

# There are people living here: exploring urban renewal and public housing estates

## DISCUSSION PAPER

by Kathleen Flanagan

Social Action & Research Centre, Anglicare Tasmania





There are people living here: exploring urban renewal and public housing estates

© Anglicare Tasmania, September 2010

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 no part may be reproduced without permission of Anglicare Tasmania Inc.

ISBN: 978-1-921267-24-6

For further information contact:  
The Social Action and Research Centre  
Anglicare Tasmania  
GPO Box 1620, HOBART TAS 7001

Tel: 03 6213 3555  
Fax: 03 6231 9589  
Email: [k.flanagan@anglicare-tas.org.au](mailto:k.flanagan@anglicare-tas.org.au)  
Web: [www.anglicare-tas.org.au](http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au)

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Prof. Keith Jacobs, Dr Kathy Arthurson and Anna Greenwood for their thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Their feedback was invaluable. Any errors remain the responsibility of the author.



## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	4
<b>2. The 'problem': concentrated disadvantage</b>	7
2.1. The causes of concentrated disadvantage	8
2.2. Why is concentrated disadvantage a problem?	9
2.3. Is it just a public housing problem?	10
<b>3. 94 definitions of community: the way we talk about the problem</b>	13
<b>4. The 'solution': urban renewal and social mix</b>	17
<b>5. Is it the right solution?</b>	19
5.1. Why social mix?	19
5.2. The evidence base for social mix	20
5.3. Social mix and stigma	23
5.4. What do residents think?	25
5.5. 'A one-sided strategy'	26
<b>6. Flying in the face of the evidence: why social mix?</b>	27
<b>7. The process and its consequences: who benefits from urban renewal?</b>	29
7.1. Displacement	29
7.2. Gains for the private sector	31
7.3. The promotion of home ownership	33
7.4. Pressure on the rest of the system	34
7.5. Has it worked? Evaluating urban renewal	34
7.6. The price of success	35
7.7. Will 'success' last?	37
<b>8. The role of community participation</b>	38
8.1. Participation in theory and in practice	38
8.2. Participation: what's really going on	39
<b>9. If not social mix, then what?</b>	41
9.1. Working with public housing communities	41
9.2. Opening up the public housing system	43
9.3. Dealing with the real problem	44
<b>10. Conclusion</b>	46
10.1. Where are we now?	46
10.2. What's happening in Tasmania?	47
10.3. Where to from here?	48
<b>References</b>	49



## 1. Introduction

In the 2008 Tasmanian State Budget, a new urban renewal project in the Hobart suburbs of Bridgewater and Gagebrook was announced. Both suburbs were originally constructed as public housing broadacre estates in the 1970s, and retain high levels of public housing: of the 2419 occupied dwellings in the area, 989, or 41%, are public housing properties (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008a). They are both disadvantaged places. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Gagebrook is the most socio-economically disadvantaged suburb in Tasmania and Bridgewater the fifth most disadvantaged (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008b).<sup>1</sup> The urban renewal project, according to the 2008 announcement, would 'provide a blueprint for the redevelopment of these suburbs in the future'. A 'master planning process', in partnership with the local council, would 'amongst other things, change the mix of private and public housing in those communities and support the development of better infrastructure in the future'. The project would be 'the first of several Statewide' (Giddings 2008). Oversight of the development of the master plan has been assigned to the Housing Innovations Unit rather than to Housing Tasmania.

As will be shown in this paper, urban renewal is not trivial. It can and does have marked effects, for good or ill, on communities. Because of this, Anglicare has produced this paper to provide information on and discussion of the issues involved in urban renewal projects that promote tenure diversification. We hope to generate debate amongst policy makers, community organisations and residents of communities that are targeted in urban renewal projects about the benefits and risks that these projects pose, and about alternative strategies that may fit better with what the research is telling us.

The Bridgewater and Gagebrook project as announced is consistent with the Australian Government's housing reform agenda and social inclusion strategy. The Economic Stimulus Plan social housing funding was contingent on the States implementing a number of reforms including 'reducing concentrations of disadvantage through appropriate redevelopment to create mixed communities that improve social inclusion' (Council of Australian Governments 2009, p. 14). One of the national social inclusion strategy's priorities is 'breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods and communities' although the focus of the strategy to date appears to be regional, not suburban (Australian Government 2009, pp. 4, 57-8).

What are 'mixed communities'? In an important speech on social housing reform, the federal Minister for Housing described them as communities in which social housing tenants 'live in developments alongside young families buying their first home, retirees who have downsized and young singles renting an inner city flat'. Mixed communities include public housing as a 'part – but not a feature – of the neighbourhood'. The Minister argued that such communities are 'more likely to build social capital – the goodwill, shared values, networks, trust and reciprocity that exists in neighbourhoods' and thus 'will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, resolve disputes, and take advantage of new opportunities'. She concluded that '[t]he remaining broad acre public housing estates ... should be renewed to create mixed communities. This is the way of the future' (Plibersek 2009, pp. 6, 7-8).

---

<sup>1</sup>This ranking is drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' socio-economic index of relative disadvantage, which determines levels of disadvantage on the basis of characteristics such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment and lack of a private car (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008b).



But why 'should' public housing estates be 'renewed to create mixed communities'? The Minister linked problems on public housing estates to the fact that 'too much of our public housing stock is concentrated together in large estates'. She said that reduced government investment had resulted in a limited stock pool that was poorly maintained and tightly targeted. This led to a range of problems in public housing areas: children growing up in 'jobless households and jobless neighbourhoods' with 'very few employed adults as role models', dislocation from jobs, services and transport, people becoming 'entrenched in their social isolation', young people 'having an expectation that they will grow up to rely on public housing, as their parents have done'. The Minister noted that public housing estates are 'regularly featured in reports on the most disadvantaged postcodes in the country' and expressed regret that while 'public housing was once an enabler, part of a housing career which allowed working class people opportunities including home ownership, today it is too often just a safety net that fails to provide the range of assistance required by tenants'. The creation of 'mixed communities' thus becomes part of the answer for the problems of public housing. Renewal of estates, 'with the support and involvement of existing tenants', is to take place over the next ten years (Plibersek 2009, pp. 4, 8-9).

As researchers have pointed out, 'mixed communities' can be 'mixed' at many levels: household structure, age, cultural background, income, tenure, gender, socio-economic status, disability or life cycle stage (Atkinson 2008, p. 21; Johnston 2002, pp. 4-5). However, there is considerable blurring in the way 'mix' is described – 'social mix', 'tenure mix', 'residential mix' and 'socio-economic mix' are all used interchangeably (Arthurson 2002, p. 246). The blurring arises because there are links between these different kinds of 'mixes'. In an urban renewal context, the intention is usually to create 'tenure mix' as a way of achieving 'social mix', which, in this context, tends to be a short-hand term for 'socio-economic mix', rather than referring to social diversity more broadly. The degree to which tenure mix can create social mix, of course, depends on the degree to which tenure and socio-economic status are connected in a particular country (Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 663-4). In other words, it depends on whether a particular tenure is occupied solely by people in a particular socio-economic group, or by people from a range of different groups. In the UK, for example, all tenures are occupied by people with varying incomes (Bailey et al. 2006, p. 12). In Australia, eligibility for public housing at the point of entry is means-tested and the system is highly targeted, so most public housing tenants are on very low incomes and many have other special needs. In other tenures, however, the picture may be less straightforward, with high and low income earners living in home ownership and private rental.

The Minister's support of tenure diversification and social mix to resolve social problems is not unusual. The approach is 'an established orthodoxy' throughout Australia, with the policy of tenure diversification through urban renewal enthusiastically supported (Wood 2003, p. 47). Researchers have noted that '[s]ocial diversity has become a factoid in which the assertion that diversity is "good" has been repeated so often that it has been considered to be a kind of truth' (Atkinson 2005, p. 2). But the research evidence on the benefits of social mix is much more equivocal than the political and policy consensus would suggest, and researchers in Australia, the UK and the US have been pointing this out for the past twenty years.

In 1990, a study by Sarkissian, Forsyth and Heine (1990, p. 13) described the evidence base on social mix as 'inconclusive and often contradictory'. A decade later, a US study by Smith (2001, p. 5) pointed out that 'we have no real evidence' for believing that social mix is beneficial. A 2002 literature review on social mix by Arthurson drew the following conclusion: 'the limited research available, especially in Australia, ... remains inconclusive and the findings ... are not large enough or regionally diverse, to draw broad or international conclusions' (Arthurson 2002, p. 248). In

later articles, Arthurson drew attention to the contrast between the lack of certainty in the research evidence and the approaches being adopted by the policy community. She noted that most of the contemporary policy debate was ‘occurring without recourse to the research findings’, which were that the empirical evidence base for social mix is ‘incomplete and inconsistent’ and ‘inconclusive’. Despite this, social mix was ‘a fait accompli’ in contemporary planning and housing policy, with community organisations, the media and politicians all in agreement (Arthurson 2004c, pp. 101, 104, 2005a, p. 3). Wood (2003, p. 49) also argues that policy makers in this area ‘have failed to take note of several studies which question the assumptions that are implicit if not entirely explicit in the frameworks that have been adopted’. Researchers in the UK in 2007 described the evidence base as ‘fragmented and ambiguous’, arguing that ‘it is not possible to demonstrate consistent and replicable evidence to support mixed tenure’ (Manley et al. 2007, pp. 1, 12).

Yet, despite the inconsistency between government policy and the evidence, the creation of ‘mixed communities’ through urban renewal appears for the moment to be, as the federal Minister for Housing puts it, ‘the way of the future’.

### Terminology: what is urban renewal?

A wide range of activity falls under the ‘renewal’ banner. Randolph and Judd have identified six common approaches used in Australia. They are:

- 1) wholesale or at least substantial disposal of public housing stock, through sales, demolition and redevelopment, to reduce the concentration of public housing in the area;
- 2) partial disposal of stock to achieve greater ‘mix’;
- 3) physical upgrades and improvements to assist in marketing the area and improving the value of the housing;
- 4) management-based approaches, including ‘intensive tenancy management’ or the transfer of stock management responsibilities to community housing associations, to reduce costs;
- 5) whole-of-government approaches (or ‘place management’) focussed on improving service delivery; and
- 6) community development approaches (cited in Randolph 2000, p. 9).

Ruming (2006, p. 16) distinguishes between ‘inward’ approaches, which focus on changing the experience of living in the area and the nature of the population by making the area more attractive to people ‘who have other choices’, and ‘outward’ approaches, which seek to overcome the physical, social and economic isolation of the area through partnerships with external places and parties (see also Hall, P 1997, pp. 873, 886).

But despite the variation in implementation and therefore the potential for confusion, the terminology used to describe interventions in areas of concentrated disadvantage is not specific, with terms like ‘neighbourhood improvement’, ‘urban redevelopment’, ‘community renewal’, ‘community regeneration’ and ‘urban renewal’ used interchangeably and applied to a variety of approaches (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 34; Arthurson 1998, p. 37). The UK term, for example, is ‘regeneration’, which is defined very broadly by the UK Government as ‘a set of activities to reverse economic, social and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without support from government’ (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, p. 6).

In Australia, a distinction that does appear to have gained some traction is that drawn by Wood, Randolph and Judd (2002, p. 1) between ‘urban renewal’, referring to stock management strategies and physical upgrades, and ‘community renewal’, referring to social, economic and community development activities. In Queensland, the distinction is so formalised that the urban renewal and community renewal programs are managed by separate sections of the housing department (Wood 2002, p. 11). For convenience, this paper adopts Wood, Randolph and Judd’s definitions and distinctions. However, because in many states and territories both urban and community renewal are pursued under the same strategy, this paper also follows Wood, Randolph and Judd (2002, p. 1) in adopting ‘neighbourhood renewal’ as an additional and convenient umbrella term.

It is also important to note that the terminology is not neutral terminology. As Johnston points out, ‘[t]he concept of renewal implies that there was a community or viable neighborhood [*sic*] previously, which has since declined or disappeared, and should be restored with the aid of government for some reason’ (Johnston 2003, pp. 2-3, emphasis in original). According to Cameron, such strategies are ‘about physical and social planning and policy choices that articulate ideas about what makes a “good” community’ (Cameron 2000, p. 8). These ideas are, of course, always going to be contestable.



## 2. The 'problem': concentrated disadvantage

The problem that neighbourhood renewal is purporting to solve is that of 'concentrated' or 'locational' disadvantage. Luxford defines 'places of disadvantage' as 'places with high proportions of low to very low income households, whose residents experience poor access to employment, or weak social networks and/or a reduced ability to sustain health and wellbeing'. Indicators of this disadvantage include lower than average household incomes, a high unemployment rate, poor public transport, low levels of car ownership and limited access to jobs (Luxford 2006, p. 2). Many areas with a high concentration of public housing would be defined as 'disadvantaged' under this definition, and political rhetoric, as in the Minister's speech, often makes this link.

### Using evidence from other places

A lot of the published research about neighbourhood renewal and related issues is from the US and the UK. In many ways the inspiration for these policies in Australia comes from the same places. While it is legitimate to draw upon research from other countries – many of the overseas studies cited here are also cited in the Australian research literature – and this paper does so, it is also important to bear in mind that the findings may have been influenced by the different political, social and economic contexts that exist in those countries. For example, while social segregation is growing in Australia, it is much less marked than in places such as the UK and the US (Atkinson 2008, p. 22).

The UK and the US have also taken slightly different approaches to neighbourhood renewal from those used in Australia. In the UK, neighbourhood renewal is being pursued in a highly coordinated way, underpinned by a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal<sup>2</sup> (Social Exclusion Unit 2001) and is generously funded. Average funding per neighbourhood renewal area in England in 1998-99 was £46 million (A\$121 million), compared to average funding per area in comparable Australian projects of around \$1.2 million to \$4.9 million (Arthurson 2004a, p. 9). Typically there is also a much higher retention of public and social housing in urban renewal areas in the UK, and most public housing tenants who are displaced by the redevelopment are able to return to the area once the project is completed, rather than being permanently relocated away from their original communities (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 46).

In the US, policy-makers have sought to 'de-concentrate' poverty by providing selected households in disadvantaged areas with vouchers that allow them to move out and rent in the private market in other suburbs (Atkinson 2005, p. 19). However, a particular aspect of the US literature that must be kept in mind is that in the US, discussions about social and tenure mix are inevitably linked to discussions about race (Goetz 2000, p. 158; Smith 2001, p. 15; Atkinson 2008, p. 22). As Sarkissian, Forsyth and Heine (1990, p. 13) put it, in the US, 'tenure mix is often racial mix'. The 'ghettos' themselves have emerged from a history of discrimination and segregation (Goetz 2000, p. 158), and some programs to promote social mix arose out of the fact that public housing tenants in the US successfully took court action arguing that concentrating public housing in disadvantaged areas constituted racial discrimination (Darcy 2007, p. 349; Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 20; Atkinson 2008, p. 15; Goetz 2000, p. 158). The ramifications of racial inequality in the US inevitably affect US research and the applicability of US evidence to other contexts. Despite this, most of the evidence informing policy development around social and tenure mix in the UK and Europe – and now in Australia – is based on work carried out in the US (Kearns & Mason 2007, p. 668).

<sup>2</sup> The National Strategy applies only to England, but the administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were expected to draw upon it when developing their own distinctive strategies (Social Exclusion Unit 2001, p. 2).

## 2.1. The causes of concentrated disadvantage

How do particular geographical locations become disadvantaged places inhabited by disadvantaged people? Newman et al. (2003, p. ii) caution that '[t]he issue of locational disadvantage is fraught with subjectivity in the sense that it stems from a combination of both people and place'.

**Issues of place:** As one researcher has commented, 'localities do not "cause" inequality by themselves: they register the impact of structural forces' (Peel, cited in Cameron 2000, p. 7). Changes in the labour market can lead to unemployment and a corresponding growth in dependence on income support and demographic and social changes (Randolph 2000, p. 6). High levels of unemployment in turn deprive an area of resources and capacity, such as the collective purchasing power necessary to attract shops, facilities and investment (Warr 2005b, p. 1). A consultation document issued by the UK Government explicitly links concentrated disadvantage to economic causes, ranging from changes at the local level, such as the closure of a major employer, through to the repercussions of globalisation (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, pp. 80-7). In some cases, the problem is not there originally but evolves over time. In Australia, public housing estates constructed close to industrial centres where there was plentiful manual work available fell into decline when the industries closed (Luxford 2006, p. 3). In Tasmania, the construction of some estates was linked to the potential for adjacent industrial development in response, as in Bridgewater and Gagebrook (Keen 2006, p. 5; Tasmanian Department of Housing and Construction 1977, p. 32), but the development never occurred.

Places can also become disadvantaged through the decisions, actions and inaction of governments (Peel, cited in Stubbs 2007, p. 1). The development of public housing in both broadacre estates and inner-city high rises without appropriate urban and infrastructure planning has undermined the wellbeing of these communities (Randolph 2000, p. 6). The Tasmanian estate of Risdon Vale was constructed despite 'serious doubts' being expressed by the then planning authority over the lack of industrial development, employment opportunities and transport infrastructure in the area (Woodruff 1987, pp.5-7). According to Atkinson and Jacobs (2010, p. 160), the chronic underfunding of public housing by government is the reason that many public housing estates were constructed in low-value locations. The issue of transport is particularly important: researchers, including those in Australia, stress the absence in many disadvantaged areas of reliable, affordable public transport as contributing to and reinforcing disadvantage (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, p. 23; Hall, P 1997 pp. 874, 876-7; Luxford 2006, pp. 2-3).

**Issues of people:** The 'issues of place' outlined above are intensified by policies and processes that lead to people who are already disadvantaged – through poverty, disability, illness or unemployment – being located in the same place as other people with the same problems. Some of this arises out of processes of residualisation – effectively, wealthier people 'select out' of disadvantaged areas, or, as Cheshire (2007, p. 1) puts it, '[j]ust as richer households buy more expensive and better clothes and better holidays, health care and educational opportunities for their children, so they "buy" better neighbourhoods'. Therefore the only people left in disadvantaged areas are disadvantaged people who are restricted in their capacity to move elsewhere, either due to affordability constraints in the case of private renters or to restrictive transfer policies in the case of public housing tenants (Luxford 2006, p. 2).

There are also deliberate policy decisions that play a part in 'issues of people', and researchers have drawn particular attention to the allocation policies used by public housing authorities. Social housing is allocated on the basis of 'need', and because of the shortfall in supply, the level of 'need' that a person has to have to successfully reach the top of the queue has grown considerably. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, of the 1191 allocations to public housing and state owned and managed indigenous housing in Tasmania in 2006-07, 91.1% were to households classified as 'in greatest need' – that is, people who were homeless, whose life or safety was at risk in their existing accommodation, who had a health condition which was aggravated by their existing housing or who had very high housing costs. Over half (58.3%) of the allocations were made to households who were 'in greatest need' for more than just one reason (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008, p. 5).

There is also evidence that not only do the tight controls on eligibility mean that only the most disadvantaged households can access social housing, policies tend to allocate the most socially excluded people to the 'worst' areas, while less socially excluded tenants are allocated to 'better' areas (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 103). This can be a result of pressure



within the system: people in extreme need have less capacity to assert their own wishes or wait for a better option. Instead, their circumstances compel them to take the first vacancy that arises, which is likely to be in an area of poorer quality as these tend to have higher turnover rates (see Atkinson 2008, p. 31; Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas 2010, pp. 37, 39). It can also be an outcome of efforts to provide 'sensitive' allocations. For example, a housing officer allocating a house to a tenant with a history of anti-social behaviour will be more likely to choose a house in an area with social problems than in an area with few problems because the tenant will 'blend in' in the former area, while in the latter they may attract complaints and opposition (see Dean & Hastings 2000, p. 19). This approach causes further residualisation in disadvantaged areas, which is only intensified by policies that actively encourage people to 'transition' out of public housing once their circumstances improve (Stone & Hulse 2006, pp. 20-1).

## 2.2. Why is concentrated disadvantage a problem?

Most people consider the existence of disadvantage to be a social problem. But why is there such a focus on *concentrated* disadvantage? It is not a new area of concern. Fear of the threat of contamination posed by concentrated communities of poor people has existed since industrialisation brought large numbers of low income earners into cities in the 19th century (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2003, p. 10; Arthurson 2008a, p. 490). According to Arthurson (2008a, p. 489), increasing social segregation meant that 'the middle and upper classes developed a distorted image of the working classes, who were often portrayed as threatening'.

However, more recently there has been considerable research attention given to the theory of 'area effects' (also called 'neighbourhood effects'). The hypothesis underpinning this theory is 'that a poor individual living in a poor neighbourhood experiences worse outcomes than a demographically and economically identical individual living elsewhere' (Atkinson 2008, p. 9). The theory is a major driver of government decisions to intervene to break up concentrations of disadvantage (Holmes 2006, p. 3).<sup>3</sup> However, the research evidence on 'area effects' comes mainly from studies in Europe and the US, where public housing estates are larger, more run-down and more stigmatised (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 433). There are clear gaps in the limited Australian research (Atkinson 2008, p. 24).

