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The Housing and Community Research Unit 26
The Housing and Community Research Unit at the University of Tasmania has had another busy and successful year with continuing grant and publication success. We have been especially pleased with a successful ARC future fellowship for the investigation of smart grids that will see Dr Heather Lovell, University of Cambridge, join us. A major event has been the launch of the UTAS Institute for the Study of Social Change, led by Professor Richard Eccleston. HACRU is one of five UTAS research hubs strategically attached to the new Institute.

The first term of the Coalition government has led to important changes in housing policy, further entrenching the diminishing contribution of Federal and state governments to delivery of affordable housing. The Council of Australian Governments remains, but the National Rental Assistance Scheme has been terminated and both the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness and the National Affordable Housing Agreement are on one-year extensions, with no certainty of continued funding.

This policy direction comes at a time when other policy proposals in areas including income support, education and health, are seeing increased pressure on the living standards of the most vulnerable social groups. At what point can we say that the strength of the safety net provided for all Australians is so weakened that it changes the nature of the social contract that has been fundamental to Australian democracy? It is important that those working in the field of affordable housing ensure these issues remain prominent in public debate and that housing researchers provide a solid evidence base for the discussion and critical analysis of the values and knowledge that underpin current policies.

There is a growing body of evidence that the impact of high levels of social and economic inequality extends beyond the effects on health, well-being and levels of crime, and include reduced economic growth. Yet although this is now taken seriously by organisations including the World Bank and the IMF, governments are pursuing regressive measures that are likely to increase inequality. Most importantly, governments continue to ignore the critical influence of housing on inequality trends. Today home ownership is in danger of becoming the preserve of economically secure, two-income households and State support for private over public housing solutions, manifested in moves away from public housing provision and private rental subsidies for low-income earners, are further entrenching housing inequality. Not only are home purchasers increasingly experiencing housing stress, but for many, rental costs have also escalated to unaffordable levels. Reform of the housing sector is long overdue with a need to reverse the current system of housing subsidies and fiscal arrangements which impact negatively on the poor and reward the already well-off.
Governments intent on delivering a more equitable and just housing system face significant obstacles. Existing home owners and rental investors have been accustomed to receiving real and imputed tax subsidies from governments and are likely to oppose reform. Their opposition will be supported by lobbyists in the finance, private house building, and real estate industries who have much to gain in maintaining current arrangements. For these reasons implementing major reform will be difficult. One possible way to proceed would be to establish a Royal Commission in which the major political parties commit in advance to accept the recommendations.

This year has seen HACRU continuing its contribution to housing policy and research, with submissions to the Senate Economics References Committee on Affordable Housing, two housing panels at the Australian Conference of Economists and Econometric Society Australasian Meeting in Hobart, seminar presentations by Associate Professor Rachel Ong, Curtin University and Dr Cameron Parsell, University of Queensland, and a housing economics workshop led by Professor Peter Phibbs, University of Sydney. Our grant success continues with Keith Jacobs winning a National Housing Program (NHP) Evidence Policy Inquiry grant involving multiple projects across three Australian Housing and Research Institute (AHURI) centres. These aim to develop a clear policy framework and directions for reforming the housing assistance system focusing especially on the value and relevance of individualised forms of welfare provision. Professor Jacobs, in partnership with Dr Deborah Warr of the University of Melbourne, has also won an ARC Discovery grant investigating the individual and area effects of poverty and place-based disadvantage, focusing especially on stigma. Associate Professor Daphne Habibis has an NHP grant that will continue her analysis of housing reform in remote Indigenous communities. It involves identifying how the mix of providers in different communities is operating, the strengths and limitations of these arrangements, and how effective they are in achieving financially sustainable positive housing outcomes for Indigenous people. Our new government and public sector contracts include a consumer engagement project led by Dr Anne Coleman. The project partners are Shelter Tasmania and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services with the focus on the development of a model of consumer engagement that focuses especially on the homeless or those at risk of homelessness. Associate Professor Habibis is also working with Housing Tasmania and AHURI on the development of Tasmania’s Affordable Housing Strategy for 2015-2025. The aim is to develop a shared vision and clear framework for how Tasmania will deliver affordable, safe and sustainable housing and better access to support for Tasmanians experiencing homelessness or housing stress over the next ten years.

