The three cities occupy very different environments, have different industry structures and growth prospects. In all three instances public housing has been significant in the past and all three are feeling the impact of change in the social housing sector in Australia. Housing policies have important regional economic development – and community development – implications in each of the three case studies. The three were selected because different housing strategies have been applied in each, and their economies are sufficiently different that the relationship between the housing sector and economy as a whole is appreciably different. Recognising and understanding this diversity – and how it affects housing management - is important for the development of better policy.

Data will be collected through a number of avenues for each of the case studies. Official data sets such as Census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics will be analysed. Data held by the South Australian Government's Department of Human Services on the level of demand for public housing in each of the case studies will be gathered. Additional information was obtained through interviews, as well as through the conduct of focus group discussions. Interviews will be conducted with relevant persons – local government officials, housing workers, economic development bodies, community workers, church groups and the representatives of the non-government sector – in each of the case studies. Further interviews and inquiries will take place in Adelaide. Focus group discussions will be conducted in each of the three regional cities as a way of identifying the most pressing issues within the local community; as a mechanism for achieving informed debate amongst local policy makers and actors; and as a tool to evaluate existing policy frameworks.

The Positioning Paper is not intended to provide answers to the issues raised in the research brief as it is only one of the outputs – and the first output – from the research project. Its purpose is to demonstrate a clear understanding of the policy issues to be addressed through the project, to provide a comprehensive review of the academic literature in relation to such issues, and to detail the research methods by which new information will be provided that will inform policy development.

CHAPTER 2.   DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2.1   What Is Community Development?

Defining community development is difficult, as many authors and many government bodies have established their own definitions. No clear consensus has emerged on how the term community development should be interpreted, as each perspective has been influenced by the values and judgements of the respective authors and often, in the case of government agencies, by their operational priorities. Indeed, through the latter part of the 1970s and 1980s much of the urban studies and planning literature was consumed by protracted debates on the meaning of the term 'community'.

Despite on-going debates over definitions, it is possible to identify two ways community development has been put into operation in Australia. *In the first instance, community development has been promoted as economic development.* Communities - townships, regions, suburbs, local government areas or cities - have sought to improve their well being by advancing their economic circumstances. *In the second instance, community development has attempted to address social alienation, often by enhancing the stock of social capital in that place*[1]. It is important to recognise these two dimensions in the practice of community development in Australia, as almost invariably they have been pursued by different types of organisations and by personnel with different sets of experience and skills. Community economic development has largely been the preserve of departments of industry, state development or small business, while human services departments, health bodies, social security agencies or departments of rural development have considered issues of social exclusion (for a fuller discussion of the organisation of local economic development in Australia see Beer and Maude 1997). Agencies charged with indigenous development – such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) – are one of the few government bodies that straddle both economic development and social development.

The functional and administrative differentiation of community development in Australia into economic development on the one hand and strategies to address social exclusion on the other, has profoundly affected how government programs have sought to advance the well-being of these places and target groups. Community development initiatives in Australia have therefore tended to be somewhat segmented. They have not been holistic in their approach. Haughton (1999) if not rejecting this division, clearly suggests that it is less relevant than we might otherwise assume. His work is firmly rooted in the English experience of community development, but there are interesting parallels between developments there and in Australia. He too notes the tension between economically focussed approaches to improving local well being and those that dealt with social exclusion. He observes that through the early 1990s

> Community development became the sole province of workers in social work or housing departments. In effect anti-poverty work became less of an integrated strategic approach to improving local well-being and more of a necessary residual activity catering for those bypassed by strategies to improve local wealth creation as the means and ends of improved local competitiveness (Haughton 1999, p. 7).

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[1] For an interesting review of the place of social capital in public policy in Australia see the series of essays edited by Winter (2000).

In effect, nationally funded organistions in Britain – such as the Urban Development Corporations – held responsibility for economic development while local governments, their social workers and housing workers, were left to cope with those left behind in the drive to harness economic globalisation and improve local competitiveness.

Haughton (1999) shows that it is possible to develop an integrated approach to community development that embraces both the advancement of the local economy and issues of social exclusion. Haughton's (1999) model is built upon solid intellectual foundations. The publication *Reconciling Economy and Society: Towards a Plural Economy*, produced by the OECD in 1996 critically examined social exclusion and attempted to integrate Braudel's (1980) writings on the architecture of society into a policy and operational framework. Drawing upon Braudel (1980) the OECD (1996) attempted to

> Establish an architecture of society which sees the economy as consisting of at least three layers: subsistence, the local market economy, and a world economy. The argument broadly speaking is that a policy which addresses just the top layer misses important issues of survival and nurturing at the local level… Rather than constructing policy around a single, flat economy, focussed on building competitive advantage in world markets, it is important to construct policy around all three layers, including policies for everyday survival for the individual (Haughton 1999 p. 7-8).

The implications of this work, and this approach to the understanding of community development, are profound. No longer should economic development be given precedence over the needs of the poorest and most marginalised within society. Community development 'extends beyond the formal economy to consider the needs of the population at large, and that in setting about its task it aims to balance economic, social and environmental concerns, rather than prioritising the economic approach above all else' (Haughton 1999 p. 8). This is a key lesson from the social capital literature. It recognises that social capital is crucial to the efficient operation of individual firms, regional economies and national economies. This was the core lesson from Putnam's original articulation of the concept (Putnam 1993). While there are a number of definitions of social capital 'all focus on relationships and the ways in which reliable, stable relationships among actors enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of both collective and individual action' (Cox and Caldwell 2000, p. 50).

Haughton (1999 p.18) argues that balanced community development (or community economic development, CED, to use Haughton's terminology) addresses each of the three tiers identified by Baudel (1980) and the OECD (1996). That is:

- At the level of the subsistence economy attention is given to the non-market and informal sector activity. The intention is to help individuals with basic survival and to build up local kinship and friendship networks;

- The local market economy is addressed by promoting self-employment, small business development and community initiatives, such as co-operatives. Here the objective is to develop an integrated economy where businesses trade amongst themselves thereby reducing the leakage of expenditure and increasing the range of economic activities within the community;

- At the level of the global economy, community development can provide training and work experience to help people overcome social exclusion and assist individuals move into jobs with globally-active firms. Community development is also seen to serve a role in lobbying to ensure the provision, and maintenance, of services and infrastructure.

The model of community development set out by Haughton (1999) has much to commend it, particularly in the way it integrates concerns with social exclusion/social capital and strategies to promote localities within the global market place. Importantly, it shows that community development initiatives should not focus on just one of the two dimensions of

community development practice identified earlier. Each is important, and each can only be successful if promoted in conjunction with the other.

There are strong similarities between Haughton's (1999) perspective on community economic development and the work of other international authors. Gibson, Cameron and Vino (1999) reviewed the process of economic restructuring in non-metropolitan communities in Victoria (specifically the Goulburn Valley and the La Trobe Valley) and concluded that a single focus on formal economic processes alone was likely to lead to an imperfect view of regional communities and their development. They noted that

> The restructuring of economic activity in the formal economy is but one way of defining regions and understanding regional change. Our concern is that one of the effects of this story is to make regional communities…seem powerless, making it very easy to forget or ignore the many real strengths and capabilities of people in regional communities (Gibson, Cameron and Vino 1999 p. 33).

They argued that too often regional development strategies focussed on attracting large scale investors while ignoring other ways of generating benefits for the community.

Gibson, Cameron and Vino (1999) thought that the assets-based community development (ABCD) approach established by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) offered one way to reconceptualise regional economies and achieve some balance between the formal economy and social development. The ABCD approach involves mapping the skills and capabilities of individuals, businesses and institutions in order to mobilise these capacities in the form of local enterprises. This approach clearly builds links between Haughton's (1999) first and second tiers. Assets-based community development operates at all three levels within the economy and as Gibson, Cameron and Vino (1999 p.34) noted

> In this revisioned economy it is not only the market mediated, commodified capitalist transactions that are included, but also those that do not operate via markets, are provided in kind or take place in non-capitalist settings. In the view of Kretzman and McKnight (1993), when the assets and capabilities of communities are more actively mobilized a diverse array of economic development initiatives is generated and any financial resources obtained from 'outside' can be much more effectively utilised.

Haughton's (1999) conclusions about the nature and goals of community development – and the resonances his work has with the writings of others - have far-reaching implications for the practice of community development in Australia. His work calls for a more holistic and integrated approach than is currently the case. Moreover, Haughton (1999) provides solid intellectual and policy reasons for this course of action. Governments attempting to address the community development needs of centres such as Whyalla or Port Augusta, for example, need to develop plans that address each of the three tiers of the economy. Addressing the global economy only would mean that any outcomes would not be relevant to a large percentage of the community, while an exclusive focus on the local level would not generate the income needed to sustain the community, and could result in a community reliant upon grants.

2.2 National And International Perspectives

One objective of this study is to integrate the research with AHURI-funded research being undertaken at the AHURI UNSW-UWS Research Centre on overseas experience of dealing with regional disadvantage (Gleeson and Carmichael 2001). It is therefore appropriate that we begin this review of national and international perspectives on community development with a summary of their analysis.

Gleeson and Carmichael (2001) reviewed the Australian literature on regional disadvantage and the policies that have been employed to address this problem in Australia, both at the national and sub-national level. Their work highlighted the importance of a number of

structuring factors. First, they pointed out that there is often an implicit assumption within policy debates that regional disadvantage is a non-metropolitan phenomenon. However, the concept of regional disadvantage is as relevant to the major cities as to rural or pastoral districts. Second, they noted that from the perspective of Australia as a whole, States comprise the only truly significant regions within the nation. The Commonwealth Government principally addresses regional disadvantage through the application of horizontal equalisation principles in its allocation of funds to the States. Addressing disadvantage in regions smaller than individual states is the responsibility of State Governments, as specified in Section 54 of the Constitution. Third, while there are a number of bureaucratically-defined regions within all States and Territories, regional governance is not strongly developed in this country and this is reflected in the relatively weak position – and limited role – of local government (see Stilwell and Troy 2000). These elements of the structure of government in Australia are shown to exert an important influence on how, and what type of, policies have been developed and implemented across Australia.

