

THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Results of the AHURI Local Government Housing Survey

Final Report

Julie Lawson

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reference Group	2
Introduction	3
Research Objectives	4
Research Context	5
Research methods	8
About the respondents	11
Key Results	15
Survey Findings	16
Providers of housing	26
Variations in housing activity between States, categories of population and financial resources.	28
Discussion, Conclusions and Priorities for further research	33
References	35
Appendix 1 Australian Local Government Housing Survey	36
Appendix 2 Local government survey sample	38
Appendix 3 Selected Commonwealth Programs	41

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Acknowledgments

The author is grateful to the Survey Reference Group for their timely contribution to the pilot survey, and to the 187 local governments for providing such a high level of response. Special thanks to Ed Wensing, ALGA, Christina Johnstone, LG&SANSW, Maryann Wulff, and Emma Saunders, AHURI.

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Local Government Housing survey was conducted during September 1994 to establish the level and type of housing activity undertaken by local governments in different states and territories. This report details the results of the first national survey to focus on local government and housing.

The survey was initially sent to 212 local governments across Australia. This figure represents 25 per cent randomly selected LGAs, and designed to represent the type and level of housing activity on a national, State, population and revenue basis. Of this sample, a significant 87 per cent of selected local governments returned completed surveys, a high rate of return for such a method of inquiry.

The survey provides an up to date description of current local government housing activities in the context of numerous Department of Housing and Regional Development initiatives to improve local area planning, expand housing choices, promote energy efficient design, and encourage local involvement in community housing.

The results of the survey reveal the variety of housing issues considered and the concerns addressed by local housing policy. Categories of local housing activities have been established including factors which inhibit or enable Councils role in housing. The results also outline the different types of resources committed to produce housing outcomes. Partners involved in the provision and management of local housing are also identified.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In general the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, through the Australian Local Government Housing Survey, aims to:

- focus on an area of national policy priority in housing and urban development
- address deficiencies in our understanding of the housing and urban system at the local level
- inform public debate and influence policy to enhance Australia's social and economic development

Specifically, this research on local government housing activity aims to:

- inform debate concerning the future roles and responsibilities of local government in housing by providing a comprehensive description of the type, level and distribution of housing activity undertaken by local government.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Over the past decade considerable discussion, policy debate, and research have focussed upon the role of local government in housing and its relationship with other levels of government, the private sector, and community organisations.

A 1984 report entitled *Housing Policy and Intergovernment Relations* (ACIR) identified five roles or principles which provide a framework for the elaboration of more detailed responsibilities:

1. informed and responsible decision making;
2. developing resources to meet the communities needs;
3. a responsive and effective co-ordinator and provider of public services;
4. a catalyst and resourceful initiator of local effort; and,
5. a representative for the local community to other governments, and the wider society.

More recent documents have sought to reinforce the importance of local government in housing and the breadth of its role. The *National Housing Strategy* considered that "all local governments have a significant involvement in housing through their regulatory responsibilities, provision of infrastructure, rating policies and provision of community facilities and services"(NHS, 1991:145).

Amongst local governments, however, there is considerable diversity in terms of population size, revenue base, social and economic context, and legislative powers which may affect the type and nature of housing activity. The specific nature of housing priorities also tend to vary according to the circumstances of different localities: gentrification in inner city areas; population loss declining rural areas; and provision of basic infrastructure on the metropolitan fringe (NHS, 1991:15).

In the context of this uneven landscape are broader political circumstances influencing most local governments. These include funding constraints; devolution of state responsibilities to the community; and the privatisation of many social welfare functions.

Within this complex and adverse context local governments are unlikely to embrace a consistent and strategic housing role. The unevenness of housing activity and responsibility holds significant implications for the equity of housing outcomes between local areas and the achievement of social justice objectives nationally.

Nevertheless, the existence of numerous Commonwealth programs such as Community Housing, Integrated Local Area Planning, and Review of Residential Regulations (Triple R) has enticed many local governments into the housing arena.

Representative bodies of local government have sought more secure long term funding for housing initiatives and participation in relevant decision making forums. The Municipal Association of Victorian and more recently the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW have been particularly active, educating Councils about the variety of housing roles they perform, promoting wider acceptance of the goals of housing choice and affordability, and encouraging participation in various Commonwealth programs.

Good examples of the outcomes of this education role include the report entitled *The Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government in Relation to Housing* (MAV, 1991) and newsletters such as *Action on Housing*, recently launched by the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW.

There are several local governments playing a pioneering role defining local government's housing responsibilities. North Sydney recently completed an affordable housing strategy (NSC, 1994) providing a model for other Councils in their approach to housing research, policy development, development control, partnership with community housing providers, and the provision of housing.

Further examples of local initiatives can be found in the Office of local Governments booklet *Local Housing Action* (OLG, 1991).

At the national level, the Australian Local Government Association has commissioned a discussion paper *Toward a National Local Government Housing Policy* (BBC Consulting Planners, 1995). This comprehensive report outlines a continuum of housing roles: needs

planning; facilitation; and provision. It also identifies a key role for local government in contributing towards national housing policy. It is envisaged that through the development local and regional housing strategies and attendance at key forums and discussions, local government can contribute towards State Housing Assistance Plans, Commonwealth State Housing Agreements and national housing policy.

The AHURI *Australian Local Government Housing Survey* addresses several recommendations of the ALGA report (BBC Consulting Planners, 1995). In particular, it raises awareness of the breadth and depth of local governments housing role amongst local, State, Territory and Commonwealth governments; and, identifies key players in partnership with local government in the provision and management of housing.

The objective of this report is to provide the first national stocktake of the actual roles and responsibilities currently assumed by local governments across Australia, by State, population size and revenue base.

RESEARCH METHODS

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, in consultation with the ALGA and Survey Reference Group, developed a proposal to document the scale, scope, organisational context and resources of current local housing activity across Australia in August 1994.

The most effective and cost efficient means to achieve this objective was considered to be a brief self administered questionnaire with up to four reminders to achieve a high rate of response.

The Survey Reference Group was established to develop an appropriate survey instrument in terms of content, format and mode of delivery. The group was comprised of thirteen individuals with expertise in housing research, policy development, and local housing practice to:

- facilitate consultation with representative organisations such as the ALGA and state based local government Associations;
- draw upon local level experience from a range of municipalities in different states; and,
- make use of the relevant experience of researchers employing survey based research.

Draft surveys were circulated amongst the Survey Reference Group, their comments were collated and concerns addressed in a pilot survey. This was sent to ten local government officers and further revisions made to improve the clarity of survey content, using terms and phrases meaningful to potential respondents.