Continuing and completed projects include Daphne Habibis’ ARC Linkage on race relations in Darwin, her investigation of Aboriginal housing conditionality, undertaken with colleagues at the University of Queensland, an evaluation of five programs funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and an analysis of the different models of tenancy management operating in remote Indigenous communities under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Dr Gabriel’s AHURI work on the future housing and support needs of people with dementia continues, as well as her Department of Industry,
1. DIRECTOR’S WELCOME

Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education investigation of how to improve the energy efficiency of low income households. Professor Jacobs’ Future Fellowship on key problems in contemporary Australian housing policy making continues, and his book analysing the history of housing reform is close to completion. Prof Franklin’s project on MONA, Tasmania’s internationally renowned and unique museum of old and modern art, is now in its second year with a series of public events in train, as well as a book, *The Making of MONA*, due for release later in 2014. It has also been a productive year for publications, with 36 journal articles produced by HACRU researchers and the successful graduation of Erika Altman whose PhD investigated governance arrangements and organisation capacity of strata titled properties in Australia. We also welcomed three new elite scholar PhD students, Alex di Giorgio, Gina Zappia and Tamlin Gorter, with the latter two also being recipients of Australian Housing and Urban Research top-up scholarships.

In the pages that follow we have outlined our current projects and those that have recently been completed, as well as our publications.

Daphne Habibis
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

Challenging the stigmatisation of poverty and place-based disadvantage (Funder: Australian Research Council, Discovery Grant)

Deborah Warr
Keith Jacobs
Rowland Atkinson

This three year project examines the ways in which individuals and neighbourhoods are subjected to stigma. Stigma has many negative impacts on individuals and communities, yet it is not widely acknowledged among the wider community. The findings will inform new approaches to research and advocacy for vulnerable populations.

Conflicts and challenges: a sociological investigation of key problems in contemporary Australian housing policy making (Funder: Australian Research Council, Future Fellow Grant)

Keith Jacobs

This four-year project is investigating what conflicts in relation to housing reveal about the social divisions in Australian society and the operation of government, and the causes and impact of these social divisions and conflicts. Its findings will provide insights about the conduct of social policy and the capacity of governments to address contemporary housing problems. It will focus on three major problems – how to (i) reduce housing stress among low-income households in the private rental market (ii) overcome the barriers that impede housing organisations from gaining development approval for new affordable housing development, and (iii) address the welfare needs of households residing in social housing at a time of budgetary constraint.
Identifying effective arrangements for tenancy management service delivery to remote Indigenous communities

Daphne Habibis
Rhonda Phillips
Peter Phibbs
Julia Verdouw

Housing reforms in remote Indigenous communities have resulted in a variety of tenancy management arrangements with different mixes of state and community housing roles. This project analyses the strengths and limitations of these arrangements and how effective they are in achieving financially sustainable positive housing outcomes for Indigenous people.

Affordable Housing Strategy Tasmania 2015-2025

Daphne Habibis
Kathleen Flanagan
Julia Verdouw
Ian Winter

The project involves collaboration with the Tasmanian state government to deliver an Affordable Housing Strategy Tasmania 2015-2025. This involves an assessment of community need and the identification of possible solutions for the delivery of support services and housing supply. The strategy will provide direction about how Tasmania will work together over the next decade to improve access to safe and affordable homes and support for Tasmanians experiencing homelessness or housing stress.
**Telling it like it is: Aboriginal perspectives on Aborigines, Euro-Australians and race relations (Funder: Australian Research Council, Linkage Grant)**

Daphne Habibis
Maggie Walter
Catriona Elder

This three-year project aims to identify Aboriginal views on how to improve race relations in Australia. The findings will be used as a basis for improving racial harmony in Darwin and as a model for achieving this in other areas of Australia. Central to the research will be the lived accounts of Aboriginal views on race relations. By uncovering Aboriginal perspectives on Euro-Australians the research will reposition the normativity of Euro-Australian culture, which is essential for reconciliation. By gaining insights into the diversity and complexity of Aboriginal lives in the Greater Darwin area the research will also challenge stereotypes and provide a robust evidence base for effective service provision.

