# Issues for tenants in public housing renewal projects: literature search findings (2016 update)

**Jon Eastgate**

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NEW SOUTH WALES

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By Jon Eastgate
99 Consulting
www.99consulting.com.au
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Shelter NSW
377 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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## Summary and Key Findings

This report examines the Australian literature on issues faced by tenants in public housing estate renewal programs. The bulk of the review was carried out in late 2013 and early 2014, with an update in late 2016. It uses publicly available information from approximately the past 10 years, drawing on academic, community and government sources to identify the key issues for tenants and how renewal projects respond to these issues. It examines two sorts of projects, "community renewal" which focuses on social interventions and "urban renewal" which focuses on physical redevelopment of a community or part thereof. The main focus of the project is on urban renewal, but there is often considerable overlap between the two approaches.

**Part 2** of the report examines the context and background to urban renewal in New South Wales and Australia. Key findings of this part of the report are as follows.

***Current and Recent Projects***

Using a fairly wide definition there were at least 20 urban renewal projects either under way, recently completed or in the planning stages in NSW as at 2014. The Communities Plus program, announced in 2015, currently includes four major estate redevelopments and fourteen smaller neighbourhood projects. Some of the Community Plus projects are re-worked versions of projects previously flagged, others are new. Urban renewal projects range in scale from single streets or clusters of dwellings to entire suburbs. There have also been a number of community renewal projects and programs either in place or recently completed, and there is often overlap between urban renewal and community renewal projects.

***Key Objectives***

Urban renewal projects in NSW, as elsewhere in Australia, have four main objectives: renewing or replacing ageing and run-down housing stock; realigning the public housing portfolio to meet the changing needs of tenants and applicants; fixing urban design features on older public housing estates which are perceived as contributing to crime and anti-social behaviour; and reducing concentrations of disadvantage by creating "social mix". These projects are taking place in a severely constrained financial environment with public housing authorities facing ongoing issues of financial viability, and this means financial considerations often take precedence in decision-making.

***Evaluation***

The complexity of urban and community renewal projects, particularly urban renewal projects, makes their evaluation a challenging task. There is a reasonable body of practice around the evaluation of community renewal, with a number of evaluations published, especially in Victoria. For urban renewal there is a body of literature which analyses methods of evaluation covering its financial, asset and social objectives. However, there is little evidence of any practice of evaluation of these projects anywhere in Australia.

**Part 3** of the report examines a number of key issues which affect tenants and residents of public housing estates which are undergoing renewal projects. It examines the success and limitations of

both community and urban renewal projects in addressing these issues, and where possible points to strategies which can help improve this performance. This analysis takes place against the background of awareness that public housing tenants experience significantly higher levels of social disadvantage than other members of the community. Key findings of Part 3 are as follows.

***Community Renewal***

Community renewal projects have been implemented around Australia over the past two decades. These projects typically target highly disadvantaged communities (most often public housing estates) and aim to reduce crime, improve community cohesion and service coordination and address priority issues as identified by each community. These projects are highly participative and collaborative. Information from evaluation of community renewal projects in Victoria and NSW shows success for these projects where there is a long term (at least 7-8 year) commitment to the project. However, it is not clear even for these long term projects how long the benefit continues after the project is wound up, particularly if this leads to an overall reduction of resources in these communities.

Similar techniques are often used in urban renewal projects but may be less successful as other elements of the urban renewal process, particularly the level of "churn" created by the de-concentration of public housing, tend to work against the community development approaches used in community renewal.

***Tenant Engagement***

Tenant engagement is widely acknowledged as central to the success of urban renewal projects. Good practice on tenant engagement includes a number of elements, including providing support and education for tenants on the issues at stake, engaging through a wide range of formal and informal processes at different times and venues, providing clear information and parameters for the engagement and engaging consistently throughout the course of a project.

Performance on tenant engagement in NSW has been variable. The Bonnyrigg renewal project provides a benchmark for tenant engagement and the Airds Bradbury project also appears to have engaged skilfully with tenants, but other projects before and since have not reached the same standard and even the Bonnyrigg project managers have struggled to sustain their quality of participation as financial issues have led to major changes in the project. Projects like the sale of public housing at Millers Point and the proposed major estate redevelopments under Communities Plus present particular challenges for tenant engagement as the proposed approach is highly likely to be opposed to tenants' preferences.