In summary the questions concerned:

- housing issues raised, considered and addressed
- housing policy concerns and priorities
- housing activity type, opportunities and constraints
- organisation, resources and funding of housing activity
- housing outcomes, type and eligibility
- partnership and management arrangements

A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 1.

A random selection of local government areas (LGAs), was taken from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. For each local government in the sample, a preliminary letter was sent to Senior Executive Officers introducing AHURI, the purpose of the research, and the forthcoming survey.

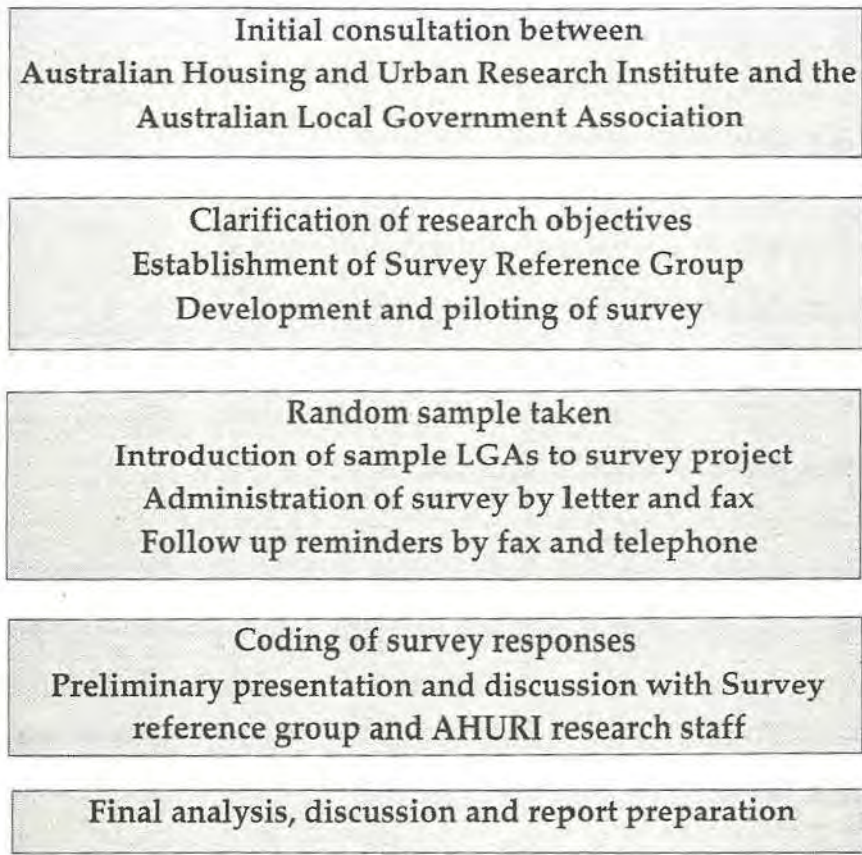
A list of the sample local government areas is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

The finalised questionnaire was mailed to Senior Executive Officers of 212 LGAs by post in September 1994, with supporting instructions and defined terms. These senior officers were asked to forward the questionnaire to the person most familiar with local housing related issues within their administration.

Following the nominated two week survey response period, up to four reminders were sent to non-responding local governments. This strategy continued for two weeks after the return date, achieving a significant 87 per cent response rate.

The survey results were then collated, coded, and analysed using SPSS computer software, and a preliminary presentation given to the AHURI research team and interested members of the Reference Group. The presentation prompted discussion which has contributed to the data analysis strategy and further areas of research.

Figure 1: The Australian Local Government Housing Survey research process

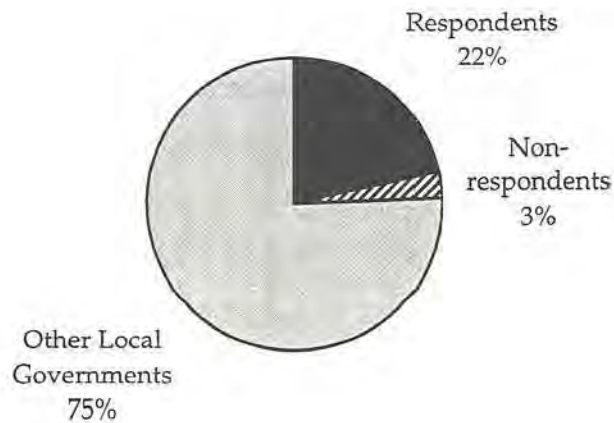


ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

The following information is outlined regarding response rate and characteristics of respondents.

The response to the survey was very strong, 187 of 212 local governments responded, representing an 87 per cent of the sample, and 22 per cent of all local governments in Australia.

Figure 2: Respondents as a percentage of all local governments in Australia



Targeting the most appropriate officer to complete the survey was a difficult task. Housing activity occurs across many different departments of local government including planning, building, community services and engineering. The person informed of each council's different organisational roles was considered to be the most senior executive. Thus all surveys were sent directly to this person to be forwarded to the officer most aware of housing issues within the administration.

Of those responding, 34 per cent were senior officers of Council, such as a Chief Executive or Town Clerk, 24 per cent were either building or health surveyors, and 21 per cent were planning officers.

Table 1: Professional position of respondent

Position of respondent	% Total responses
Senior Executive	34
Building/Health Surveyor	24
Planner	21
Community Services Officer	9
Other	8
Housing Officer	4
No answer	1
Total	100

In most cases, the first name of the respondent indicated their gender. There was an overwhelming proportion of male respondents (82 per cent), reflecting the gender distribution amongst those professions (such as municipal managers, building surveyors, and planners) assuming responsibility for housing activity in local Councils.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Gender	Responses	% valid responses
Male	94	82
Female	20	18
Total valid responses	114	100
Not specified	73	
Total responses	187	

A very high rate of response was recorded for each State (over 90 per cent). Responses from the Northern Territory were less forthcoming perhaps due to different organisational responsibilities, remoteness from national and State housing processes and different cultural practices which affect housing responsibilities at the local level. More research is required to understand this variation.

THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Table 3: State of local government responses

State	% All responses	Responses	Response rate	Sample
Victoria	28	52	90	58
NSW	19	35	90	39
Queensland	13	24	92	26
Northern Territory	4	7	50	14
Western Australia	19	35	92	38
South Australia	15	28	90	31
Tasmania	3	6	100	6
Total	100	187	88	212

Those who responded to the survey varied significantly in population size and revenue base as indicated by tables 4 and 5. For example, responses include the District Council of Spalding (SA) with a population of 506, and 1991/2 revenue base of \$359,000; Randwick City Council (NSW) population 115,349 and 1991/92 revenue \$44,100,000; and Bundaberg City Council (QLD), 32,733 people with a budget of \$14,314,000 in 1991/92.

