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The Housing and Community Research Unit  

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Welcome to our annual report for 2010/2011. The report provides information on another busy year. As researchers, we have kept a close eye on the federal government’s plans to expand the role of the community housing sector. While important, an enlarged role for the community housing sector should not detract us from the major problem facing all social housing authorities: the paucity of funds for new development and ongoing operational costs. One of the most pressing tasks for supporters of social housing is to mount a campaign to persuade the federal government to increase social housing subsidies by pointing out that those who benefit most from the current housing system are well-off homeowners and rental investors. Of course any campaign that draws attention to the iniquitous housing system is likely to incur opposition from groupings that benefit from the status quo. However unless the funding arrangements are reformed, the social housing sector will remain marginalised regardless of whether state housing authorities or community housing organisations eventually end up managing the bulk of the stock.
All of us who work in HACRU are committed to pursuing research that is policy relevant and theoretically informed. Last year was another productive one. Amongst the projects we completed for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute were: ‘the environmental sustainability of Australia’s private rental housing stock’; ‘regulatory frameworks for the ‘not-for-profit’ housing sector’; ‘the future of public housing’; ‘the impact of stigmatisation for social housing tenants’; ‘housing, policy and social inclusion’; ‘the causes and effects of experiences of loneliness’; and ‘housing services responses to Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility’. We also hosted two excellent seminars. Adrian Franklin presented a paper on ‘the future design of suburbs and community renewal’ and Hobart-based architect Paul Johnston talked on ‘contemporary design in social housing’ based on his Churchill Fellowship study tour of the UK, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

The projects that we are currently working on include: Stewart Williams and Keith Jacobs’ partnership with James Cook University on ‘adaptation of the built environment to prepare for the impact of natural hazards’; Anne Coleman’s investigation of ‘homelessness and rough sleeping’; Michelle Gabriel’s research on ‘home comfort and environmental adaptation’ and ‘women’s housing pathways and priorities’; Adrian Franklin’s book ‘Retro: a guide to the mid-20th century design revival’; and Keith Jacobs and Stephen Loo’s joint study with Monash University on ‘independent housing for young people recovering from mental illness’.

Other news we can report on includes the appointment of Anne Coleman as a senior lecturer within the School of Sociology and Social Work and the award of a 3 year AHURI postdoctoral research fellowship for Felicity Picken. We extend a warm welcome to Anne, Felicity and Kathleen Flanagan, a new PhD student, who will be researching the ways that neo-liberal ideologies impact on the organisational culture of government housing authorities. We also celebrated the award of PhD to two of our students, Felicity Picken and Jan Forbes.

This coming year we will be hosting two seminar presentations and one research symposium. Professor Russell Kenley, based at Swinburne University, will discuss the findings from an AHURI-funded project exploring ‘asset management issues for social housing organisations’. Later on in the year Annette Hastings from the University of Glasgow will present a paper on ‘middle class activism in relation to public service provision’. In the autumn we will convene a housing and theory symposium on the theme of ‘homes, objects and other things’.

Our aim for the symposium is to encourage broad theoretical and conceptual reflections on our present understanding of housing provision, tenure relations, housing management, household practices and sustainable housing.

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

Keith Jacobs
June 2011
2. CURRENT 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 understandings and deployments of insurance, actuarialism and risk management are not adequate for the complexity of today’s natural disasters.

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 (Funder: AHURI)

Cameron Duff (Monash)
Shane Murray (Monash)
Cameron Sudgen (Monash)
Stephen Loo (UTAS)
Keith Jacobs (UTAS)

This project aims to promote housing policy interventions that strengthen the array of informal resources available in communities to support independent housing for youth in recovery and to determine the role of informal resources in promoting social inclusion. The project will identify neighbourhood factors that moderate the risk of homelessness for youth in recovery and will entail data collection activities in both Melbourne and Launceston.
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

Women’s housing pathways and priorities
Michelle Gabriel and Phillipa Watson
This project identifies a new set of housing pathways and priorities among young women compared with their mothers and grandmothers. These include: an appreciation of property ownership as the key to long term financial security; a displacement of the home as a site of family, care and work; the reorientation of residential location towards place of employment; and recognition of the home as a place in which particular ethical modes of living, such as a mindfulness of energy and water consumption, can be enacted.