From the perspective of this research it is significant that Gleeson and Carmichael's (2001) work addresses regional disadvantage rather than community development because – as Gleeson and Carmichael (2001) make clear – the two are not synonymous. Recent writings on regional development policy and practice in Australia were reviewed (for example, Beer 2000; Stilwell, 2000; Tonts 2000 and RAPI 2000) and Gleeson and Carmichael commented on the broad-scale trends evident in regional policy in Australia, namely:

- That state regional policies often do not give priority to social concerns, but instead focus on reducing metropolitan primacy;

- That current Federal policy settings emphasise 'self help and entrepreneurship as antidotes to regional concerns' (Gleeson and Carmichael's 2001 p.48); and, that

- There appears to be broad scale political support for regional policies to address social disadvantage.

While noting concerns about the limits of current Federal and State policies (Beer 2000; Tonts 2000; Stilwell 2000) Gleeson and Carmichael observed that there are elements of value in current regional assistance policies, especially:

- the emphasis on local scale program formulation and management;

- partnership approaches that draw upon the skills and major resources of all major community interests;

- the need to value the contribution of voluntary resources and of social capital;

- the importance of integrated policy approaches at the state and federal level; and,

- the need to prevent overlaps or ambiguity in the assignment of responsibility for program areas and program settings (p. 51).

2.2.1 Economic Development Strategies

There is a whole body of work on economic development and economic development philosophies and strategies both at the national and international levels (see, for example, Tietz 1994; McKinsey and Co. 1994). Indeed, as a number of authors have made plain (Knudsen 1997; Maude and Beer 2000), there are so many strategies and approaches potentially available to economic development authorities that practitioners are often left wondering which are the most appropriate courses of action for their agency or region.

Fortunately, bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union Directorates-General have devoted considerable attention to this issue, drawing upon the experience of their member nations. The Territorial Development Unit within the OECD argues that it is possible to identify both successful and

unsuccessful regional development strategies (OECD, 1997; Huggonnier, 1999). Huggonnier (1999, 6-7) argues that strategies that do not work include:

- those that provide massive financial assistance through bureaucratic channels to lagging regions;

- artificial interventions that try to stimulate substantial growth in a limited number of sites. These 'growth-poles' either fail or result in enclave development where footloose industries locate for the period of their subsidy, without any links to the wider economy;

- infrastructure projects that bear no relationship to the demand for that service or facility;

- the maintenance of direct assistance to declining industries in order to protect one or more local economies; and,

- infrastructure decision making based on short-term demands rather than long-term needs. Weaker regions tend to have the longer term needs while wealthier regions often suffer from immediate bottlenecks. Decisions made in the absence of a strategic plan operate to the advantage of wealthier regions.

On the other hand, Huggonnier (1999, 7-8) was able to identify three positive actions in regional development:

- the creation of an environment more suitable for small and medium sized enterprises;

- encouraging entrepreneurialism or the formation of new businesses (through networking, institutional frameworks *et cetera*); and,

- consolidating and improving local infrastructure.

In the view of the OECD the creation of networks and industry clusters is an important path for stimulating and maintaining growth (OECD, 1997b ; Huggonnier, 1999). Building connections to the global economy through industry clusters and business networking is seen to raise regional incomes and create more resilient economies. The OECD (1997) suggested that attracting foreign direct investment is also important as it injects the region into the global market place. Foreign direct investment policies then need to be complemented by networking and cluster programs that generate substantial linkages between foreign investments and the surrounding small businesses.

Interestingly, housing gets no mention in this framework for action. However, the supply of adequate and affordable housing could be viewed as part of local infrastructure and as contributing to small firm competitiveness.

2.2.2   Questions of Scale in Economic Development Assistance

The examination of international local and regional economic development policies is important but caution must be exercised before attempting to extend to Australia lessons learned – and approaches applied – in other nations. There are substantial differences between Australia's economy and the economies of some other OECD nations, especially with respect to the size of government intervention in the economy. Australia remains the second lowest taxed nation in the OECD and this imposes significant constraints on the scope and ambitions of government programs.

The differences between Australia and other developed economies are most pronounced when considering European Union (EU) nations. The significance – both in terms of impact and sheer size - of regional development assistance within the European Union should not be under-estimated. To use Ireland as an example, Mac Sharry, White and O'Malley (2000 p.155) report that European Union structural assistance funding raised Ireland's GNP 'by between three and four per cent above the level it would have reached without EU transfers'.

Some £3.1 billion[2] was received between 1989 and 1993 under the first tranche of structural funds receipts in four main areas: agriculture, fisheries, tourism and rural development. As Mac Sharry *et al* (2000) commented, the impact of this funding was substantial

> Some 8,600 farms were supported, with 120,000 farmers receiving compensatory allowances. In the food-processing sector, 102 projects helped create 3,363 jobs, while a total of 2,030 young trained farmers received installation aid.

> The industry program contributed to the development of the manufacturing and international-services sector. Industrial output expanded by almost 7 per cent annually over the period, with similar rates of increase in the manufacturing and building sectors.

> Between 1989 and 1993, some 307 km of national primary roads were improved or upgraded, along with 170 km of roads supporting industrial and tourism development. Facilities at Dublin, Shannon and Cork airports were upgraded, and the Dublin-Belfast rail link was improved. In addition, investment has been concentrated on ports. Over the first programming period, some 250 km of sewers and 166km of trunk water mains were installed, and 52 sewerage pumping schemes were constructed (p. 156).

The second tranche of European Union funding (referred to as Delors 2) provided an even greater level of assistance to Ireland. Some £4.6 billion of funding from Community Support Framework Programmes was received between 1994 and 1999. This second round of funding aimed to 'capitalise on the strengths of the Irish economy, while remedying some of its structural weaknesses' (Mac Sharry *et al*, 2000, p. 157). Funding went into agriculture, forestry and rural development, as well as raising the skills profile of the work force through investment in education and training, including the provision of 255,000 apprenticeships.

It is important to acknowledge the immense size – by Australian standards – of regional development assistance in Europe. Admittedly, Ireland has been one of the largest recipients of European Union structural assistance and so may be considered atypical. However, Ireland's experience is indicative of the scale of programs within the European Union. Ireland's recent regional development history is relevant to this research because much of the assistance received was directed to areas outside the capital, Dublin. Non-metropolitan communities were the primary recipients of this development assistance. Second, the assistance made available by the European Union is of an order of magnitude greater than any program initiated by Australian governments – Federal, State or Local. For example, the Keating Government's Regional Development Program – which was seen as a major step into regional development by that government– had funding of just $120 million over five years (Housing and Regional Development 1994; Brown 1996).

Australia can be seen to be parsimonious in its funding of regional development even if we take a more permissive view of assistance measures. The Industry Commission (1996) found that state government subsidies to business amounted to $5.2 billion in 1994-95 while local government subsidies stood at $220 million. These sums are much smaller than those available through the European Union, and most of the expenditure does not perform a community development function, instead it is used by individual states to attract investment from its competitors, which are usually other Australian states. Most of the subsidies go to larger firms located in the capitals.

Questions of scale in community development programs are important. There is a quantum difference in the level of support available in Europe when compared with Australia and it may therefore be difficult – if not impossible – to transfer the European experience to this country. Australia's model of community development is very different to the sorts of models and approaches found in Europe and America (Beer 1997a). Issues of scale and funding

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[2] One punt (£) is roughly equal to two Australian dollars.

have a significant impact and the types of interventions that could be attempted in Ireland or another European nation are simply beyond the scope of governments in Australia. The next section considers the role of housing in community economic development, while the following chapter examines issues of society and social exclusion.

2.3 The Role Of Housing And Housing Policy In Economic Development

The relationship between housing and economic development is an important topic, but one that has rarely been considered in Australia or internationally. This section considers the potential impact of housing on the economic development of regions. It examines the lack of attention paid to housing issues in mainstream debates on regional development, before turning to discuss three important ways regional housing markets can speed up or retard economic development.

Very little systematic attention has been given to the place of housing and housing markets in the economic development of regions. Gleeson and Carmichael (2001 p. 48) noted that

> Housing has not been a strategic or operational concern of regional policy making framed at the national level. Neither has housing featured in national regional policy debates.

This absence is unfortunate as there are a number of important questions of policy and theory surrounding this relationship. For example, we need to ask, what role does housing and housing policy play in community development in non-metropolitan Australia? How can housing affect the well being of communities and what is the nature of the influence that housing wields? Does housing generally contribute to, or detract from, the growth of non-metropolitan regions and, what is the relationship between housing market processes and the broader dynamics of economic growth within the community?

2.3.1 Housing and Development in Non-Metropolitan Communities

The literature (Beer, Bolam and Maude 1994; Econsult 1987; Econsult 1989; Arnot 1991; Budge and Associates 1992, Budge, Hugo and D'Rozario 1992) suggests that there are three types of critical relationship between housing and the economic development of communities in non-metropolitan regions in Australia:

First, lower housing costs outside the capitals keep the cost of labour lower in non-metropolitan communities than in the capital cities and therefore adds to the ability of these regions and urban centres to attract and retain businesses;

- Second, the over-supply of housing in some areas – especially public housing – can be seen to impede labour mobility by encouraging households to remain in cities and regions where employment opportunities are limited, if not negligible;

- Third, the insufficient supply of housing in fast-growing regions can impede development. Forcing new businesses to other regions, imposing additional costs on established firms, or promoting the 'leakage' of expenditure from the region as workers commute into the region.

Each of these influences will be considered in more detail below. The section will then go on to suggest a theoretical approach that can help us to conceptualise or understand several key elements of the interaction between housing and community development in non-metropolitan Australia.

Lower housing prices contribute to lower wages in non-metropolitan communities across Australia and this in turn makes these locations more attractive for some types of enterprise. Housing costs across non-metropolitan Australia are appreciably lower than even in the smaller capitals such as Adelaide or Hobart (see Beer, Bolam and Maude 1994, Chapter 6). These cost differentials are reflected in rents: throughout the 1990s rents in non-metropolitan South Australia averaged $100 per week, compared with the average of $150 per week in Adelaide. Many of the businesses that are established or relocate to non-metropolitan communities are sensitive to labour costs. Over recent years call centres and data processing facilities (such as the Australian Stock Exchange facility in the LaTrobe Valley) have been attracted to towns and regions where wages and staff turnover are lower. Indeed the Federal Treasurer – Peter Costello – suggested in 2000 that further deregulation of wages and employment conditions would be the most effective policy solution to the problems confronting regional Australia (Davidson 2000).