A number of arguments are commonly presented for why living in a disadvantaged area might create further disadvantage for already socially excluded people. Briefly summarised, they are as follows:

- The poorest people are likely to become concentrated in areas that are physically isolated from private investment and employment opportunities because the housing in such areas is cheap. However, concentrating together households with a high need for support services and limited work skills leads to services in the area becoming over-burdened and the demand for low paid, low skilled jobs exceeding supply. The lack of opportunities, alternatives and support within the area lead to low levels of educational attainment, low incomes, poorer health and people turning to crime for economic survival.
- The poverty of the area can cause it to develop a poor reputation, leading to 'postcode discrimination' by employers, mortgage providers and insurers, which in itself causes greater poverty. Those people who have the financial capacity to do so choose to move away to other, less disadvantaged areas, leaving only the most disadvantaged behind.
- Because people's only neighbours are other disadvantaged people, their social networks and resources become limited. This reinforces a way of life that is mainly focussed on survival on a low income. Their behaviour and their values become shaped by disadvantage. Dysfunctional behaviour and attitudes become acceptable and are therefore reproduced throughout the community.
- Disadvantaged areas often have poor quality housing and a poor built environment. This affects people's health. It also means the area gains a reputation for being visually unattractive, which undermines community morale. Urban design can facilitate crime (for example, poor lighting and isolated footpaths can increase people's vulnerability to mugging), leading to increased suspicion and reduced trust. Effectively, the physical environment reinforces disadvantage and dysfunctional behaviour.
- Because of the residualised nature of the population, local services only deal with 'problem people' in 'problem areas'. This distorts the way in which service providers see residents and vice versa. Service providers develop assumptions and expectations about residents' behaviour and residents feel resentful of service providers because of the poor quality of service they receive. This inhibits the possibility of change (Atkinson & Kintrea, cited in Atkinson 2008, pp. 19-20; see also Jupp 1999, pp. 21-4).

---

<sup>3</sup> Another motivating factor for governments is the public response to places of visible and prevalent disadvantage. In some ways, the policy focus on concentrated disadvantage and public revulsion regarding concentrated disadvantage feed on each other. Goetz notes how in the US, while opposition to the development of affordable housing in wealthier neighbourhoods is not new, the policy focus on the detriment caused by concentrations of poverty has provided these communities with a rationale and a vocabulary with which to articulate their opposition (Goetz 2000, p. 170).

These theoretical arguments for how 'area effects' are supposed to work sound compelling. However, the research evidence is actually ambiguous. According to Atkinson (2008, p.9), area effects are 'both difficult to measure and to conceptualise', and even if they do exist, they cannot be attributed necessarily to a particular housing tenure or to the environmental or social composition of neighbourhoods. The welfare state, labour market, economy, social networks, socialisation and stigmatisation all play a part, on a global scale as well as locally. Cheshire calls area effects 'more a matter of faith than anything else' (Cheshire 2007, p. 1).

However, according to a number of researchers, one outcome of concentrated disadvantage certainly does make life more difficult for residents. This is stigmatisation, which in this context refers to the negative way in which the neighbourhood, the people in it and the problems they experience are perceived by those outside (and inside) the area. According to Warr, stigma 'is practised against those who are perceived to be outside of social norms' and to groups of 'perceived low social value ... largely because of their difficulty to reciprocate the support or benefits they are deemed to have received'. Poverty is stigmatised for both reasons. Even though it has an 'unrelenting social presence', poverty is seen as abnormal, a quality that 'supposedly reflects something about the deficient character or culture of those who are poor'. And poor people's dependence on income support payments and reduced economic participation leads to them being seen as worthless (Warr 2005a, pp. 288-9).

Residents interviewed by Wood recognised that their areas suffered from social problems such as higher unemployment, drug use or criminality, but they were also angry about the way in which the resulting stigma then created other, equally burdensome problems, such as the withdrawal of private businesses or mainstream services or a lack of a responsiveness from the police or public housing authorities (Wood 2002, pp. 34-5; see also Dean & Hastings 2000, pp. 19-20). Residents may not share the negative views of outsiders, but these views, when held by real estate agents, insurers, mortgage finance providers and employers, can have significant negative impacts on their lives (Luxford 2006, p. 3; see also Dean & Hastings 2000, pp. 14-16). Some residents from stigmatised areas in the UK believed that teachers in their local schools expected less of their pupils because of the area's reputation (Dean and Hastings 2000, p. 5).

Stigma is particularly associated with public housing, and areas that are both disadvantaged and contain public housing attract what Dean and Hastings (2000, p. 1) describe as 'a double dose of stigma'. A survey in Scotland found greater support in the community for 'social diversity' (defined in the survey as 'an area with lots of different kinds of people') than for 'tenure diversity' (Kearns & Parkes 2002, pp. 21-2), suggesting that while people will express support for diversity, if that diversity is specifically related to public housing support falls away. This kind of stigma can have a significant impact on public housing tenants. A survey of residents of public housing high-rises in Sydney found that the attitudes of outsiders were identified as a major problem and for some residents, affected their feelings about living in the area: '[i]t meant that residents felt compelled to justify, to outsiders, why they liked living in [a public housing development]' (Arthurson 2001, p. 817). A UK study of the effects of stigma on public housing estates found that it affected personal relationships, with some residents reporting that family and friends no longer visited them because they feared crime. Others felt looked down upon by colleagues or found it difficult to make friends from outside the area because they felt judged and disparaged (Dean & Hastings 2000, pp. 17-19). When such attitudes are internalised, there can be devastating consequences for people's self-esteem and residents may retreat from contact with people and networks outside their community (Warr 2005, pp. 303-4).

Stigma is so attached to public housing because of government policies targeting public housing to those most in need (Luxford 2006, p. 3; Palmer et al. 2004, p. 412; see also Clark 2009, p. 174). According to Atkinson and Jacobs, because entry into public housing requires a low income and, usually, a high level of need, the system has 'selected and gathered together' those who are worst off, creating 'a system that collects the excluded, but further excludes residents from opportunities because of the secondary impacts of exclusion played out by the media, prevailing social values and the lack of accessible opportunities' (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 4).

### **2.3. Is it just a public housing problem?**

Researchers caution against assuming that concentrated disadvantage is a problem exclusive to public housing. Concentrated disadvantage and social exclusion affects areas of cheap private rental housing as well (Luxford 2006, p. 3; Randolph & Holloway 2005, pp. 177, 179-88), as well as home owners (Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 28). Randolph,

Murray and Ruming (2007, pp. 17-37) have argued that while private renters can be socially excluded, 'it is the presence of multiple social exclusion which mark [sic] areas of public housing as unique'. However Hulse and Burke (2000, pp. 6-9) argue that private renters are more vulnerable to social exclusion than public housing tenants because they face higher rents, have less security of tenure and face similar issues with lack of amenity and concentrated disadvantage, but lack the connections to support services, tenant empowerment strategies and political visibility and accountability that are available to public housing tenants.

And although there is a link between public housing (and other forms of housing affordable for low income earners) and disadvantage, researchers point out that evidence of an association between concentrations of public housing and concentrations of social disadvantage is *not* evidence that public housing causes disadvantage (Meen et al. 2005, p. 39). Instead it is the growing emphasis on accommodating only those most in need, the restructuring of the welfare state, the economy and industries and fiscal constraints that have made public housing 'the repository for the most excluded', rather than public housing itself being 'the cause of the problems per se' (Arthurson 2004b, p. 268).

The message from the research is that disadvantaged communities, including those dominated by public housing, are complex places. While there are many problems and difficulties facing these communities, the picture should be balanced with an understanding of community strengths and particularly with the views and perspectives of the people who live in these places. It is important to take a critical attitude to myths and stereotypes when engaging in debates about what 'should' happen in these communities.

**Public housing estates are not always in disadvantaged locations.** Newman et al. analysed the level of amenity provided by three housing assistance programs in Perth: public housing, Commonwealth rent assistance and Keystart, a home ownership assistance program for low income earners. They found that public housing tenants had the best access to amenity out of the three groups of recipients, although single parent households and households with young children generally experienced poor amenity (Newman et al. 2003, pp. 55-6). Many of the inner-city high-rise estates on the mainland provide large numbers of public housing tenants with good access to shops, services and public transport (Arthurson 2001, p. 817). The UK Government has pointed out that some areas that appear, on the face of the statistics, to be disadvantaged, may in fact serve as transitional neighbourhoods, or 'launch pads', for people moving on to better things (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, pp. 55-6).

**Public housing areas do not always lack a sense of community.** A study of stigmatised public housing estates in South Australia found significant levels of community participation among public housing tenants, private renters and home owners in those areas, with residents reporting involvement in Neighbourhood Watch, school sport, health promotion, volunteering, the local council, environmental action groups, local theatre and recreation. The only significant barrier they identified to that participation was cost, rather than lack of interest or motivation (Palmer et al. 2004, p. 421). Public housing tenants often have strong ties to their local area, as a coping strategy in response to disadvantage or because disadvantage confines their day-to-day living to a small geographical area (Johnston 2003, p. 27; Mullins & Western, cited in Stone & Hulse 2006, p. 28). Local friendship networks can be a significant source of emotional and practical support in disadvantaged communities and are deeply valued by residents (Warr 2005a, p. 294). Some public housing tenants may simply like their area and their neighbours. The stability and security of tenure offered by public housing allows people to feel more settled within a community (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 19).

**Public housing areas do not always lack diversity.** Writing in the UK, Birdwell, Hannon and Thomas (2010, pp. 16-18) point out that although social housing residents are often represented 'as a homogenous, undifferentiated mass' or alternatively, are 'bluntly characterised according to demographic indicators or employment status', they in reality have a 'considerable range in their experiences'. In Bridgewater and Gagebrook, for example, the population includes people in full-time employment, people who work in managerial or professional positions, two-parent families and home owners (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008a). While the proportions of these groups are lower than national averages, they are still there.



**Public housing tenants are their own people.** They may not always agree with the perceptions of themselves and their neighbourhoods held by outsiders and policy makers. Outsiders may see an area as ‘dismal and despairing with inadequate housing, [while] residents in contrast may be proud of the neighbourhood and describe it as warm and friendly’ (Arthurson 2001, p. 814). Nor do all public housing tenants agree on everything: a UK research project found that although there was ‘little doubt’ that the nature of the area and the people living there had an impact, positive and negative, on residents’ wellbeing and sense of belonging, individual perspectives regarding the nature of an area – and thus the impact it had on a person – varied widely, even between quite close neighbours (Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas 2010, p. 22; see also Dean & Hastings 2000, p. 13).

For residents, especially long-term residents, the benefits obtained from a sense of belonging to an area may make up for pervasive social problems in that place (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 6). Cheshire (2007, p. 17) argues that although choices about where to live are constrained by income, low income earners still have some capacity to exercise choice, and an area may be chosen because it has something to offer. For example,

[h]aving a sympathetic small shop within walking distance which, though it may have high prices, stocks what you want and may give a bit of credit when you are most hard pressed is a lot more useful to a struggling single parent than being a short drive from a supermarket catering for affluent professionals (Cheshire 2007, p. 35).

Other research challenges the idea that public housing tenants themselves hate living in public housing or that they are passive victims of stigmatisation. A study of two public housing suburbs in South Australia found that residents were actively involved in challenging the stigmatisation of their area, through high levels of community involvement and taking action individually and collectively to tackle negative media reports (Palmer et al. 2004, pp. 420-2). Research has also found that residents of older properties are often satisfied with their housing even though policy-makers regard it as inadequate (Arthurson 2001, p. 817). UK researchers found among social housing tenants a high level of attachment to and emotional investment in their housing, even among those who appeared to be neglectful of their homes (Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas 2010, pp. 23-4). As Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas (2010, p. 21) put it, ‘[t]he debate about the impact of living in social housing rarely engages with the idea that many of those within the sector may actually like their homes’.



### 3. 94 definitions of community: the way we talk about the problem

In 2000, a representative of the New South Wales housing department argued in a conference paper that 'large [public] housing estates have clearly been a significant failure', with a major contributing factor in their 'disintegration' being

the abnormal concentration of disadvantaged people in neighbourhoods which look different to the norm, where support services are limited and where the pathways to economic independence are non-existent at worst or an obstacle course at best. Residents are disempowered, feel trapped and do not have a sense of belonging.

He listed 'poor social mix' along with high levels of unemployment, crime, substance abuse, neighbourhood disputes, truancy, vandalism and family breakdown as problems experienced by such estates (Woodward 2000, p. 24).

This focus on residents' behaviour fits with a trend observed by Goetz in the US, who notes that '[o]ver time, the focus has shifted away from the causes of concentrated poverty toward the behavior [sic] of the poor in response to concentrated poverty' (Goetz 2000, p. 160). Behaviours of concern include drug use, violent crime, high drop-out rates or poor school performance, unmarried parenting, low labour force participation, an 'oppositional culture' and other 'underclass' behaviours (Goetz 2000, pp. 159-60). In Australia, Darcy argues similarly that there have been two interpretations of 'locational disadvantage' which have informed policy responses to disadvantaged communities. One has focussed on the political failure to provide services and infrastructure to certain communities, resulting in compounded disadvantage, while the other has focussed on the development of a culture of poverty and joblessness, place-based stigma and the way that the culture within a community or neighbourhood adds to the disadvantage already experienced by individuals living in the area (Darcy 2007, pp. 349-50). The second is more apparent than the first in the speech by the federal Minister for Housing which was cited in the introduction to this paper.

It is not just the observable problems in disadvantaged communities that create stigma. It is also how we talk about and conceptualise these communities. As in the example above, communities dominated by public housing are often depicted as somehow not 'normal'. The aim of one urban renewal project in New South Wales was 'to seek the flow-on ... benefits of a "conventional" suburb' (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 43), suggesting that whatever else the original community was, it was not 'conventional'. Such attitudes undermine the capacity of public housing to promote the social inclusion of its tenants. Public housing can no longer serve as 'the basis for integration into economic and social opportunity', because politically, it is treated as welfare housing for those most in need and every public housing tenant is assumed to share those needs (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 7).

A number of researchers have drawn attention to the ideological approaches that underpin neighbourhood renewal and which drive the tenor of the debate. For example, Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph (2004, p. 6) identify four different perspectives on neighbourhood renewal: structuralist perspectives, neo-liberal perspectives, environmentalist perspectives and social exclusion or inclusion perspectives.

- The **structuralist** perspective identifies the core problems as structural in origin and promotes greater government intervention, more resources for deprived communities and income redistribution. It has considerable academic standing but little practical influence on policy makers.
- The **neo-liberal** perspective argues that public housing reinforces disadvantage, and focuses on the privatisation of housing assets and the provision of support for people to leave public housing. The neo-liberal approach is generally the one favoured by governments.
- The **environmentalist** perspective focuses on urban design and layout as facilitating or alleviating disadvantage. It was influential in the 1980s, but is now generally seen as a 'limited' approach.
- The **social exclusion or inclusion** perspective focuses on area-based responses including urban renewal and tenure diversification. It is the model used in the UK and Europe to tackle concentrated disadvantage on public housing estates and is now being adopted by Australian public housing authorities.

Following its widespread adoption in Europe and the UK, 'social inclusion' is increasingly becoming the policy framework of choice among Australian governments at all levels. Influential research on social exclusion by Levitas, a British sociologist, identified three main ways in which this framework has been used in contemporary British policy circles: the 'redistributionist discourse', which focussed on poverty and the lack of full citizenship as the driver of inequality; the 'moral underclass discourse', which focussed on individual morality and the behaviour of poor people; and the 'social integrationist discourse', which concentrated on the role of employment in promoting inclusion (Levitas, cited in Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 32). Arthurson and Jacobs identify policies promoting social mix and the explicit linking of social problems with social housing as belonging to the 'moral underclass discourse' (Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 34). Wood shares this view, pointing out that if social mix is to introduce mainstream norms and values into public housing areas, this must mean that the norms and values that already exist in those areas are different from – and inferior to – the mainstream. This reflects the 'underclass thesis' which 'maintains that the poor are poor because they are morally inept' (Wood 2003, p. 51).

Looking at social policy and responses to disadvantage more broadly, a number of researchers emphasise the divisions between perspectives of the 'left' and the 'right', and the development of the 'post-socialist' or 'third way' approach that emerged from the left and was popularised under the Blair Government in the UK. Wood (2002, p. 1) detects in this a new theoretical consensus that 'neither the state nor the market can provide the solution for disadvantaged communities without the active engagement of local people' (Wood 2002, p. 1). 'Community' has now re-emerged as a focal point for government policy, but there is a new set of priorities that are shaped by a conservative social policy agenda (Hess & Adams 2007, pp. 2, 5; see also Hess & Adams 2001, pp. 13-14). According to Wood, Randolph and Judd (2002, p. 13) 'recent community based policy is based more upon a conservative reaction to the market and the state than upon a radical questioning of the current power structures'.

Similarly, Everingham (2001, p. 106) suggests that the 'prevailing politics of community' has a strong ideological focus towards 'social order rather than social justice'. It 'legitimises the growing disparities in wealth and hardens public sentiment towards those most disadvantaged by the new economic conditions'. 'Community' is an ambiguous concept, drawing on conservative and nostalgic ideas of 'collectivism and mutual support even though society has become increasingly individualistic and unequal' (Clark 2009, p. 176). Characterising disadvantaged communities as innately dysfunctional allows governments to avoid addressing the broader structural issues that have created disadvantage and which would require radical reform to be successfully addressed (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 52-3). While some believe communities 'offer a qualitatively better source of policy ideas and processes', communities are also seen as the answer to the retreat of the state from the provision of services and the making of social policy (Hess & Adams 2001, p. 15). Community is 'not-government', seen to provide 'an integrated, mutually supportive self-sustaining whole, not in need of government resources, nor government facilitated forms of collective action' (Everingham 1998, p. 2).

And what is a community anyway? Lilley (2005, p. 63) notes that '[i]n 1955 Hillery<sup>4</sup> was able to list 94 different definitions of community and a current analysis, if one had the time or inclination, would presumably reveal many more'. According to Johnston (2006, p. 7), when used in public policy programs the concept of 'community' is a 'dog's breakfast'.

Regardless of this lack of clarity, 'community' is the neighbourhood renewal 'flavour-of-the-month'. As Jupp (1999, p. 32) notes, '[t]erms such as "thriving" communities, "balanced" communities, "vibrant" communities, and "inclusive" communities crop up in most documents about mixed tenure estates'. According to Hess and Adams, the late 1990s saw the re-emergence of community as 'a powerful public idea' (Hess & Adams 2007, p. 5), and according to Wood, the present view is that renewal work is 'unsustainable' without active engagement from 'the community' (Wood 2002, p. 1). Everingham (2001, pp. 106-7) argues that 'community' has been identified as 'both the site of, and solution to, the social problems associated with the new economic conditions'. It has become 'the main rhetorical tool' used by government to address problems and 'an agent of government'. It is now a policy vehicle, rather than an object of social policy (Darcy 1999, p. 15).

But is 'community' always an empowering concept? Shelter New South Wales has described public housing estates as 'forced communities' (Shelter New South Wales 2003, p. 1). Taylor (1998, p. 822) comments that '[i]t is perhaps ironic that, while the language of the market exalts individual choice and liberty, those whom the market fails are prescribed "community"'. 'Community' may have started out as being about self-determination and empowerment, but through being grafted onto a residualised welfare system, it has become a service and policy response to disadvantage, targeted at people who are unable to be self-determining or empowered (Everingham 1998, p. 6). And when 'community' is prescribed, it is often prescribed in a judgemental way. T Allen notes that there are always 'clear ideas and expectations about what features should be exhibited' by a 'community'. Any community that does not match these expectations is 'inevitably deficient' (Allen, T 2000, p. 455).

Why such a concern about which words are used and why? Because words can drive whole policy agendas. It is important to ask what they are actually intended to mean, and to check whether everyone involved agrees on that meaning. A high level of social capital, according to the Australian Social Inclusion Board (2009, p. 5), is one of the main characteristics of 'resilient communities', but according to Fine, the concept of social capital is 'a sack of analytical potatoes', ambiguous and all-encompassing (Fine, cited in Wood 2003, p. 53). Terms such as 'social exclusion' or 'social cohesion' can be used as analytical tools to understand social, political and economic processes, but they can also be used, less helpfully, as merely descriptive labels or justifications for policy directions or as policy outcomes in themselves (Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 28; Stone & Hulse 2006, p. 6). They can be used to silence the voices of those most affected (Lilley 2005, p. 62). Warr (2005a, p. 300) criticises the term 'social exclusion' for '[erasing] the mutual cooperation and social support' that exist in many disadvantaged communities. Some terminology can also act to exclude those unfamiliar with the particular jargon of the moment. As Murphy and Cauchi (2002, p. 7) put it,

language is the vehicle which mediates values and culture and thereby provides the description for people's experiences and reality. The use of language ... which is outside the experience and reality of most grass-roots groups and individuals in the community provides yet another serious barrier to their inclusion.

The use of such terms can also be used to place a particular policy above reproach. Kearns and Forest have commented in relation to 'social cohesion' that '[t]he usual premise is that social cohesion is a good thing, so it is conveniently assumed that further elaboration is unnecessary' (cited in Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 9). This means that policies can be pursued in the name of delivering 'social cohesion' without ever having to be clear about what 'social cohesion' is or justify why the particular policy approach is necessary. A similar argument could be made in relation to many policies labelled as being about 'community'.

A number of popular policy frameworks did not originate in Australia. Although it is legitimate to draw on overseas experience in policy development (this paper does so, for example), it is also important to be cautious when doing so. In relation to social inclusion, for example, Arthurson points out that the concept 'derives from countries with different

---

<sup>4</sup> Lilley is presumably referring to an often-cited literature review of definitions of community conducted by George Hillery in 1955, published as Hillery, GA 1955, 'Definitions of community: areas of agreement', *Rural Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 111-23.



economic, political and cultural arrangements’ and comments that ‘its somewhat uncritical adoption into the Australian housing and urban policy context is worthy of scrutiny’ (Arthurson 2004a, p. 5). Lilley asks whether the use of terms such as ‘social exclusion’ is evidence that careful analysis has been done on issues within Australia or whether the term, as a definition and a response, has simply been ‘borrowed’ from another policy jurisdiction (Lilley 2005, pp. 60-1). Murphy and Cauchi (2002, pp. 1-2, 11-12) question the importation from the UK and the US of many community-building approaches, including neighbourhood renewal, arguing that they have been imported before being proven to achieve anything other than limited and short-term outcomes and without consideration of how cultural and community differences might affect their chances of success in Australia.