**Individualised forms of welfare provision and reform of Australia’s housing assistance system (Funder: National Housing Research Program Grant)**

Keith Jacobs
Kath Hulse
Wendy Stone
Ilan Wiesel.

The Inquiry will contribute to evidence-based policy through three interrelated projects: (i) a conceptual and policy development framework based on a review of international practice; (ii) a quantitative modelling of household demand and review of housing assistance provision/innovation; and (iii) a case study based on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

**An individualised welfare approach to housing assistance: conceptual foundations and international experience**
*(Funder: National Housing Research Program Grant)*

Keith Jacobs  
Kath Hulse  
Michelle Gabriel  
Julie Lawson

This project will develop a conceptual and policy framework for more individualised approaches to housing assistance in Australia informed by international experience. Acknowledging different institutional, governance and policy contexts, the project will distil key learning, policy opportunities and challenges for reforming the housing assistance system in Australia.

**Individualised forms of welfare provision: their utility for Australia’s housing system**
*(Funder: National Housing Research Program Grant)*

Daphne Habibis  
Ilan Wiesel

Drawing on secondary evidence, the paper will argue that constrained housing options – attributed in part to the prevailing institutional structures of housing assistance programs – limit choice and control for people with disability participating in the NDIS. The paper will examine policy options to increase housing choice for people with disability.
Aboriginal Lifeworlds, Conditionality and Housing Outcomes (Funder: National Housing Research Program)

Paul Memmott
Daphne Habibis
Christina Birdsall-Jones

This three-year project considers how housing assistance can be used to foster certain social norms and associated behaviours that contribute to positive outcomes for Indigenous people. It considers what modes of conditionality are most effective and in which contexts and the role of Indigenous cultural and social norms — including kinship obligations and reciprocity — in developing social capital and improvements in housing outcomes. A key hypothesis to be tested is that for positive outcomes, an intercultural recognition space is required which involves mutual recognition of the moral relationships of duty and care between housing administrators, Indigenous community leaders and tenants.

Future Housing and Support Needs of People with Dementia

Michelle Gabriel
Christine Stirling
Deborah Faulkner

This research project aims to provide policy-makers and housing practitioners with new knowledge into the future housing and support needs of people with dementia. It will investigate how to advance strategies to support tenants, extend their capacity to age-in-place and improve service coordination in this area.
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

Creating the Bilbao Effect: MONA and the Social and Cultural Coordinates of Urban Regeneration Through Arts Tourism (Funder: Australian Research Council, Linkage Grant)

Adrian Franklin
Justin O’Connor
Nikos Papastergiadis

MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) has been described as one of the most important cultural events in recent Australian history only topped perhaps by the opening of the Sydney Opera House. It has achieved international recognition not only for its astonishing innovation in generating new ways in which art can be experienced but also in generating economic benefits that create a platform for significant and sustainable urban regeneration. This project is dedicated to discovering how these impact and effects happened and how they can be capitalized on.