Communities across non-metropolitan Australia have a concentration of employment in those industries and occupations where wages tend to be lower. In addition, they have relatively few persons employed in industries and jobs – such as professional employment in the finance and service sectors – where high wage costs are the norm (Garnett and Lewis 1999). Lower housing costs are therefore important in maintaining their industry competitiveness. Previous research has shown that housing costs as a percentage of income are no more affordable in non-metropolitan areas than in the capital cities (Beer, Bolam and Maude, 1994; Beer 1997, 1998). It would be misleading to suggest that lower housing costs necessarily result in lower wages in non-metropolitan regions, but they are an important contributing factor in the lower labour cost environment within these centres. Indeed, the South Australian Housing Trust was established by the Playford Governments for exactly this reason: lower housing costs resulting from public sector rents flowed through to lower wages in South Australia compared with the eastern seaboard capitals and helped attract large businesses, such as General Motors Holden, to Adelaide (Marsden 1985). Lower wages also depress housing costs as housing is price elastic: regions with higher wages have higher housing costs (Bover, Muellbauer and Murphy 1989).

An oversupply of housing – especially public housing – can be seen to impede labour market mobility. It can be argued that excess stocks of public housing in cities or regions with high rates of unemployment and limited economic prospects can discourage people from moving to regions where employment is more likely to be found. This line of argument was strongly developed in Britain in the 1980s when economic growth was concentrated in and around London while many parts of the north of England faced job losses and high rates of unemployment (Allen and Hamnett, 1991; Bover, Muellbuaer and Murphy 1989; Doogan, 1996). Workers were seen to be confronted by a stark choice: they could either remain in the north and occupy cheap Council housing but remain unemployed, or move to London to secure employment but face higher housing costs and an insecure private market.

The Industry Commission reported to the Commonwealth Government in 1993 on Impediments to Regional Industry Adjustment. This report raised the spectre of public housing acting as a drag on regional adjustment. Gleeson and Carmichael (2001, p. 48) noted

> Interestingly, the report touched upon housing – rare for Australian regional analysis. Stilwell sums up the Commission's analysis: 'Provision of public housing in areas with high unemployment (was) specifically identified as an impediment to regional mobility' (1994 p. 17). The logic – that highly localised pools of affordable, though difficult to access, housing stock should constrain the fluent operation of regional employment markets – was contestable, to say the least, and in any case not supported by rigorous analysis.

This line of argument is important for this research project because – as will be discussed later in this Positioning Paper – one of the case studies has high rates of unemployment, limited employment growth prospects but a substantial stock of publicly provided housing. We need to ask, therefore, has the substantial public housing stock locked individuals and households into this city and discouraged them from moving to where employment prospects are brighter?

Finally, we need to recognise that the insufficient supply of housing in fast-growing regions can impede development. Current policy and media interest in non-metropolitan Australia (often referred to as Rural and Regional Australia or RARA) has focussed on the problems confronting areas of economic and population decline (Beer 2000; Tonts 2000). However, as Gleeson and Carmichael (2001) recognised, a number of academic studies have shown that non-metropolitan Australia is highly differentiated and there are regions of growth as well as areas of stagnation or decline (Walmsley and Weinand 1997; Beer 1999).

In many respects, non-metropolitan regions of growth may have far more acute and immediate problems of housing provision and regional development than those suffering from a shortage of jobs. Significantly also from the perspective of this research, the policy responses and frameworks necessary to deal with this challenge are very different to those needed to deal with an excess of stock within a declining economy.

In the past State Housing Authorities (SHAs) across Australia worked to encourage regional development through the direct provision of housing for staff to be employed in newly relocating or establishing firms in non-metropolitan centres (Neutze 1977). Some, such as the South Australian Housing Trust and Homeswest, (WA) even built industrial estates outside the capitals. However, the recasting of the role of SHAs from public housing provision to welfare housing provision has significantly reduced the capacity of these institutions to provide housing to facilitate non-metropolitan development (Department of Commerce and Trade, 1996). However, relying on the private market has not always proved successful and a number of state governments have been forced to recognise market failure in this area. The Western Australian Government, for example, instituted a major review of housing provision in non-metropolitan regions in 1996 and the Regional Development Council, its peak regional development advisory body, concluded:

> The shortage of housing in regional areas has a detrimental effect on the ability of businesses to attract employees and on regional and state economic growth. A number of regions reported that business growth is being retarded because prospective employees will not move to regional areas because of the lack of housing. This shortage includes private as well as public housing and extends to quality private housing for highly skilled or executive workers.

Department of Commerce and Trade, 1996, p. 2

Remarkably for an industry department which traditionally relies upon market solutions for policy problems, the Department of Commerce and Trade concluded that

> The proposition is that the housing market suffers from *market failure* (emphasis added) in regional areas. For example, the high rental prices do not necessarily lead to increases in the number of rental properties. In a number of regions a balance between supply and demand has not eventuated.

Department of Commerce and Trade, 1996 p. 3

The Department went on to conclude that 'governments have a role to play in normalising regional housing markets' (1996, p. 29). The report prepared by the Department of Commerce and Trade endorsed substantial - especially by the standards of the 1990s - policy intervention. First, it recommended upgrading and expanding the role of existing government agencies involved in the direct provision of housing to government employees. Second, it advocated the provision of subsidies to firms to enable them to provide housing

for workers attracted to new or expanding operations. Third, it canvassed the removal of stamp duty on property transactions in regional areas; and, finally, it considered granting housing investors in regional areas access to infrastructure bonds. A specialist agency was to develop strategies tailored to meet the needs of each region but this has not happened (Tonts, Fisher, Owen and Hillier 2001).

Over recent years the South Australian Government has also grappled with policies to encourage the provision of housing in regions outside its capital city. There have been severe and sustained shortages of rental accommodation in the eastern parts of South Australia, especially those areas associated with viticulture (Beer forthcoming). The South Australian Regional Development Taskforce (1999) recognised the shortage of accommodation in some areas was a significant impediment to development. The South Australian Government, however, shied away from direct intervention in regional housing markets. Instead it has attempted to encourage private investment in regional housing markets. To date its success has been limited and a number of Inter Departmental Committees continue to work on the problem.

2.3.2   Labour Market Segmentation Theory

The discussion above has shown that housing can have a significant impact on the growth and development of non-metropolitan communities. These effects are important in policy, both for those charged with regional development and those whose responsibilities encompass the management of public housing. The relationship between housing markets and labour markets at the regional or community level appears central to these policy concerns. In the world of rational economics, perfectly operating housing markets would respond to shifts in regional economic conditions – and labour markets – with the supply and demand of housing rising and falling as broader circumstances dictate. However, these conditions do not apply with frictions and lags within both housing and labour markets generating substantial public policy concerns. How then should we understand the interaction between housing markets and labour markets? Randolph (1991) developed a valuable theoretical model of this relationship and his model arose out of his reading of labour market segmentation and labour market discontinuity theory.

Labour market discontinuity theory suggests that the employment market does not operate as a single entity, but instead there are a number of discontinuous segments, defined by location, skill levels, experience, ethnicity, gender and age. Randolph (1991 p. 30) asked

> What then can spatially discontinuous labour market theory add to our understanding of housing market processes?…it provides us with a more sensitive tool with which to understand that part of housing demand that derives from the position of housing consumers in the labour market….we may appreciate further the impact that local labour market structure has on the housing consumption propensities of households, particularly during periods of rapid restructuring.

Randolph (1991 p. 30) reinforced his assertion that discontinuity theory is of value for understanding regional housing markets by arguing that it also provides 'conceptual tools which can further our understanding of housing market processes *per se'*. Specifically it offers seven insights:

1. This theoretical position highlights the asymmetrical relationship between the producers and consumers of housing. That is, 'an understanding of housing market structure should start with production, not housing consumption' (p 31);

2. The theory recognises the pressure households (consumers) can exert on producers varies according to their labour market situation;

3. It recognises the ability of certain households to compete in the market is affected by discrimination;

4. Space is seen to play an important structural role in determining housing outcomes. It operates alongside labour market processes. Randolph (1991 p. 34) argues that

> The housing market in any one locality is thus characterised by a hierarchy of overlapping socially and spatially defined segments. It is not a unitary hierarchy, however. Rather there are a number of tenure-based divisions that intersect with local social divisions to produce a range of market segments. Each segment will have its own distinctive economic, social and locational characteristics, defined both in terms of the structure of the provision on which it is based and the social characteristics of the population it accommodates.

5. Because housing markets are dynamic, housing outcomes will vary over time as well as over space;

6. Each segment generated by the interaction between discontinuous housing and labour markets possesses a degree of autonomy, but the boundaries are not hard and fast. Households can move from one segment to another, and the autonomy of each segment is therefore relative;

7. Housing market processes are socially, spatially and historically contingent. As Randolph (1991 pp. 35-36) noted

> Although the major discontinuities in housing market structure can be understood at the aggregate level, the detailed segmentation of local housing markets are only definable through specific empirical analysis.

In summary, Randolph (1991) suggests that we can only understand regional housing markets by approaching the topic with a knowledge of how the labour market is organised and segmented; by focussing on the processes of production; by recognising the potential importance of discrimination within housing and labour markets; by acknowledging that location is significant, and that market segments overlap each other; by recognising that housing markets change over time; and, finally, by accepting that specific empirical analysis is needed in order to fully understand each market segment.

To this perspective Randolph (1991) added his argument that households play an important mediating influence in the relationship between labour and housing markets. It is the household that ensures there is no simple relationship between housing and job markets, as individuals in identical labour market positions may have very different household structures which influence their requirement for, and ability to purchase, housing. While Randoloph's (1991) emphasis on the significance of households in determining housing consumption is not original, it does serve as a timely reminder of the complex relationship between economic growth and employment outcomes on the one hand, and housing provision on the other.