The terminology and practice of neighbourhood renewal can express intolerance of difference. Lees puts it very strongly:

[s]ocial mix policies also destroy, in my mind, their moral authority because they socially construct the middle class or middle-income groups as a natural category in contrast to a demonised working class or low income groups... They push the idea that we all should somehow be/become middle class and that we all want to be middle class. They are about social engineering ... and all the problematic connotations that go with that. They forge a relationship between property and propriety [*sic*], owner-occupiers are well behaved and “normal”, whilst social [housing] tenants are problematic and abnormal – they are “othered” (Lees 2008, pp. 2463-4).

As Levitas has pointed out, policy documents tend to depict the opposite of ‘exclusion’ as being ‘integration’, not ‘inclusion’, with an emphasis on social cohesion and economic efficiency (cited in Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 9). There is no sign of the interpretation of ‘social integration’ suggested by Blanc (cited in Lilley 2005, p. 64), where ‘[m]inorities are not required to fit into existing patterns’ and social integration is ‘a two-way process in which majority and minorities invent new forms of social bonds’. Instead, it is assumed that middle class people hold a different set of values to people on low incomes, and that changing the values of people on low incomes into the values of the middle class will overcome their disadvantage (Wood 2003, p. 51) – even though, as Wood notes, there is no evidence that people on different incomes have different values and even if they did, there is no exploration in the literature about how a change of values would overcome structural disadvantage. Whiteford noted in 2001 that

European debates about social exclusion are more concerned with social relations and ruptures in the social contract. They are also implicitly focused on sub-sets of the low-income population who are distinguished within themselves and from the “mainstream” by location, attitudes and behaviour. ... [I]n contrast to the relatively non-judgemental evaluations implied by the standard poverty line conceptions..., those concerned with social exclusion are concerned about the *behaviour* of the excluded. ... [I]t can also be argued that aspects of the concern with social exclusion have strong similarities to ... concerns expressed about the “underclass” and welfare dependency (Whiteford 2001, p. 66, emphasis in original).





## 4. The 'solution': urban renewal and social mix

A number of strategies have been tried in Australia to address the issue of concentrated disadvantage, including employment projects, physical improvements to housing and the built environment, resident participation projects and training and skills development projects (Arthurson 2002, pp. 245-6; Baum 2008, p. 42). Queensland's Community Renewal program was introduced as part of a crime prevention strategy (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 24). However, while different states have tackled the problem of concentrated disadvantage in different ways, giving different emphasis to various approaches or using different combinations of interventions (Arthurson 1998, pp. 36-9; Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 24), since the 1970s social mix has been popular with Australian public housing authorities as a strategy for tackling poverty, and particularly concentrated poverty (Arthurson 2005b, p. 519).

However, social mix was not new in the 1970s. Arthurson (2008a) describes how social mix emerged in Europe in the 19th century as a response to social segregation, accompanied by rising concern over the apparent threat posed by segregated communities of disadvantaged people. Advocates of social mix drew on romanticised and idealised notions of pre-industrial villages and aimed to dilute undesirable behaviour and provide the working classes with appropriate, middle-class role models. Social mix 'proffered a convenient device that targeted individual behavior [*sic*] as the cause of problems of social and urban decline while leaving the existing hierarchical and inequitable social system in tact [*sic*]'. In the post-war period, in South Australia at least, social mix policy was applied more benignly, if paternalistically, viewed as an opportunity for both lower and middle class residents to learn from each other and to provide equitable access to services for all communities. However, this was in a context of low unemployment and a healthy economy. More recently, with changing economic and social conditions and, thanks to ever-tightening targeting of public housing, the emergence of anti-social behaviour as a critical issue in public housing areas, earlier rhetoric, 'intertwined with fear of the poor, class conflict, and social disharmony' is re-emerging, and the focus is on 'managing' the behaviour of the poor through breaking up concentrations of poverty and dispersing residents (Arthurson 2008a, pp. 488-95, 497-9).

This rhetoric is re-emerging internationally as well (Arthurson 2008a, p. 498), and currently, creating social mix through tenure mix is the dominant approach in Australia, as well as in the UK and the US (Arthurson 2005b, pp. 519-20). It can of course be implemented in different ways, such as increasing the proportion of home ownership in public housing estates through sales to tenants, developers or the market, transferring management of public housing properties to community housing associations,<sup>5</sup> spot-purchasing public housing in existing private housing areas or creating mixed-tenure communities from scratch by including public housing in new private developments (Randolph & Wood 2003, pp. 20-1; Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 664-5; Atkinson 2008, pp. 25-6). But the redevelopment of existing

---

<sup>5</sup> On the face of it, this particular strategy of stock transfer would not change the mix of tenures on the estate as the tenants would remain tenants of social housing. In recent times, however, the role of community housing and the kind of tenancy such housing associations would offer has been depicted as something quite different to that which is offered by public housing authorities. The Housing Minister has indicated strong support for 'growth providers', community housing associations that offer 'a range of housing products', including 'subsidised rental homes for key workers, rent-to-buy programs and shared equity schemes', in addition to social housing. These providers 'are now property developers in their own right', according to the Minister, and they 'offer a means to deliver the innovation, flexibility and commerciality we need to transform our social housing system' (Plibersek 2009, pp. 5-6). Stock transfer has underpinned the growth of the community housing sector to date (Australian Government 2010, p. 9), and state and territory housing ministers have agreed that up to 75% of the new housing stock constructed through the social housing component of the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan will be transferred to community housing providers by 30 July 2014 (Housing Ministers' Conference 2009, p. 26).



communities – tenure diversification – has been the preferred option (Atkinson 2008, pp. 25-6; Ruming 2006, p. 9). Tenure diversification can be achieved either through demolition of existing public housing and its replacement by a newly constructed mix of public and private housing or through the upgrade of existing public housing and its sale on the private market. This form of urban renewal can of course be supplemented by other initiatives, including strategies to improve the coordination of local service provision, employment programs, community participation strategies and improvements to the physical environment (Arthurson 2005a, p. 2).<sup>6</sup>

Going by the research and policy literature, the consensus at present when it comes to best practice in neighbourhood renewal appears to be for an integrated approach that combines both urban and community renewal activity, although some researchers caution that the evidence base for this conclusion is limited (Baum 2008, pp. 40-2; Beatty et al. 2008, pp. 50-1, 56-7; Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2004, p. 7, 2005, p. 6; Bridge et al. 2003, pp. 138, 140). Best practice is also seen to incorporate extensive community participation, as well as an extensive timeframe for intervention (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 34; Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2004, p. 7; Randolph & Judd 2000, pp. 101-3; ed. Thornhill 2009, pp. 17-18; Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, pp. 17, 19; Taylor & Wilson 2006, p. 10). There is also a growing focus on whole-of-government strategies, a trend seen both in Australia and overseas, with an emphasis on a partnership approach incorporating design, management and social, environmental and economic programs (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 24; Taylor 1998, p. 819; Hoatson & Grace 2002, pp. 433-4). This more integrated and holistic response is seen to be essential due to the complexity of and interrelationships between the problems experienced by residents, and because it allows for scarce resources to be pooled, avoids duplication and maximises value for money (Arthurson 2003b, pp. 27-9).

Compared to what has gone before, the direction of current policy is ‘increasingly radical’ (Darcy 2007, p. 352), with an emphasis on promoting private sector involvement. There is a shift away from the construction of new, master-planned, mixed tenure estates to a focus on the modification of existing neighbourhoods and an explicit link to social exclusion and inclusion (Arthurson 2004c, p. 103). Stubbs (2007, p. 2) identifies a ‘policy trajectory’ in New South Wales urban renewal from the mid to late 1990s, one which moved ‘from softer, social renewal strategies ... to promotion of the imperative for radical physical redevelopment of the estate as the only cure for such a place’.

---

<sup>6</sup> Urban renewal strategies are used to promote social mix, but they can also have other objectives, including improving the viability and value of public housing stock, enabling the reconfiguration and relocation of the public housing portfolio, resolving problems with the management of public housing, promoting alternative providers and delivering a range of non-housing outcomes (Randolph & Wood 2003, p. 34). Urban renewal strategies can also aim to achieve greater local responsiveness by the public housing authority, a reduction in turnover, improvement in arrears levels and a reduction in anti-social behaviour (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 24). Randolph et al. (2004, pp. 25-6) found that urban renewal programs were achieving some successes in addressing asset management issues such as maintenance, amenity and landscaping, as well as in attaining a portfolio of housing that better matched the needs of people on the waiting list.



## 5. But is it the right solution?

### 5.1. Why social mix?

Why is social mix seen as such a compelling solution to the problem of concentrated disadvantage? Researchers discussing the evidence base for social mix usually begin by itemising the justifications for it that are presented by policy makers. The justifications most commonly noted are:

- Social mix will give disadvantaged people access to wider social networks, influence and opportunities, and in particular, to the word of mouth networks that facilitate access to employment (Arthurson 2002, p. 247; Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 665-6; Holmes 2006, p. 10; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, pp. 5-6; Randolph & Wood 2003, p. 8; Ruming 2006, pp. 12-13; Johnston 2002, p. 9; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413; Badcock 1997, p. 6; Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 732).
- Social mix will facilitate greater interaction between people of different backgrounds, which will help to lower community tensions and reduce the prevalence of crime and anti-social behaviour (Kearns & Mason 2007, p. 666; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 6).
- Social mix will provide disadvantaged people with middle-class role models, who will demonstrate and enforce mainstream behaviour and aspirations and cultural 'norms' (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 5; Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 665-6; Ruming 2006, pp. 12-13; Smith 2001, p. 5; Johnston 2002, p. 9; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 412; Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 732; Arthurson 2002, p. 247).
- Social mix will create more 'stable', 'cohesive', 'sustainable' communities (Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413; Wood 2002, p. 14; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 6; Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 665-6; Ruming 2006, pp. 12-13; Stone & Hulse 2006, p. 33).
- Social mix will draw investment into a neighbourhood, with wealthier residents demanding and attracting shops, services and private investment (Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 665; Holmes 2006, p. 10; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 6; Randolph & Wood 2003, p. 8; Ruming 2006, pp. 12-13; Johnston 2002, p. 9; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413; Badcock 1997, p. 6; Bailey et al. 2006, p. 20).
- Social mix will provide greater housing choice to public housing tenants and other disadvantaged people (Bailey et al. 2006, p. 20; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 6; Kearns & Mason 2007, p. 666)
- Social mix will overcome the stigma that is attached to communities dominated by public housing (Kearns & Mason 2007, pp. 665-6; Ruming 2006, pp. 12-13; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413; Arthurson 2001, p. 808).

## 5.2. The evidence base for social mix

But will social mix achieve the outcomes that are so confidently ascribed to it? Most of the researchers cited above are not convinced that the claims are justified. According to Ruming, there is 'very little research' testing the assertion that greater social mix improves outcomes for public housing tenants. However, the research literature that is available raises three themes challenging the social mix thesis: the difficulty of generating the necessary level of interaction between public housing tenants and home owners required for public housing tenants to find jobs or for home owners to be effective role models; the risk that co-locating people of different incomes might contribute to increased, not reduced, social tension because it draws people's attention to inequality; and the question of whether or not increasing the number of middle-income earners in an area does actually lead to improved services and more investment (Ruming 2006, p. 13; see also Arthurson 2005a, pp. 2-3).

**Interaction:** Most of the expected outcomes outlined above depend upon interaction between residents of different social groups – and interaction of sufficient substance to lead to role-modelling and emulation of behaviour, people taking advantage of job opportunities and a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour (Jupp 1999, p. 37). But the evidence that this kind of contact actually occurs is very shaky. A study of a highly integrated, high density, mixed tenure development in the US found that while residents greeted a neighbour regularly – approaching once a day – spending more than 10 minutes in conversation with a neighbour occurred less than once a week, and more intense interactions, such as sharing a meal with a neighbour, babysitting a neighbour's children or even lending something to a neighbour, were relatively rare, with their frequency being measured on an annual rather than a monthly or weekly basis (Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 723). Another study of 1000 residents of 10 mixed tenure neighbourhoods in England found that less than two-fifths of respondents knew the names of any neighbours living in a different tenure. Less than one in five would be able to ask someone from a different tenure for help or advice (Jupp 1999, pp. 38, 42). There is research to suggest that greater social interaction, including cross-tenure interaction, occurs between children, particularly in a school environment (Arthurson 2005a, p. 8; Allen, C et al. 2005, pp. 35-6; Holmes 2006, p. 6), although Lees (2008, pp. 2458-9) cites research that suggests the opposite. However, whether school-based interaction occurs is of course dependent on whether the residents send their children to the same school (Arthurson 2008b, pp. 6-7).

One of the strongest arguments for mixed tenure developments is that they will provide people without employment access to the personal and 'word-of-mouth' networks necessary to successfully find work. However residents in socially mixed areas do not appear to form personal relationships at the level necessary to support unemployed people to find jobs (Wood 2003, p. 51).<sup>7</sup> Some evaluations have found a reduction in the unemployment rate in an area following the introduction of mixed tenure, but this is potentially misleading because changes in the unemployment rate can be the result of the introduction of working people into the neighbourhood, perhaps displacing unemployed residents into other areas, or the migration out of those residents who may have become more employable thanks to employment programs included as part of the neighbourhood renewal strategy (Cheshire 2007, pp. 22-4; Wood 2003, p. 51; Darcy 2007, pp. 348, 358; Berube 2005, p. 13). Conventional unemployment statistics relate to the place, not the people living in it, and say nothing about changes in levels of employment among the original residents.

The lack of interaction between tenures appears to be because of different patterns of daily movement among homeowners and public housing tenants, or among working people and people who are unemployed, and their different 'social worlds' (Atkinson 2005, pp. 16-17; Allen, C et al. 2005, p. 32; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413; Arthurson 2002, p. 247; Lees 2008, p. 2459; Randolph, Murray & Ruming 2007, pp. 22-3; Jupp 1999, p. 41). That is, people who own their homes or who work appear to both work and socialise outside their residential neighbourhood, while public housing tenants and people who are unemployed live their lives much closer to home. Other researchers have asked whether proponents of social mix are perhaps placing too great, and too old-fashioned, an emphasis on neighbourhood. It is entirely possible that in a modern age of mass car and telephone ownership, social interaction between any neighbours is much less likely to occur (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 115). Meen et al. describe the assumption that neighbourhoods are at the centre of social interaction as 'anachronistic' and not reflective of the day-to-day reality of people's lives (Meen et al. 2005, pp. 10, 14).

---

<sup>7</sup> Cheshire (2007, pp. 16-17) has suggested that introducing higher income earners may actually reduce low income residents' chances of finding work because they displace the existing 'word-of-mouth' network with a network in which the jobs on offer do not necessarily match the skills base of the low income residents. He argues that neighbourhoods filled with low skilled workers actually offer labour market advantages for those workers, who appear to rely more, and more successfully, on personal contacts with friends and family to find work. Cheshire's position is somewhat out of step with other researchers, although it is cited and supported by Lees (2008, p. 2461). Arthurson (2008b, p. 11), for example, argues that the networks available to jobless people in areas with high levels of unemployment are generally not helpful in finding work because they tend to comprise other jobless people. Generally, while such communities have strong internal bonds, people appear less likely to look outwards and meet people outside their community.

The lack of interaction has also been attributed to neighbourhood design that segregates tenures within neighbourhoods, for example by containing all of the public housing within one or two streets (Arthurson 2005a, p. 8; Atkinson 2008, p. 35; Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 118; Atkinson 2005, pp. 16-17; Johnston 2003, p. 18; Wood 2003, p. 50; Jupp 1999, pp. 45-6). Such research has led to the recommendation that best practice in mixed tenure development involves ‘pepper-potting’ – that is, scattering public housing throughout the development – to force greater interaction.<sup>8</sup> However one study, while recommending ‘pepper-potting’ as a way to generate interaction, also concluded that the levels of social interaction that this would obtain were ‘hardly sufficient to create a considerably more inclusive society’ (Jupp 1999, pp. 54-5, 81), and other research has found that closer integration of tenures actually contributes to social disharmony by drawing residents’ attention to differences in behaviour, values and income levels (Arthurson 2008b, p. 7; Beekman et al., cited in Kearns & Mason 2007, p. 667; Walker et al. 2007, p. 1). It can also expose vulnerable people by placing them in isolated situations (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 14).

It appears certain from the research that a policy intervention that imports middle-income earners or home-owners into a public housing estate and expects widespread social interaction to occur as a result, generating a range of social benefits, is misplaced. Atkinson (2005, pp. 16-18), Arthurson (2005a, p. 2, 2008b, pp. 6-7), C Allen et al. (2005, pp. 32-5), Smith (2001, p. 2), Johnston (2002, p. 7), Ziersch and Arthurson (2007, p. 413), Darcy (2007, p. 357), Randolph et al. (2004, p. 6), Lees (2008, pp. 2458-60, 2462-3), Jupp (1999, pp. 37-60) and Goodchild and Cole (2001, p. 114-5) all note the very limited empirical evidence, in their own studies or in the literature as a whole, that such social interaction between occupants of different tenures actually does occur. Social networks may be important, but this doesn’t mean governments can create them simply by changing the social mix in a neighbourhood (Atkinson & Kintrea, cited in Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 413). In the UK, even after long periods, the levels of mutual support across tenures in mixed tenure developments remain low (Jupp 1999, pp. 51-2). As Johnston puts it, ‘[g]overnments cannot make people like, talk with, or help their neighbors [*sic*]’ (Johnston 2003, p. 17). Even the UK’s Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which is generally supportive of mixed tenure development, has concluded that ‘claims that have been made in relation to mixed tenure are probably exaggerated’, and that there is no evidence that mixed tenure produces networking or role-modelling effects (Allen, C et al. 2005, p. 9). Arthurson (2002, p. 256) concludes that ‘arguably, it is poverty and lack of material resources on estates that undermines or determines a lack of inclusion of residents in activities of mainstream society, more so than not living next door to middle-income home owners’.

**A note on role-modelling:** Underpinning some of the arguments about access to networks and reductions in anti-social behaviour is the assumption that home-owning residents will act as ‘role models’ for public housing tenants. In the words of one US proponent of social mix, these role models will demonstrate to public housing tenants ‘that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception’ (Wilson, cited in Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, pp. 706-7). Implicit in this argument is the rather insulting (to public housing tenants) proposition that home owners will always, innately and intrinsically, demonstrate such behaviour, while public housing tenants will not. Yet is this true? Are home owners always diligent, law-abiding, aspirational, responsible citizens? And are public housing tenants always the opposite?

---

<sup>8</sup> Given that ‘pepper-potting’ is usually considered best practice, studies of its impact can be distorted by other factors. An evaluation of mixed-income developments in the US in 1974 found that resident satisfaction was higher the more integrated the development, but that this was not because of the social mix but because the most integrated developments were also the highest quality – they had the best construction, design, tenancy management and location – while the least integrated concentrated the public housing tenants in poor quality and unattractive housing (Ryan et al., cited in Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 710).

**Tension:** The introduction of social mix does not always result in social harmony and acceptance. There are examples in England of mixed tenure developments where owner-occupiers have sought the fencing off or even removal of their public housing neighbours due to antisocial behaviour and fears of crime and deviancy (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 115). Home owners responding to a survey of a 'mixed' community in Adelaide called for 'scum', 'riff raff' and 'low income people' to be removed from the area, groups they often explicitly associated with public housing (Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, pp. 425-6).<sup>9</sup> Evaluations of Australian urban renewal projects have found that strategies to promote mixed tenure can draw residents' attention to income and class differences rather than promoting integration and can lead to increased social tension (Arthurson 2002, pp. 247-8; Arthurson 2005a, p. 10; Wood 2003, p. 50). A lack of integration between tenures and greater stigmatisation of public housing were identified risks in the social impact assessment for the neighbourhood renewal project in Minto in New South Wales (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, pp. 39-40).

Of course, not all middle income earners are hostile to public housing. A 1976 US study of the consequences of social mix for the marketing of housing found that if the advertising of properties in such communities was 'honest', it would attract middle and upper class residents who supported the concept of social integration (Smookler, cited in Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, pp. 9-10). According to Hoatson, many inner-city communities in Victoria have come to value the mix and diversity provided by the public housing in their area (cited in Hoatson & Grace 2002, pp. 429-30). However, Lees argues that although people may express willingness to live in close proximity to those who are different, this does not lead to increased levels of interaction between different social groups (Lees 2008, p. 2458). She also suggests that while initial waves of middle-class residents may not be hostile, later waves tend to prefer 'sanitised and relatively homogenous neighbourhoods' (Lees 2008, p. 2464).

Studies in the UK in the 1950s found that having a cross-section of social and economic groups living in the same area did not promote social interaction – in contrast, it sometimes promoted disputes (Kuper, cited in Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 105). Middle income earners, more so than high income earners, are particularly keen to distance themselves from the income group below (Arthurson 2002, p. 248; Biggins & Hassan, cited in Arthurson 2005a, p. 10). People prefer to live among people they feel are similar to them (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 105; Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, pp. 7-8; Stone & Hulse 2006, p. 36), and forced diversity can hinder the development of social capital (Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, p. 427). Ruming, Mee and McGuirk surveyed and interviewed residents of a mixed tenure area in New South Wales that was held by Department of Housing officials at the time to be close to ideal in relation to tenancy mix and size. They found that although a majority of the public housing tenants responding said that they believed there was a community in the area more than half did not feel part of it. Owner-occupiers said that they could easily identify public housing properties by their physical appearance, said that communities dominated by home-owners were 'better' and attributed any social problems in the area to the public housing tenants. Public housing tenants said that they felt looked down on by the owner-occupiers and where they did feel part of a community, it was within their own tenure of public housing, where they shared common experiences of financial difficulty and exclusion and could support each other through them (Ruming, Mee & McGuirk 2004, pp. 241-3).