Home comfort
Michelle Gabriel
This project interrogates changes in societal and individual expectations surrounding housing form and comfort, in particular, the increasing reliance of households on energy-intensive heating and cooling systems to manage household comfort levels. It will provide insight into differences in the living standards and comfort levels of households across low and high-income neighbourhoods. The project is important in understanding how the transition to a lower carbon society may potentially exacerbate differences in the household experiences of home comfort and hence the quality of life of low and high income households.

Street homelessness: making everyone count
Anne Coleman
This project is a collaborative venture between Anne and David MacKenzie (Swinburne University of Technology) that aims to build on knowledge about the situation of people sleeping ‘rough’ in Australia. The three stage project will: explore the extent to which, and the reasons why, people sleeping out are undercounted; document the specific elements of best practice outreach; and gather anecdotes which illustrate the importance of outreach in responding to people who sleep out. The project will increase understanding of this ‘hard to reach’ group and provide guidelines about how to engage with and provide meaningful assistance to them.
2. CURRENT PROJECTS

Retro: the mid-20th century design revival
Adrian Franklin
This research project examines way in which objects designed in the mid-twentieth century have captured our imagination in the contemporary period. Original designs/objects are highly sought after and valued and many of the designs from the 1950s-1980s have been reissued. The book considers the nostalgia for the optimistic days of the space race, the electronics revolution, the democratisation of design for living and more luxurious homes for all. The research is to be published as a book by the University of New South Wales Press in September 2011 under the title ‘RETRO: a guide to the mid-20th century design revival’.

Gateways to intervention in homelessness: exploring the missed opportunities of ‘friends and relatives’
Felicity Picken
This project will explore the problem of homelessness amongst the middle-aged. The research will consider the role that informal networks can provide for the homeless such as friends and relatives. It will also consider how welfare agencies and state housing authorities can facilitate these informal networks.

Leadership and the state of planning and architecture
Felicity Picken
This project will explore the importance of ‘transformational leadership’ as a vehicle for establishing more socially inclusive cities. It will address questions such as: how do professionals view leadership? What role can leadership play in creating a more inclusive urban setting? And how can leaders be encouraged within the design profession?
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 project established a panel of experts from government, welfare organisations, academia and the media to consider the impact of stigma for social housing residents and the policies that can be deployed to mitigate its effects. The panel found that there are complex reasons why social housing neighbourhoods are subject to popular vilification. People in these neighbourhoods are seen not as victims of social inequity resulting from policies that congregate disadvantaged people in certain locations, but as contributing to their problems by cultures of welfare dependency and crime.

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 project examined the potential opportunities for, and barriers to, improving the environmental sustainability of Australia’s private rental stock. The outputs from this project include a positioning paper, an analytical report which models the impact of the federal government’s proposed carbon pollution reduction scheme on household energy bills and a final report which presented the key research findings.
3. COMPLETED PROJECTS

Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not-for-profit housing sector (Funder: AHURI)

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

This research project investigated the usefulness of regulatory frameworks for the not-for-profit housing sector in Australia, by undertaking case studies in three states. The outputs from this project include a positioning paper that provides a review of the potential strengths and weaknesses of regulation as a means of expanding the not-for-profit sector in Australian housing and a final report that presents the empirical data collected.

Improving housing policy responses to Indigenous patterns of mobility (Funder: AHURI)

Daphne Habibis (UTAS)
Chris Birdsall-Jones (CURTIN)
Terry Dunbar (Charles Darwin University)
Margaret Scrimgeour (UniSA)

This project was concerned with Indigenous patterns of mobility and social housing responses to these patterns. The research identified types of mobility amongst Indigenous people and the link between mobility and the risk of falling into homelessness. It also outlined how housing policy-makers might respond to increased rates of temporary mobility among Indigenous people.