2.4   The Role Of Housing And Housing Policy In Economic Development: A Conclusion

At the beginning of this review we noted Gleeson and Carmichael's (2001) comment that housing has not been a prominent issue within regional development debates. The discussion above has shown that while their observation is undoubtedly true, there are important issues surrounding housing supply in non-metropolitan communities. On occasion these issues have attracted the attention of policy makers (see, for example, the Department of Commerce and Trade 1996; South Australian Regional Development Taskforce, 1999; Beer, Maude and Tesdorpf, 1998). They have not, however, been at the forefront of policy debates and strategy development. As Gleeson and Carmichael (2001 p. 55) noted

The reluctance to address housing issues in regional policy debates may also reflect an implicit assumption on the part of many commentators that employment not housing is the central regional issue. This possibility is implicit and therefore hard to document. There appears to be need (sic) for greater analysis and debate in Australia about how housing and employment markets interact, and at which spatial scales.

While their points are valid, we must recognise another possible explanation of the invisibility of housing issues within community development in Australia: the division of responsibilities between government departments – with departments of industry and trade usually taking responsibility for local or community development and human services or housing authorities carrying the government's housing responsibilities – has resulted in non-metropolitan housing issues falling between two stools. This has been exacerbated by broader trends in the delivery of housing assistance across Australia as the greater emphasis on housing those most in need, and the need to focus on the cost effective management of assets, means that greater priority is awarded to metropolitan, rather than non-metropolitan communities. Regardless of the causes, the result has been a gap in our understanding of the role of housing in the economies of regions, especially non-metropolitan regions. We know comparatively little about the interactions between population processes, housing markets and labour markets and how they determine growth prospects. Even less is known about the influence of housing on the social development of communities, and that topic is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL EXCLUSION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE REGENERATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING

This chapter considers the relationship between housing processes and community development. It focuses upon social exclusion and the redevelopment of public housing because much of the international literature and debate on the relationship between community development and housing has been undertaken within a social exclusion framework, and has been presented within the redevelopment of run-down housing estates. Public housing, problems of unemployment and the redevelopment of older public housing estates are also important issues in our case studies. Along the way this chapter also considers questions of social capital, its formation and application to housing policy.

Using the work of Randolph and Judd (1999) as a springboard, the chapter considers the level of social exclusion confronting public housing tenants in non-metropolitan communities, and the types of strategies needed to overcome these challenges. It is argued that State Housing Authorities (SHAs) have been forced by circumstances beyond their control to play a major role in addressing social exclusion. Their redevelopment efforts and strategies to combat social exclusion have been concentrated in the metropolitan areas, though some initiatives have taken place outside the capitals. Public housing managers in non-metropolitan centres are confronted by conditions that both exacerbate the incidence of social exclusion on the one hand, and reduce its impact on the individual on the other. Social capital is significant in the latter instance.

The chapter begins with a discussion of contemporary approaches to community development. It then turns to discuss social exclusion and its definition. Finally it considers the importance of social exclusion debates for public housing authorities and their relationship to social capital.

3.1   Community And Community Development

As noted earlier, the terms community and community development are extremely problematic because they have been used in a variety of ways in a range of contexts. However, they raise important issues of public policy as increasingly community development has been seen as the locus for broader debates on social policy and the constitution of our society. Atkinson (1999) recognised this and drew upon Foucault's (1979) concept of governmentality to argue that

> the way that we have conceived and constituted the 'social' is currently undergoing a profound change: the language of the social is giving way to the language of community. The community is being constituted as a 'new territory for the administration of collective existence, a new surface upon which micro-moral relations among people are conceptualised and administered' (Rose 1996 p. 330).

The community then, is increasingly seen both as the point of delivery for social welfare measures and as an active agent in determining and addressing the needs of individuals. There is no better illustration of this conceptual shift than the renaming of the Federal Government's Department of Social Security to the Department of Family and Community Services.

But what does an emphasis on the community mean? How are 'community' concerns put into operation as social policy? To start with, social capital is seen as an important part community and community development. Social capital has attracted considerable policy and academic interest in Australia over recent years, but knowledge and experience in this area is just developing (Winter 2000). While drawing on the work of three researchers

associated with the development of this concept (Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman) Winter notes that

> The social capital debate examines the extent to which families, communities, institutions, firms, regions and nations are able to make credible commitments to one another to solve such dilemmas of collective action.

<div align="right">(Winter 2000 p.21).</div>

In many ways social capital is shorthand for the networks and levels of trust individuals and communities build up in their dealings with each other. Social capital has become an issue of policy and academic interest because authors such as Robert Putnam have shown that it can make a significant difference to the well being and functioning of both the economy and society.

Social capital is particularly important within this research because rural or non-metropolitan communities are often seen to be rich in inter-personal relations and social capital. This perception is supported in Australia by empirical work by Onyx and Bullen (2000) which showed that non-metropolitan communities appear to have higher levels of aggregate social capital than those in the capitals. However, they have a lower tolerance of diversity. The communities covered by this research project have a social capital asset that may be under-employed at present. The challenge is to find ways to make better use of this resource.

Community development strategies therefore seek to nurture social capital and empower individuals and the communities they live in. They do so stepping beyond economic development strategies to strengthen social interactions. This includes:

- establishing Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) that provide an alternative form of economic activity, and that allow individuals to regain self-esteem through productive activity;

- the establishment of co-operatives and mutual associations that work for the well being of the community. This might include a housing co-operative, a credit union or similar;

- maximizing individual incomes by ensuring individuals receive their full entitlements and are able to take advantage of marginal economic activity (such as baby sitting) that falls within welfare rules (West 1999);

- providing community members with ways of reducing their unavoidable living costs;

- offering opportunities for social interaction and participation in community activities;

- giving communities an opportunity to shape their future. This involves more than just community consultation, it embraces a genuine sharing of power (Atkinson 1999).

Community development strategies are seen as additional to more conventional local economic additional strategies, and recognise that the problems generated by long term unemployment and poor access to decision making cannot be addressed through conventional approaches (Geddes 1999). In large measure contemporary approaches to community development reflect, and are directed at, social exclusion. The nature and definition of which is discussed in the next section.

3.2 Defining Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a term that has gained considerable currency in social and housing policy debates over the last decade and its origin lies in French writings. Somerville (1998 p.761) has suggested that its spread within the social sciences is 'a result of the Europeanisation of social policy'. Marsh and Mullins (1998 p. 749) note that

> The idea of 'social exclusion' has emerged over a relatively short space of time to take centre stage in political and popular debates about social disadvantage. What is to be done about 'social exclusion' and 'socially excluded groups' is now seen as a key policy concern in many European states.

Marsh and Mullins (1998) went on to comment on the importance awarded to issues of social exclusion by the Blair Labour Government and the establishment within the Cabinet Office of a Social Exclusion Unit, reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

Social exclusion is clearly an important concept, and one that has attracted considerable policy and intellectual interest. Social exclusion has been defined in a number of ways. The Social Exclusion Unit within the UK Cabinet Office suggests that

> Social exclusion is a shorthand for what happens when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Social Exclusion Website 1998).

While Mandanipour (1998 p.77) argues

> The question of social exclusion and integration, it can be argued, largely revolves around access…to decision making, access to resources, and access to common narratives, which enable social integration

Somerville (1998 pp. 761-2) observed that

> There exists considerable variation, however, in the meaning attached to the term…Two meanings of social exclusion appear to be particularly prevalent. The first relates to exclusion from the labour markets of advanced capitalist countries. One general argument here is that due to processes of economic restructuring in these countries a substantial proportion of their populations have been consigned to long-term unemployment. The second meaning, in contrast, relates to the denial of social citizenship status to certain social groups.

Finally, it is valuable to consider Randolph and Judd's (1999) perspective on social exclusion. They identify a number of key points from their review of the literature, all of which have significant policy implications. In their view

- Social exclusion is clearly a multi-dimensional issue, involving social, economic, cultural and political processes

- It refers to joined-up problems, involving a range of interpenetrating processes that, when acting together, reinforce social disadvantage and marginalisation

- It refers to individuals *and* areas – exclusion is both a social and a spatial problem

- It is not just about poverty or income, it is also about access to life chances and non-material attributes and values

(Randolph and Judd, 1999 p. 6).

They went on to comment how housing tenure does not figure prominently in definitions of social exclusion, reinforcing the point that social exclusion can occur in all tenures. Randolph and Judd's use of the term 'joined-up problems' is significant, as this language is typical of the social exclusion literature and indicative of a mindset that emphasises the need for holistic solutions. Space or geography is important for Randolph and Judd (1999) as social exclusion is '**reinforced** by the **spatial** concentration of disadvantaged households in certain types of localities and housing, particularly, public housing (p. 8 original emphasis). It suggests that geographically specific policies and programs are needed to counter exclusion.

Clearly there is both convergence and diversity within these different definitions of social exclusion. The high degree of ambiguity in the use and definition of social exclusion is to be expected because, as Marsh and Mullins (1998) pointed out, the term was first promoted within the European Union as 'an alternative vocabulary to that of poverty' (p.751). European nations that could not agree on a definition of poverty, or accept that parts of their population suffered from poverty, could and did agree to strategies to address this far more vague – and less politically sensitive – notion of social exclusion. As a number of authors have observed, social exclusion has a different emphasis to conventionally defined poverty (Marsh and Mullins 1998; Taylor 1998). The latter is a question of the distribution of resources within society, while the former highlights the relationship between the disadvantaged and the rest of society. It is a concept that focuses on their relations with other actors in society and the economy.

Access to goods and services is seen as a key issue within social exclusion and it is linked to questions of economic restructuring and the marginalisation of individuals within the formal workforce. Australian audiences should be aware that in Europe the concept of social exclusion is often associated with debates on the position of immigrants – a link not yet developed in this country. Groups and individuals are socially excluded when their position within the labour market, or their legal status, or other factors relating to the provision of services, places them at a disadvantage relative to others within society. It is a wide ranging definition of disadvantage, and as Randolph and Judd (1999) argue, it encompasses many of the long-standing debates in the Australian urban studies literature on locational disadvantage and social polarisation (see, for example, Fincher and Wulff 1998).