Table 4: Population size of local government responses

Population	Responses	% valid responses
up to 1,000	17	10
1,001 to 10,000	93	54
10,001 to 20,000	24	14
20,001 to 40,000	18	10
over 40,000	21	12
Total valid responses	173	100
Missing	14	
Total responses	187	

More than half of all responses were from local governments with less than 10,000 people (64 per cent) and an annual budget in 1991/2 less than \$10,000,000 (69 per cent).

Table 5: Revenue size of local government responses

Revenue (\$000)	Responses	% valid responses
up to 1,000	15	9
1,001 to 10,000	103	60
10,001 to 20,000	28	16
20,001 to 40,000	15	9
over 40,000	10	6
Total valid responses	171	100
Missing	16	
Total responses	187	

KEY RESULTS

The results of the 187 survey responses are presented in this section of the report which has three subsections.

Firstly, key findings of the survey are presented in tabular and graphical form. The aspects reported in this subsection are:

1. housing issues considered
2. who brings these issues to local governments attention
3. the existence of formal housing related documents
4. the major housing concerns of these documents
5. recent housing activities undertaken
6. enabling and inhibiting factors affecting housing role
7. organisational context of housing responsibilities
8. resources committed to housing

Secondly the following characteristics of respondents providing housing are detailed:

1. proportion of sample providing housing
2. partners with local government in providing housing
3. type of housing provided
4. managers of local government housing

The third subsection details variations in housing activity between different States, categories of population size and revenue base. Due to the size of the sample, low response rate, cultural and or organisational differences, figures for the Northern Territory and Tasmania have not been included in State comparisons. However, their responses are included in the national results, and for population and revenue categories.

SURVEY FINDINGS

What housing issues are considered by local government areas across Australia ?

To gauge the type and level of housing issues considered by local governments respondents were asked how often, if at all, their local government considered various housing issues. For each issue specified respondents assessed whether their administration never, sometimes or often considered these issues.

It was found that a significant majority (96 per cent) of LGAs had considered housing issues of some kind at various frequencies.

The top four housing issues most frequently considered by local government were: availability of land for housing (45 per cent); quality of housing design and construction (43 per cent); affordability of housing for low income households (38 per cent), and the density of housing (37 per cent). Most local governments consider the availability of land (92 per cent), and affordability (83 per cent) either sometimes or often.

Only 4 per cent of LGAs reported that they do not consider any housing issues.

Table 6: Housing issues considered by Australian local governments.

What housing issues are considered?	% Never	% Sometimes	% Often	Total
Availability of land	8	47	45	100
Quality of design and construction	17	39	43	100
Affordability of housing	14	48	38	100
Density of housing	21	42	37	100
Energy efficiency	17	46	36	100
State and federal housing policy	29	53	18	100
Adequacy of housing	22	62	16	100
Management of housing	48	41	11	100
Choice of tenure	46	46	8	100

Who brings these issues to local governments attention?

Overt housing issues may be raised by a variety of sources, in the broader community, local area, or from within the administration. To gain an understanding of the most likely route, respondents were asked who brought these issues to their administrations attention and how frequently. A list of ten possible sources were listed, with an option to specify others. Respondents were asked to consider whether each source never, sometimes or often raised housing issues.

Almost all (96 per cent) respondents could identify which groups, if any, were raising housing issues.

According to the respondents, very few outside groups raise housing issues regularly with their local government administration. This role is generally undertaken by internal Council officers (42 per cent) and elected Councillors or commissioners (17 per cent).

A broad range of other groups raise housing issues sporadically with local government, including State, Territory, Federal government departments and community service agencies.

Groups least likely to raise housing issues with local government include employee organisations (84 per cent) business groups (65 per cent) and of note community housing services (42 per cent). This latter finding is significant and worthy of further investigation.

Table 7 Who raises housing issues at the local government level?

Who raises housing issues ?	% Never	% Sometimes	% Often	Total
Council officers	4	54	42	100
Councillors	7	76	17	100
Residents groups	36	53	10	100
State/Territory Government	23	68	9	100
Federal Government	35	58	7	100
Community housing services	42	53	6	100
Community Services Agencies	36	58	6	100
Business groups	65	33	2	100
Church organisations	57	43	1	100
Employee organisations	84	15	1	100

Planning for housing - Council documents

Having considered who raises housing issues, respondents were asked to recall whether housing was considered in formal Council planning documents. A list of five typical documents was provided with an option to specify others.

Many respondents reported that housing was addressed in more specific developments codes (77 per cent) and plans (68 per cent) rather than overall corporate strategies. However, a significant 42 per cent of local governments addressed housing in their corporate plan for the administration.

The more comprehensive strategies entirely devoted to housing has been completed by 44 per cent of all local governments surveyed.

Table 8: Housing related documents

Existence of housing related documents	% Yes	% No	% Total
Development code or standard	77	23	100
Specific area development plan	68	32	100
Council policy statement	54	46	100
Council housing strategy	44	56	100
Corporate plan for the administration	42	58	100

The housing concerns of local government plans, policies and strategies

These documents addressed a number of housing concerns. Respondents were asked to evaluate whether various housing concerns were of major or secondary concern in planning documents.

Table 9 outlines the major and secondary concern of housing related documents. The availability of land for housing (49 per cent), quality of design and construction (42 per cent) and density of housing (29 per cent) are the main housing concerns addressed by local governments via formal plans, policies and codes.

Table 9: Housing concerns of local government plans, policies and codes

What are the housing concerns of planning documents?	% Major	% Secondary	% Not a concern	% Total
Availability of land	49	34	17	100
Quality of design and construction	42	38	19	100
Density of housing	37	41	22	100
Adequacy of housing	17	47	36	100
State and federal housing policy	15	48	37	100
Affordability of housing	13	46	41	100
Energy efficiency	10	56	34	100
Choice of tenure	7	39	53	100
Management of housing	6	37	57	100

The same list of concerns also appeared in an earlier question concerning housing issues, enabling a comparison to be made between those issues raised and those incorporated in formal Council strategy.

A comparison of those issues often raised and addressed demonstrates that the affordability of housing for low income households and energy efficiency of housing design are less likely to be addressed by formal Council codes, plans, strategies and so forth.

