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Welcome to our annual report for 2009/2010. The report signifies another busy year for academics working within the Housing and Community Research Unit and we anticipate we will remain busy, as there are huge challenges that lie ahead.

The Australian government’s 2010 inter-generational report provides an excellent summary. It predicts that Australia’s population will grow from 22.3 million in 2010, to 35.9 million by 2050. Such a large increase in numbers will have important implications for cities in terms of quality of life (housing, transport, health and education). Over this period, the proportion of people of working age is due to fall, from its current rate of 65 per cent to 61 per cent. This fall will reduce the capacity for economic growth, and while the last 40 years has seen annual average GDP growth rates of 3.3 per cent, the expectation is that this will slow to an average of 2.7 per cent annually.
What will this mean for Australian cities and those who reside there? First, the demand for housing will remain high and the shortage of supply, unless addressed, will no doubt lead to severe problems for low-income households. Australian cities will also experience significant changes as the population increases take affect. The Australian government’s State of Australian Cities 2010 publication, reports a rapid increase in levels of car dependency, creating significant traffic problems in Australian cities. Unless adequate investment is made in public transport facilities and infrastructure, traffic congestion will become more frequent. As if this was not enough, the measures needed to address the impact of climate change and Australia’s aging population will stretch the budgets of governments even further.

Clearly, it is essential that governments across Australia make the necessary investments so that these challenges can be managed. Of course this is no easy task; politics is dominated by powerful interest groups who seek to pursue a policy agenda commensurate with their interests. Politicians will need to be vigilant and resist attempts by these interests groups to steer policy and remain steadfast in ensuring that difficult decisions are not put aside for short-term advantage. All of us who work in HACRU are committed to pursuing research that is policy relevant but theoretically informed. Last year was a very productive one for us all. Amongst the research that we commenced were two projects led by Rowland Atkinson concerning gentrification and displacement in Australian cities, and social mix, housing policies and community outcomes. Rowland continues to work on a project funded by the Australian Research Council on privatising neighbourhoods, governance and social life with colleagues from the University of Newcastle and Macquarie University. Michelle Gabriel’s project on the environmental sustainability of Australia’s private rental housing stock, Max Travers’ project on regulatory frameworks for the not for profit housing sector and Keith Jacobs’ projects on the future of public housing and social inclusion formed the core component of our work program in 2009/2010.

Amongst this year’s new projects for AHURI are Keith Jacobs’ panel evaluation to explore the impact of stigma on social housing estates and Adrian Franklin’s enquiry into the causes and effects of experiences of loneliness. Stewart Williams and Keith Jacobs have just started a large project funded with the assistance of the Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change led by academics at James Cook University that focuses on the adaptation of the built environment to prepare for the impact of natural hazards.

Other important news was the departure of Rowland Atkinson, Director of HACRU from 2005-2009. Rowland returned to the UK in August 2009 to take up a readership in sociology at the University of York. Rowland will be sorely missed by all those who worked with him, both at the University and also in the wider housing policy community. His enormous energy and commitment to critical scholarship was an inspiration to all of us within the School of Sociology and Social Work. He did an outstanding job leading HACRU and ensured its reputation as a centre of excellence in housing related research. I have now taken over from Rowland, as Director. It is the second time around for me, as I held the post from 2002-2005. The next few years will be exciting as we all grapple with the pressing problems that confront society at a time of demographic and economic change.

In the pages that follow we have outlined work we have completed, our current research and also new projects that we have just started.

Keith Jacobs
June 2010.
Stigma Research Laboratory (SRL) at Moonah Arts Centre. Image: Sean Fennessy.
The Stigma Research Laboratory (SRL) established by HACRU in partnership with the Tasmanian School of Art, Moonah Arts Centre and Contemporary Arts Spaces Tasmania (CAST) was established as an arts-based strategy to consider the possibilities for challenging the negative representations that are ascribed to certain Australian urban neighbourhoods. The problem of stigma is both complex and enduring and as a result, is difficult to address. With Keith Jacobs providing academic direction for the project and Natasha Cica as collaborative project developer, SRL held an exhibition at the Moonah Arts Centre in May 2009 featuring three visual artists John Vella, Scott Cotterell and Phillipa Steel. The project drew on the Unit’s strong interests in housing stigma and social inclusion, to create an exhibition that was equal parts intelligent, elegant and cheeky. Merging together contemporary art, academia and the public, the SRL challenged contemporary notions of the neighbourhood and explored ideas relating to the enduring questions of how and why our postcode remains such a prevailing factor in defining who we are.