3.3   Social Exclusion And The Regeneration Of Public Housing Estates

Social exclusion has important implications for the implementation of social policy and the management of public housing. Randolph and Judd (1999 p.2) put this into conscious focus arguing that the concept of social exclusion was important because

> It provides us with a framework for understanding the *interconnectedness* of the problems disadvantaged people, families and communities face and the need for an integrated and holistic policy response….Moreover, adopting social exclusion as a framework …allows us to explicitly recognise that policy responses must move well beyond the remit of State Housing Authorities. Tackling social exclusion means much more than fixing-up or selling off public housing estates, especially if it is shown that the problem extends beyond the boundaries of these estates.

Randolph and Judd's (1999) work explicitly recognises the role a number of State Housing Authorities have assumed in addressing social exclusion – and related phenomena – through the redevelopment of public housing estates. As a number of authors have noted (Paris, Stimson and Williams 1985; Industry Commission 1993) the restructuring of the Australian economy from the 1970s resulted in a rapid escalation in the demand for public housing and a consequent shift away from public housing as an alternative tenure for

working men and women, to one with an exclusive focus of meeting the needs of those least well off in society. This has resulted in a significant shift in the nature of public housing and public housing tenants. Those in public housing are almost invariably on low incomes – often statutory incomes – with 80 per cent of tenants, and 95 per cent of persons entering the tenure, qualifying for rent rebates. Moreover, as Wulff (1995) and Wulff, Pigeon and Burke (1995) observed, low-income tenants often find it difficult to enter or re-enter the labour force. The part-time and casual nature of work generally available to public housing tenants, in combination with child care commitments and the income thresholds of State Housing Authorities, can make the transition back to paid work both difficult and unattractive. Those who want work are often poorly skilled and lack the experience and qualifications sought by employers.

Persons in public housing are confronted by complex and multiple disadvantage. Much of the public housing stock is provided in large estates (Forster 1995) and these 'are now associated with populations characterised by the usual litany of social exclusion:

- Chronic unemployment;

- Youth unemployment;

- Poor educational attainment;

- Dysfunctional families;

- Welfare dependence;

- Drug and alcohol misuse; and,

- Crime and other forms of social dysfunction'.

Randolph and Judd (1999 p. 8).

Throughout Australia governments have attempted to address the problems confronting the public housing sector. Urban regeneration has been one strategy pursued by State Housing Authorities. Randolph and Judd (1999 p.9) observed that State Housing Authorities have often been the lead agencies when governments have attempted to confront the problems of social exclusion simply because 'public housing is where those with multiple disadvantage live'. Areas such as Holdsworthy in Sydney, Inala-Ipswich in Queensland, as well as Elizabeth or Salisbury North in South Australia (Lloyd-Jones 1998) have been targeted by large scale redevelopment programs. The redevelopment of part of Elizabeth North into Rosewood Village was one of the first large-scale regeneration programs attempted and it has served as a model for other projects around Australia (Stevens 1995). Typically these programs have involved the demolition of run-down stock, the refurbishment of some portion of the existing stock, and often the construction of additional dwellings, in order to make better use of the land and services. Change to the stock of public dwellings is often accompanied by redevelopment of the physical and social landscape, with greater attention paid to landscape architecture and the provision of community facilities. Typically, one goal of these redevelopment programs is to foster greater 'social mix' within the larger public housing estates. This is attempted through the sale of redeveloped dwellings and the provision of new, more attractive, housing.

Frequently redevelopment occurs through collaboration between State Housing Authorities and private sector partners. The private sector developers are seen to bring skills and abilities to the redevelopment that are not normally found in public sector institutions. This includes expertise in marketing and market research, urban design and, sometimes, financing entry into home ownership.

Randolph and Judd (1999) noted that in their attempts to redevelop large scale public housing estates State Housing Authorities initially focussed on estate design and asset management. This approach, however, often did not get to the root causes of multiple disadvantage or social exclusion in these areas. Reconfiguring estates, stock improvement,

breaking up concentrations of public rental and selective disposals have featured prominently....Important as these initiatives may be, they do not really get at the underlying social problems that communities face or offer long term solutions to moving people back into the mainstream (p. 9).

Collins, Farrelley and Richards (1995) expressed similar sentiments in their review of the Inala-Ipswich Area Strategy, which was funded under the Better Cities program. The Inala-Ipswich Corridor stretches for some 20 kilometres to the west of Brisbane and links the Queensland capital with the city of Ipswich. The region is an area of recognised social and economic disadvantage with large estates of public housing, several correctional institutions, a psychiatric facility, institutions for the developmentally disabled, low average incomes and high rates of unemployment. Inala-Ipswich has suffered from inadequate public facilities. The major psychiatric and other institutions are an important source of employment locally but are no longer considered to be the most appropriate form of care for the traditional client base. Public housing accounts for more than 50 per cent of the total stock in some suburbs.

One of the objectives of the Inala-Ipswich Area Strategy was to address the issues of social inequality and poor public image associated with the corridor as a result of the concentration of public housing and large public institutions, and the inadequate provision of social infrastructure. However, the evaluation report written by Collins, Farrelley and Richards concluded that

> ... it is difficult to rate the effort a success. The initial agreement schedule included objectives of making area socio-economic improvements and improving access to employment. Some respondents indicated that inadequate income is a pervasive underlying characteristic of the area, which needs to be addressed if sustained improvement in the area is to be achieved. The subsequent absence of an economic development focus and other efforts to enhance area resident incomes raises questions about the internal logic and long-term area benefit of this Strategy (Collins, Farrelley and Richards 1995, p.5).

International experience (Maclennan 1998) and developments across Australia showed that simple manipulation of the housing stock is insufficient to deal with the fundamental problems evident in these areas. Indeed the redevelopment of public housing can exacerbate problems as low income people with tenuous connections to the formal labour market could be locked out of the redeveloped housing stock, or occupy the same stock but end up renting from a private, rather than a social, landlord. As Randolph and Judd (1999) commented, the initial waves of public housing redevelopment were often fueled by asset management concerns. Reforms initiated in large measure by the Federal Government and State Treasuries pushed State Housing Authorities to look for better rates of return on their assets and to separate their role as tenant managers from their role as housing providers. To use the language of social exclusion, segmented solutions were being offered to joined-up problems.

More recent attempts at the redevelopment of public housing estates have learnt from the failings of the past. Randolph and Judd (1999p. 11) note that a number of different types of responses to the problems of large estates are now employed, including asset improvement strategies; partial asset disposal; wholesale asset disposal; non-asset community development; management based strategies (intensive tenancy management) and whole of government approaches, or place management. They give the example of the New South Wales Government's Neighbourhood Improvement Program, which pursued physical and social strategies to achieve the following objectives:

- Effective management of housing services

- Involvement of tenants and the community

- Optimum use of assets

- Community development outcomes

- Increased employment opportunity

- Focussed effective social service delivery

Randolph and Judd (1999 p. 13)

Clearly this strategy is much more complex and multi-faceted than earlier attempts that focussed on the physical redevelopment of housing. In addition, the redevelopment of public housing – and the attack on social exclusion – is now seen to be a whole-of-government issue. That is

> to successfully address the complex needs of a socially disadvantaged community…a more substantial all of government approach is required with more equal commitment from key government agencies and local service providers and pooling of resources to significantly improve place based integration of housing and other services (Randolph and Judd 1999 p. 18).

This approach to social exclusion and the improvement of the welfare of public housing tenants is as multi-faceted as the disadvantage suffered by the socially excluded. It requires integration both within and across tiers of government. To further complicate matters, successful strategies also require integration with the non-government sector, sitting tenants and the broader community. Successful redevelopment strategies must contain multiple elements and address the whole range of discrimination affecting those within these communities.

3.4 Social Exclusion, Social Capital And Community Development

Social exclusion and social capital are important concepts in understanding the development of communities and the provision of housing assistance beyond the capital cities. Social exclusion is important because those in public housing in non-metropolitan communities are often the poorest people in centres that are themselves disadvantaged with respect to services and access to power and/or decision making. Social capital is significant because it is one of the untapped resources of these communities. This section examines questions of social capital and social exclusion and does so through the lens of Taylor's (1998) review of research on remedial action on housing estates in Britain. Her work is used to highlight the relationship between social capital and more conventional approaches to social housing assistance.

Taylor (1998) reviews the results of 33 research projects funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the United Kingdom into action on social housing estates. Many of these projects examined questions of social exclusion and the redevelopment of public housing estates. Her reading of this substantial body of work led her to conclude that problems on social housing estates have, in the main, been addressed in four main ways:

- Through the promotion of the community approach;

- By changing the landlord;

- By bringing jobs into the housing estate; and,

- The promotion of partnership and community involvement.

Importantly, Taylor (1998) did not see any of these approaches as providing a sufficient response to the problems of troubled housing estates. It is worthwhile revisiting her argument here because of the strong parallels between the British and Australian approaches to public housing regeneration.

Taylor (1998) was very critical of simplistic community approaches to the problems of depressed social housing estates. She argued approaches that suggest that the problems confronting these communities could be resolved by rediscovering community spirit and promoting self help offer little real assistance. In her view

> The 'community approach' has a long pedigree….But this is no magic wand. If the romantic ideal of community exists anywhere, it is certainly not easy to create in the battered, fragmented and divided world of social housing. Hampden-Turner (1996) reminds us that; "those stakeholders disenfranchised by unemployment and by chronic and persistent poverty cannot discharge their communitarian responsibilities to look after themselves, their families, neighbours and communities" (1996 p. 11).
>
> (Taylor 1998 p. 822)

Taylor (1998) was also dismissive of strategies for dealing with 'difficult' estates that involve changing the landlord or simply bringing in jobs. In the former case, she pointed out that it is unrealistic to expect other landlords to make a better fist of managing estates and housing that was too difficult for well-resourced public sector agencies. In the latter instance, finding permanent employment for those in these estates can be difficult, and poverty traps act as a significant barrier to entry into the formal labour force. From the viewpoint of agencies managing these troubled estates there is a 'Catch 22' in simple job creation schemes: tenants who receive full time work are likely to move out of the area and be replaced by another household with multiple disadvantage. Schemes that provide education, training and employment opportunities therefore work to the benefit of the individual tenant, but may not necessarily solve the long term problems of the housing estate.

Partnership and community involvement programs were reviewed favourably by Taylor (1998). She concluded that contemporary approaches to partnership are more effective than those employed in the past but are still somewhat limited in their impact because they involve an asymmetrical relationship between the tenants and the managing agency. Put simply, in most cases the community is given insufficient power and responsibility to make a significant difference.