The research also suggests that middle income earners' attitudes to public housing can undermine efforts to establish public housing – and therefore mixed communities – in more advantaged areas. Arthurson found that tenants who were moved out of public housing estates into public housing located in middle-income communities felt isolated due to the differences between them and their neighbours (Arthurson 2002, p. 248). Another study found that public housing tenants relocated into wealthier areas experienced hostility from their more affluent neighbours (Ziersch & Arthurson 2007, pp. 413-14). Research in Western Australia raised concerns about the consequences of relocation for indigenous households moved to higher income areas, suggesting that there was a greater level of hostility towards these households in their new communities than there had been in their old ones (Walker et al. 2007, pp. 1-3).

---

<sup>9</sup> A study by Graham, Fallon and White (2007) provides a Tasmanian example. The study was of part of a Hobart suburb that includes privately-owned homes, community housing, public housing and housing cooperatives. Although this community would be regarded by many policy makers as admirably 'mixed', the study identified a range of problems in the area, including a high prevalence of crime, both petty and serious and including violence, theft and vandalism, anti-social behaviour, domestic disturbances, disruptive parties, public drunkenness, drug use and drug dealing and 'hooning', and victimisation of people who did report problems to the authorities. Despite referring to positive aspects of the local community such as its diversity and capacity, residents reported an overall atmosphere of fear, tension and futility. The researchers identified a clear social division between residents based on tenure type, accompanied in some cases by negative attitudes towards the public housing tenants among other residents. Many of the concerns centred on young people, a small group of whom were identified by other residents as the main source of anti-social behaviour. Although for adult residents the suburb's location did not present a problem as there was reasonable public transport and many had private transport, for young people the lack of shops, services or facilities within the community was seen to contribute to a sense of isolation and boredom. The majority of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area could be traced back to one or two families living in social housing, and the study's ultimate recommendation – backed by residents and stakeholders who were interviewed – was that they be evicted and replacement tenants be more carefully selected (Graham, Fallon & White 2007).

**Investment:** Does social mix attract investment and services to a previously neglected area? A literature review by Atkinson concluded that mixed tenure areas did appear to have a wider range of services (Atkinson 2005, p. 18). Public housing tenants interviewed by Ruming, Mee and McGuirk (2004, p. 245) believed that local services were only provided by the council because there were home owners and private renters living in the area, even though they, the public housing tenants, made more use of local shops and recreational facilities than did home owners (see also Lees 2008, p. 2460).

However, the link between investment and mixed tenure is not straightforward. One study of urban renewal in Australia found that although there had been improvements to the local shops in the estate under urban renewal, these improvements had been as a result of the integrated renewal strategy being pursued. That is, they were not a spontaneous economic response to the new mix of tenures in the area, but the result of conscious policy decisions by renewal officials (Atkinson 2008, p. 34). And while new investment in an area can lead to employment creation, existing residents may not be in a position to take up job opportunities immediately because they are often not job ready and cannot compete effectively for the jobs available (Arthurson 1998, pp. 42-3). People need to be supported to compete for new jobs created by investment within or near the community (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, p. 41).

Having private housing available in an area previously dominated by public housing can allow people who wish to leave public housing to do so without moving away from the area (ed. Thornhill 2009, p. 19; Meen et al. 2005, p. 11), although obviously this is dependent on the private housing being, and remaining, affordable. It provides 'more consumer choice' (Johnston 2003, p. 20). However, this argument is made at a time when public housing is being increasingly devalued and denigrated as a legitimate long-term housing option. In a study of the experiences of housing association tenants in Britain, Birdwell, Hannon and Thomas (2010, pp. 43, 45) argue that there is no 'single purpose' to public housing. Instead, 'it serves several purposes for the many different groups who rely on it'. For some of these groups, it provides permanent, secure, affordable housing; for others, it is a transitional option, a 'platform' or 'launch pad' to better things. However, the authors do not explore the interplay between the desire of some social housing tenants to 'move on' from public housing and the stigma attached to it as a residualised 'tenure of no choice'. For example, some of the tenants they interviewed were keen to dissociate themselves from social housing and from other social housing tenants, stressing the differences between themselves and 'typical' social housing tenants (Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas 2010, p. 41). Policy interventions which reinforce the stigma attached to public housing by labelling residence in public housing, particularly into the long-term, as negative or damaging, risk creating a vicious cycle which disadvantages those tenants for whom moving on is not and will never be an option.

Tenure mix may attract mainstream services but it can also lead to the loss of specialist services. There are arguments for keeping high-needs groups in a confined area to facilitate service delivery as some services are only viable when demand reaches a certain threshold (Arthurson 2002, p. 248) and it is easier to efficiently meet the needs of people who are concentrated in one place rather than geographically dispersed (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, p. 16). Concentrations of ethnic minorities in some public housing estates have led to the establishment of local services and businesses catering to the specific needs of these communities, businesses which would not be viable without the community being collected in that location (Stevens 1995, p. 86). Efficient tenancy and asset management is also easier if public housing stock is located together rather than scattered across a wide area (Randolph et al. 2004, pp. 46, 50). Dispersal of disadvantage through tenure diversification may lead to a reduction in specialist service provision for disadvantaged people (Wood 2003, p. 51; Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 26; Randolph et al. 2004, p. 6).

### 5.3. Social mix and stigma

Some researchers have suggested that social mix genuinely does have a beneficial effect when it comes to reducing the stigma that is attached to public housing areas. The negative effects of stigma are noted above, and reducing stigma does not just lead to improved psychological wellbeing but can also improve jobseekers' chances of successfully finding work through a reduction in 'postcode discrimination' (Atkinson 2008, p. 27). In the UK, the policy of selling off public housing stock to owner-occupiers has seen a reduction in the stigma attached to the area, and increased property values (Berube 2005, p. 39).



But research exploring the issue of stigma, including a number of studies in Australia, has found that the issue is not that simple and that the evidence is not unequivocal. An Australian study of three urban renewal areas identified a reduction in stigma, but noted that other factors could have been at play, not just the new social mix: two of the suburbs were next to a prestigious new private housing development, and they had also benefited from the recent closure of an infectious diseases hospital and a psychiatric hospital respectively (Arthurson 2005a, pp. 6-7). Warr (2005b, pp. 2-3) argues that renewed neighbourhoods continue to be stigmatised despite physical upgrades or community participation programs. Randolph et al. (2004, pp. 28-9) reviewed neighbourhood renewal programs in four Australian states and found that while there was evidence of progress towards stigma reduction, it had not been eliminated. Similarly, Dean and Hastings (2000, p. 48) found that stigma lingered in the UK despite extensive neighbourhood renewal activity and acted as a 'drag' on the regeneration of disadvantaged areas.

Part of the problem is that the stigma that surrounds public housing estates is not necessarily attached to particular geographical locations, but to the tenure that dominates those locations: public housing. Even in socially mixed areas, there remains significant stigma attached to visible public housing (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 11). Residents in urban renewal areas interviewed by Wood linked the stigma that was attached to their communities to the 'housing commission label' (Wood 2002, p. 34). Some research suggests that while introducing a higher proportion of private housing into a stigmatised suburb reduces the stigma that applies to the whole suburb, it does not eradicate the stigma that still attaches itself to areas of public housing within the suburb (Arthurson 2005a, pp. 7-8). What social mix may achieve is not the elimination of stigma, but simply a change in the scale at which it operates (Ruming, Mee & McGuirk 2004, pp. 234, 244, 246).

Stigma also exists within the tenure. As a coping strategy for dealing with the negative impacts of stigmatisation, public housing tenants can label themselves as 'good' tenants, responsible and committed, as distinguished from 'bad' tenants, who trash houses and don't care. A study of two public housing suburbs in South Australia found that some community members delineated their part of the suburb from the 'bad' areas where the 'bad' tenants lived and saw themselves as part of a different community from the people living in the 'bad' area (Palmer et al. 2004, pp. 419-20). In interviews in former urban renewal sites, Arthurson found that public housing tenants who felt that they had improved their circumstances tried to disassociate themselves from the public housing tenants who they felt had not, and blamed these tenants for the stigmatisation of the tenure. Similar attitudes emerged among people who had formerly been public housing tenants but who had purchased their property and become home owners (Arthurson 2005a, p. 6).

**The dark side of social capital:** This 'within-tenure' stigmatisation illustrates something little acknowledged: the dark side of social capital. As stated earlier, one of the Australian Government's aims in promoting mixed communities is to build social capital within communities to strengthen their capacity to deal with disadvantage and conflict and take hold of new opportunities (Plibersek 2009, p. 7). But strong communities can be complicated places. Everingham (2001, p. 115) comments that while the word 'community' has no negative connotations, 'the lived experience of community involves a process of identification which is inevitably negative as well as positive. ... Whatever unites people through their identification with like-selves, at the same time excludes those who are unlike-selves'. Similarly, Ruming, Mee and McGuirk (2004, p. 237) note that '[c]ommunity has been employed as the spokesperson of an idealised common good,





an invisible social construct in which all people have the same beliefs, strive for the same goals, and work collectively to achieve results beneficial to that community, often at the expense of their individual wants and desires'. But in reality, they argue, research suggests that 'community' often operates to exclude or oppress difference through a construction of 'us' and 'them'. A study of two public housing estates in Victoria found that although some residents reported strong ties with their community, they also excluded from that sense of community those they classified as 'no-hopers', 'ferals' or bad neighbours (Warr 2005a, pp. 292-7).

Kearns and Forrest argue that 'social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing', and that it can lead to 'discrimination and exclusion and ... a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority' (Kearns & Forrest, cited in Wood 2003, p. 53). People can join together to exclude from the shared sense of community those perceived as different (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, pp. 7-8). Communities, including 'strong' communities, can be many things: supportive places for vulnerable people, enclosed and inward-looking, defensive and defiant towards authority or supportive of vigilante action (Stone & Hulse 2006, pp. 15, 21).

#### 5.4. What do residents think?

Social mix is a popular government policy, but it is virtually a cliché that almost no one wants it in their backyard. While research on planned mixed tenure communities in the UK has found that the areas are highly popular and in high demand, this may be partly due to the high quality of the physical environment and the provision of extensive local services rather than the existence of 'mix' (Allen, C et al. 2005, pp. 8-10). Other research found that while people said they favoured social mix, they often objected to it in their area, especially if their area featured high levels of home ownership (Kleinhans, cited in Atkinson 2008, p. 27). A survey in Scotland found that owner-occupiers were much more opposed to mixed tenure than renters, particularly if they lived in an area dominated by home ownership, and concluded that

[i]t seems as though those who rent would be happy to see the creation of more mixed tenure communities, [but] their feelings are not reciprocated by owner occupiers. Yet of course members of both tenures need to favour the idea of mixed tenure communities if in practice they are going to be widely achieved (Kearns & Parkes 2002, pp. 21-2).

Evidence from the US is that within neighbourhood renewal areas, non-public housing tenants favour a reduction in the level of public housing in their community (Smith 2001, p. 17).

Because a lot of the policy decisions are made by the privileged, the attitudes they hold about public housing and social mix are important because those attitudes inform their decisions. But what do public housing tenants themselves think of 'social mix'? There is a shortage of in-depth Australian research exploring this (Arthurson 2005b, p. 521), and much of the discussion ignores the lived experience of the residents targeted by policies to enforce social mix (Arthurson 2005a, p. 3; Darcy 2007, p. 352). Residents participating in one study of stigmatised public housing estates in the UK viewed tenure diversification positively, seeing the willingness of the private sector to invest in housing in the area as a sign of hope and positive change (Dean & Hastings 2000, p. 11), but generally, research in the UK and the US

has suggested that for tenants, social mix is less of an issue than other factors to do with their neighbourhood, such as environmental quality, privacy, perceptions of safety, design, management and maintenance (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 9; Meen et al. 2005, pp. 10, 14; Holmes 2006, pp. 4-5; Jupp 1999, pp. 65-7). The specific context in a particular area is all-important (Goodchild and Cole 2001, p. 117). In Australia, evidence is mixed and, understandably, different tenants have different views. One study in Bonnyrigg, a neighbourhood renewal site in New South Wales, found that residents felt that, through social mix, the project was attempting to enforce a particular lifestyle change on them, while others predicted that rather than owner-occupiers, the new private housing would be occupied by private renters, with high turnover the result. They felt that the rhetoric surrounding the redevelopment, with its emphasis on the new 'living' community that would result, devalued their community as it already existed (Darcy 2007, pp. 356-7). But another study found that Bonnyrigg residents were unconcerned about the implications of a greater social mix in the area – what did cause some anxiety was the issue of whether there would be enough public housing post-redevelopment to accommodate everyone who wanted to stay (Stubbs, Randolph & Judd 2005, pp. 143).

A survey of residents of a mixed-income development in the US asked low-income residents about role-modelling. The researchers noted that '[t]he idea [of role-modelling] was familiar to them; they had heard it often enough. However, [they] found this idea rather insulting, implying that they were childlike, inferior, or needing improvement' (Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 732, n. 3). Another study of the same development also found that residents resented the assumption that they needed role models, seeing it as an intrusion on their privacy, and instead stressed their role as a 'watch-dog' in ensuring management maintained service quality and enforced the rules (Mason, cited in Nyden 1999, p. 743). It seems the views of tenants themselves regarding social mix, its importance, its intended outcomes and its unintended outcomes can vary, and quite widely, from the views of policy and decision makers.

### 5.5. 'A one-sided strategy'

One of the curiosities in the debate about social mix is that there is little concern expressed about or attention paid to the communities at the other end of the spectrum – communities that are dominated by one tenure, social group or income bracket, but where the tenure is home ownership, the social group is middle class and the income is high. 'Gated communities' may result in limited social engagement and social cohesion, but they are 'not usually seen as a problem for public policy' (Stone & Hulse 2006, p. 31). Capitalism supports the right of wealthy people to purchase larger dwellings in more desirable locations, without concern being expressed about the implications for their social wellbeing (Johnston 2002, p. 6). Social homogeneity is a problem and social mix a solution only in poorer communities. Perhaps part of the reason for this is that, as Jacobs, Kemeny and Manzi (2003, p. 16) put it in relation to the management of anti-social behaviour, people who are socially excluded are seen as different, and abnormal, and thus 'in need of specific forms of intervention that would be inappropriate in other settings'. As Lees puts it, social mix is a 'one-sided strategy' (Lees 2008, p. 2460).

Although researchers stress that no neighbourhood has a completely homogenous population – 'social mix is merely a description that may apply to virtually any urban neighbourhood' (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 103) – it is also the case that mixed communities of the sort eulogised by policy makers remain, as Smith (2001, p. 5) points out, 'highly unusual'. Even a community that is mixed on the basis of tenure might not be mixed on the basis of social class or socio-economic status (Johnston 2002, p. 5) and even communities that start off mixed do not remain permanently mixed – evidence from England suggests that most communities ultimately become homogenous, tenure-wise, dominated by either owner-occupied or social housing, as segregation by tenure remains a powerful norm in society (Meen et al. 2005, pp. 4-6; see also Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 7). Lees (2008, p. 2461) argues that there may be social benefits to homogeneity because conflict arises when people make comparisons between themselves and others. She follows Cheshire and Luttmer (both cited in Lees 2008, p. 2461) in arguing that 'people's welfare does not depend on their own income as much as their own income relative to other people's income living near to them'. She concludes that 'if people prefer to live with people like themselves we should not be forcing them to mix, because ultimately this will fail; rather, we should be keeping the possibility for mixing open to them' (Lees 2008, p. 2465).



## 6. Flying in the face of the evidence: why social mix?

If the evidence is so clear that social mix does not achieve the outcomes claimed for it, that it does little to resolve the issues of disadvantage and social exclusion, that it can in fact lead to further disadvantage for the most vulnerable, why are good people within public housing authorities still pursuing neighbourhood renewal as their main response to inequality, poverty and disadvantage? As Lees puts it, the evidence base is sufficiently contradictory that it 'should make policy-makers sit up and take note' (Lees 2008, p. 2463; see also Meen et al. 2005, p. 11). So why don't they?

There appear to be four main reasons: the hold of the policy idea itself, the stigmatisation of the public housing tenure, the convenience of implementation and sheer pragmatism.

**The 'factoid' of social mix:** That social mix is in and of itself a good thing is such a prevalent idea that it is extremely difficult to buck the trend simply by citing academic research. Social diversity 'intuitively' makes sense, even though there is no research evidence to support it (Atkinson 2005, p. 2). There is a 'punitive common sense that the problems of poor places stem from their "unnatural" concentrations of public housing and working class people' (Peel, cited in Badcock 1997, p. 3). For the UK's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, for example, 'a sustainable community' includes an integrated mix of homes of different types and tenures by definition (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, cited in Bailey et al. 2006). For policy officers in South Australia interviewed by Wood, less public housing equates to a 'better' social mix (Wood 2002, p. 21). Arthurson (2002, p. 250) found that housing authority staff tended to connect changes to social mix with community regeneration and the creation of more sustainable, cohesive and self-sufficient communities. In some Australian states, social mix is supported by legislation. For example, the promotion of social mix is one of the objectives of the New South Wales *Housing Act 2001* (s. 5(i)), the integration of private and public housing is one of the objectives of the Victorian *Housing Act 1983* (s. 6(d)), and the guiding principles of the Queensland *Housing Act 2003* include the statement that 'a community is sustainable if it is socially and economically diverse...' (s. 6(c)(i)).

The difficulty a whole range of people have in breaking out of the assumption that social mix and sustainable, stable, viable communities are connected is evident in the following examples. A guide to the creation of sustainable mixed communities in the UK (Bailey et al. 2006) dutifully recommends strategies for the creation of successful tenure mix even while simultaneously acknowledging research studies that show that the likelihood of achieving this success is purely speculative. Berube (2005, p. 25) asserts that a 'robust' policy on concentrated disadvantage would include strategies to promote social mix, but on the same page states that '[a]dmittedly, the research evidence that mixed communities can deliver ... is more thin than we might hope'. The social impact assessment report for the Minto redevelopment acknowledges that the evidence regarding the benefits of social or tenure mix is 'mixed'. The report does not discuss this any further, but in the next sentence lists the ways in which it 'works best' (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 43). Social mix becomes both a strategy to achieve an outcome and the outcome itself: Holmes (2006, p. 5) describes how social housing providers in the UK had taken steps to 'rebalance' tenure mix on housing estates, and how one of the benefits of this was a more 'balanced' household mix.

**A stigmatised tenure:** Taylor (1998, p. 827) argues that increasingly,

public services ... are being stigmatised, repeatedly made aware of their last resort nature in today's consumer society. ... [I]n a society where people are supposed to have choice, [public housing] residents are further excluded by their "dependency" on public services.

Public housing as a tenure is stigmatised, and people who work in public housing are not insulated from this. Negative beliefs about public housing assist to reinforce mistaken beliefs about the efficacy of social mix. Housing authority officers interviewed by Ruming, Mee and McGuirk (2004, pp. 240-1) believed that public housing tenants were unable to develop their own communities, and that if they were to become part of a community, it would have to be through their acceptance by and ultimately assimilation into a community dominated by owner-occupiers.

In the words of Arthurson (2004b, pp. 263-5), viewing public housing concentration as a problem in and of itself leads to public housing estates being 'depicted as a repository for a socially dysfunctional community, a cultural "underclass" excluded from mainstream society'. Such a problem can only be resolved by redevelopment into a private housing estate with residents who are not members of this underclass – that is, not public housing tenants. A review of the literature on social mix by Stubbs et al. (2005, pp. 52-3) noted a pathological approach to and stereotypical labelling of disadvantaged communities, a focus on the worthlessness, unsalvageable nature or redundancy of the physical stock, often in the face of contradictory evidence, and an evidence-less assumption that urban renewal would result in social renewal.

The public housing system is commonly depicted as a 'failed' system, undermined by the institutional failure of state governments to make the most of supposedly generous federal investment and by the personal failure of its tenants (Atkinson & Jacobs 2010, p. 157). Yet this perception is open to challenge. In 1993, the Industry Commission found that public housing was the most cost-effective method of providing housing assistance, and delivered a range of valuable benefits to tenants, with secure tenure and non-discriminatory access among them (Industry Commission 1993, vol. 1, p. xviii). Given this endorsement, it is worth asking why there is such hostility towards public housing in government circles. Arthurson argues that 'the current lack of commitment to maintaining public housing seems to be based more on ideology than rationality' (Arthurson 2001, p. 812).

**Convenience:** As Atkinson (2008, p. 22) points out, there is a rough equivalence between housing tenure and income levels, especially in relation to public housing in Australia, and furthermore, housing tenure is a 'relatively clear variable' that is easy to manipulate. This makes it relatively easy to use housing tenure as the basis for intervention. Areas of concentrated public housing are also under considerable government control because of the dominance of the government landlord. They 'can be governed in ways that private homeownership cannot' (Atkinson 2008, p. 27).<sup>10</sup> But the focus on public housing can distort the discussion: social exclusion is not tenure specific, but there is a tendency to assume that it is, and that public housing tenants are most at risk, because 'the focus of much visible government policy is social housing estates' (Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 27). This means that other places and people suffering equally severe disadvantage miss out on funding and policy attention in favour of identifiable public housing 'estates' (Atkinson 2008, p. 47).

**Pragmatism:** Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph (2004, p. 7) point to pragmatism as a principle driver of the focus on neighbourhood renewal and social mix in spite of the evidence. They argue that while housing practitioners acknowledge the wider structural forces that shape the problem, they see 'little alternative' but to use area-based policies to focus on the immediate – and politically very visible – problems plaguing disadvantaged places. Housing practitioners are 'usually unsympathetic to academic perspectives that deride area based intervention and [that] hold out for major structural reform', taking the more pragmatic view that there will always be funding constraints in welfare practice and that housing authorities must do the best they can with the funds they have (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 3). For people and organisations grappling with the consequences of poverty, inadequate services and infrastructure and widespread social problems in public housing areas, social mix strategies are seen as the only way in which scarce public resources can be obtained for disadvantaged communities. According to Berube (2005, p. 24),

[r]ather than wait for more definitive calculations of area effects to emerge, or for income inequalities to evaporate by some other means, Government has appropriately acknowledged that poor neighbourhoods represent an added barrier that poor families should not be forced to overcome.

