AHURI Research & Policy Bulletin

Do community housing organisations strengthen communities?

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING IS AN IMPORTANT AND IMPLICIT OBJECTIVE UNDERPINNING THE COMMUNITY HOUSING SECTOR. HOWEVER THERE ARE FEW EXPLICIT STRATEGIES IN PLACE TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

KEY POINTS

- Community housing organisations carry out a range of activities that are implicitly aimed at strengthening communities. These include improving housing access, personal development, brokering more effective access to community services, supporting social and economic participation by tenants and supporting local economic initiatives.

- Participants in this study believed that many community housing organisations make a significant contribution to community building in areas with limited public housing stock, such as regional locations and high-cost city communities.

- The community strengthening role of community housing could be further enhanced if this was made an explicit objective of community housing management. This would encourage suitable resourcing of community strengthening initiatives.

CAVEATS

Focus group discussions were intended to collect a range of information and experiences relating to community strengthening and community housing so that the scope of these activities could begin to be identified. Other community housing organisations may have further objectives in relation to community strengthening than those that participated in the discussions.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The nature of community housing organisations means that they are well placed to engage in the type of activities that strengthen communities. To ensure that this underlying objective is supported and appropriately resourced, community housing organisations need to make community strengthening an explicit strategy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about this project, the following documents are available:

Positioning Paper www.ahuri.edu.au

Final Report www.ahuri.edu.au

Or contact AHURI National Office on +61 3 9660 2300.

*Based on research by **Claire Barbato, Adam Farrar** and **Peter Phibbs**, of the AHURI Sydney Research Centre. The research involved a series of group discussions with community housing providers, tenants, community members and government and non-government policy makers aimed identifying the linkages between community housing and community building.*

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