In Taylor's (1998) view community action is central to successful redevelopment. Developing and enhancing social capital – through sports clubs, meetings and especially activities focussed around child rearing – is fundamental. Transforming the relationships between communities and service providers is important also. Taylor (1998) highlights the need for greater balance in decision making. Consultation is not enough, there needs to be a genuine devolution of power and authority if the community is to take responsibility for improving its well being. Approaches that argue residents have to adapt to the agendas of centralised decision-makers are doomed to fail. Taylor (1998) highlights that building social capital, creating an ethos and momentum for community development and finding jobs for the residents of these estates, takes considerable time. There are no speedy solutions, a sentiment echoed in Australia by Gibbons (1998). Access to economic power is the final ingredient Taylor (1998) sees as essential for success in community development and the renewal of public housing estates. Communities can begin to move down this path by establishing local enterprises that meet pent-up demand on housing estates. While incomes are low, gross expenditures are high and more of that income needs to be captured within the community. The views expressed by Taylor (1998) on the revitalisation of public housing estates are important for understanding community development and the delivery of housing assistance in non-metropolitan Australia. Her focus on power relations is important, as is her concern with social capital.

3.5 Social Exclusion, Community Development And Regeneration Of Public Housing: A Conclusion

This chapter has considered the literature on community development, social exclusion, the redevelopment of public housing and social capital. It has shown that there are strong linkages between the four and they have important implications for policy development.

The concept of social exclusion recognises that many within society are denied access to society's 'goods' and face social, economic and cultural barriers to improving their life circumstances. Many public and private tenants could be considered socially excluded because of low income, limited formal education or qualifications, poor access to information sources or decision makers, and limited contact with the formal labour market. Strategies that attempt to address the needs of this group **must** take community development as their point of departure. Lesser approaches - such as the refurbishment of the housing stock, simple job creation schemes or the promotion of 'community' – are not likely to address the long term needs of the residents and have low prospects for success. Taking the time to build social capital within the broader community and the population living in public housing appears to be an important first step toward successful policy interventions.

The available literature on social exclusion and community development has, from the perspective of this research, significant gaps. It does not shed light on the relationship between social housing and private sector housing, and it does not suggest how social capital can be stimulated in the absence of substantial government investment. The British literature in particular assumes a substantial level of government subsidy and involvement, but does not specify what role local governments can play, or how communities may value their housing. These issues will be examined in the later reports to come from this project.

CHAPTER 4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND NON-METROPOLITAN SOUTH AUSTRALIA: EVIDENCE FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The research reviewed in the previous chapters has shown that community development is a multi-faceted process and that housing can be an important indicator -–and contributor to – social exclusion. The review of previous work has also shown that strategies to develop communities need to take into account individual circumstances. This research project recognises this requirement and uses the analysis of three case studies to shed light both on potentially valuable policies, and the gaps within existing knowledge. This chapter briefly reviews the economic and housing conditions in the three case study centres covered in this study: Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge. The goal of this chapter is to draw out the relationship between the economy and public housing in each of the cities and highlight key questions of public policy. The chapter performs an important role in furnishing background information for the latter stages of this research project.

Each of the case studies considered here is a regional city, that is they are an urban centre with a population of 10,000 or more outside the statistical division of the capital city (see Beer, Bolam and Maude 1994). In common with other regional cities in South Australia their economies struggled through the 1990s (Beer 1999). No regional city in South Australia matched the national rate of employment growth during the period 1991 to 1996. While many centres hosted vibrant industries, growth in one industry was more than offset by employment losses in others. There are significant stocks of public housing in each of the three case studies and each has a substantial percentage of their population unemployed or otherwise dependent on a statutory income. Data presented in Bray and Mudd (1998) show that more than 21 per cent of regional income in Whyalla and Port Lincoln was obtained from social security payments and other income support, while between 15 and 21 per cent of regional income in Murray Bridge comes from this source. In common with the rest of non-metropolitan Australia, these cities have felt the impact of the withdrawal and consolidation of government services into the capitals (Gerritson 2000), further fueling their sense of isolation and exclusion from the mainstream of Australian society.

4.1   Whyalla

Whyalla is located on the Eyre Peninsula near the head of Spencer Gulf. Whyalla had a population of 23,644 at the 1996 Census, including 519 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Whyalla has been losing population since the mid 1970s when the shipyards closed and this is reflected in an aged population (Figure 1).

The production of iron and steel was the reason that Whyalla was established as a settlement and as a city and the OneSteel factory (formerly BHP Steel Division) remains an important part of the City's economy. The high percentage of employment in manufacturing (Figure 2) reflects the on-going significance of this plant. Whyalla also has well developed service industries – this includes retail trade, but also professional and business services, and community services. Whyalla is a major focus for the provision of many government services – especially state government provided services, with a major hospital and other specialist services meeting the needs of much of the Eyre Peninsula population.

Figure 1. Age Sex Profile, Whyalla, 1996 Census
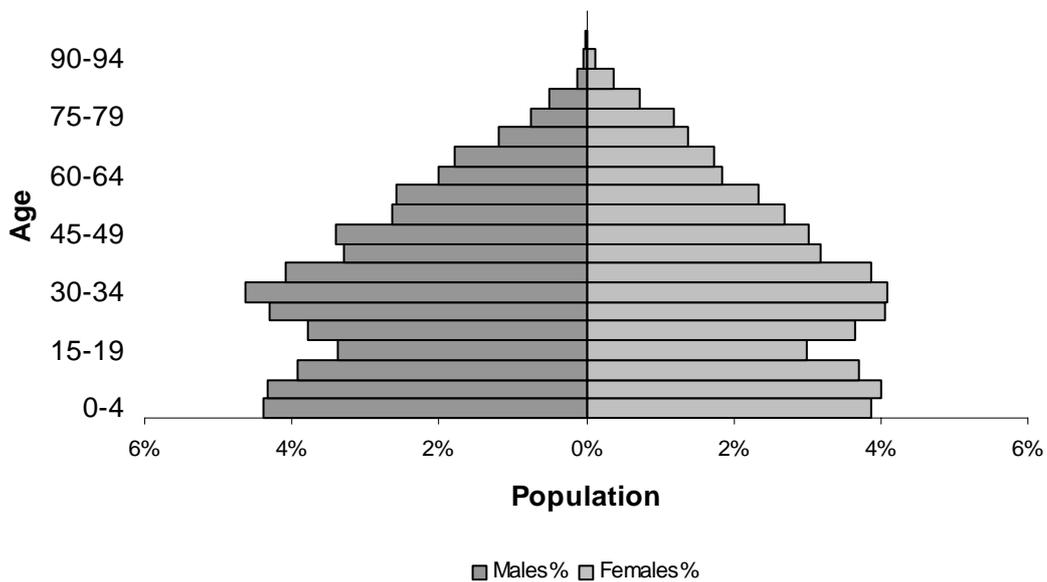
Source: ABS 1996 Census

Whyalla had a workforce of 10,556 persons at the 1996 Census, of which 13.9 per cent were unemployed. There were a further 4,601 persons aged between 15 and 64 (30 per cent of the population aged 15 to 64) who were not in the labour force. Census data show that Whyalla has a relatively small percentage of its workforce employed in management and administration when compared with all of South Australia (5.8 per cent compared with 9.9 per cent) and a concentration of employment in trades and related work (17 per cent of the workforce compared with 13 per cent across the state). Overall, the workforce is skilled but does not occupy the highest income positions.

Figure 2. Industry Structure, Whyalla and South Australia, 1996 Census
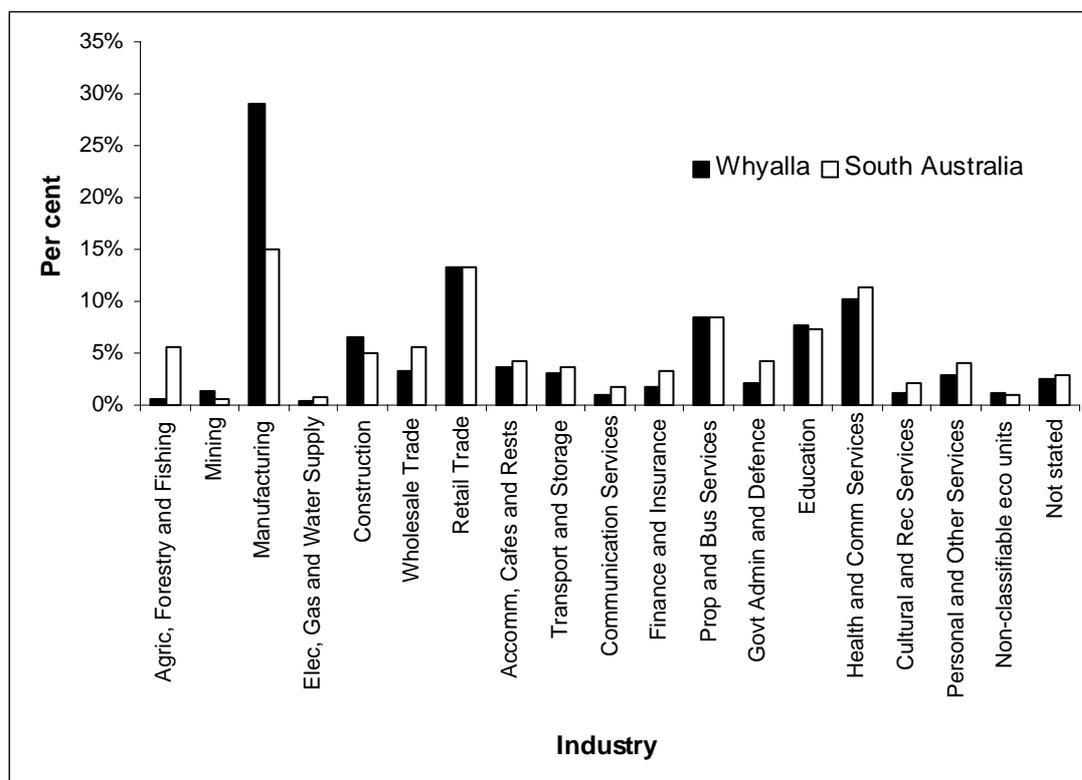
Source: ABS 1996 Census

Whyalla was largely built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s by the South Australian Housing Trust. The Trust built housing for workers and their families as the steelworks and ship building industry expanded. This history is reflected in the tenure structure of the City, with 3,328 dwellings or 36.3 per cent of the total housing stock rented from the Trust. The supply of public rental dwellings is greater than the demand and in the year 2000 there were more than 400 unoccupied Trust dwellings. As would be expected, waiting lists do not exist if prospective tenants are willing to accept whatever dwelling, and whatever location, is offered. The Trust has not attempted large scale redevelopment and renewal projects in Whyalla, but it has encouraged long term tenants to enter home ownership.