Housing: a Post War History

Keith Jacobs

This book will provide an historical study to consider the most significant housing issues in the contemporary world including: the political economy surrounding homeownership, the role of public housing, the problem of homelessness, the ways that housing performs in accentuating social and economic inequality, and how suburban housing has transformed city life. Reaktion Press will publish the book in late 2014.
Schweppes

Drinks

$2 Video

Hire
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

Get Bill Smart
(Funder: Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education)

Michelle Gabriel
Phillipa Watson
Millie Rooney

Get Bill Smart is trialing an innovative, community capacity-building approach to the implementation of energy efficiency upgrades for low income households. The aim is to improve householder engagement and education levels regarding energy efficiency and to empower low income households to be more energy efficient. This community capacity-building approach will be compared with a more conventional approach of in-home education and upgrades, a combination of the two approaches, and a control group that does not receive direct support through the project. HACRU are measuring the effects of the various interventions and the outcomes of the project. The University is working with other organisations (Sustainable Living Tasmania, Mission Australia) to deliver the project. To date, the university research team have submitted four milestone reports as part of the project.

Consumer Engagement Project,
Hearing and Listening

Anne Coleman

This project involves a partnership between Shelter Tasmania and the Department of Health and Human Services. The University of Tasmania has been contracted to undertake a consultation process in order to develop a model for consumer engagement that would include people experiencing homelessness, and people who are at risk of, or formerly homeless. Consultations have been held at locations in the south and north of the state and approximately 80 people have participated. Service providers are also being consulted to gauge their capacity to support consumer engagement, and to identify how services could be resourced and supported. It is anticipated that the project will be concluded in November 2014.
Evaluation of National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness Programs

Daphne Habibis
Michelle Gabriel
Barbara Lloyd
Joel Stafford
Julia Verdouw

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness establishes a partnership between state and federal governments with the goal of making a positive difference to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. This project evaluated five homelessness services in Tasmania that are directly funded by the Agreement or are closely linked with it.

New and Emerging Models of Tenancy Management in Remote Indigenous Communities (Funder: National Housing Research Program Grant)

Daphne Habibis
Peter Phibbs
Rhonda Philips
Julia Verdouw

Housing reforms in remote Indigenous communities have resulted in a variety of tenancy management arrangements with management spread across state, community and private housing sectors. This research project identified the different models of tenancy management, and shared the policy and practice lessons across jurisdictions.

Is there a ‘tipping point’ at which additional services for homeless people do not lead to additional improvements in health and well-being? A study of the STAY service in Tasmania (Funder: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Keith Jacobs
Michelle Gabriel
Stewart Williams
Kathleen Flanagan

This was an evaluation of Housing Tasmania’s Specialist Intervention Tenancy Service. The project considered the views of policy makers and the users of services to gauge the optimal point or points of intervention at which different services might become more effective. It is envisaged that the findings from the study will provide policy makers with insights about the level and form of support that is the most effective in assisting homeless people settle in suitable accommodation.
The Role of Informal Community Resources in Supporting Independent Housing for Young People Recovering from Mental Illness: A Guide for Housing Policy Makers and Practitioners

Stephen Loo
Keith Jacobs
Cameron Duff
Shane Murray

This project aimed to enhance the understanding of the role of informal community resources in supporting stable housing and inclusion for young people recovering from mental illness. The project had three discrete objectives; identify the informal community resources, relationships and supports that facilitate the acquisition and retention of stable housing for youth in recovery; identify the various ways youth recovering from a mental illness utilize these informal resources and relationships; and identify ways that informal community resources might be mobilized in the design of novel housing and social initiatives for youth in recovery.

The Economic Contribution of the Salamanca Arts Centre – A cost benefit analysis (Funder: Salamanca Arts Centre)

Keith Jacobs

Salamanca Arts Centre is a high-profile Tasmanian Arts organisation located in Hobart. This project provided a cost-benefit analysis of its social, economic and cultural contribution to the community.