More detailed qualitative research is required to understand the reason for this considerable discrepancy.

Local housing activities

A series of questions concerned the type of housing related activities undertaken by local governments. Housing related activity was broadly defined, and informed by the Municipal Association of Victoria's 1991 report of the roles of local government in housing, the survey pilot, and in consultation with the Survey Reference Group and officers of the ALGA.

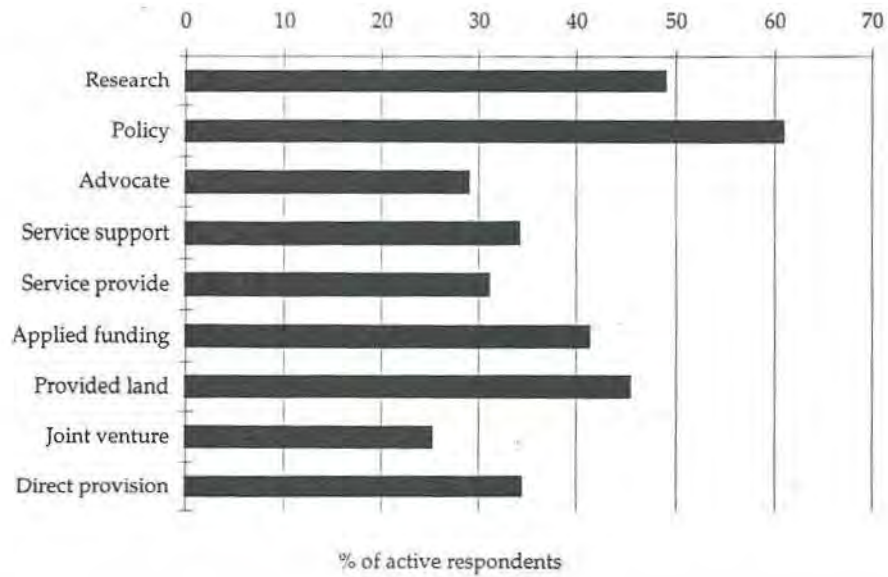
The activities were listed in a continuum of involvement from research to direct provision of housing. Just over 80 per cent of respondents indicated some level of housing activity over the past three years.

Of active local governments 61 per cent had prepared housing plans, codes and strategies, and 49 per cent had researched local housing issues. A significant proportion of local governments have been involved in the provision of land for housing (45 per cent) and/or applying for funds for the development of housing (41 per cent). Least common activities were advocacy regarding local housing related issues to other levels of government (29 per cent), and joint venture to develop housing (25 per cent).

Table 10: Local housing activities over previous three years

What housing related activities are undertaken?	% Yes	% No	Total
Developed housing policies, codes etc	61	39	100
Researched Monitored housing issues	49	51	100
Provided land	45	55	100
Applied for funds for development	41	59	100
Financially supported local housing services	34	66	100
Directly provided housing	34	66	100
Directly provided local housing services	31	69	100
Acted as a local housing advocate	29	71	100
Undertaken joint ventures to develop	25	75	100

Figure 3: Type of housing activities undertaken by active local governments



Enabling and constraining factors affecting housing activity

Respondents described the factors enabling or constraining their local governments role in housing. Several themes emerged including political factors, administrative factors, socio-economic context, local circumstances, support from other levels of government, and local skills and resources.

Table 11 : Comments from respondents concerning factors affecting local housing activity

Theme	Enabling housing activity	Inhibiting housing activity
Political factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> active community groups, councillor support, clear policy direction, broad Council vision of the role of planning, support from state LG associations, growth of housing role in other local governments, supportive management, active local housing committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> housing role undertaken by other agencies, other primary infrastructure priorities, considered a State rather than local government role, no housing policy, lack of strategy, housing not a community issue, Councillor and community resistance to housing role, housing a private sector role, desire not to compete with private sector.
Administrative factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supportive legislative base, state government planning obligations and provisions, ability to acquire crown land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State housing management process, State government does not consult with local government, state legislation inhibits greater planning role.
Socio-economic context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate research base, demand for housing established, identified housing needs, awareness of social and economic trends, population growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> declining population, movement of population to larger community centres.
Local circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need for rental stock, housing shortage, under-utilised private sites, cheap land, Council owned land, desire to encourage development, promote housing choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> geographical isolation, no suitable land for housing, area is fully developed, high cost of land, environmental concerns, infrastructure constraints.
Support from other levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assistance from state government, state and federal government community housing program, capital assistance grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of support by commonwealth, insufficient grants from funding bodies.
Local skills and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of other initiatives, undesirable development in the past, opportunities for redevelopment, availability of land, direct funds for housing from local government, resources for project management training, professional background of key officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> too small an organisation, lack of experience, lack of staff, financial constraints, lack of financial and human resources.

The raw qualitative data, briefly summarised in the above table, is worthy of further exploration and analysis. It should contribute to further research on the factors influencing local governments role in housing.

Organisational context of housing responsibilities

Most councils (92 per cent) were able to identify an officer responsible for housing concerns. However, only 4 per cent had dedicated an officer to perform only housing related matters. Common departments involved in housing matters were building, health, planning and community services. Almost a third (31 per cent) of local governments discussed housing matters across related relevant departments and 27 per cent of respondents had an established Council housing committee.

Table 12: Organisational context of housing responsibilities

Who is responsible for housing issues in LG?	% Yes	% No	% Total
Officer (s)	92	8	100
Cross departmental committee	31	69	100
Council housing committee	27	73	100

Local government resources committed to housing

Continuing the sequence of questions concerning resources committed to housing, respondents were asked to identify the type of resources spent over the past three years on housing related tasks and outcomes. Given the breadth of housing related activity undertaken by local government, it was anticipated that resources other than bricks and mortar needed to be quantified, such as officer time, rate exemptions, and so forth.

The results indicate the most and least common resources provided by local government: officer, lands, buildings, rates exemptions, other in kind assistance, and are represented in the following table.