Gated and master-planned communities: social privatism and community formation (Australian Research Council)

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

The methods for this project included surveys and interviews with the residents of six gated and master-planned communities in the Sydney metropolitan area. A series of papers have been produced on the relative privatism and social withdrawal of households living in these communities and the wider positioning of gating and master-planning as new aspects of the urban fabric.
3. COMPLETED PROJECTS

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

Rowland Atkinson (UTAS/University of York)  
Maryann Wulff (Monash)

This project 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. The final report suggests that not only is localised gentrification a major problem but the wider issue of systemic housing supply issues has tipped many households into being dislocated from key locations in the city.

**Housing, public policy and social inclusion**  
*(Funder: AHURI)*

Kath Hulse (Swinburne)  
Keith Jacobs (UTAS)  
Angela Spinney (Swinburne)  
Kathy Arthurson (Flinders)

This project explored the ways in which housing processes affect economic and social disadvantage and the extent to which housing and related policies and programs can be effective in addressing such disadvantage. The final report sets out how housing policy might best deliver outcomes that enhance social inclusion.

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

Adrian Franklin (UTAS)  
Bruce Tranter (UTAS)

This research project considered the relationship between loneliness, housing and health. Amongst the outputs from the project was an essay that translates the largely hidden spectre of loneliness in Australia into its proper policy place: the interface of housing, health and the city. The purpose of this translation was to identify and specify the parameters of an emerging policy area for discussion by policy professionals and policy makers. It also identifies new areas for research on loneliness that make a significant contribution to connecting housing and health policy and practice.
4. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

**Recent PhD Completions**

Felicity Picken’s doctoral thesis ‘Accidentally tourism: when non-humans interfere with the planning and development of place’ considered the impact of government investment in architecture and urban design projects in Sullivans Cove, Hobart.

Jan Forbes’ doctoral thesis ‘The housing experiences of older women who live alone: an interpretative approach’ addressed a gap in knowledge about how older women experience their housing.

**Current Doctoral Students**

- Portraying the ‘Great Australian Dream’ – Dan Goss
- 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
- Sustainable housing for equity and energy efficiency – Phillipa Watson
- Global financial markets and housing – Peter Willans
- Neo-liberal ideologies and their impact for government service providers – Kathleen Flanagan
5. PUBLICATIONS


2010 Loo, S., ‘School of fine furniture’, Architecture Australia, 99, 80-84.


5. PUBLICATIONS


2010 Walter, M. ‘Market forces and indigenous resistance paradigms’, Social Movement Studies, 9 (2) 121-137.


2011 Willis, K., Natalier, K. and Revie, M. ‘Understanding risk, choice and amenity in an urban area at risk of flooding’, Housing Studies, 26 (2) 225-239.
The Housing and Community Research Unit is located in the School of Sociology and Social Work. 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 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 the 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 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, social housing, urban policy

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

**Dr Anne Coleman**
Homelessness, policy implementation and social housing.

**Dr Felicity Picken**
(AHURI Postdoctoral Fellow)
Homelessness, urban planning

**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

**Prof. Adrian Franklin**

**Prof. Rob White**

**Dr Max Travers**

**Assoc. Prof. Maggie Walter**

**Assoc. Prof. Bruce Tranter**

**Ms Helen Norrie**

**Prof. Stephen Loo**

**Dr Rowland Atkinson**
(University of York)

**Prof. Jim Kemeny**
(Honorary research fellow)

**Dr Jesse Shipway**
(Honorary research fellow)

**Dr Jed Donoghue**
(Honorary research fellow)

HACRU postgraduate students

Erica Altmann
Dan Goss
Meredth Izon
Phillipa Watson
Peter Willans
Kathleen Flanagan