---

<sup>10</sup> Stone and Hulse (2006, p. 20) and Cameron (2000, pp. 6-7) have respectively pointed to the ways in which both the location, type and management of public housing and the processes of urban planning can function as tools of social control. Attempts to create social mix can be compared to social engineering (see Walker et al. 2007, p. 44; Darcy 2007, p. 359); Hulse and Stone (2006, p. 35) suggest that this is why 'tenure mix' has become a more acceptable term to use.



## 7. The process and its consequences: who benefits from urban renewal?

When considering the reality that faces people in many public housing areas – the lack of transport, services and facilities, the poorly maintained housing, the limited job opportunities – it is understandable that some argue that doing something is better than doing nothing. Even if the evidence is not there, what is wrong in taking the pragmatic approach, giving place-based intervention the benefit of the doubt, and pursuing urban renewal regardless? What harm could it do? The social impact assessment for the renewal of Minto spells out a scenario that would apply to many urban renewal projects:

[t]he redevelopment of the Minto estate provides a number of potential benefits. The majority of these benefits accrue to the DoH [Department of Housing] and its operation, and to the future residents of the redeveloped estate. The negative consequences of the redevelopment are largely and disproportionately born [*sic*] by the existing residents of Minto (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 42).

### 7.1. Displacement

According to Lees (2008, p. 2457), displacement is the most significant of the ‘overwhelmingly negative’ consequences of the movement of middle income groups into low income neighbourhoods. Reducing the amount of public housing in an area at the very least requires some existing public housing tenants to either relocate or change their tenure by buying their own home (Walker et al. 2007, pp. 1-2).<sup>11</sup> But these options do not always work out for people: in relation to indigenous households in Western Australia, for example, Walker et al. (2007, pp. 1-2) conclude that the approach had only had ‘mixed success’. Relocation can be traumatic and disruptive, and the emotional impact of losing a home and a community can be considerable (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 2, pp. 138-40). However, despite the risk of very negative consequences there is minimal research available about the effects on public housing tenants of forced relocation, especially in Australia (Baker & Arthurson 2007, p. 29).

According to Stubbs (2007, p. 9), there is research to indicate that residents’ perceptions of safety and security in an area decline when urban renewal processes start. In Minto, where the initial process is generally considered to have been badly mishandled, a subsequent social impact assessment went so far as to recommend formal counselling for

---

<sup>11</sup> Stock levels can be preserved and even increased and social mix created if a redevelopment radically changes the nature of the housing in the community, providing smaller housing of a much higher density than the original development (Arthurson 1998, pp. 40-1; Stevens 1995, p. 84). Smaller properties are in greater demand by applicants on the waiting list (Arthurson 1998, p. 41). However, higher density and smaller properties are not always what is wanted by the existing tenants. The Bonnyrigg neighbourhood renewal project will result in much higher density living and reduce the amount of private space provided to each resident (Stubbs 2007, p. 9), but the baseline survey for the project found that nearly 80% of the social housing tenants who participated wanted their post-development property to be a freestanding house with a backyard; 72% had children and 45% had pets that needed a backyard. Only 3% preferred a flat or unit and only 10% a villa unit (Stubbs, Randolph & Judd 2005, pp. 28-9, 36-7, 38).

As Stevens points out, residents moved out of an area to allow for urban renewal may not be able to return if the new housing is not deemed appropriate for their needs under the state housing authority’s allocation policy (Stevens 1995, p. 84). Given the pressures around eligibility and access to public housing, building exclusively to the needs of the existing waiting list will mean constructing housing that only caters for a very narrow ‘social mix’. In contrast, Bailey et al. (2006, p. 22) and Holmes (2006, pp. 5, 7, 11) both point to the need to build a variety of housing types within each tenure in a mixed development. Smith (2001, p. 17) cautions against using the accommodation of existing residents as the benchmark for public housing provision: the benchmark should in fact be set higher than that because of the widespread shortage of affordable housing for people on low incomes.



residents, acknowledging that there were people suffering from severe psychological distress, including depression requiring medication, as a direct result of the project (BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 47). Even in Bonnyrigg, a neighbourhood renewal program which is generally acknowledged to be proceeding with considerable attention to the impact on tenants, many respondents to the baseline survey reported increased stress and uncertainty as a result of the proposal (Stubbs, Randolph & Judd 2005, p. 40).

The benefits of urban renewal do not flow evenly. New residents, and those tenants fortunate enough to remain, benefit from the improvements to the physical environment, the improved services and the job opportunities created, but there is little evidence to indicate that relocated tenants benefit equally from the process (Arthurson 2002, p. 255). In fact, their sense of community and their social networks may have been undermined by their dispersal (Luxford 2006, p. 2). Many public housing communities have high levels of social cohesion and strong, supportive community networks – characteristics that, if destroyed in the redevelopment, must then be recreated and rebuilt in the ‘new’ community (Arthurson 2002, p. 253). Stubbs argues that for families returning to Minto after the redevelopment is complete, the community will ‘no longer [be one] they recognise or have connections to’, even though for many ‘it is these connections and support that formed their main reason for staying’ (Stubbs 2007, p. 4). Lees questions whether even the residents who remain actually benefit from the changes, arguing that increasing social mix can lead to reduced quality of life for existing residents and can threaten the networks of support and the specialised services that emerge from living in homogenous communities (Lees 2008, p. 2461). There is an intrinsic contradiction in attempting to strengthen a community while simultaneously dispersing it (Johnston 2006, p. 17): it ‘improves the place but at the expense of the community’ (Randolph 2000, p. 11). As Badcock (1997, p. 12) puts it, ‘displacement as an outcome defies accepted canons of social justice’.

Policy officers in South Australia interviewed by Wood suggested that reducing the concentration of public housing in an estate allowed for improvement to the amenity of those public housing properties that were retained (Wood 2002, p. 20). But the Villawood estate in Victoria, recognised as well-located in relation to services and in an area with high housing demand, was redeveloped from an estate comprising only public housing to an estate with no public housing at all. A representative of the New South Wales housing department supported the decision to bulldoze Villawood, noting that crime rates in the estate and the surrounding area had fallen dramatically since the demolition (Woodward 2000, p. 25). But Arthurson comments that ‘it is private home buyers, rather than public tenants, who will benefit from the favourable location in the future’ (Arthurson 2001, p. 822). Similarly, many of the people who were once residents of Minto will not be able to benefit from the better transport networks, job opportunities and service development of recent years or from the renewal of the estate (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 156-7). Even if the public housing that is retained in an urban renewal area is of better quality, Arthurson asks legitimate questions about which strategy is more equitable: one that undertakes cheaper, more moderate upgrades to existing housing and allows more people access to public housing, or one that disposes of large quantities of public housing to fund premium upgrades for a lucky few (Arthurson 2001, p. 824, 2004, p. 9).

Stevens (1995, p. 85) also notes the uneven flow of any economic benefits. Revenue from increased property values, rents and rates goes to public housing authorities and local councils, not to relocated tenants. The consequences of

increasing property values can also lead to further displacement: several researchers raise concerns that successful redevelopment can trigger gentrification, which ultimately displaces lower income households even further (Nyden 1998, p. 746; Atkinson 2008, pp. 35, 47; Lees 2008, p. 2457). A Canadian study found that the more attractive the area becomes, the more wealthier households, who are able to 'bid out' the less wealthy for both owner-occupied and private rental housing, are attracted to it and the harder it is to retain low income residents (City of Vancouver, cited in Johnston 2002, p. 8). Analysis of the Perth neighbourhood renewal program found that while the affordability of home purchase did decline somewhat in the neighbourhood renewal locations as a result of the program, 'the main impact on affordability ... occurred in the rental sector' and that neighbourhood renewal, by reducing the amount of public housing available and driving up private sector rents, had reduced rental options for people living in neighbourhood renewal suburbs (Eringa 2003, pp. 7-8).

The displacement of existing residents is not just a matter of relocated tenants 'missing out' on opportunities in their old suburb. Moving 'difficult' tenants into a less disadvantaged area does very little to resolve their issues – it just makes the problem less visible and imposes the stress of the problem on a different place (Arthurson 2002, pp. 254-5; Atkinson 2008, p. 17). As Stubbs et al. (2005, p. 48) point out, '[a]n unemployed person is a major cost to the community whether they live in Airds [in New South Wales] or Alice Springs'.

Researchers are concerned about what they see as a 'focus on relocating the poor to improve the environment, rather than benefiting the existing tenants' (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 433; see also Arthurson 1998, p. 36; Randolph 2000, p. 11; Atkinson 2005, p. 18). The need for and performance of urban renewal is often assessed on the basis of statistics that relate to the place, not the people in it (Darcy 2007, pp. 350-1; see also Clarke 2006, p. 134). Stubbs et al. (2005, p. 48) suggest that some of the statistical gains in neighbourhood renewal areas may in fact be 'illusory'. Tunstall and Coulter reviewed progress made in 20 'unpopular' public housing estates in England over a 25-year period and found that while almost all of them are now significantly better places to live than they were in 1980 or 1995, the lives of individual residents may not necessarily have changed for the better. Some of the changes that were observed were the result of people moving away and being replaced by others rather than changes in the situation of individuals within the place, and it was possible that the greater popularity of the estates made it more difficult for the most disadvantaged people to obtain housing there. The problem was a focus on 'places, not individual people' (Tunstall & Coulter 2006, p. xiii). It is easy to reduce the level of disadvantage in a geographical location by simply removing the people who are disadvantaged from it.

## 7.2. Gains for the private sector

Beyond the unfairness inherent in the original residents not benefiting from improvements in their community – indeed, in the most disadvantaged residents being required to sacrifice the most – there is also the question of how far it is reasonable for governments to devote their scanty public housing budgets to improving the circumstances and lifestyles of middle-class people? Public-private mix may be a pragmatic way to obtain funds for the demolition and rebuilding of public housing stock (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 430), but as Arthurson puts it,

[l]arge amounts of public housing are being converted to private consumer goods to attract and house, for the most part, middle-class residents. This approach raises questions about what happens to the equity principles that are the responsibility of government to provide affordable, public rental housing to low-income people? (Arthurson 2001, p. 822).

Private investment does not mean there is no call on the public purse. Evidence from the UK is that in extremely disadvantaged areas, significant public resources are needed before there is a likelihood of significant private investment (Holmes 2006, p. 3). An evaluation of English neighbourhood renewal projects found that work needed to commence and improvements emerge in order for private developers to become confident enough to become involved (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 114). And private investors are not the only ones to require subsidies. As early as 1974, a review of social mix in Adelaide concluded that the South Australian Housing Trust had to provide 'massive' subsidies to middle-income earners in order to obtain social mix, and asked whether the benefits of social mix were worth the cost (Brennan, cited in Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 10). In addition, as Arthurson (2001, p. 821) points out, in order to attract middle income earners a neighbourhood must be designed around their needs rather than the needs of the public housing tenants fortunate enough to stay.

Neighbourhood renewal programs in Australia have led to considerable financial and management gains for public housing authorities, gains which can be used to benefit the system, including through reinvestment in more appropriate supply (Atkinson 2008, pp. 28-9; Clarke 2006, p. 132; Randolph 2000, p. 10). But developers involved in neighbourhood renewal are not doing the government a favour. In cases where the redevelopment is conducted in partnership with the private sector, the benefits of increased property values do not all flow to the public sector – it is the private partner which obtains much of the profit (Badcock 1997, p. 10). They also obtain access to prime development sites. The Bonnyrigg neighbourhood renewal site is located between two large metropolitan centres, with access to employment, commercial centres and public transport (Darcy 2007, p. 356). Residents in Minto have suggested that it is not a coincidence that the majority of the housing in the ‘new’ Minto will be sold just as the area is becoming a desirable place to live, close to a newly constructed highway, shops and growing job opportunities (Stubbs 2007, p. 3). Many of the qualities that make some public housing estates attractive to private developers – proximity to services, transport hubs and employment growth – are the very qualities that also make them attractive to public housing tenants (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 156-7).

Smith (2001, p. 4) argues that explicitly including private sector partners in neighbourhood renewal can lead to pressure to reduce the amount of public housing in the final development. After all, the market, operating freely, does not tend to produce mixed-tenure developments (Smith 2001, p. 8; Arthurson 2001, p. 822). Private sector partners are primarily concerned with maximising profit and reducing risk, and a greater emphasis on private housing addresses both concerns. In the UK, ‘market uncertainties’ have led to original commitments to public housing being downgraded as developments proceed, or to the construction of social housing being delayed until the very end of the redevelopment process as developers seek to quickly recoup their costs by prioritising private housing for sale (Bailey et al. 2006, p. 46). Reliance on private sector funding and market forces to drive the renewal process can also present considerable risks, particularly in flat housing markets (Randolph et al. 2004, pp. 54-5); the global financial crisis and subsequent recession in the UK triggered considerable concern about the financial sustainability of many renewal programs, particularly given the associated collapse in the UK housing market (ed. Thornhill 2009, p. 49).

Despite the risks, public housing authorities have increasingly looked towards engagement with the private sector as part of wider reforms to the public service (Arthurson 2003a, pp. 357-8). According to Badcock, public service reform and national competition policy led to a ‘significant redefining in the mid-1990s of the social contract in relation to housing assistance for the needy in Australia’. Joint venture arrangements to construct public housing and a policy emphasis on cash assistance for people in the private rental market were effectively about a transfer of social responsibility ‘back to the market’. This reform agenda sat in contradiction to the ‘operational practicalities’ facing state housing authorities, which were wrestling with the consequences of economic restructuring and the retreat of the welfare state (Badcock 1997, p. 4).

In the US, the rationale for introducing a greater role for the private sector into neighbourhood renewal was that it would provide funding without requiring tax increases (Smith 2001, p. 6). In at least some developments it also seems to have been assumed that the private sector could manage the process better than the public sector (Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 718). In the UK, Berube stresses the role of ‘market forces’ in bringing about ‘positive, sustainable long-term change’ (Berube 2005, p. 35). In Australia, there is a desire to ‘leverage’ government investment (Arthurson 2003a, p. 360). In New South Wales, for example, the involvement of the private sector was seen to allow projects to be self-financing (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 50). However, private sector involvement can then require particular policy decisions to be made: for example, in order to attract private homebuyers ‘at a price that would finance its revitalisation’, Minto had to be ‘progressively demolished and totally redeveloped’ (Darcy 2007, p. 355).

Arthurson writes that ‘regeneration partnerships are permeated by power differentials’. Seeing market-based responses as the solution ‘entails a fundamental reorganisation of the roles and balance of power between public sector agencies and the private sector in regeneration partnerships’ (Arthurson 2003a, p. 360). According to Badcock, these partnerships involve acceptance of

the intrusion of a pricing regime dictated by commercial rates of return into a sector (social) which has nominally been “not-for-profit” (cost-rental), whilst also conceding the long-term benefits of “planning gain” or “betterment” on all of the dwelling stock and community facilities that are then sold off (Badcock 1997, p. 10).



Although Smith argues that the use of public dollars to leverage private resources means that the public goals of the program must lead, not follow, investment decisions (Smith 2001, p. 18), the reality is that when private investors are involved, their interests 'tend to be perceived as beyond the need for justification' (Mayor & Taylor, cited in Arthurson 2003a, p. 365). Financial viability becomes the driving factor, and may override other elements of the project, with the project 'servicing the needs of market capital, rather than tenants' (Arthurson 2001, pp. 821-22).

There are also implications for community members wishing to have a say in what will happen in their own communities. Private sector involvement in South Australian projects has meant that 'there was an understanding, across all parties, that residents would not be able to challenge those aspects [of the projects] that were commercially predetermined' (Wood 2002, p. 47). In The Parks redevelopment the community development strategy was originally withheld from public release because it contained material that was commercial-in-confidence (Arthurson 2003a, p. 365). In Minto, many of the details of the redevelopment were similarly classified as commercial-in-confidence and residents participating in the project reference group were prohibited from distributing information back to the rest of the community (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 77).

### 7.3. The promotion of home ownership

Governments may attempt to make the effective privatisation of public assets more palatable by including sales to existing tenants in tenure diversification strategies. Many neighbourhood renewal projects are linked to initiatives to promote home ownership among existing public housing tenants by encouraging them to purchase public housing properties from the government. This enables two goals to be achieved: tenure mix through the transfer of public housing into private ownership and greater levels of home ownership among low income earners.

In relation to the first goal, a number of researchers point out that such a strategy achieves tenure mix, but not necessarily social or income mix (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 113; Johnston 2002, p. 5, 2003, pp. 17-18). Researchers have questioned the value of such an approach and drawn attention to its risks. It is assumed that home owners are more likely to maintain their properties and demand and enforce standards of behaviour. But it is important to acknowledge that if they do this, it may be because they tend to have greater financial resources, not because of their tenure (Atkinson 2008, p. 17). Will bringing more low income earners into the home ownership tenure lead to greater investment in homes and neighbourhoods or could it in fact lead to further problems for those households?

Johnston (2003, pp. 17-18) comments that 'there seems little social value in changing a neighbourhood profile from one of public tenant battlers to owner-purchaser battlers'. Arthurson (2008b, p. 28) expresses concern about the use of marginal home buyers to get rid of poorly performing public housing stock with high maintenance costs. Badcock (1997, p. 11) highlights the potential for marginal home buyers to be effectively stranded while other parties reap the rewards, pointing out that

the risk of mortgage default is very unevenly shared. Regardless of the potential difficulties that lie ahead for buyers at the margin: the [public housing authority] gets to transfer a household off its rental list; the private developer recoups the initial outlay; [the finance facility] protects its investment with mortgage insurance (Badcock 1997, p. 11).

While some urban renewal projects occur in areas that are comparatively well-located, others are in very isolated or fringe areas. Newman et al. (2003, pp. 12, 56) draw attention to the risks involved in assisted home purchase in locations with poor amenity, arguing that such purchasing decisions may result in long-term disadvantage for the household. A poor location disadvantages a first home buyer as it inhibits future capacity to 'purchase up' and may trap them in negative equity. Home buyers in such areas benefit little from capital growth and lack job opportunities close to home.

There are also questions about how effective such strategies are in achieving their intended goal of increasing public tenants' access to home ownership. Many of the sales that were part of urban renewal projects in the early 1990s were directed to private buyers rather than to current tenants (Stevens 1995, p. 84). The most disadvantaged tenants are unlikely to be able to afford to purchase, even with significant price reductions (Arthurson 1998, p. 40). Experience in South Australia in the mid-1990s was that offering tenants the opportunity to purchase their own or redeveloped

homes in urban renewal areas was unsuccessful until a subsidy was provided to assist them to bridge the deposit gap (Badcock 1997, p. 11). In Western Australia, limited home purchase among Aboriginal public housing tenants living in neighbourhood renewal areas was attributed to a lack of financial capability, lack of information about home loan options and a growth in house prices above the reach of the loans that were available (Walker et al. 2007, pp. 2, 47-8, 51-2, 55). At The Parks in South Australia, the department assumed that up to 19% of all tenants would choose to enter home ownership rather than relocate to other public housing. Early data indicates that the figure was actually less than 1% (Baker & Arthurson 2007, p. 34).

Home ownership is not a magic wand that in and of itself resolves the problems of people whose circumstances do not otherwise change. For many, it is what Birdwell, Hannon and Thomas (2010, pp. 23-4) describe as an ‘unrealistic and risky proposition’ that despite its relentless promotion in public policy is rarely an explicit aspiration for social housing residents. Its promotion in neighbourhood renewal is more about ideology – what Cameron (2000, p. 4) calls Australia’s ‘predominant culture of home ownership’. Home ownership is the normal, beneficial tenure of choice, which makes public housing abnormal and inferior. For this reason, ‘tenure is ... identified as an effective surrogate indicator of community’: communities with high levels of home ownership are automatically considered to be more successful than communities without (Ruming, Mee & McGuirk 2004, p. 236). However, is ownership really the best option for everyone? Birdwell, Hannon and Thomas (2010, p. 24) point out that ‘occasionally lack of aspiration to own can also be rational’. For some people, home ownership is financially unachievable or results in persistent financial stress. However, the security of tenure offered by public housing can substitute for ownership, providing similarly high levels of ‘ontological security’, or the sense of identity, independence and control that is provided by having a home (Lewis 2006, p. 2), while imposing less of a financial burden.

#### **7.4. Pressure on the rest of the system**

Many, although not all, neighbourhood renewal programs result in an overall loss of public housing stock. Achieving no net loss is challenging and costly, because the low value of housing in public housing estates means that obtaining enough revenue from the project alone to generate one-for-one replacement through purchase or construction is extremely difficult, if not impossible (Arthurson 1998, p. 40, 2004a, p. 9; Randolph 2000, p. 10). But there is no secure, low-cost private rental market to replace lost public housing (Arthurson 2001, p. 823). Tenants forcibly displaced from public housing through neighbourhood renewal need to be rehoused in other public housing. This, coupled with the overall reduction in supply, results in greater pressure on the waiting list and intensifies the targeting and allocation pressures already applying to the public housing system (Arthurson 2002, pp. 252-3; Randolph 2000, pp. 10-11). In 1996, the South Australian public housing authority estimated that the redevelopment projects then planned would result in about 10% of all new allocations to public housing being used to house existing tenants who were being relocated to make way for neighbourhood renewal (Arthurson 1998, p. 41). In Western Australia, community sector organisations have reported that neighbourhood renewal has had a severe impact on waiting lists for public housing (Eringa 2001, pp. 2-3).