Table 13: Type of resources provided by local governments

What type of resources are provided by local governments?	% Yes	% No	% Total
Officer	36	64	100
Land	26	74	100
Buildings	21	79	100
Rate Exemptions	11	89	100
Financial support to outside groups	9	91	100
Other in-kind assistance	9	91	100

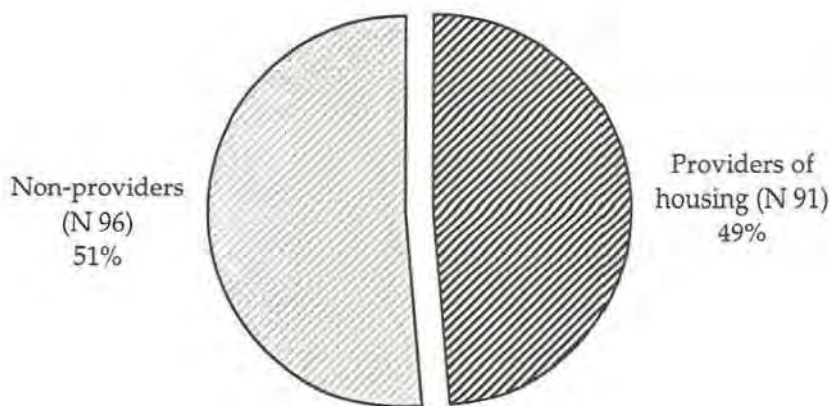
Almost half (45 per cent) of respondents had applied to housing programs for funds to undertake housing related activity.

This ended the general questions on housing activity, and the report now considers the results of respondents involved in the provision of housing.

PROVIDERS OF HOUSING

A series of questions concerned providers of housing: number of providers, partnerships, type households provided for and managers of housing stock. Of the respondents, 91 (49 per cent) were involved in then provision of housing,

Figure 4: Percentage of local government providers and non-providers of housing



Of these providers 77 per cent involved a partner in the provision of housing. Most common partners were State or Territory governments (80 per cent) and community housing groups (44 per cent).

Table 14: Type of local government housing partners

Partners	Number	% providers with partners
State/Territory Govt.	56	80
Community housing group	31	44
Federal Govt.	20	29
Church organisation	16	23
Service club	11	16
Business group	6	9
Private business	2	3

* Multiple answers possible

THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

With or without partners, local governments were providing housing for a range of household types, particularly older people (58 per cent), employees of Council (44 per cent) and local income families (24 per cent).

Table 15: Type of household accommodated by local government

What type of households are accommodated?	Number	% Yes	% No	% Total
Older people	53	58	42	100
Employees of Council	40	44	56	100
Low income families	22	24	76	100
People with disabilities	15	16	84	100
Young people	12	13	87	100
Low incomes singles	12	13	87	100
Single parents	9	10	90	100
People who are at risk of homelessness	8	9	91	100
Women	7	8	92	100
Refugees	0	0	100	100
New migrants	0	0	100	100

Given the predominance of housing for employees it is not surprising that 64 per cent local government housing providers manage that housing themselves. A further 49 per cent of local government housing is managed by a community housing committee.

Table 16: Management of local government housing

Who manages local government housing?	% Yes	% No	% Total
Council officers	64	36	100
Community housing committee	49	51	100
State government	23	77	100
Council and joint venture partner	8	92	100
Residents co-op	3	97	100
Real Estate agents	3	97	100
Sold to residents for home ownership	2	98	100

VARIATIONS IN HOUSING ACTIVITY BETWEEN STATES, CATEGORIES OF POPULATION AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

This sub-section of the report categorises key findings according to State of origin, size of population and financial resources, to assess whether these variables influence the level and type of housing activity.

Is there a difference in housing activity between states?

There are significant differences between States on the Eastern sea-board and South and Western Australia. Higher levels of overall activity were found in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

Table 17: Variation in total housing activity between states

State	Victoria	NSW	Q.L.D.	W.A.	S.A
% Respondents undertaking housing activity	69	58	60	42	50

NB: Northern Territory and Tasmanian responses and sample size too low for comparison with other States.

Closer analysis of the variation in the type of local government activity between different states is more revealing. Each State appears to have unique areas of strength in housing activity. Both Victorian and New South Wales have strong capacity the planning activities of housing.

Victorian strengths are research and policy development. In New South Wales high levels of policy development and advocacy were recorded. In Queensland facilitation and provision activities are more common amongst local government areas. Whilst in West Australia provision roles were more common, South Australian local governments recorded low levels of participation in all planning, facilitation and provision related activities.

THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Table 18: Type of housing activity by State

Type of activity undertaken by LGs	Vic	NSW	Q.L.D.	W.A	S.A.
<i>Planning</i>					
Researched Monitored housing issues	69	58	60	42	50
Developed housing policies, codes etc	83	84	60	48	70
<i>Facilitation</i>					
Acted as a local housing advocate	29	52	45	10	25
Financially supported local housing services	37	45	50	32	30
Directly provided local housing services	31	39	45	35	25
<i>Provision</i>					
Applied for funds for development	51	35	55	61	25
Provided land	54	74	75	61	55
Undertaken joint ventures to develop	31	29	15	39	20
Directly provided housing	29	48	55	45	15

* Multiple answers possible

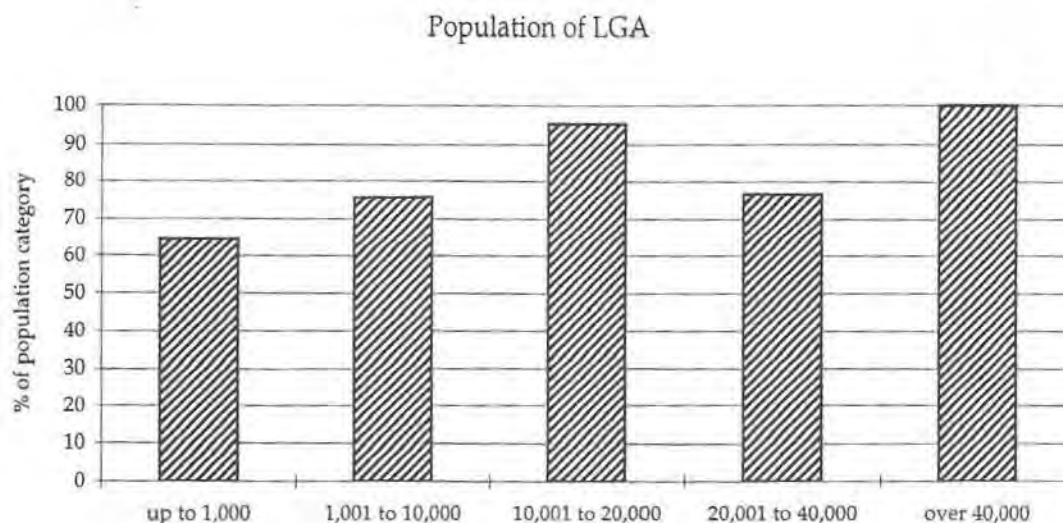
Does housing activity vary by population size?