What future for public housing in Australia? A critical analysis (Funder: AHURI)

Keith Jacobs (UTAS)
Rowland Atkinson (UTAS)
Val Colic-Peisker (RMIT)
Mike Berry (RMIT)
Tony Dalton (RMIT)

This AHURI funded project examined the medium and long-term viability of the public housing sector in Australia. The overall aims of the project were to look beyond the day-to-day issues confronting State Housing Associations (SHAs) and to provide new insights into the role of public housing in Australia. The research project was guided by three main assumptions; first, that the demand for low-cost housing will remain high and that many of the people who require low-cost housing will be individuals with a high level of need. Second, the current economic recession and the willingness of governments to invest in public infrastructure will generate significant resources for public housing at least in the short term. Third, that there will be an impetus within government policy circles to diversify public housing and extend the role of community housing associations in providing low cost housing. Through a series of interviews with housing experts we learnt that a widely held view within policy circles is that public housing is at a ‘crossroads’ in so far as its long-term future is uncertain. The lack of funding and antipathy towards the sector has acted as a spur for the Australian government to consider radical longer-term proposals including the transfer of stock to community housing agencies.
3. CURRENT PROJECTS

The environmental sustainability of Australia’s private rental housing stock (Funder: AHURI)

Michelle Gabriel (UTAS)
Phillipa Watson (UTAS)
Rachel Ong (Curtin)
Gavin Wood (RMIT)
Maryann Wulff (Monash)

This AHURI funded project examines the potential opportunities for, and barriers to improving the environmental sustainability of Australia’s private rental stock. For existing private rental stock, this entails retrofitting existing dwellings to minimise energy and water consumption. For new dwellings and development, options include consideration of housing design, location and density.

Improving the environmental sustainability of private rental housing poses unique policy challenges. Of central concern is the ‘principal-agent’ or ‘split incentive’ problem; that is, while the landlord (or the principal) is generally responsible for purchasing the energy-using facilities in the home, the tenant (or the agent) is generally responsible for the payment of recurrent energy bills.

Also of concern is the potentially uneven impact of new environmental sustainability measures on Australian households. In contrast to homeowners, private rental households are more likely to be experiencing poverty and housing stress. Higher concentrations of low-income households within the private rental sector and existing problems of housing affordability place financial restrictions on the capacity of these households to adapt to increased energy prices.

The team are currently undertaking a review of recent policy initiatives and consultation with private rental landlords. Recent outputs from this project include a positioning paper and an analytical report which models the impact of the Federal Government’s proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme on household energy bills.

Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not for profit housing sector

Max Travers (UTAS)
Vivienne Milligan (UNSW)
Keith Jacobs (UTAS)
Rhonda Phillips (UQ)
Bill Randolph (UNSW)

This AHURI funded research project is concerned with questions about the purpose of regulatory frameworks; the impact of regulation, especially impacts on service outcomes and organisational culture; and the development of effective regulation. There has been considerable interest in Australian social housing in expanding the small ‘not for profit’ sector, within a regulatory framework that makes it possible for governments to give financial support. A number of states have introduced different schemes, and a new National Regulatory Code is about to be introduced. This research project investigates the usefulness of regulatory frameworks for the ‘not for profit’ housing sector in Australia, by undergoing case studies in three states.
Additional research on regulation in the UK, the Netherlands, Austria and the USA has been conducted by Keith Jacobs (UTAS), Heather MacDonald (UWS) and Julie Lawson (University of Delft).

This project is approaching completion, the recent outputs from this project include a positioning paper which provides a review of the potential strengths and weaknesses of regulation as a means of expanding the not-for-profit sector in Australian housing.

Funded by AHURI, this project focuses on exploring ways in which housing services respond to Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility and how these responses can be improved. These questions are examined in the context of policy developments in remote and regional Australia that have potential to increase Indigenous urbanisation. The question of how social housing providers should respond to the mobility of Indigenous populations is a vexed one, involving issues of whether alternative and better models of service delivery can, or should, be found. How governments address this question carries implications for the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia because of its impact on Indigenous aspirations for cultural integrity and cultural survival. In addition, this research has implications not only for remote and regional Australia, but also for social housing in urban areas.