The situation is complicated by the findings of research into the impact of forced relocation, which has found that the quality of the housing into which tenants are relocated is a critical factor in whether the relocation is a positive or negative experience for tenants (Fuller 1995, pp. 177-8; Baker & Arthurson 2007, pp. 31-4). However, as projects roll on, overall stock levels decline and pressure on waiting lists increase, obtaining good quality housing – and thus resident satisfaction – for relocated residents will be ever more difficult (Baker & Arthurson 2007, p. 34; Badcock 1997, p. 12).

#### **7.5. Has it worked? Evaluating urban renewal**

Given the significant public resources channelled into neighbourhood renewal, and the radical remaking of the urban landscape it potentially represents, it would be reasonable to expect that substantial evaluations of this approach would have been conducted. But although neighbourhood renewal in the UK has been subjected to extensive critical analysis, evaluation in Australia – and in the US – has been very limited (Wood 2002, p. 4; Ruming 2006, pp. 84-5). Writing in 2002, Wood, Randolph and Judd commented that there were few independent evaluations and that ‘current sources [were] largely restricted to promotional leaflets and sections of broader Annual Reports’ (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 2). According to Ruming (2006, p. 20), the available evaluation evidence is site-specific: there are few large-scale systemic evaluations of the neighbourhood renewal approach as a whole. Judd and Randolph conclude that our understanding of what aspects of renewal are effective or even what outcomes have been achieved remains ‘relatively poor’ (Judd & Randolph 2006, pp. 97-8).

The effectiveness of attempts to evaluate renewal programs to date are impeded by a number of factors, including the lack of precise, measurable objectives in these programs, the difficulty of obtaining data specific to the boundaries of the urban renewal area, a lack of clarity around short and long term aims and outcomes, the lack of an 'audit trail' which links initiatives, expenditures and results, the lack of baseline information and difficulties in tracing causality given that many places are also subject to powerful external factors (Randolph & Judd, cited in Ruming 2006, p. 18). Assessing tenant satisfaction is also complicated: attitudes are generally shaped by whether one is a 'winner' or a 'loser' in the process (Badcock 1997, p. 12). Tenant surveys that ask people to give retrospective ratings about their living situation prior to the project commencing need to be treated carefully (Arthurson 1998, p. 42). The way in which the neighbourhood renewal process is carried out can have a major influence. In Minto, for example, Stubbs et al. found that while some residents expressed a desire to leave Minto and dissatisfaction with their living conditions there, this was actually due to the disruption the project had brought to the community rather than a reflection of dissatisfaction prior to work commencing (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 148).

Causality is a particularly problematic issue. It remains possible that in those areas where some positive change has been identified, this change is due to factors other than the urban renewal project (Stubbs et al. 2005, p. 56). When measuring the benefits of one strategy, findings could be clouded by other strategies included in the same project. Marked improvements to the quality of the physical environment, for example, could skew any attempt to assess the independent value of tenure mix (Manley et al. 2007, p. 5). Cheshire criticises the UK Government for comparing the experience of disadvantaged people in disadvantaged areas to the national average when setting benchmarks for its neighbourhood renewal strategy, rather than making comparisons with the experiences of equally disadvantaged people in wealthier areas, arguing that the Government's approach distorted any assessment of whether social and tenure mix was the right answer to the problem of concentrated disadvantage (Cheshire 2007, pp. 6-7).

The theory underpinning the evaluation of neighbourhood renewal is also under-developed. Ruming reviewed evaluation frameworks, methodologies and objectives in Australia, the US, the UK and Europe, and concluded that, as far as neighbourhood renewal is concerned, there is a 'lack of coherent and compressive evaluation models' (Ruming 2006, p. 117). Evaluation also tends to focus on financial and economic performance, rather than social aspects, such as residents' sense of efficacy over their own lives (Clarke 2006, p. 138). Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph note a further problem: evaluation processes

are often viewed as an opportunity to flag up examples of policy success. It is hard to acknowledge policy failure when engaging in evaluative work primarily because of concerns that information might be viewed negatively and cited as a justification to reduce funds or close off programmes [*sic*] (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 43).

## 7.6. The price of success

According to Atkinson (2005, p. 18), '[t]enure diversity has ... elevated some areas to relatively unremarkable normality ... [which] may itself be seen as a signal of success ... in terms of the aspirations of many residents to achieve such "normality"'. This may be true, but how genuinely inclusive are these communities? Wood (2003, p. 51) argues that the reduction in stigma attributed to mixed tenure may in some cases be attributable to the exclusion of certain groups from the redeveloped areas. A review of mixed tenure areas in the UK found that the more popular communities were also the ones which had sought to be selective about who was accommodated, including through excluding people with a problematic previous tenancy history (Holmes 2006, p. 5). Goodchild and Cole (2001, p. 113) point to the increased use of legal measures by landlords in the UK to exclude anti-social tenants from their estates.

A best-practice guide to creating mixed tenure communities produced by the UK's Chartered Institute of Housing and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation argues that it is important to avoid making allocations on the basis of need alone, and instead recommends planned, 'appropriate' allocations based on targets for particular tenant groups. The guide also warns of the risk of stigmatisation if social housing in a mixed tenure estate is used as emergency housing for homeless households (Bailey et al. 2006, pp. 72-3). A cost-benefit analysis of neighbourhood renewal in New South Wales found that long-term sustainability was only possible if other proactive measures, such as a selective allocations policy, were introduced (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 47-8). Whether mixed communities 'select out' the most disadvantaged in the

belief that this enhances chances of success and whether neighbourhood renewal to create social mix helps the most disadvantaged residents or simply displaces them are two questions identified by a review of mixed tenure communities in the UK as requiring further research (Holmes 2006, p. 10).

In the US, federal guidelines specify that successful marketing – to purchasers – of mixed use developments depends upon ‘careful screening’ of all tenants, with successful developments having strong, ‘even-handed’ management and being ‘customer driven’ (Smith 2001, p. 7). Screening processes are applied to redeveloped areas; former residents with a history of criminal or anti-social behaviour are not permitted to return (Berube 2005, p. 43). In one US redevelopment, public housing tenants returning to the area were required to undergo mandatory drug tests, a requirement not imposed on their new, home-owning neighbours (Smith 2001, p. 14). In another, residents were subject to credit and police checks, had to supply personal references and recommendations from their children’s school administrators, and had to undergo ‘housekeeping visits’ (Rosenbaum, Stroh & Flynn 1998, p. 706).

Private developers working on mixed tenure areas have argued that their capacity to successfully sell private housing in an estate depends upon showing prospective buyers that living in this kind of community will be no more stressful than living anywhere else. A developer interviewed for the development of the UK guide on tenure mix commented that ‘the biggest headache with mixed income communities is post-occupational management’, and the management strategies suggested by the guide contain a strong emphasis on controlling residents’ behaviour, including through the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Bailey et al. 2006, pp. 75-6). However, as Hoatson and Grace have pointed out, this sort of approach ‘[leads] to questions about who becomes labelled as “disruptive”, and who has the power to apply such labels’ (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 435). British research has found that removing tenants with extreme behavioural problems does improve the quality of life on a public housing estate (Power, cited in Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 435). But what are the consequences for those tenants – or for people with other complex needs?

Research in Western Australia by Walker et al. (2007, p. 2, 35-6, 42, 53-4) found that the public housing authority there lacked the resources, processes and skills to deal with ‘difficult’ tenants in urban renewal areas, and that such tenants are ‘simply shunted from location to location when the complaints in one area make it imperative to move them on’. Judd, Samuels and O’Brien caution against using ‘greater selectivity’ in allocation policies as a solution for anti-social behaviour and crime, noting that

prompt action related to “problem tenants” can involve judgements and actions potentially beyond the reasonable boundaries of power and control possessed by housing managers and/or other residents. A delicate balance exists between the interests of a majority of residents and the individual rights of each member of the community, particularly when dealing with disadvantaged people, who are already in disempowered situations (cited in Johnston 2003, p. 12).

Goodchild and Cole argue that the promotion of social mix, done in the name of combating social exclusion, requires housing authorities to control resident profile by picking and choosing tenants – effectively, to exclude certain tenants from certain places. In other words, ‘the promotion of social balance actually involves social exclusion’ (Goodchild & Cole 2001, p. 118).

It appears that for tenure mix to be a ‘success’, it is necessary to exclude those with the biggest problems. But this does nothing to help resolve those problems. Western Australian research on the impact of urban renewal on Aboriginal households found that those most likely to benefit from urban renewal were those already ‘actively engaged with mainstream society’. Those who did not benefit, who lacked control and choice in the process, and who experienced negative consequences, were those who were ‘often already tagged as “problem tenants”’, and whose worsened circumstances led to further anti-social behaviour (Walker et al. 2007, p. 2). Exclusion only further disadvantages and marginalises, because it further stigmatises people already stigmatised by being labelled as difficult and denies them the benefits of the improved housing, better services and extra community programs that neighbourhood renewal is meant to bring about in the first place.

### 7.7. Will 'success' last?

Some neighbourhoods in the UK have been subjected to neighbourhood renewal in various forms on 'numerous occasions' for the past twenty to thirty years, with little evidence of lasting improvement in their situation (Wood 2002, p. 4). The experience in both the UK and the US is that if neighbourhood renewal is not conducted 'well' it needs to be repeated within a decade or two (Arthurson 2004c, p. 101). Because of this, sustaining the effects of neighbourhood renewal into the long term has become an issue of major concern to UK policy makers (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2004, p. 2). Yet Wood, Randolph and Judd note that the focus on how to make programs 'sustainable' is based on an assumption that the programs have resulted in significant gains that need sustaining. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that any gains have been limited 'and are, if anything, restricted to minimising the effects of structural economic decline' (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 20). And 'sustainability' is of course another word with a contested definition (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 40-3). In an urban renewal context, a 'sustainable' local area is one in which further intervention or funding will not be required (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2004, p. 1; Fordham, cited in Arthurson 2003a, p. 368). Stubbs et al. note that the context for this narrowed definition is one of declining resources, which means that communities that do not require resources are seen as preferable to those that do (Stubbs et al. 2005, pp. 40-1).

Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph conducted research on the development of 'exit strategies' for urban renewal programs – strategies, that is, for ensuring that the results of the renewal continue to be felt into the long term, even once the program has formally ended and any special funding and resources are withdrawn from the community. They found a connection between assumptions about 'social mix' and state housing authorities' attitudes to exit strategies. The view that an exit strategy was not really necessary

was most evident in locations where the majority of new residents were home purchasers, and perceived of [*sic*] being capable of supporting themselves. ... There would be no need for the extensive community supports and services that public housing tenants would both need and expect once the area is dominated by home owners with only passing ties to the old community... It is likely that all that will be needed at the end of most redevelopment programmes [*sic*] is a revised system of tenancy management at a lower density for the remaining public tenants, while the private owners and renters will simply look after themselves (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 46).

But how realistic is it to expect communities to manage without ongoing public support just because they are now 'mixed'? Community participation is often touted as the means by which 'sustainability' can be achieved, yet paid community development positions are usually contract-funded and time-limited. It is also questionable as to whether the community participation strategies pursued actually result in the development of community leaders who can then take on the work, which means that premature withdrawal of funding for support positions can impose too great a burden on residents already facing considerable disadvantage (Arthurson 2003a, p. 368). Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph's research, which considered five Australian urban renewal projects, found that in nearly all cases there were very high expectations of community capacity building and the ongoing, active participation of residents was seen as a given, even though this is not always the case and cannot be taken for granted (Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, p. 44).

Hoatson and Grace argue that governments should expect to continue funding neighbourhood renewal sites following completion of the physical redevelopment. They argue that social mix alone cannot be expected to resolve the problems of disadvantaged communities, and that these areas will continue to contain public housing and therefore there will continue to be residents who 'have less money, time and energy than they need to sustain their own lives, with none or little left over to invest in their community'. Thus, argue Hoatson and Grace, '[i]t is reasonable to expect governments to take more than usual responsibility' and continue to allocate the funding needed for resident participation, maintenance, economic development, service delivery, security and problem-solving (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 439).



## 8. The role of community participation

### 8.1. Participation in theory and in practice

The theme of community participation (or engagement or involvement or consultation) as an essential component of any renewal strategy emerges so strongly from the neighbourhood renewal literature that it requires further discussion. Community participation is claimed to lead to greater community self-help, community empowerment, stronger social networks and neighbourhood entrepreneurship (Arthurson 2003a, p. 361). Participation strategies in themselves have been found to lead to positive changes for the community, even if no physical change to the community then occurs (Stubbs et al 2005, pp. 34-5; Stubbs, Randolph & Judd 2005, p. 140). US research has found that increasing tenants' capacity to have a voice in decision-making has increased both satisfaction and quality of life in public housing developments (Nyden 1998, p. 747). Bailey et al. (2006, pp. 70-1) claim that in the UK community participation has been central to encouraging innovation and experimentation in the design of mixed tenure developments, and point to a number of examples where it has led to a radical overhaul of the original design proposed.

Much of the literature on social capital links it explicitly to membership of community groups and volunteer activity, with such activity seen as the answer to the failures of both market and state in response to disadvantage. The promotion of community involvement in disadvantaged areas will 'draw people into developing the kinds of relationships and social skills ... that are deficient in these kinds of areas' (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, pp. 10-11). Because it is only through community participation that disadvantage can be successfully addressed, the gains of renewal cannot be sustained without the community being involved on an ongoing basis (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 13). Participation is also pitched as being 'good for' tenants. According to Arthurson and Jacobs, the emphasis on tenant participation can be traced back to the notion that tenants should be 'active' and responsible citizens (Arthurson & Jacobs 2004, p. 33), a notion that is presumably built on the idea that they are not currently so.

But despite widespread belief that public involvement will lead to better policy-making and therefore better policy, there is actually a lack of empirical research evidence about the effectiveness of public involvement, with much of the research evidence that is available relating to what does not work, rather than what does and how it brings about better outcomes (Burton 2003, pp. 6-7, 12, 18-19, 24, 28).

In practice, community participation often falls short of theoretical standards (Burton 2003, p. 24; Arthurson 2003a, pp. 361, 370, n. 2). A number of researchers provide examples of where best practice has not been followed, such as instances where 'participation' has been used as a label for what is merely information provision, or criticise the inadequate funding and unrealistic timeframes or the unrealistic expectations and unfair burdens placed on community representatives (Stevens 1995, p. 86; Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, pp. 16-17; Arthurson 2003a, pp. 363-4, 367; Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 436; Forrest & Kearns, cited in Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 17; Wood 2002, pp. 37-8, 41, 57-8; Burton 2003, p. 26). Randolph et al. (2004, p. 45) reviewed urban renewal projects in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, and found dissatisfaction among tenants about the degree of participation that had occurred and the amount of say that they had been given over what happened to their homes and neighbourhoods. Participation strategies often appear to be designed for stakeholder management rather than for genuine engagement with tenants, as with the 'menu of options' model, under which tenants are informed, for

example, that a radical upgrade to their housing is occurring ‘whether you like it or not’ but are permitted to choose the colour of their new bathroom suite (Allen, T 2000, p. 445-8; Birdwell, Hannon & Thomas 2010, p. 22), or where tenants are brought in to fine-tune details well after the main goals of the project have been decided upon (Darcy 2007, p. 353). Researchers also suggest that many of the barriers to participation – what Wood refers to as the ‘apparently insurmountable’ obstacles of poverty, stigma and unfair treatment which have eroded people’s morale and self-esteem (Wood 2002, p. 43) – have been inadequately addressed in the past. Even a well-regarded consultation process, such as that which has occurred in Bonnyrigg in New South Wales, suffers from the under-representation of some population groups in the engagement process (Coates et al. 2008, p. 18).

## 8.2. Participation: what’s really going on

As noted above, according to Wood, Randolph and Judd (2002, p. 13), policy makers now broadly hold the view that ‘neither the state nor the market can provide the solution for disadvantaged communities without the active engagement of local people. Community participation is therefore cast as an essential if not central element in the process of renewal and as an end in itself’. However, the ‘almost ubiquitous call for community participation’ is made without acknowledging that the structures and processes used may be contestable or inequitable.

Everingham puts it this way: the new, ‘third way’ concept of community is that it is

something very like a large football field, a neutral ground where all parties can come together and talk about what they can do to help solve social problems. The state is simply one player in the team. The game itself has all the appearance of being independent of the state, but its rules are still officially, formally determined. The state still governs the same territory of social life even if other players are being asked to accept more responsibility for the outcome of the game (Everingham 2001, pp. 110-11).

Partnerships can be mechanisms for leveraging resources – or mechanisms for leveraging legitimacy (Johnston 2006, p. 3). The language of ‘partnership’ can obscure the very real differences in power between the various stakeholders (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 436).

As Taylor puts it, ‘[i]t is always the residents that have to adapt; the agenda and the rules of engagement tend to be those of official partners’ (Taylor 1998, p. 828). Large, well-funded partners in the renewal process can use their greater power to control the agendas and timeframes in ways that can either assist or undermine community involvement. Residents’ power is particularly limited by the fact that they do not bring money to ‘what is basically a commercial project’ (Arthurson 2003a, p. 366). And a process that aims to change estate communities so that they become more like surrounding areas not dominated by public housing ‘suggests the negation of tenant interests where they are in conflict with the interests of those around them’ (Lilley 2005, pp. 63-4). As Johnston asks, ‘[w]hat are the power imbalances in a local partnership where one of the results of the partnership venture is a removal of some people from the partnership site?’ (Johnston 2006, p. 18).

And built into the rhetoric of neighbourhood renewal is an explicit assumption that it is possible for everyone concerned to agree on what a particular community should be. For example, the UK Government states that regeneration will be more successful if the public, private and community sectors ‘own’ a ‘shared vision’ of the community’s future and ‘agree’ on how and where investment should be made (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, p. 34). In reality, living in a common geographical area or sharing a common characteristic does not automatically make a group of people into a community (Butcher, cited in Allen, T 2000, p. 454; Johnston 2003, p. 26). What if different groups or different individuals do not ‘share’ a common vision or ‘agree’ on what should happen? Based on research conducted in a former public housing estate that had undergone tenure diversification, Clark concluded that for most people, ‘the meaning of community was unquestionably about relationships with acquaintances, neighbours, friends and family living locally’. Community is in fact a ‘mosaic’ of these relationships. Because everyone has different acquaintances, neighbours, friends and family, this means that the experience of community – and therefore a person’s perspective on what should happen in that community – is personal, individual and different for everyone (Clark 2009, pp. 170, 177). Clark criticises the assumption that a group of people living in the same location belong to the one entity and that this entity will therefore engage with government as a unified body on the basis of shared attitudes (Clark 2009, p. 164).



We need to be careful not to idealise community. Clark (2009, pp. 171-2) notes the strong element of nostalgia in the way individuals describe and explain their sense of community, and suggests that this nostalgia can be damaging and alienating when it is unquestioningly adopted while ignoring the reality that communities can be 'divisive, oppressive, and full of tension and conflict'. Hess and Adams, for example, assume that the focus of 'community' in policy-making is equity and cohesion (in contrast to order and redistribution on the part of governments and efficiency and productivity on the market of markets) (Hess and Adams 2001, p. 20). But as discussion in this paper has shown, communities are not always equitable or cohesive places. As Clark points out, although the aspiration of contemporary welfare policy is of individual and community self-reliance, a community is 'an abstract entity that means different things to different people' and it 'does not and cannot provide support to all its members, merely based on geographical location or some other notional categorisation' (Clark 2009, p. 164). And even though very supportive of the potential of 'community' to bring new values and new forms of engagement to the public policy process, Hess and Adams caution against 'a thoughtless substitution of the mantra of the market with that of the community' and argue that 'we must be wary of assuming that the community is a blunt instrument to solve intractable social problems' (Hess & Adams 2001, pp. 19-21).

Governments may seek to overcome some of the difficulties of reaching excluded and marginalised residents by involving community organisations in the consultation process. However, as Johnston warns, this raises the risk of 'substitutionism' – that is, where organisations 'presume to speak on behalf of disadvantaged people and crowd out those people's own voices and action in the process' (Johnston 2006, p. 7). While this can arise from the role of these organisations as intermediaries, rather than from deliberate intent (Johnston 2006, p. 7), it could be potentially disastrous for the interests of tenants if the views of tenants and the views of the organisations were not the same. Genuine empowerment rests on being able to actually exercise power (Wilson et al. 2005, p. 5). Yet the chances of this in the modern neighbourhood renewal context seem unlikely (Arthurson 2003a, p. 368). As Murphy and Cauchi (2002, p. 2) put it, '[i]f local people are included in some decision making but excluded from other decision making, are they truly empowered?', and they go on to point out that while governments claim empowerment as their goal, 'they remind us regularly about how powerless we really are when they either ignore or dismiss our opinions' (Murphy & Cauchi 2002, p. 3). A proposal like T Allen's, a relationship in which the default assumption is that tenants will control all matters save those 'over which the landlord must have charge and which could be satisfactorily justified' (Allen, T 2000, p. 457), seems a long way off.





## 9. If not social mix, then what?

According to Taylor,

[p]olicies based on community and individual pathology only reinforce the cycle of exclusion by focusing on the failure of the [public housing] estate and those who live in it. Policies to extend the market demonstrate to residents how little choice they have in a society where choice is a defining feature of citizenship. To move from exclusion to integration requires that this cycle of exclusion be reversed (Taylor 1998, p. 821).

If reducing the amount of public housing in broadacre estates is not the right way to respond to the concentrated disadvantage in those communities, then what should public housing authorities in particular and governments in general do instead? The research suggests a number of approaches worth exploring.