***Social Mix***

Creating social mix is one of the key objectives of most of the NSW urban renewal projects, as well as those in other states. This is primarily achieved through creating tenure mix in former public housing estates, selling a proportion of the housing generated by the renewal project to owner-occupiers. Social mix is claimed to provide a number of social benefits for public tenants including improved services, reduced crime, better access to education and employment and reduced stigma.

However, while tenants are frequently supportive of the concept there is little evidence that most of these benefits actually result from the social mix policies employed in Australia. There are conditions under which the policies may be more successful, including the presence of children in the community, “pepper-potting” social housing with private housing so that the two tenures are indistinguishable and significant physical improvements to the housing and urban infrastructure in the community.

The concept of social mix is further challenged by the fact that while public housing authorities are strongly in favour of it, and public housing tenants are at least not averse to it, private developers and home owners appear to be more wary of the concept and try to insulate buyers from the social housing parts of a development by advocating physical separation and downplaying the presence of social housing in their marketing of the development. These challenges are not insurmountable but public housing authorities need to negotiate strongly for their vision of social mix to make it a reality.

***Community Disruption and Loss of Place***

While public housing estates targeted for urban renewal are often portrayed as socially dysfunctional, this is rarely the perception residents have of their communities. Repeated surveys in various public housing estates show that a majority of tenants like where they live, believe they have a strong positive community ethos and attribute the bad reputation of their neighbourhoods to a few “problem” tenants. A key risk of urban renewal projects is that they will disrupt the strong relationships which already exist in these communities and lead to tenants being more isolated and less supported. This can have particular impacts on older or more highly disadvantaged residents who may face increased physical and mental health issues during times of change. These can be mitigated to some extent by careful community engagement, personalised approaches to the issues faced by the most vulnerable tenants and proper attention to the issues of disruption, grief and loss of place. Community renewal techniques have been used extensively to build on existing community strengths but these can be challenging to implement in an urban renewal context.

***Stigma***

Combating stigma is another key objective of urban renewal programs. The evidence suggests that a number of elements of urban renewal projects can help combat this stigma, including physical improvements to the community, ensuring that social housing is indistinguishable from private housing, and the positive marketing campaigns that generally accompany the sale of some of the homes. However, there is a significant social stigma attached to public housing in general and local interventions are not sufficient to overcome this. It also requires a broad communication approach aimed at changing the public narrative around social housing tenants and communities.

***Crime and Safety***

Issues around criminal and anti-social behaviour are consistently identified by tenants of public housing estates as the aspect of their community they like least. Urban renewal programs attempt to respond to these problems through design changes, including undoing a number of elements of the Radburn urban design which are seen as facilitating crime and anti-social behaviour. However, evidence indicates that a successful crime prevention strategy needs to emphasise social over physical interventions, focusing on personal support, community engagement, inter-agency

cooperation and community crime prevention initiatives. Redeveloping a community in the absence of this careful social engagement can even risk worsening crime and anti-social behaviour if it disrupts existing informal community controls.

***Renewal and Relocation Processes***

The process of urban renewal and relocation can be extremely stressful for tenants and place them at increased risk of physical and mental health problems. These risks need to be managed through consistent, high quality individualised communication, careful project management to minimise risk and disruption and contain these to the shortest time possible, and particular attention to crime and safety risks.

In the long term, tenants who have been relocated more often view this as a positive than a negative event in their lives. However, the process of relocation, whether to a new suburb or within the same one, can be a period of intense stress and grief particularly for long-term tenants and this needs to be managed carefully and sensitively.

***Exit Planning***

Both urban and community renewal programs require a proper, well thought out exit plan if gains are to be sustained beyond the life of the project. This plan needs to involve a clearly negotiated handover of responsibilities to appropriate local organisations or government bodies, along with adequate resources. Evidence on exit planning in Australian renewal programs is slight, but what there is indicates that performance may be patchy at best.

# 1.0 Introduction

The redevelopment or "renewal" of public housing estates has been a growing feature of the Australian social housing landscape, as it has been in other developed nations. New South Wales is no exception to this pattern, with a number of renewal projects either under way or on the drawing board.

These renewal projects have a substantial impact on public housing tenants, and on the communities in which they live. Yet all too often, tenants' needs have not been "front and centre" in planning for renewal. It is only in recent years that there has been substantial Australian research into how renewal projects impact on tenants, and this research is still patchy.