Recent outputs for this project include a positioning paper which provides an overview of current research on the relationship between housing services and indigenous patterns of mobility while examining the policy context within which these services take place. This project will be completed later in 2010.

**Improving Housing Policy Responses to Indigenous Patterns of Mobility (Funder: AHURI)**

Daphne Habibis (UTAS)
Chris Birdsell-Jones (CURTIN)
Terry Dunbar (CDU)
Margaret Scrimgeour (UniSA)
3. CURRENT PROJECTS

**Gated and master-planned communities: Social privatism and community formation**

Rowland Atkinson (UTAS)
Pauline McGuirk, (University of Newcastle)
Robyn Dowling (Macquarie University)

This project is approaching completion with survey results and interviews with the residents of six gated and master-planned communities in the Sydney metropolitan area now completed. A series of papers are currently in progress detailing the key findings. These will focus on the relative privatism and social withdrawal of households living in these communities and consider the wider positioning of gating and master-planning as new aspects of the urban fabric.

**Gentrification and displacement in Melbourne and Sydney (Funder: AHURI)**

Rowland Atkinson (UTAS)
Maryann Wulff (Monash)

This project is now being written-up ready for a winter submission to AHURI. Our work focused on the scale and experience of gentrification and displacement in Melbourne and Sydney. New data on patterns of affluent household migration in the two cities was plotted to unpick the geography of gentrification. Simultaneously we recruited around 50 interviewees across the two cities to understand more about the household implications for those struggling to stay in rapidly appreciating property markets. We have also conducted policymaker interviews with a view to generating concrete proposals for local governments and cities facing these pressures.
The problem of social housing stigmatisation and the innovations that can minimise its effects: a panel investigation (Funder: AHURI)

Keith Jacobs (UTAS)
Kathy Arthurson (Flinders University)
Natasha Cica (UTAS)
Anna Greenwood (UTAS)
Annette Hastings (University of Glasgow)

This AHURI funded project will involve the establishment of an investigative panel to unpack the causes of stigma and its effects in order to make recommendations for innovative policy interventions that promote more positive public perceptions of social housing. The investigation will build upon significant work already undertaken by HACRU’s Stigma Research Laboratory.

It is recognised by policy-makers that Australian social housing remains stigmatised by the wider public and business communities. This has serious consequences for an already disadvantaged population group in terms of employment opportunities, educational and health outcomes. For housing organisations, negative perceptions undermine initiatives to improve the quality of life for tenants and make it difficult to overcome opposition to placing social housing in new private developments. Housing organisations are committed to finding sites for new social housing in areas with high concentrations of private home-ownership. Thus it is important to deploy policies to challenge the stigma surrounding social housing and any resistance to its location in particular neighbourhoods through engendering more positive understandings of the contribution it makes to community well-being. While there is mounting evidence for experiences and negative effects of housing and neighbourhood stigma in the empirical literature, there remains limited evidence that considers the effectiveness of strategies for countering its impact on people and places. The investigative panel will bring together internationally renowned experts in media and public relations, housing management and tenant representatives to work with researchers to explore novel options to address this problem.

This project commenced in May 2010 and will be completed early 2011.
4. NEW PROJECTS

Loneliness, housing and health and health in Australia
(Funder: AHURI)

Adrian Franklin (UTAS)
Bruce Tranter (UTAS)

Funded by AHURI, this research project is concerned with the relationship between loneliness, housing and health. Specifically, this research is guided by the question of how does the newly emerging issue of loneliness in Australia connect to housing and housing policy in Australia and what is its subsequent impact on health? This project aims to produce an essay that translates the largely hidden spectre of loneliness in Australia into its proper policy place, on the interface of housing, health and the city. The purpose of this translation will primarily be to identify and specify the parameters of an emerging policy area for discussion by policy professionals and policy makers. However, in doing so, the essay will also identify new areas for research on loneliness that make a significant contribution to connecting housing and health policy and practice.