There is weak, less consistent relationship between population size and overall local government housing activity.

Table 19 : Variation in total housing activity by population size.

Population of local government area	up to 1,000	1,001 to 10,000	10,001 to 20,000	20,001 to 40,000	over 40,000
% Respondents undertaking housing activity	65	76	95	76	100

Figure 5: Housing activity by population size of local government area



Again closer analysis of activity type reveals some interesting findings. There is a strong positive relationship between planning activity and population size. There is no distinguishable relationship between population size and facilitation activities such as advocacy and financial support to housing services. However, there is a weak negative relationship between provision activities and population size, suggesting that population size is by no means a deterrent to more active housing roles.

Table 20: Variation in the type of housing activity by population size

Type of activity* undertaken by size of population	1,001 to 10,000	10,001 to 20,000	20,001 to 40,000	over 40,000
Planning				
Researched Monitored housing issues	40	50	53	81
Developed housing policies, codes etc	49	77	76	86
Facilitation				
Acted as a local housing advocate	19	36	24	43
Financially supported local housing services	31	41	12	33
Directly provided local housing services	29	23	18	29
Provision				
Applied for funds for development	32	45	41	48
Provided land	48	59	53	52
Undertaken joint ventures to develop	20	41	24	24
Directly provided housing	31	36	24	29

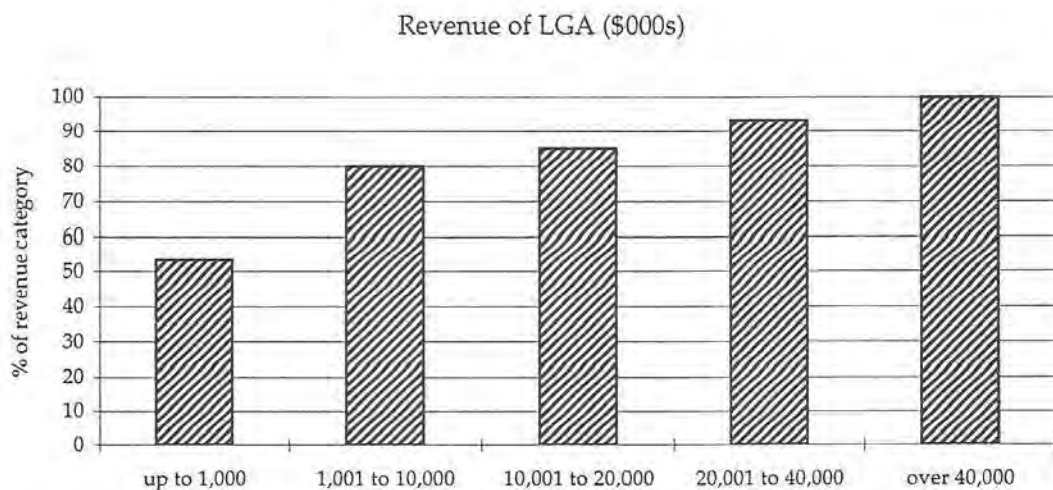
Does housing activity vary by the revenue base of the local government area?

Nevertheless there is a strong positive relationship between overall housing activity the revenue base of local governments. As financial resources increase, local government is more likely to undertake housing related activities.

Table 21: Variations in overall housing activity by revenue base

Revenue base of local government area (\$000s)	up to 1,000	1,001 to 10,000	10,001 to 20,000	20,001 to 40,000	over 40,000
% Respondents undertaking housing activity	53	80	85	93	100

Figure 6: Housing activity by size of revenue base of local government areas



THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This strong positive relationship holds for all housing related activities except provision of land and direct provision of housing. For these function local government areas with a revenue base of 10,000,000 to 20,000,000

Table 22:: Variations in the type of housing activity by revenue base

Type of activity by revenue base (\$000s)	up to 1,000	1,001 to 10,000	10,001 to 20,000	20,001 to 40,000	over 40,000
<i>Planning</i>					
Researched Monitored housing issues	20	40	56	73	100
Developed housing policies, codes etc	27	49	78	80	100
<i>Facilitation</i>					
Acted as a local housing advocate	0	20	37	33	70
Financially supported local housing services	7	30	33	20	60
Directly provided local housing services	20	31	26	20	40
<i>Provision</i>					
Applied for funds for development	20	37	44	40	50
Provided land	33	52	63	53	40
Undertaken joint ventures to develop	7	22	26	20	40
Directly provided housing	13	31	41	33	20

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this research shed light on a previously under examined area housing policy and practice: actual local government housing activity. There are three key themes which emerge:

1. high level of broadly defined local government housing activity which varies significantly between states, and increases with revenue base
2. significant variation in the type of housing activity: specifically planning, facilitation and provision roles; which are dispersed amongst several different departments of local government
3. almost half of all local governments are minor providers of housing, with a strong preference for housing older people and local government employees, over other household types

Returning to the ACIR principles for housing roles, it would appear that local government is generally more active in research and policy development, partly addressing the requirement to be an "informed and responsible decision maker" (ACIR, 1984).

Research, planning and policy development are particularly strong amongst local governments with significant financial resources. However, the results challenge the assumption that only larger population centres are able to be involved in active housing roles. The findings reveal that smaller towns are just as, if not more, likely to become involved in the direct provision of housing.

However, local government has not been a strong catalyst of local effort and representative for the local community to other governments on housing issues. This is represented by the low level of advocacy on local housing issues, such as affordability and energy efficiency. Further, community housing agencies are not raising housing issues at the local government level, despite being one of two primary managers of locally provided housing stock.

The effectiveness of needs based planning may also be in question. Whilst worthwhile housing outcomes are being produced for the elderly, there may be other target groups not provided for by local government.

These findings should be of concern to managers of Commonwealth programs such as ILAP, CHP and BC, seeking to engage local government in addressing these issues (See Appendix 3 for the objectives of selected Commonwealth programs).

The following areas are worthy of further in depth research and analysis, and emanate from the findings of the report:

1. the nature of the relationship between community housing organisations and local governments
2. the potential for regional needs based planning to assist local governments with limited financial resources
3. the factors inhibiting some large local government areas with high housing needs from involvement in housing
4. the means to strengthen local government's role in housing advocacy, and needs based planning
5. the impact of variation in planning powers upon the ability of local areas to address housing needs
6. the reasons for the lack of response on issues such as housing affordability and energy efficiency

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AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSING SURVEY

Please answer all questions and fax responses to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (03) 629 7030 by 23 September 1994.