### 9.1. Working *with* public housing communities

Cameron argues that governments and policy makers must understand communities as ‘complex and organic entities’. If they did, they might realise that changing the social mix in an area is ‘no guarantee of a “better” community’ (Cameron 2000, pp. 9-10). An alternative way forward is to build on strengths and assets rather than focussing on weaknesses and deficits (Fincher 2008, p. 4). Suggestions in the research include the following:

- Arthurson argues that an alternative to urban renewal to promote social mix is that housing authorities should concentrate on existing residents, delivering improvements in the quality of existing housing, employment strategies, projects to build tolerance of ethnic diversity and better service provision (Arthurson 2002, pp. 258). Evidence suggests that any community-based activity in a neglected area will be greeted positively by residents and will have positive outcomes for the community (Stubbs, Randolph & Judd 2005, p. 140; Stubbs & Hardy, cited in Johnston 2003, p. 13). A telephone survey by the Department for Victorian Communities found that in those areas where the Government had undertaken ‘community strengthening projects’<sup>12</sup>, respondents reported an improved sense of wellbeing. The findings were particularly striking in disadvantaged areas, suggesting ‘that community strengthening investments can buffer the effects of disadvantage’ (Hess & Adams 2007, pp. 10-11). A research project in the UK examining four separate neighbourhood renewal projects found that a ‘positive’ element in all the programs was that they ‘placed emphasis on their existing communities even when the regeneration objectives have included the creation of mixed communities and attracting new, higher income households’. These programs delivered improvements in the choice of housing, lower levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and littering, better quality local facilities and housing and more affordable housing to existing residents (ed. Thornhill 2009, p. 51).

---

<sup>12</sup> Hess and Adams describe the ‘strengthening’ projects as involving the creation of ‘sustainable networks’ based on ‘local level partnerships’ that include key stakeholders and community representatives. These partnerships then achieve ‘agreed policy and service delivery outcomes’ ranging from volunteering programs through to complex strategic planning. The aim was to connect government, business and community organisations together to address complex modern problems (Hess & Adams 2007, pp. 7-8).

- Genuinely engaging with residents themselves is also important.<sup>13</sup> Many disadvantaged communities have been the subject of repeated experiments in community programs, funded in the short-term and designed by outside ‘experts’, that have promised much and delivered little. Disillusionment, cynicism and passivity could perhaps be expected when yet another program is announced (Murphy & Cauchi 2002, p. 4). A study by Wood of six Australian public housing communities found that a common complaint from neighbourhood renewal professionals was that communities had been ‘consulted to death’. Some active residents also talked about disillusionment with consultative processes (Wood 2002, pp. 36-7). The idea that a community has been ‘over-consulted’ can be used as an excuse for avoiding further consultation (e.g. BBC Consulting Planners 2005, vol. 1, p. 25). However, when Wood spoke to tenants, he found that over-consultation was not what the residents had actually experienced. Instead, some residents felt that although they had been ‘consulted’, their views had also been discarded. Others said that they had not been greatly involved, because they had not been asked. Wood concluded that the idea that there had been ‘too much’ consultation in the past was ‘misplaced’, and that it was ‘more likely that there had *not been enough effective and inclusive consultation*, rather than too much, and that the expectations that accompanied initial activity had either not materialised or have been slow in coming’ (Wood 2002, pp. 36-7, emphasis added).
- Clark (2009, p. 175) argues that the reason for the failure of many social policies and programs is inadequate attention to community development, and particularly community ‘ownership’ and involvement. Effective community development, however, may not fit well into usual bureaucratic processes designed around objectives, outcomes and key performance indicators (Ife 2003, p. 2). There is a fundamental contradiction inherent in community-building strategies that ‘[occur] within a strong, [sic] framework of government priorities, government policies and government processes which have been *imposed on* communities rather than have *emanated from* them’ (Murphy & Cauchi 2002, p. 1, emphasis in original). As Ife (2003) points out, ‘[c]ommunity development is about processes, not outcomes’. It is an open-ended process, without a clear deadline, and requires ‘trusting the community to know what it wants, and trusting the process rather [than] defining (and worse, measuring) the outcome’. Care does need to be taken – community development cannot be assumed to be the solution for every problem or an excuse to reduce government commitment to social programs ‘on the basis that “they are better undertaken at community level”’. Nor can it occur without a broader analysis of the reasons why the community is disadvantaged – Ife warns that if it is done, it ‘is just as likely to exacerbate inequalities rather than address them’, by blaming the community for its problems. It must occur within a values framework; Ife suggests a human rights framework. Community development can be a radical and challenging process: it is ‘neither technical and value-free, nor apolitical. ... Community development, if it is actually successful, will threaten some very powerful interests’ (Ife 2003, pp. 2-4, 6-7). However, given that much of the rhetoric and action of neighbourhood renewal is, at best, paternalistic and, at worst, feeds processes of stigmatisation and exclusion by labelling communities as inadequate and dysfunctional and in need of re-making by the introduction of better, more adequate, more functional people, there is power in a process that at its best is based upon the premise that ‘the community may have more to teach us than we have to teach them’ (Ife 2003, pp. 2-7).
- A response to a problem should relate to the source of the problem. For example, if evidence points to the physical quality of the housing as the source of the problem, then upgrades and maintenance are the solution, not tenure diversification. If crime and anti-social behaviour are the problem, then the response needs to address the causes of that, be they neighbourhood layout and design, stress created by socio-economic profile or poor policing presence. Tenure diversification is not going to solve a problem of poor housing management or anti-social behaviour by a handful of households (Atkinson 2008, pp. 17, 29).
- Despite the concern expressed in public policy over public housing tenants who remain in public housing ‘for life’ with no aspiration to move on (e.g. Plibersek 2009, p. 4; Department of Health and Human Services 2009, pp. 27, 28; Social Housing Taskforce 2009, pp. 40-54), research also points to the importance of long-term residence in a community, challenging the idea that remaining in the same place for a long period of time is somehow socially undesirable. Sarkissian, Forsyth and Heine (1990, pp. 10-11) cite a number of research studies which link long-term residence in the same area to people’s sense of satisfaction with and belonging to their community. The presence of long-term residents has been shown to create greater integration within communities (Arthurson 2004b, p. 267). Clark (2009, pp. 169-70, 174) found a similar link between length of residency and feelings of

<sup>13</sup> Palmer et al. (2004, p. 424) suggest that the residents themselves will be the source of the best ideas on how to tackle stigma because residents in stigmatised areas are already engaged in challenging stigmatisation and its consequences. Asking residents what they want with the expectation of actually delivering it will not necessarily lead to the government finding itself over-committed; satisfaction surveys show that residents usually have ‘realistic aspirations but high expectations’ of the changes they want in their daily lives: changes in housing quality, litter and graffiti and crime and anti-social behaviour (ed. Thornhill 2009, p. 5).

connection and belonging, and noted that newcomers to a place could weaken locals' sense of commonality and shared identity. The presence of large numbers of private renters on short-term leases, particularly when landlords are neglectful of their maintenance responsibilities, has been identified as a problem in some areas, linked to the sell-off of poor quality public housing stock to private investors (Arthurson 2005a, pp. 5, 9). Strategies that support long-term residence – encouraging people to 'put down roots' – may assist in improving the day-to-day experience of life in these communities. Such strategies could include providing assistance so that those tenants who choose to change their rental arrangements or purchase housing can do so 'in place' (Stone & Hulse 2007, p. 53). Other tenants may of course choose public housing as the tenure that best suits their needs. Hulse and Randolph call on housing authorities to exploit the greater security and affordability offered by public housing. A less pressured housing environment allows people to take time over re-skilling and work-readiness programs, which will in turn lead to better jobs that suit people's needs and provide longer-term career prospects (Hulse & Randolph 2004, p. 59).

- Some researchers are also supportive of strategies that tackle concentrations of affluence, by promoting the introduction of public housing into wealthier neighbourhoods (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 5). These strategies allow tenants to benefit from the better services and amenities offered in these neighbourhoods without requiring the destruction of existing communities. However, as noted earlier, researchers have found that tenants sometimes continue to face barriers in accessing these better facilities and in interacting with their wealthier neighbours, and this needs to be addressed. Planned mixed communities are strongly supported by UK researchers. One study of such communities 20 years on found that while they featured higher than average levels of deprivation, there was little 'severe disadvantage, nor the problems that tend to be associated with it', and that they did allow people to escape the prejudice and stigma attached to public housing estates (Allen, C et al. 2005, p. 28). Atkinson and Jacobs call for investment in high and low value areas to both promote diversity in wealthier areas and address pockets of disadvantage in poorer ones. Investment in disadvantaged areas should be channelled into strategies that better integrate communities and tenants into labour markets, economies and the wider environment and support the role of public services (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 5).

## 9.2. Opening up the public housing system

According to Stubbs et al. (2005, pp. 15-32), a 'best practice' approach to neighbourhood renewal is fundamentally incompatible with many of the issues that are driving it: the decline in funding for public housing, the backlog of outstanding maintenance and the stigmatisation of public housing estates. Currently, the public housing system is a constrained system: funding, supply, eligibility and allocations are all restricted. These constraints both undermine the system's capacity to address the issues facing its tenants and reinforce the problems those tenants face. As Atkinson and Jacobs put it in relation to the targeting of public housing on the basis of need, '[i]t is difficult to deny that public resources should not help those most in need, yet this logic has also undermined the broader advantages that this social investment might have for the lives of tenants and their communities' (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 13). That is, the consequences of targeting, including stigmatisation and reduced levels of rental revenue, have compromised the capacity of public housing to be a source of community, opportunity and support for its tenants.

Part of the drive towards tenure diversification is the need for housing authorities under considerable budgetary pressure to reduce costs, with many new mixed developments simply the by-product of strategies to leverage private investment into public housing authorities through joint ventures with the private sector (Sarkissian, Forsyth & Heine 1990, p. 7). Yet the 'twin problems' that neighbourhood renewal is tackling – 'the residualisation of public housing tenants and the rundown of investment and repairs in the stock they live in' (Judd & Randolph 2006, p. 99) – are the result of deliberate policy decisions such as the decision to target so stringently and the progressive erosion of public housing funding levels which has led to accumulated maintenance backlogs and the sell-off of housing stock (see also Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2003, p. 20; Atkinson & Jacobs 2010, pp.159-60). Atkinson and Jacobs recommend reversing these policy decisions: tackling the concentration of disadvantage within public housing by opening up allocations to a wider range of people, rather than confining access to people with complex needs only, effectively creating mixed communities within the sector, and ensuring that the decline in stock levels is tackled 'head on' (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008, p. 22). Increasing supply will not only assist in allowing for the broadening of the tenant base while ensuring the access of people in extreme need is not compromised, but it will also allow the system to respond to those people in need who are currently missing out on access to public housing (Atkinson 2008, p. 46).

There is a serious contradiction inherent in governments ever more tightly targeting public housing to those most in need and the same governments' extolling of 'social mix' (Arthurson 2008b, p. 7). Targeting is the antithesis of 'mix'. Furthermore, it is the effects of targeting that have in fact created the attraction to social mix in the first place (Arthurson 2008b, p. 4), even though social mix is not going to solve the problems of a residualised public housing system (see also Randolph, Murray & Ruming 2007, p. 9; Atkinson 2008, p. 5). The contradiction is intensified by the fact that programs to promote social mix often lead to a reduction in stock, which places even greater pressure on allocations. These dual policies have resulted in even more tightening of 'the links between housing tenure, poverty and place in Australia', essentially undermining the premise on which neighbourhood renewal is based (Arthurson 2008b, p. 23).

Targeting also has consequences for the financial sustainability of the public housing system, with ongoing erosion of rental revenue arising as a direct consequence of increased levels of targeting (Hall, J & Berry 2007, p. 13). Yet the option of broadening eligibility for public housing should not be totally unpalatable. The South Australian Housing Trust maintained no limits on eligibility as late as 2000 (South Australian Auditor-General 2000, p. 381) and in 2001, the Victorian Government did consider the option of broadening eligibility for social housing (Johnston 2002, p. 13, n. 4). The importance of widened eligibility criteria to support sustainability is accepted as a given in the growing housing association sector, which the Australian Government has anointed as holding the answer to future social housing supply (Australian Government 2010, pp. 5, 31; Plibersek 2009, pp. 5-6).

Johnston (2003, p. 8) argues that only an increase in supply would allow for targeting to be relaxed; without it, a change in targeting policy would undermine the principle of 'vertical equity' and lead to public housing authorities being 'crucified by the mass media for rotting and lack of compassion'. Damaging media headlines aside, expanding eligibility criteria while maintaining the existing and inadequate levels of supply would result in people in urgent need of public housing being inappropriately excluded from the system. Atkinson argues that at both the state and federal level, 'it is essential to acknowledge the need for some expansion of public or community housing delivery', because '[i]t is not possible for the reorganisation of concentrations of poverty to be substituted for the need to address this policy fundamental' (Atkinson 2008, p. 46).

As Atkinson and Jacobs (2010, p. 158) point out, public housing is '[fixed] in the national imagination as a failed project that contains poverty', and treated accordingly by governments. Yet it could also be seen – and treated – as a fundamental human right, or as a vital launch pad for economic participation.

### 9.3. Dealing with the real problem

Through the emphasis on social mix, housing authorities are being asked to deliver an outcome – the resolution of the widespread social and economic problems affecting people living in public housing estates – that cannot be achieved by merely reducing the level of public housing in those areas (Walker et al. 2007, p. 3). According to a literature review on social mix by Atkinson, it is income levels that must be taken into account if we are to understand disadvantage, including concentrated disadvantage. Income, or socio-economic status, is significantly linked to health, education and employment outcomes. The review concludes that '[i]n terms of broad guidance for policy-makers it would seem that adjustments around this key variable [income levels] should be the focus for efforts to improve broader community outcomes'. But action in this area is not within the power of state housing authorities to implement (Atkinson 2008, p. 21). As a housing officer from the South Australian Housing Trust put it,

We manage tenancies and build houses ... [T]o ask us then to be responsible for whether children in that household receive proper nutrition and education is a big ask, and not one I think we could make a claim too [sic]. The impact of renewal on the community has probably been overstated in the past. If you can physically change the look of a place people think you're in control of the situation, but we're not (cited in Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2005, pp. 36-7).



The community building and development activities suggested above are important, but on their own they will only have a temporary effect if the fundamental reasons why people are disadvantaged are not addressed (Murphy & Cauchi 2002, p. 9; see also Ife 2003, p. 3). Actually solving the ‘problem’ of concentrated disadvantage is beyond the power of housing authorities and of housing-focussed neighbourhood renewal strategies.<sup>14</sup> Broader structural reform, particularly in relation to income adequacy, is what is required to solve the problem.<sup>15</sup>

Focussing so intently on mix allows governments and policy makers to hide the real problem. Both Hoatson and Grace (2002, p. 432) and Goodchild and Cole (2001, p. 109) argue that the two most popular perspectives on concentrated disadvantage, the ‘moral underclass’ approach which focuses on undesirable values and behaviour, and the ‘structural’ or ‘social exclusion’ approach which focuses on isolation from services and support, avoid the core issue of poverty. They ‘hide’ the problem (Hoatson & Grace 2002, p. 432). ‘Mix’ diverts attention from the need for effective income redistribution (Cheshire 2007, p. 35). If disadvantage can be described as the result of a lack of social cohesion or social capital in communities then there is no need to address the imbalances of power that reinforce social disadvantage (Wood 2003, p. 54). As Atkinson and Jacobs (2010, p. 159) put it, ‘the central question of public housing has become one of social composition in small areas and their “balance”, rather than whether the extent of *systemic inequality* is too wide’ (emphasis in original).

At a very fundamental level, a government that wants to address the fact that some places and some groups of people in the community do not have what other places and other groups of people have must address inequality. Baum argues that attention to inequality is critical because disadvantage is cumulative and ‘[a] nation that grows at the expense of inclusiveness risks significant social dysfunction that can in the extreme, challenge all levels of government and bring into question the shape and function of the nation’s social fabric’ (Baum 2008, pp. 10, 38). Arthurson and Jacobs (2004, p. 29) conclude that ‘while housing plays a role in social exclusion, addressing income inequality ... is one of the most effective ways of addressing inequality and exclusion’.

---

<sup>14</sup> Lilley (2005, p. 61) does however make the valid point that although state housing authorities do not have direct responsibility for addressing issues such as structural inequality, discrimination, macro-employment markets or education, ‘appropriate theory, information and partnerships’ still need to be built into any approach to disadvantage that they do adopt or the response will be ‘inappropriate and/or ineffective’.

<sup>15</sup> If neighbourhood renewal was genuinely ‘whole of government’, then there would presumably be the capacity to address at least some of the structural issues driving inequality and disadvantage. But in reality, most neighbourhood renewal activity is carried out by public housing authorities because most of the discussion about the issue remains focussed tightly on concentrated disadvantage within public housing estates (Wood, Randolph & Judd 2002, p. 24). Because the problem is in a public housing community, it is assumed that the responsibility for addressing the problem rests with the public housing authority, even though, as Johnston (2003, pp. 10-11) points out, a number of other government agencies have responsibilities within such communities, including the police, health services, human services, including mental health services and child, youth and family services, and central agencies such as premier’s departments.



## 10. Conclusion

### 10.1. Where are we now?

This paper has briefly explored the complex issues underpinning the public housing policy approach of urban renewal and tenure diversification. It has considered the problem that these strategies seek to address: concentrated disadvantage, particularly in public housing estates, and the causes of that problem, both structural and political. It has looked at why policy makers are so concerned about concentrated disadvantage, and particularly the role of ‘area effects’ and stigmatisation. It has noted that the issue of concentrated disadvantage is not confined to public housing, and that public housing does not directly cause disadvantage. It has looked at the way in which policy makers and governments talk about disadvantaged communities, and how carelessly chosen rhetoric can create stigma by depicting public housing communities and public housing tenants as abnormal and dysfunctional.

The paper has explored the ways in which governments choose to respond to the ‘problem’ of concentrated disadvantage, and in particular the response of ‘social mix’, a solution usually implemented through what is referred to as ‘urban renewal’ or forced diversification of tenure in public housing estates through the sell-off of stock. It has looked at the ideological origins of this policy approach, including the focus on what is seen as undesirable behaviour among the poor.

The paper explores the evidence base for social mix and finds it to be flimsy and limited. Social mix does not appear to promote integration and access to social and employment networks, to reduce community tension or to improve service delivery for disadvantaged people, as claimed. It has some success in addressing stigma, but does not succeed in entirely overcoming it because the public housing tenure itself continues to be stigmatised under this approach. The paper notes the ‘dark side’ of the social capital these projects are intended to promote – the way in which strong communities can act to exclude as well as include. It notes the lack of attention given to the voices of those most affected in the debate, and the way in which much of this debate depends on our attitudes to those who are different and our reluctance to embrace that difference and diversity.

It asks why good people within public housing authorities continue to pursue social mix in the face of evidence that it does not work. It notes the power of the social mix thesis, the extent to which the public housing system is stigmatised and denigrated, even in the eyes of those who operate the system, the ease with which government can intervene in public housing estates in contrast to the difficulty it experiences in intervening in other places and the argument that ‘doing something is better than doing nothing’.

The paper also considers the harm that seeking to remake a community through urban renewal can inflict upon vulnerable people, particularly through the displacement of existing residents, who are often excluded from benefiting from the new resources, services and facilities provided by the project because they have been relocated to make way for the project. It explores the growing role of the private sector in neighbourhood renewal, and the consequent diversion of benefits and profits to private developers and private – and generally middle class – home owners. It considers the increased pressure on the existing system created by the loss of public housing stock and the difficulties inherent in relocating tenants displaced from urban renewal sites.

The paper notes the lack of systemic evaluation on neighbourhood renewal in Australia. It notes that the price of success appears to be the exclusion of the most disadvantaged from redeveloped areas: those most in need are most likely to miss out. It notes the ambiguous evidence that any success can last and the assumption that social mix replaces the need for ongoing government funding.

The paper explores the role of ‘community’ in the debate and the emphasis governments place on community participation and creation of social capital as integral to the process and the outcomes of urban renewal, despite the barriers and blockages that exist to genuine engagement and the very uneven power relationships between the target community and the entities seeking to renew it. It notes the contestability of the assumption that ‘communities’ are homogenous entities that speak with one voice.

Finally, the paper considers alternatives to the neighbourhood renewal approach. It suggests three tiers of intervention: starting at working with public housing communities, proceeding through reforms to address the twin problems of targeting and under-funding that beset the public housing system, and ending with a call for structural reform to tackle the central problem of income inequality and inadequacy.

## 10.2. What is happening in Tasmania?

At the time of writing, in Tasmania urban renewal is very definitely on the horizon, but its scope and extent are reliant on the outcome of bilateral negotiations between the State and Australian Governments. The uncertain future of Tasmania’s public housing system, which is currently the subject of an ongoing review and reform process, is also a brake on any immediate activity. Housing Tasmania has identified five areas as potential sites for neighbourhood renewal – Bridgewater, Gagebrook and Clarendon Vale in the state’s south and Rocherlea and Shorewell Park in the north and north-west respectively – but is awaiting the necessary funding and policy decisions before commencing any major work. However, following on from the Minister’s 2008 announcement, discussed at the beginning of this paper, the Housing Innovations Unit has allocated \$200,000 from the State Government’s Housing Fund to the development of a master plan for Bridgewater and Gagebrook. An external consultant has been engaged and a draft master plan for ‘housing regeneration’ in the area has been completed.

The plan has not been publicly released, but apparently contains a number of elements that are familiar from similar projects on the mainland, including:

- a change in housing density, with the development of more medium density housing (meaning apartment blocks of two to three storeys);
- sales to increase the level of private ownership in the suburb;
- the transfer of management and/or ownership of public housing stock to community housing associations; and
- a focus on commercial development, such as the creation of a ‘village hub’.

There has been some community involvement through engagement with local services. Two well-attended community workshops were held, with participants recruited through a ‘targeted’ process that focussed on ‘proactive’ community members. Year 9 and 10 students at Bridgewater High School were also involved through a school project that looked at housing and neighbourhood issues. A representative of a local community organisation is part of the project’s reference group. However the process to date has not sought to engage with all community members, partly because of the lack of certainty over the availability of funding for implementation. Ultimately, the intention is that the project be ‘community-led’, with management of the process being put out for tender to the community sector.