Homelessness Research Collaboration (Funded by The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

David MacKenzie (Swinburne)
Paul Flatau (Murdoch)
Guy Johnson (RMIT)
Angela Spinney (Swinburne)
Chris Chamberlain (RMIT)
Suellen Murray (RMIT)
Kath Hulse (Swinburne)
Adam Steen (ACU)
Rob Stanton (NATSEM)
Phil Anderson (AIHW)
Edmond Hsu (AIHW)
Shelley Mallett (UniMelb)
Phil Crane (QUT)
Catherine Holmes (UQ)
Rodney Fopp (UniSA)
Keith Jacobs (UTAS)
Tony Eardley (UNSW)

This FaHCSIA funded project is being directed by the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University and includes Keith Jacobs as part of the research team. The Commonwealth White paper on homelessness has presented the challenge of ‘halving overall homeless by 2020’, however, homelessness is a complex issue with difficult questions to be answered and problems that need to be solved. In particular, this involves tracking the trajectories of sub-groups of homelessness and assessing the needs of various groups in order to arrive at an understanding of the issue, which allows homelessness to be dealt with as a mainstream issue rather than garnering only a residual response.

This research project merges the necessary resources to meet the questions raised within the white paper, by bringing together research leaders who understand the problems and the policy context surrounding the issue of homelessness in Australia.
4. NEW PROJECTS

Adaptation of Built Environment to Climate Change Induced Increased Intensity of Natural Hazards (Funder: Climate Change Adaption research Grants Program, Bureau of Meteorology)

David King (JCU)
Alison Cottrell (JCU)
Yetta Gurtner (JCU)
John Ginger (JCU)
Stewart Williams (UTAS)
Keith Jacobs (UTAS)

This project focuses on the use of building codes, land-use planning and housing insurance as key regulatory mechanisms in climate change adaptation. Whilst often deemed to be amongst the most important tools for disaster mitigation, they are not well understood, especially in terms of how they might be adapted for use under changing climatic conditions. Perceptions are held about stakeholders’ views on these issues but there has been little comprehensive research. The project addresses the gap in knowledge through an all hazards approach to building design, land use planning and building stock, using case studies in each sector to facilitate a proactive approach that will link practice to policy. The UTAS team is investigating insurance as an under-utilised regulatory mechanism in relation to housing. The more traditional deployments of insurance, actuarialism and risk management are not adequate for understanding the complexity of natural disasters.
Recent Completions

Ellie Francis-Brophy’s doctoral thesis ‘Accommodating public housing change: The social relations of policy actors’ has recently been completed. Within her thesis, Ellie analysed the social relations between non-state policy actors and the Tasmanian State Housing Authority in a period of transition following the implementation of Stage One of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Jan Forbes has just submitted her doctoral thesis ‘The housing experiences of older women who live alone: an interpretative approach’. Jan’s study seeks to address a gap in knowledge, about how older women who live alone experience their housing. While demographic information indicates that this group faces risks and vulnerabilities that might be improved by housing policy responses, evidence on the perspectives of residents is limited.

Current Doctoral Students

Portraying the Great Australian Dream: The needs and motivations for owner-occupation, the constraints preventing it, and the decision-making process surrounding it – Dan Goss

The Discourse of Anti-social Behaviour in Australia: A Foucauldian analysis of a Tasmanian public housing estate – Anna Greenwood

Corporate expertise and its impact on organisational capacity and governance – Erica Altmann

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

Accidentally tourism: When non-humans interfere with the planning and development of place – Felicity Picken

Sustainable Housing for Equity and Energy Efficiency – Phillipa Watson

Global Financial Markets and Housing – Peter Willans
6. PUBLICATIONS


2009 White, R.D. ‘Understanding and Engagement in Community Intervention: Views from Above and Below’, *Tasmanian Council of Social Service Newsletter*, Battery Point: TasCOSS.

6. PUBLICATIONS


The Housing and Community Research Unit is located in the School of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Tasmania. It receives core funding from Housing Tasmania and the University 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 academic rigorous work of a 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 AHURI.
Our core interests

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 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 Keith Jacobs (Director)
Social exclusion, stigma and urban regeneration,

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

Dr Daphne Habibis
Indigenous housing, complex needs

Dr Kris Natalier
Homelessness, criminal justice, young people

Dr Stewart Williams
Risk management, environmental
disaster planning

Associate Staff

Professor Adrian Franklin
Professor Rob White
Dr Jed Donoghue
Dr Max Travers
Dr Maggie Walter
Dr Rowland Atkinson (University of York)

HACRU

Postgraduate students

Erica Altmann
Jan Forbes
Dan Goss
Anna Greenwood
Meredith Izon
Felicity Picken
Phillipa Watson
Peter Willans

www.utas.edu.au/sociology/HACRU