The Role of Outreach in Responding to Primary Homelessness

Anne Coleman
David Mackenzie
Brendan Churchill

The project was a collaboration between RMIT Associate Professor David MacKenzie) and UTas (Anne Coleman and Brendan Churchill) funded by the former Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The aim of the project was to document the practice of outreach to people experiencing homelessness (especially those living in public spaces). The finding of the report highlighted the relational nature of outreach work and its importance in responding to people who are usually considered ‘hard to engage’ and highly vulnerable. A report was provided to the department on August 2013. A monograph has subsequently been published.
3. COMPLETED PROJECTS
4. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

Current Doctoral Students

New Public Management and Government Services Provision
– Kathleen Flanagan

Youth, language and identity in a new African diasporic community in Australia
– Meredith Izon

The experience of social housing practitioners providing tenancy management services to Aboriginal tenants
– Fiona Proudfoot

Sustainable housing for equity and energy efficient homes
– Phillipa Watson

Housing in the private rental sector: a site for investment or a place to live? Investigating the interplay between landlords, tenants, and the structures that inform the experience of secure occupancy
– Gina Zappia

Intergenerational Mobility in Australia’s Labour Market
– Brendan Churchill

Telling it like it is – Aboriginal perspectives on Aborigines, Euro-Australians and race relations
– Alex di Georgio

Young People’s Career Choices in Rural Australia
– Merete Schmidt

Creating the Bilbao Effect- Assessing the economic, social and cultural impact of MONA on Hobart’s creative industries, and investigating how state and local governments can capitalise on this cultural momentum
– Miriam McGarry
5. PUBLICATIONS


2014 Proudfoot, F and Habibis, D, ‘Separate Worlds: A discourse analysis of mainstream and Aboriginal populist media accounts of the Northern Territory Emergency Response’, Journal of Sociology <http://jos.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/05/23/1440783313482368.abstract>


The Housing and Community Research Unit is located in the School of Social Sciences and is affiliated with the School’s Institute for the Study of Social Change. It receives core funding from Housing Tasmania and the University of Tasmania, along with other funding through AHURI and the Australian Research Council and other small NGO funders via small-scale consultancy work. The unit began in 2002 as a collaborative research venture between Housing Tasmania and UTAS to undertake housing and community-related research that would both support the policy environment in which Housing Tasmania operates as well as producing rigorous academic work of national and international standing. A range of outputs by the Unit includes peer-reviewed articles, articles for the housing policy press, seminars for housing practitioners and reports for Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

The work of the Unit is centred on housing, urban and community issues. Within this broad remit there is a focus on the following areas:

- Housing politics and policy
- Housing affordability
- Gentrification and neighbourhood change
- Indigenous and regional housing issues
- Diversity and social inclusion
- Housing, crime prevention and community safety
- Migration, demographic change and housing impacts
- Regulation of the ‘not-for-profit’ sector
- Environmental planning and mitigation
Core Staff

Assoc. Prof Daphne Habibis (Director)
Indigenous housing, complex needs

Prof. Keith Jacobs
Social exclusion, social housing, urban policy

Dr Michelle Gabriel (Research Fellow)
Housing affordability, environmental sustainability

Dr Anne Coleman
Homelessness, policy implementation and social housing

Kathleen Flanagan
Housing policy, policy implementation and affordable housing

Dr Kris Natalier
Homelessness, criminal justice, young people

Dr Stewart Williams
Risk management, environmental disaster planning

Dr Julia Verdouw
Urban sociology & community studies, urban policy

Dr Phillipa Watson
Architectural science & technology, social policy

Associate Staff

Prof. Adrian Franklin

Prof. Rob White

Dr Max Travers

Assoc. Prof Maggie Walter

Assoc. Prof Bruce Tranter

Ms Helen Norrie

Dr Julia Verdouw

Dr Phillipa Watso

Prof. Stephen Loo

Prof. Mardi Dungey

Dr Ceridwen Owen

Dr Rowland Atkinson
(University of York)

Prof. Jim Kemeny
(Honorary research fellow)

Dr Jesse Shipway
(Honorary research fellow)

Dr Jed Donoghue
(Honorary research fellow)

Dr Jan Forbes
(Honorary research fellow)

HACRU Postgraduate students

Meredith Izon

Kathleen Flanagan

Fiona Proudfoot

Gina Zappia

Alex di Georgio

Brendan Churchill

Merete Schmidt

Kesherie Gurung