- 1 City/ Shire of _____
 2 Name of person filling in this form _____
 3 Position title of person filling in this form _____

4 How often does your local government administration consider the following housing issues (circle N=Never, S=Sometimes, or O=Often):

Availability of land for housing	N	S	O
Adequacy of housing for particular household types	N	S	O
Affordability of housing to low income households	N	S	O
Density of housing	N	S	O
Quality of design and construction of housing	N	S	O
Choice of household tenure available	N	S	O
Management of housing	N	S	O
State and federal housing policy	N	S	O
Energy efficiency of housing design	N	S	O
Does not consider any housing issues (tick if appropriate) _____			

5 Are there other housing issues which are considered by your local government administration? Please specify: _____

6 Who usually brings housing issues to your administrations attention and how often? (Circle N=Never, S=Sometimes, or O=Often)

Elected Councillors/Commissioners	N	S	O
Council officers	N	S	O
Federal Government	N	S	O
State/Territory Government	N	S	O
Residents groups	N	S	O
Community housing services	N	S	O
Business groups	N	S	O
Community service agencies	N	S	O
Church organisations	N	S	O
Employee organisations	N	S	O
Other (please specify) _____			

Not brought to attention (tick if appropriate) _____

7 Is housing considered in any of the following:

Council housing strategy	Yes	No
Council policy/ statement	Yes	No
Corporate plan for the administration	Yes	No
Specific area development plan	Yes	No
Development code/standard	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____		

8 What are the combined housing concerns of these plans, policies, statements and codes (major concern=M, secondary concern=S, not a concern=N)

Availability of land for housing	M	S	N
Adequacy of housing for particular household types	M	S	N
Affordability of housing to low income households	M	S	N
Density of housing	M	S	N
Quality of design and construction of housing	M	S	N
Choice of household tenure available	M	S	N
Management of housing	M	S	N
State and federal housing policy	M	S	N
Energy efficiency of housing design	M	S	N
Other please specify _____	M	S	N
Does not consider any housing issues (tick if appropriate) _____			

9 Over the past three years what housing related activities has your Council undertaken?

Researched/monitored of local housing issues	Yes	No
Developed housing policies, codes, or regulations	Yes	No
Acted as a local housing issues advocate	Yes	No
Financially supported local housing services	Yes	No
Directly provided local housing services	Yes	No
Applied for funds for housing development projects	Yes	No
Provided land for housing development projects	Yes	No
Undertaken joint ventures to build housing	Yes	No
Directly provided housing	Yes	No
Has not undertaken any housing related activities (tick if appropriate) _____		

10 Please list the factors which have enabled or inhibited Councils role in housing.

Enabling factors _____

Inhibiting factors _____

11 Who is responsible for housing related activities within Council?

Council officer(s) Yes, specify job title _____ No
 Cross departmental committee Yes, specify departments _____ No
 Council housing committee Yes No
 No one (please tick if appropriate) _____

12 What type and level of resources were committed to housing issues by your Council between the financial years 1990/1-1992/3?
 (Please estimate in dollar terms as accurately as possible or circle N/A where the information is not available)

Officer resources (including on-costs)	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Land	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Buildings	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Rate exemptions	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Financial support to outside groups	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Other in Kind assistance	best estimate \$ _____	N/A
Total estimated contribution to housing over the past three years \$ _____		

13 Has your Council applied to government programs for funding to undertake housing activity? Yes No

14 If yes, which program(s) were you successful (S) and unsuccessful (U) in receiving funds?

Name of program _____	S	U
Name of program _____	S	U
Name of program _____	S	U

IF YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PROVISION OF HOUSING, QUESTIONS 15-20 CONCERN YOU. IF NOT, PLEASE GO TO THE END OF THE SURVEY.

15 Has your Council worked in partnership with other organisations to provide housing? Yes ___ No ___ (If no, go to question 17)

16 What type of organisations has your Council worked with to provide housing?

Federal government department (specify) _____	Yes	No
State government department (specify) _____	Yes	No
Church organisation	Yes	No

Community housing group	Yes	No
Service club	Yes	No
Business group	Yes	No
Private business	Yes	No
Other (please name) _____		

17 How many dwellings have been developed from Council's contribution of land, finance or property? (With or without other organisations) _____

18 Tick the groups accommodated by this housing and indicate the number of dwellings provided for each category

	(Tick)	How many?
Employees of council	_____	Number _____
Youth people	_____	Number _____
Single parents	_____	Number _____
Low income families	_____	Number _____
Low income single people	_____	Number _____
Older people	_____	Number _____
People with disabilities	_____	Number _____
People who are at risk of homelessness	_____	Number _____
Women	_____	Number _____
Refugees	_____	Number _____
New migrants	_____	Number _____
Other group/s (please specify) _____		

19 What is the approximate total value of the land and dwellings provided by your local government? \$ _____

20 Who manages this housing?

Council officers	Yes	No
Council and joint venture partner	Yes	No
Community housing committee/association/trust	Yes	No
State government housing authority	Yes	No
Residents co-operative	Yes	No
Real estate agents	Yes	No
Sold to residents for home ownership	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____		

THANK YOU. PLEASE FAX THIS SURVEY TO THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSING AND URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE BY THE 23 SEPTEMBER 1994. FAX NUMBER (03) 629 7030.