At the 1996 Census a further nine per cent of dwellings were rented privately, 24 per cent were owned outright and 27 per cent were being purchased. Rental housing therefore accommodated 45 per cent of households.

There are a number of critical issues within the housing stock. The Upper Spencer Gulf Regional Housing Study (Hassell 1994) found the region suffered from inappropriate housing stock for the aged; a lack of support services for most forms of low income and disadvantaged housing; a lack of private rental accommodation and private sector provided owner occupation housing of high quality; and, inadequate youth housing and accommodation for people with disabilities. To a certain extent housing supply processes can be seen to have failed in Whyalla because while there is a substantial surplus of low quality public rental housing, it can be difficult to secure higher quality rental housing in the private rental market.
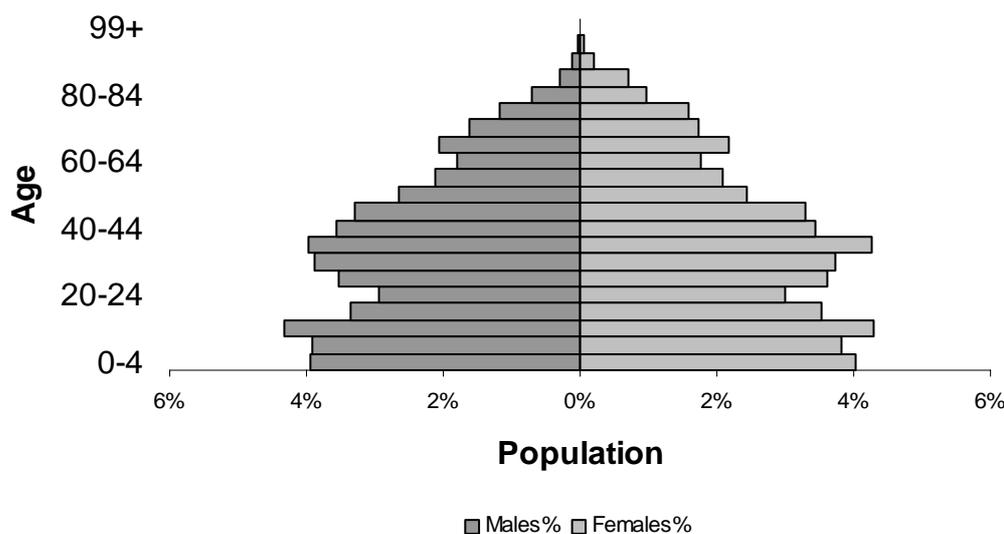
4.2 Port Lincoln

Port Lincoln is situated at the foot of the Eyre Peninsula. At the 1996 Census it had a population of 12,182 persons of which 589 are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Unlike Whyalla, Port Lincoln's population has grown over the last decade, albeit relatively slowly. When compared with Whyalla, Port Lincoln has a younger age profile (Figure 3), though once again persons aged between 15 and 30 are under represented within the community relative to the rest of Australia and Adelaide.

Port Lincoln has a strongly developed fishing industry and this is reflected in data on employment by industry (Figure 4). In addition to a substantial abalone, crayfish, prawn and fin-fish industry, Port Lincoln is the most significant port for the tuna industry in Australia. Over recent years there has been a shift to aquaculture with tuna being fattened prior to harvesting and as on-shore production of abalone has grown. These industries have become major employers, both in direct production and harvesting and in downstream processing. Port Lincoln is a significant centre for retailing and service provision, as well as transport and tourism related industries.

Despite the relative strength of some of the industries in Port Lincoln, unemployment stood at 14.6 per cent at the 1996 Census, and this was almost double the statewide rate of 8.8 per cent. A further 28 per cent of adults aged 15 to 64 were not in the formal workforce. Clearly, despite the prosperity of some industries, and some within the community, gaining a job is difficult for many. This is exacerbated by the fact that employment is often seasonal, especially in the fish processing industries. At the 1996 Census the workforce was concentrated in lower-paying occupations, including labouring, production work and the trades.

At the 1996 Census some 36 per cent of households in Port Lincoln owned their homes, and 22.2 per cent were purchasing their dwelling. The public rental sector accounted for 18.4 per cent of households and the private rental sector accounted for a further 18.5 per cent. This meant that just under 38 per cent of households in Port Lincoln rented their dwellings.

**Figure 3. Age Sex Profile, Port Lincoln, 1996 Census**

Source: ABS 1996 Census

Housing concerns have been prominent in the social and economic development of Port Lincoln over recent years. In the late 1990s the South Australian Housing Trust engaged in a major regeneration project - the Lincoln Gardens estate on the southern edge of the city (SAHT 1997). This area was targetted for development because Lincoln South, as it was then known suffered from a poor public perception in Port Lincoln, particularly those areas where the disadvantaged and low-income households are concentrated, creating aggregations of poverty, distress and social problems (SAHT 1997 p.4).

This project affected 200 Housing Trust owned dwellings, with approximately 150 being sold off after redevelopment and 50 retained for the Trust's future needs (SAHT 1997 p.3).

Figure 4. Industry Structure, Port Lincoln and South Australia, 1996 Census
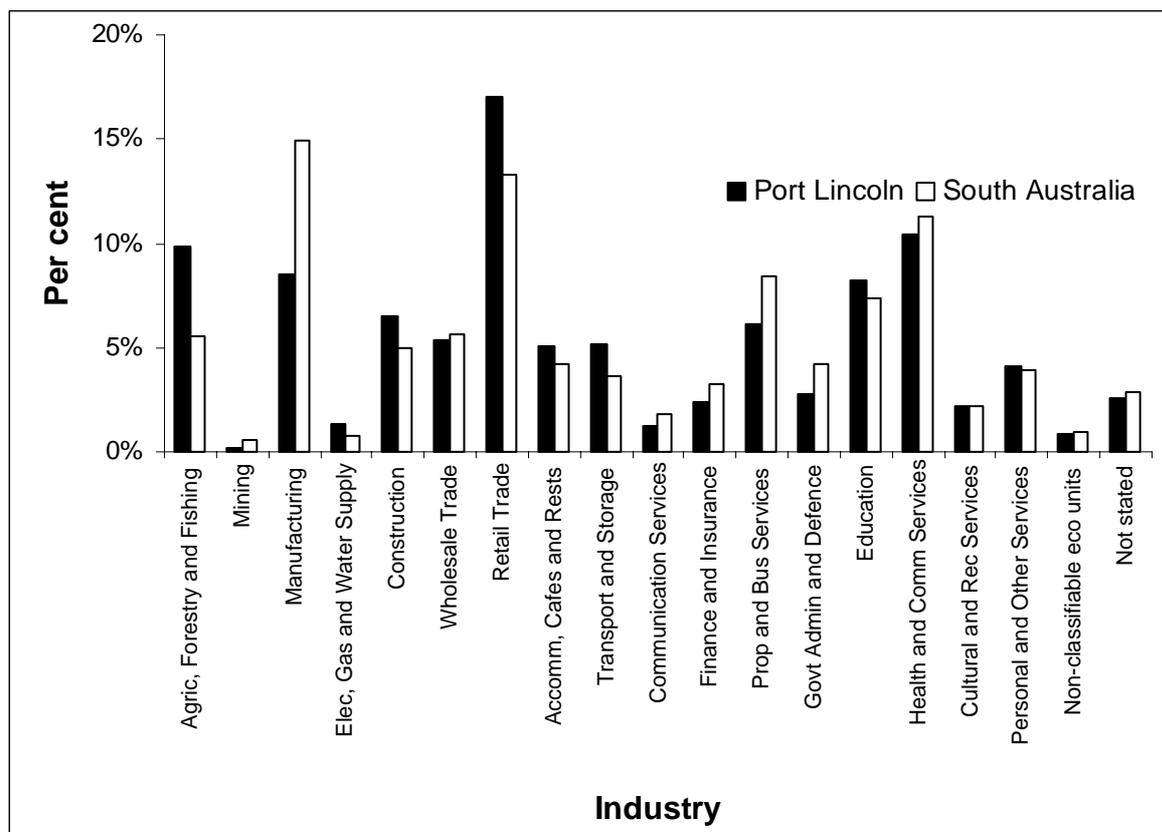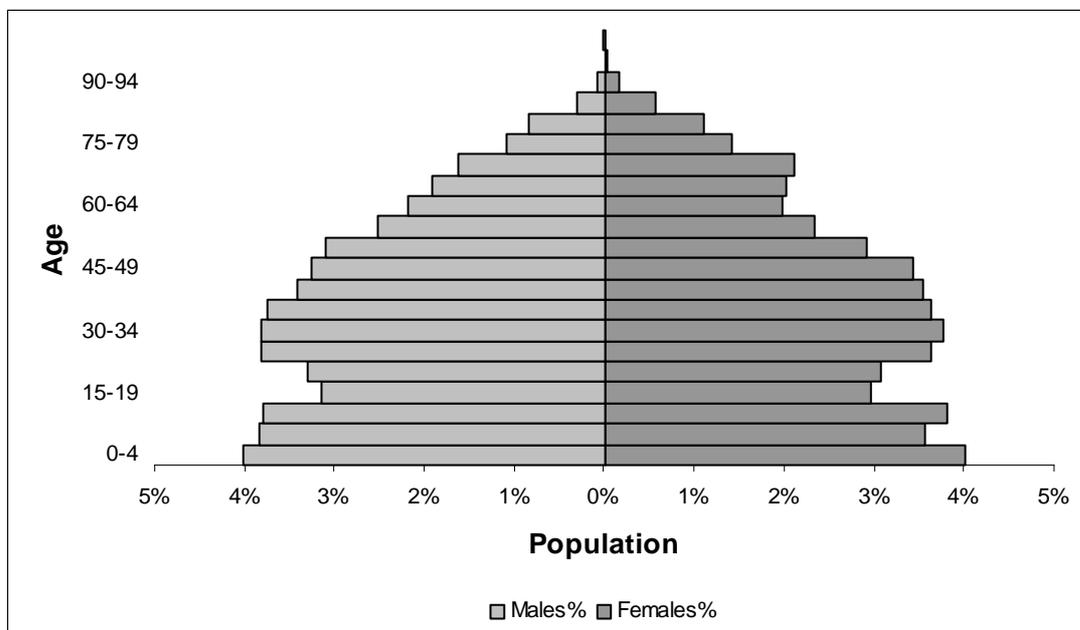

Source: ABS 1996 Census

Port Lincoln suffers from a shortage of rental accommodation. The private sector is under-supplied and the sale of public housing has reduced access to this form of accommodation. It is of interest that much of the stock redeveloped at Lincoln Gardens was sold to private investors.