As with similar projects on the mainland, what is happening in Bridgewater and Gagebrook does pose risks. The ‘vision’ thus far appears to centre on medium density community housing in the central part of the suburb, with privately owned family homes surrounding it. This will be a radical change in the landscape of the neighbourhood – only 2.5% of the existing dwellings in the area are flats, units or apartments (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008a). The emphasis on apartment-style community housing suggests that the social housing that remains in the area will be designed with the people on the public housing waiting list in mind, rather than the profile of existing residents. Displacement for at least some of the existing residents may well be the outcome. The risk that ‘success’ will require the exclusion of tenants perceived to be ‘problems’ is also high, as research strongly emphasises the commercial and policy pressures that lead

to the exclusion of people with complex needs in order to ensure confidence among private investors and private home buyers. The lack of certainty over funding is also a concern. The Housing Innovations Unit is hoping that some funding will become available to allow them to pursue one or two 'pilot' housing redevelopments in the area. These pilots will then trigger political pressure from residents for further activity, which will proceed in stages. But will there be enough funding to support, for example, a wide-reaching and long-term community involvement and development process, or the provision of better social infrastructure, such as public transport? Then there is the fact that the project is proceeding with predetermined goals that have not had resident input. The change in 'mix' was announced in 2008 by the Minister. It did not come from the community.

### 10.3. Where to from here?

Where does all of this – the contradictory evidence base, the experiences from interstate and overseas of displacement and exclusion, the uncertainty surrounding the depth and scale of activity in Tasmania, the structural and even global causes of the problem – leave the Tasmanian community? Urban renewal and social mix are established, national policy directions drawn from a powerful international policy trend. They arise out of a particular ideological framework and are often pursued in a context of stigma and discrimination, but they can also be an honest attempt to deal with the material deprivation and the lack of social infrastructure that characterise areas of concentrated public housing. They may not succeed, because so many of the problems in these areas arise from structural forces outside the field of influence of housing authorities. But is the alternative to abandon any form of 'renewal' and call instead for structural change that may be a long time coming, while people in disadvantaged communities continue to go without decent public transport, essential services and quality housing?

This paper was written to prompt discussion and debate, with the hope that these things could lead to the shaping of policies that minimised harm and promoted social justice and the genuine empowerment of communities. The questions below offer a beginning point for that discussion.

How can we ensure that urban renewal proceeds in a way that generates investment and services, but that also allows communities to retain their own identity, and allows all who live in and love a place to remain and be a part of its brighter future?

How can we give to public housing tenants the same autonomy, power and right to speak out over what happens to their homes and communities that we willingly accept in and extend to private home owners and private developers?

How can we recreate our public housing system to be a source of community, inclusion and wellbeing rather than a target of stigma, hostility and despair?

How can we promote a decent life for all members of our society while avoiding imposing our own value judgements about what constitutes 'a decent life' on people who might have different views?

How can we include and support those people in our community who, due to life circumstances, personal choices or past experience, behave in ways that cause distress and damage to their neighbours and communities?

How can we allocate the limited funds of government to ensure that the maximum benefit flows to those who most need the resources?

How can we ensure that private investment in an area benefits not only those who are a source of profit for the investor but also those who are not?

How can we overcome the structural forces that create disadvantaged places, particularly when many of those forces are global in scale?

How can we draw all the threads of local, state and national policy together to deliver equity and the reasonable entitlements of all citizens to all people and all places in our society?





## References

- Allen, C, Camina, M, Casey, R, Coward, S & Wood, M 2005, *Mixed tenure, twenty years on – nothing out of the ordinary*, Chartered Institute of Housing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Coventry, UK.
- Allen, T 2000, 'Housing renewal – doesn't it make you sick?', *Housing Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 443-61.
- Arthurson, K 1998, 'Redevelopment of public housing estates: the Australian experience', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 35-46.
- Arthurson, K 2001, 'Achieving social justice in estate regeneration: the impact of physical image construction', *Housing Studies*, vol. 16, no. 6, pp. 807-26.
- Arthurson, K 2002, 'Creating inclusive communities through balancing social mix: a critical relationship or tenuous link?', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 245-61.
- Arthurson, K 2003a, 'Neighbourhood regeneration: facilitating community involvement', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 357-71.
- Arthurson, K 2003b, 'Whole of government models of estate regeneration: the way forward?', *Just Policy*, no. 29, pp. 26-35.
- Arthurson, K 2004a, 'Conceptualising social inclusion in estate regeneration policy: what part does public housing play?', *Just Policy*, no. 34, pp. 3-13.
- Arthurson, K 2004b, 'From stigma to demolition: Australian debates about housing and social exclusion', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, vol. 19, pp. 255-70.
- Arthurson, K 2004c, 'Social mix and disadvantaged communities: policy, practice, and the evidence base', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 101-106.
- Arthurson, K 2005a, 'Residents' perspectives about social mix', paper presented to State of Australian Cities National Conference, Brisbane, 30 November – 2 December.
- Arthurson, K 2005b, 'Social mix and the cities', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 519-23.
- Arthurson, K 2008a, 'Australian public housing and the diverse histories of social mix', *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 484-501.
- Arthurson, K 2008b, 'Urban regeneration, scale and balancing social mix', paper presented to Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Department of Planning and Community Development Social Inclusion and Place Based Disadvantage Workshop, Melbourne, 13 June.
- Arthurson, K & Jacobs, K 2004, 'A critique of the concept of social exclusion and its utility for Australian social housing policy', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 25-40.
- Atkinson, R 2005, *Neighbourhoods and the impacts of social mix: crime, tenure diversification and assisted mobility*, HACRU occasional paper no. 1, Housing and Community Research Unit, Hobart.
- Atkinson, R 2008, *Housing policies, social mix and community outcomes*, AHURI final report no. 122, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.

Atkinson, R & Jacobs, K 2008, *Public housing in Australia: stigma, home and opportunity*, HACRU discussion paper no. 1, Housing and Community Research Unit, Hobart.

Atkinson, R & Jacobs, K 2010, 'Damned by place, then by politics: spatial disadvantage and the housing policy-research interface', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 155-71.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008a, *2006 Census QuickStats: Bridgewater-Gagebrook (urban centre/locality)*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 20 May 2010, <<http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/ABSNavigation/prenav/ProductSelect?newproducttype=QuickStats&btnSelectProduct=View+QuickStats+%3E&collection=Census&period=2006&areacode=UCL601600&geography=&method=&productlabel=&producttype=&topic=&navmapdisplayed=true&javascript=true&breadcrumb=LP&topholder=0&leftholder=0&currentaction=201&action=401&textversion=false>>.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008b, *Census of population and housing: socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA), Australia – data only, 2006*, cat. no. 2033.0.55.001, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Australian Government 2009, *A stronger, fairer Australia: national statement on social inclusion*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.

Australian Government 2010, *Regulation and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector*, discussion paper, Australian Government, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008, *Who receives priority housing and how long do they stay?*, bulletin no. 63, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

Australian Social Inclusion Board 2009, *Building inclusive and resilient communities*, Australian Government, Canberra.

Badcock, B 1997, 'Replacing "problem" housing: a South Australian case study', *Just Policy*, no. 9, pp. 3-13.

Bailey, N, Haworth, A, Manzi, T, Paranagamage, P & Roberts, M 2006, *Creating and sustaining mixed income communities: a good practice guide*, Chartered Institute of Housing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Coventry.

Baker, E & Arthurson, K 2007, 'Housing, place or social networks: what's more important for relocating tenants?', *Australian Planner*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 28-35.

Baum, S 2008, *Suburban scars: Australian cities and socio-economic deprivation*, urban research program research paper no. 15, Griffith University, Brisbane.

BBC Consulting Planners 2005, *Minto renewal project: social impact assessment*, 2 vols, report to the New South Wales Department of Housing, Sydney.

Beatty, C, Foden, M, Lawless, P & Wilson, I 2008, *New Deal for Communities: a synthesis of new programme wide evidence: 2006-07*, NDC national evaluation phase 2 research report no. 39, Department for Communities and Local Government, London.

Berube, A 2005, *Mixed communities in England: a US perspective on evidence and policy prospects*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Birdwell, J, Hannon, C & Thomas, G 2010, *Where are tomorrow's heartlanders? Unlocking the potential of social housing*, report prepared by Demos for The Hyde Group, London.

Bridge, C, Flatau, P, Whelan, S, Wood, G & Yates, J 2003, *Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes*, AHURI final report no. 40, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.

Burton, P 2003, *Community involvement in neighbourhood regeneration: stairway to heaven or road to nowhere?*, CNR paper no. 13, Economic and Social Research Council Centre for Neighbourhood Research, Bristol & Glasgow.

Cameron, C 2000, *Redevelopment of public housing estates*, Shelter WA occasional paper no. 1, Shelter WA, Perth.

Cheshire, P 2007, *Segregated neighbourhoods and mixed communities: a critical analysis*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Clark, A 2009, 'Not a solution at all? Communities and social policy', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 163-81.

Clarke, M 2006, 'Urban renewal programs in Australia: modelling the key performance indicators', *Australian Property Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 131-9.

Coates, B, Kavanagh, D, Judd, B & Unsworth, L 2008, *Telling the story: community engagement in Bonnyrigg*, report prepared in consultation with the Living Communities Consultative Committee, Housing New South Wales, Sydney.

Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National partnership agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan: building prosperity for the future and supporting jobs now*, Council of Australian Governments, Canberra.

- Darcy, M 1998, 'The discourse of "community" and the reinvention of social housing policy in Australia', *Urban Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 13-26.
- Darcy, M 2007, 'Place and disadvantage: the need for reflexive epistemology in spatial social science', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 347-61.
- Dean, J & Hastings, A 2000, *Challenging images: housing estates, stigma and regeneration*, The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Bristol, UK.
- Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, *Transforming places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration*, Department for Communities and Local Government, London.
- Department of Health and Human Services 2009, *Social and affordable housing in Tasmania: final options paper*, report prepared by KPMG, Sydney.
- Eringa, K 2001, *Review of the Parry-Strommen 'New Living' report*, Shelter WA, Perth.
- Everingham, C 1998, 'The imagined community of access and equity', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 1-16.
- Everingham, C 2001, 'Reconstituting community: social justice, social order and the politics of community', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 105-22.
- Fincher, R 2008, 'Issues of scale: a place-based view of social inclusion centred on redistribution, recognition and encounter', paper presented to Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Department of Planning and Community Development Social Inclusion and Place Based Disadvantage Workshop, Melbourne, 13 June.
- Fuller, N 1995, 'The impact of relocation on public housing tenants: a survey of residents' experiences', *Australian Planner*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 175-180.
- Giddings, L (Minister for Health and Human Services) 2008, *New housing initiative*, media release, State Government Communications Unit, Hobart, 12 June.
- Goetz, EG 2000, 'The politics of poverty deconcentration and housing demolition', *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 157-73.
- Goodchild, B & Cole, I 2001, 'Social balance and mixed neighbourhoods in Britain since 1979: a review of discourse and practice in social housing', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 19, pp. 103-21.
- Graham, H, Fallon, J & White, R 2007, *Mixed housing and anti-social behaviour: a local area study of South Hobart*, HACRU occasional paper no. 11, Housing and Community Research Unit, Hobart.
- Hall, J & Berry, M 2007, *Public housing: shifting client profiles and public housing revenues*, AHURI final report no. 108, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Hall, P 1997, 'Regeneration policies for peripheral housing estates: inward- and outward-looking approaches', *Urban Studies*, vol. 34, nos 5-6, pp. 873-90.
- Hess, M & Adams, D 2001, 'Community in public policy: fad or foundation?', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 13-23.
- Hess, M & Adams, D 2007, 'Innovation in public management: the role and function of community knowledge', *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, article 2.
- Hoatson, L & Grace, M 2002, 'Public housing redevelopment: opportunity for community regeneration?', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 429-41.
- Holmes, C 2006, 'Mixed communities: success and sustainability', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Housing Ministers' Conference 2009, *Implementing the national housing reforms: a progress report to the Council of Australian Governments from Commonwealth, State and Territory housing ministers*, Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Hulse, K & Burke, T 2000, 'Social exclusion and the private rental sector: the experiences of three market liberal countries', paper presented to ENHR conference, Gävle, Sweden, 26-30 June.
- Hulse, K & Randolph, B 2004, *Work disincentives and housing assistance*, AHURI final report no. 67, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Hulse, K & Stone, W 2006, *Housing, housing assistance and social cohesion*, AHURI positioning paper, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.

- Ife, J 2003, 'Community development and human rights', paper presented to People Place Partnerships 2: Strengthening Communities conference, 30 April.
- Jacobs, K, Arthurson, K & Randolph, B 2004, *Developing appropriate exit strategies for housing regeneration programmes*, AHURI positioning paper no. 69, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Jacobs, K, Arthurson, K & Randolph, B 2005, *Developing appropriate exit strategies for housing regeneration programmes*, AHURI final report no. 87, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Jacobs, K, Kemeny, J & Manzi, T 2003, 'Power, discursive space and institutional practices in the construction of housing problems', *Housing Studies*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 429-46, viewed 26 August 2010, <[http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/106/1/Jacobs\\_Kemeny\\_26\\_Manzi\\_2003\\_Power\\_final.pdf](http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/106/1/Jacobs_Kemeny_26_Manzi_2003_Power_final.pdf)>.
- Johnston C 2002, *Housing policy and social mix: an exploratory paper*, Shelter brief no. 19, Shelter New South Wales, Sydney.
- Johnston, C 2003, *Tenancies, communities, and the (re)development of public housing estates – a background paper*, Shelter brief no. 21, Shelter New South Wales, Sydney.
- Johnston, C 2006, *Regeneration partnerships and communities*, Shelter New South Wales, Sydney.
- Judd, B & Randolph, B 2006, 'Qualitative methods and the evaluation of community renewal programs in Australia: towards a national framework', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 97-114.
- Jupp, B 1999, *Living together: community life on mixed tenure estates*, Demos, London.
- Kearns, A & Mason, P 2007, 'Mixed tenure communities and neighbourhood quality', *Housing Studies*, vol. 22, no. 5, pp. 661-91.
- Kearns, A & Parkes, A 2002, *Public opinion for policy? Housing, neighbourhoods and communities in Scotland*, CNR paper no. 9, Economic and Social Research Council Centre for Neighbourhood Research, Bristol & Glasgow.
- Keen, E 2006, *Research into the community of Bridgewater and Gagebrook*, Fusion Australia, Poatina, Tasmania.
- Lees, L 2008, 'Gentrification and social mixing: towards an inclusive urban renaissance?', *Urban Studies*, vol. 45, no. 12, pp. 2449-2470.
- Lilley, D 2005, 'Evaluating the "community renewal" response to social exclusion on public housing estates', *Australian Planner*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 59-65.
- Luxford, L 2006, *Housing assistance and disadvantaged places*, AHURI research and policy bulletin no. 85, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Manley, D, Doherty, J, Graham, E & Boyle, P 2007, 'Social well-being for mixed tenure areas in Britain: 1991 to 2001', paper presented to ENHR conference, Rotterdam, 25-28 June.
- Meen, G, Gibb, K, Goody, J, McGrath, T & Mackinnon, J 2005, *Economic segregation in England: causes, consequence and policy*, The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Bristol, UK.
- Murphy, J & Cauchi, J 2002, 'What's wrong with community building', paper presented to Local Government Community Services Association of Western Australia conference, 4-6 December.
- Newman, P, Thorpe, A, Greive, S & Armstrong, R 2003, *Local advantage and disadvantage in public housing, Rent Assistance and Housing Loan Assistance in Perth*, AHURI final report no. 52, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Nyden, P 1998, 'Comment on James E Rosenbaum, Linda K Stroh, and Cathy A Flynn's "Lake Parc Place: a study of mixed income housing"', *Housing Policy Debate*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 741-8.
- Palmer, C, Ziersch, A, Arthurson, K & Baum, F 2004, 'Challenging the stigma of public housing: preliminary findings from a qualitative study in South Australia', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 411-26.
- Plibersek, T 2009, 'Room for more: boosting providers of social housing', speech to the Sydney Institute, Sydney, 19 March.
- Randolph, B 2000, 'Community renewal and disadvantaged areas – a national agenda for action', *Proceedings of creative approaches to urban renewal: a conference on the redevelopment of public housing*, Shelter Western Australia, Perth, pp. 6-15.
- Randolph, B & Holloway, D 2005, 'Social disadvantage, tenure and location: an analysis of Sydney and Melbourne', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 173-201.

- Randolph, B & Judd, B 2000, 'Community renewal and large public housing estates', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 91-104.
- Randolph, B, Murray, D & Ruming, K 2007, *Defining social exclusion in Western Sydney: exploring the role of housing tenure*, research paper no. 10, City Futures Research Centre, Sydney.
- Randolph, B & Wood, M 2003, *The benefits of tenure diversification*, AHURI positioning paper no. 65, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Randolph, B, Wood, M, Holloway, D & Buck, B 2004, *The benefits of tenure diversification*, AHURI final report no. 60, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Rosenbaum, JE, Stroh, LK & Flynn, CA 1998, 'Lake Parc Place: a study of mixed-income housing', *Housing Policy Debate*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 703-40.
- Ruming, K 2006, *MOSAIC urban renewal evaluation project: urban renewal policy, program and evaluation review*, City Futures Research Centre, Kensington, New South Wales.
- Ruming, KJ, Mee, KJ & McGuirk, PM 2004, 'Questioning the rhetoric of social mix: courteous community or hidden hostility', *Australian Geographical Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 234-48.
- Sarkissian, W, Forsyth, A & Heine, W 1990, 'Residential "social mix": the debate continues', *Australian Planner*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 5-16.
- Shelter New South Wales 2003, *Consulting residents about regeneration of public housing estates: suggestions for better practice*, Shelter New South Wales, Sydney.
- Smith, JL 2001, 'Mixing it up: public housing redevelopment in Chicago', paper presented to Danish Building and Urban Research & European Urban Research Association conference, Copenhagen, 17-19 May.
- Social Housing Taskforce 2009, *More than a roof and four walls*, final report, Social Housing Taskforce, Perth.
- Social Inclusion Unit 2008, *A social inclusion strategy for Tasmania: a consultation paper*, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Hobart.
- South Australian Auditor-General 2000, *Report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 2000: part B – agency audit reports*, vol. 1, Parliament of South Australia, Adelaide.
- Stevens, CA 1995, 'Public housing redevelopment as social policy', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 81-8.
- Stone, W & Hulse, K 2007, *Housing and social cohesion: an empirical exploration*, AHURI final report no. 100, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Stubbs, J 2007, "Unmaking" poor places?', paper presented to New South Wales Council of Social Service Perspectives on Poverty Conference, Sydney, 17 October.
- Stubbs, J, Foreman, J, Goodwin, A, Storer, T & Smith, T 2005, *Leaving Minto: a study of the social and economic impacts of public housing estate redevelopment*, Minto Resident Action Group with Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, St Vincent de Paul Society, Shelter New South Wales, Franciscan Fathers, UnitingCare Burnside, South West Regional Tenants' Association, New South Wales Council of Social Service, 'Remembering Minto' Project Committee, Diversity Services Macarthur, Tenants' Union of New South Wales, South West Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service & South Western Sydney Area Health Service, Sydney.
- Stubbs, J, Randolph, B & Judd, B 2005, *The Bonnyrigg Living Communities baseline survey*, University of New South Wales, Sydney & Judith Stubbs and Associates, Wollongong.
- Tasmanian Department of Housing and Construction 1977, *Gagebrook planning study*, report prepared by Gutteridge Haskins & Davey Pty Ltd, Tasmanian Department of Housing and Construction, Hobart.
- Taylor, M 1998, 'Combating the social exclusion of housing estates', *Housing Studies*, vol. 13, no. 6, pp. 819-32.
- Taylor, M & Wilson, M 2006, *The importance of neighbourhood: tackling the implementation gap*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Thornhill, J (ed.) 2009, *Transforming estates: a report by ECOTEC and the Chartered Institute of Housing*, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry.
- Tunstall, R & Coulter, A 2006, *Twenty-five years on twenty estates: turning the tide?*, The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Bristol, UK.



- Walker, R, Ballard, J, Taylor, C & Hillier, J 2007, *The effects of New Living on indigenous wellbeing: a case study on urban renewal*, AHURI final report no. 99, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Warr, D 2005a, 'Social networks in a "discredited" neighbourhood', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 285-308.
- Warr, D 2005b, 'There goes the neighbourhood: the malign effects of stigma', paper presented to State of Australian Cities National Conference, Brisbane, 30 November – 2 December.
- Whiteford, P 2001, 'Understanding poverty and social exclusion: situating Australia internationally', in R Fincher & P Saunders (eds), *Creating unequal futures? Rethinking poverty, inequality and disadvantage*, Allen & Unwin, Crow's Nest, New South Wales, pp. 38-69.
- Wilson, M, Wilde, P, Purdue, D & Taylor, M 2005, *Lending a hand: the value of "light touch" support in empowering communities*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Wood, M 2002, *Resident participation in urban and community renewal*, AHURI final report no. 23, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Wood, M 2003, 'A balancing act? Tenure diversification in Australia and the UK', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 45-56.
- Wood, M, Randolph, B & Judd, B 2002, *Resident participation, social cohesion and sustainability in neighbourhood renewal: developing best practice models*, AHURI positioning paper no. 26, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Woodruff, R 1987, 'Risdon Vale: past, present and future: a community study', Associate Diploma in Welfare Work thesis, Hobart Technical College.
- Woodward, R 2000, 'Community renewal in south western Sydney: social inclusion: the quiet revolution in public housing', *Proceedings of creative approaches to urban renewal: a conference on the redevelopment of public housing*, Shelter Western Australia, Perth, pp. 16-27.
- Ziersch, A & Arthurson, K 2007, 'Social capital and housing tenure in an Adelaide neighbourhood', *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 409-31.