APPENDIX 2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY SAMPLE

Milyakburra Community Inc. Bickerton Island	Ikuntji Community Inc NT
Auburn Municipal Council NSW	Kardu Numida Council NT
Barraba Shire Council NSW	Lajamanu Community Government NT
Bellingen Shire Council NSW	Milikapiti Community Government NT
Bland Shire Council NSW	Nyrripi Community Inc NT
Bombala Shire Council NSW	Palmerston Town Council NT
Brewarrina Shire Council NSW	Ramingining Community Inc. NT
Cabonne Shire Council NSW	Timber Creek Community Government NT
Carrathool Shire Council NSW	Yirrkala Dhanbul Community NT
Cobar Shire Council NSW	Yugul Mangi Community Government NT
Coolah Shire Council NSW	
Coonamble Shire Council NSW	Albert Shire Council QLD
Cowra Shire Council NSW	Atherton Shire Council QLD
Drummoyne Municipal Council NSW	Barcaldine Shire Council QLD
Eurobodalla Shire Council NSW	Belyando Shire Council QLD
Gilgandra Shire Council NSW	Bowen Shire Council QLD
Goulburn City Council NSW	Bundaberg City Council QLD
Greater Taree City Council NSW	Caboolture Shire Council QLD
Gunning Shire Council NSW	Charter Towers City Council QLD
Hawkesbury City Council NSW	Dalby Shire Council QLD
Hornsby Shire Council NSW	Emerald Shire Council QLD
Inverell Shire Council NSW	Flinders Shire Council QLD
Kiama Municipal Council NSW	Gold Coast City Council QLD
Lachlan Shire Council NSW	Ilfracombe Shire Council QLD
Leichardt Municipal Council NSW	Isisford Shire Council QLD
Macleay Shire Council NSW	Kilcoy Shire Council QLD
Marrickville Municipal Council NSW	Longreach Shire Council QLD
Mudgee Shire Council NSW	Maryborough City Council QLD
Murrundi Shire Council NSW	Miriamvale Shire Council QLD
Narranderra Shire Council NSW	Mundaberra Shire Council QLD
Nundle Shire Council NSW	Nanango Shire Council QLD
Parkes Shire Council NSW	Peak Downs Shire Council QLD
Pittwater Municipal Council NSW	Redland Shire Council QLD
Randwick City Council NSW	Rosalie Shire Council QLD
Rylstone Shire Council NSW	Tambo Shire Council QLD
Shoalhaven City Council NSW	Townsville City Council QLD
Strathfield Municipal Council NSW	Warwick City Council QLD
Tamworth City Council NSW	Woocoo Shire Council QLD
Tumut Shire Council NSW	Adelaide City Council SA
Urana Shire Council NSW	Beachport District Council SA
Weddin Shire Council NSW	Berri District Council SA
Windouran Shire Council NSW	Burnside City Council SA
Woollahra Municipal Council NSW	Carrieton District Council SA
Yass Shire Council NSW	Cooper Pedy District Council SA
Alice Springs Town Council NT	East Torrens District Council SA
Borroola Community Government NT	Eudunda District Council SA
Gulin Gulin-Weemol Aboriginal Council NT	Hawker District Council SA
	Kanyaka-Quorn District Council SA

Kimba District Council SA	Keilor City of VIC
Kingscote District Council SA	Kew City of VIC
Light District Council SA	Kilmore Shire of VIC
Malllala District Council SA	Kowree Shire of VIC
Meningie District SA	Lexton Shire of VIC
Morgan District Council SA	Maffra Shire of VIC
Mount Remarkable District Council SA	Marong Rural City of VIC
Northern Yorke Peninsula Council SA	Metcalfe Shire of VIC
Payneham City Council SA	Minhamite Shire of VIC
Peterborough District Council SA	Mirboo Shire of VIC
Pinnaroo District Council SA	Moorabool VIC
Port Broughton District Council SA	Mornington Shire of VIC
Port Pirie City Council SA	Myrtleford Shire of VIC
Riverton District Council SA	Newstead Shire of VIC
Roxby Downs Municipality SA	Oakleigh City of VIC
Spalding District Council SA	Oxley Shire of VIC
Thebarton Town Council SA	Port Phillip City of VIC
Waikerie District Council SA	Pyalong Shire of VIC
Warooka District Council SA	Pyrennees Shire of VIC
West Torrens City Council SA	Rosedale Shire of VIC
Yorketown District Council SA	Sale City of VIC
Burnie City of TAS	Shepparton City of VIC
Clarence City of TAS	Strathfieldsaye Shire of VIC
Georgetown Municipality of TAS	Surfcoast Shire of VIC
Huon Valley Municipality of TAS	Talbot and Clunes Shire of VIC
Latrobe Municipality of TAS	Traralgon Shire of VIC
Northern Midlands Municipality of TAS	Upper Yarra Shire of VIC
Alexandra Shire of VIC	Walgett Shire Council VIC
Ararat/ Rural City of Ararat Shire of VIC	Wangaratta Shire of VIC
Bairnsdale Shire of VIC	Warracknabeal Shire of VIC
Ballarat Shire of VIC	Werribee City of VIC
Beechworth United Shire of VIC	West Coast Municipality of VIC
Bendigo City of VIC	Wycheproof Shire of VIC
Box Hill City of VIC	Ashburton Shire of WA
Broadmeadows City of VIC	Belmont City of WA
Bungaree Shire of VIC	Bridgetown- Greenbushes Shire WA
Castelmaine City of VIC	Bruce Rock Shire of WA
Chiltern Shire of VIC	Capel Shire of WA
Colac City of VIC	Chittering Shire of WA
Colac Shire of VIC	Collie Shire of WA
Croydon City of VIC	Cottesloe Town of WA
Diamond Valley Shire of VIC	Cunderdin Shire of WA
Doncaster and Templestowe City of VIC	Denmark Shire of WA
Dundas Shire of VIC	Dumblyung Shire of WA
Echuca City of VIC	Esperance Shire of WA
Frankston City of VIC	Geraldton City of WA
Gisbourne Shire of VIC	Gosnells City of WA
Greater Geelong City of VIC	Irwin Shire of WA
Hastings Shire of VIC	Kalgoorlie-Boulder City of WA
Heidelberg City of VIC	Kondinin Shire of WA
Huntly (former) Shire of VIC	Leonora Shire of WA
	Melville City of WA

THE HOUSING ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Moora Shire of WA
Mount Marshall Shire of WA
Murchison Shire of WA
Narrogin Shire of WA
Northam Town of WA
Perenjori Shire of WA
Port Hedland Town of WA
Roebourne Shire of WA

South Perth City of WA
Tambellup Shire of WA
Trayning Shire of WA
Wandering Shire of WA
Westonia Shire of WA
Woodanilling Shire of WA
Yalgoo Shire of WA

APPENDIX 3 SELECTED COMMONWEALTH PROGRAMS

Commonwealth Program	Aims to promote:
<i>Better Cities (BC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic growth; • improved social justice; • ecologically sustainable development; • improved urban environments and more livable cities; • reform of institutionally based human services; • innovative reuse of redundant government land.
<i>Integrated Local Area Planning (ILAP)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate responses to local needs and circumstances; • links physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural issues, rather than treating them separately; • a shared vision of desired futures; • better internal and external co-ordination; • efficient and effective use of available resources; community involvement; lead role of local government.
<i>Local Approvals Review Program (LARP)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better approval practices at the local government level; • promote best practice in customer service.
<i>AMCORD 95</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a process that facilitates planning development and management of a more efficient, effective, responsive and environmentally sustainable process at the local government level; • improve the quality of choice in housing and residential environments and ensuring that there is a high level of integration of housing with other elements that make up the urban environment.