4.3   Murray Bridge

Murray Bridge lies approximately 60 kilometres to the east of Adelaide, just east of the Mount Lofty Ranges. At the 1996 Census the City had a population of 15,893 persons and approximately 620 were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. In the past Murray Bridge attracted immigrant settlement as Southern Europeans in particular moved into the region to take up market gardening.

The City has, when compared with the rest of South Australia, a relatively youthful profile (Figure 5) and this reflects the slow but steady growth of Murray Bridge over the last decade. The City has a substantial population of children, and those aged under four were the largest single cohort at the 1996 Census. Their parents are reflected in the high percentages aged between 25 and 40, and in total the demography suggests growth in the demand for housing.

Figure 5. Age Sex Profile, Murray Bridge, 1996 Census

Source: ABS 1996 Census

Employment in Murray Bridge is based around agriculture, manufacturing and service industries (for a fuller discussion, see the relevant case study in Beer, Bolam and Maude, 1994). Murray Bridge is an important centre for irrigated agriculture – especially horticulture and dairying - and these industries have provided the impetus for associated enterprises such as the manufacturing of irrigation products, as well as the processing of local foodstuffs. There is also some small scale assembly of electrical switches. Murray Bridge has long been an important retailing centre for its region. There were 6,920 people in the workforce at the 1996 Census and an unemployment rate of 11.9 per cent. Some 28.3 per cent of the adult population aged 15 to 64 were not in the formal labour force.

Figure 6. Industry Structure, Murray Bridge and South Australia, 1996 Census
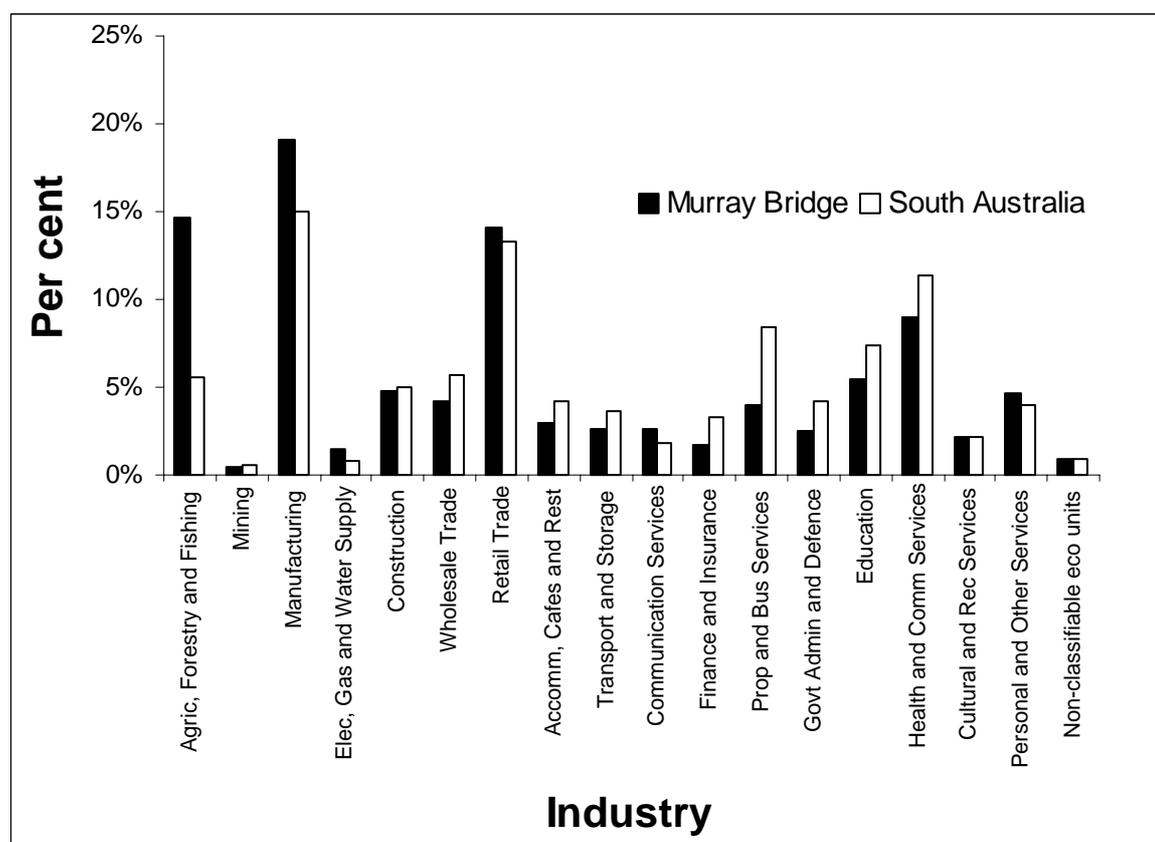
Source: ABS 1996 Census

There is a substantial public housing stock in Murray Bridge with 895 households or 14.9 per cent of households living in this tenure. Outright home ownership is the single largest tenure, accounting for fully 39 per cent of households, followed by home purchase at 24.6 per cent. The private rental sector accommodates a further 15.7 per cent of households in Murray Bridge.

4.4   The Case Studies: a conclusion

This brief review on housing conditions and economic conditions within the three case study communities has shed light on the nature of the relationship between housing assistance in these cities and broader processes of community development and growth. It has shown that all three case studies have a relatively large public housing sector and that the unemployment rate is higher in these centres than for all of South Australia. Whyalla in particular has felt the impact of economic restructuring with the substantial loss of jobs from the manufacturing sector.

Finally, we need to acknowledge that the problems and issues confronting each of the case studies are unique to that regional city and can only be understood with reference to local history, labour markets and development processes. A point Randolph (1991) saw as central to understanding the relationship between the housing market and the labour market.

CHAPTER 5.   CONCLUSION

This Positioning Paper set out to situate research into the role of housing assistance in non-metropolitan Australia within the context of national and international research on community development. Along the way it covered a diverse range of literature and grappled with a wide array of topics. In many ways it was forced to deal with two quite dissimilar topics: on the one hand the community development/economic development literature and policy framework, and on the other, writing on social exclusion and the delivery of housing assistance to the socially marginalised.   We believe that this paper has been able to marry these two strands of research and policy development. It has shown that:

- Housing can and does play an important role in community development outside the capital cities;

- International notions of 'best practice' in local economic development embrace community development and award priority to strategies designed to help the poorest and most marginalised within society develop their social networks at the same time that they seek global investment and market the community internationally;

- Community development needs to be a multi-layered process and one where the local community and central government decision makers are treated on an equal footing;

- Building social capital within communities is important, but this needs to be matched by efforts to attract business, markets and investment;

- Community development takes time, and organistions seeking to revive regions must be ready for a long term commitment;

- Community development can only occur if the local community is as fully engaged as possible, but it also requires a commitment from more distant institutions and bodies, such as central government departments;

- 'Community' approaches to the problems confronting localities are not the same as community development;

- Adequate investment in infrastructure is seen as crucial to the growth of regions, and this can be interpreted to embrace adequate housing;

- Too much public housing can impede the development of communities by discouraging migration to labour markets with better job prospects and higher housing costs;

- Insufficient housing can – and does – retard the development of non-metropolitan communities in Australia. There are grounds for arguing that State Housing Authorities have a role in providing this accommodation;

- Randolph's (1991) writings on housing market segments strongly emphasise supply processes in understanding housing market/labour market relationships. This suggests that strategies designed to enhance the role of housing assistance in promoting the welfare of non-metropolitan communities must, in the first instance, address the supply process. To put this into context, Whyalla's surplus public housing stock is therefore seen as a problem of supply not demand;

- The concept of social exclusion usefully captures the complex and multiple disadvantage experienced by many within contemporary societies.   It highlights the troubled relationship between some elements of the population and society as a whole;

- Public housing regeneration projects need to do more than manipulate the physical fabric of housing. Community development has to be incorporated into these initiatives if they are to achieve their goals;

- The review of the case studies suggests that there are socially excluded people within these centres. This includes the long-term unemployed, those made redundant or permanently pushed out of the formal labour market by economic restructuring - as has occurred at the Whyalla steel plant - and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population;

- There are problems with housing supply in the regional cities selected as case studies and changes in the nature of housing assistance – through increased supply, redevelopment of housing or changed management practices – could improve their growth prospects.

Overall, the Positioning Paper has shown that housing and housing assistance is important for the development of non-metropolitan communities. It suggests there are ways the Department of Human Services in South Australia (as the 'parent' department) and the South Australian Housing Trust (as the manager of the housing stock) could assist in the development of better communities while still meeting their 'core business' objectives. These lessons would apply equally in other Australian jurisdictions. Achieving these goals will require co-operation with other tiers of government and other agencies within the South Australian Government. Taylor (1998) noted that this goal was often espoused but rarely achieved in British attempts at the regeneration of public housing estates. Community development also takes time and the development of trust.

The Positioning Paper has shown that there is much that is not known about the relationship between housing and community development. The interface between the public and private tenures remains a largely unexplored territory within the international literature, and little has been written on the value communities' place on housing.

The Final Report will consider how the goals outlined above fit within current policy frameworks and what steps – if any – can be taken to bring about more effective policies and more effective interventions.

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