This paper attempts to bring together a substantial proportion of the Australian research relating to the impact of renewal projects on tenants. It doesn't claim to be comprehensive, but it aims to capture the main threads of this research and draw conclusions about what housing authorities and policy-makers should be looking for when they consider the impacts of renewal projects on tenants' wellbeing.

The paper is written in two main parts. The shorter part (Part 2.0) sets the context of public housing renewal in New South Wales. It provides a summary, based on publicly available sources, of the renewal work currently going on in NSW and the key factors driving this renewal work.

The second, longer part (Part 3.0) summarises the available Australian research on the impacts of renewal projects on tenants. It does this by examining a range of issues identified as affecting tenants, and such evidence as is available on what works and doesn't work in addressing these issues.

The bulk of the review was carried out in late 2013 and early 2014 (Eastgate 2014), with an update in late 2016.

This paper draws on five kinds of data sources.

- Official NSW Government documents including policy papers, fact sheets and web information on renewal projects – these are mostly used in Part 2.0 to set the context for the report
- A range of more or less formal information on the public record, including media reports, press releases, information published by tenant and resident groups, local government publications and other NSW Government reports – these are used where necessary to fill out the picture gained from official publications.
- Formal, peer reviewed academic research, including a number of AHURI reports as well as conference papers and journal articles published by professional housing researchers.
- Specific research, whether academic research, market research or research carried out by tenants themselves (there is often an overlap between these categories), which seeks the views of tenants and residents on redevelopment projects.
- A range of less formal communications, such as conference and workshop presentations or opinion pieces, presented by researchers and housing professionals in various contexts.

All of the material reviewed here is more or less publicly available. Most has been sourced via the internet, but some has also been provided to the author by Shelter NSW, sourced through Shelter's community and government networks – in these cases, care has been taken to only cite reports where we have permission to do so.

## 1.1 Urban Renewal and Community Renewal

The renewal, regeneration or redevelopment of public housing estates can potentially include a number of different types of activities. In order to be clearer what we are talking about in this paper, we adopt a two-fold typology of renewal projects drawn from a number of researchers (e.g. Randolph and Wood, 2004; Ruming, 2006). This distinguishes between two types of strategy:

- *Community Renewal* is a strategy for addressing locational disadvantage through working with people and community. Community renewal strategies include community development, service coordination and planning, community arts, crime prevention and other similar community-based activities. It typically involves a high level of community engagement and limited physical changes to the community, and it leaves the current community largely "in place", attempting to address disadvantage through people-based social inclusion activities.
- *Urban Renewal* is a strategy which attempts to address locational disadvantage by addressing physical issues in public housing estates. It involves major capital works such as upgrading or replacement of run-down housing and improvements to the public realm (parks, streets and public facilities). It may well involve extensive community engagement but its primary aim is physical regeneration. In contrast to community renewal, urban renewal programs do not necessarily take the existing community as a given and may result, deliberately or otherwise, in substantial changes to the make-up of the community.

It needs to be recognised that this distinction is to some extent artificial. Projects that are largely framed along "Community Renewal" lines may also involve a level of physical improvement, while "Urban Renewal" programs may be carried out in concert with substantial community and social programs. However, the distinction is a useful one because it highlights two different strategies for addressing similar sets of issues, often applied in very similar communities. These two different strategies may also sometimes be in tension and later sections of this paper will explore both some of the tensions and some of the synergies between these two approaches.

## 2.0 Urban Renewal and Community Renewal in New South Wales

This part of the report describes the current and recent "state of play" in urban and community renewal in New South Wales, and outlines some of the context and background to urban and community renewal projects in NSW and Australia. It examines the key policy and financial drivers behind renewal programs, their key objectives and some questions about how they can be evaluated.

### 2.1 Urban and Community Renewal of Public Housing Estates

Using a fairly wide definition there were at least 20 urban renewal projects either under way, recently completed or in the planning stages in NSW as at 2014. The 2016 announcement of the Communities Plus program includes four major estate redevelopments and fourteen smaller neighbourhood projects. Some of the Community Plus projects are re-worked versions of projects previously flagged, others are new. Urban renewal projects range in scale from single streets or clusters of dwellings to entire suburbs. There have also been a number of community renewal projects and programs either in place or recently completed, and there is often overlap between urban renewal and community renewal projects.

This section presents a summary of current and recent urban and community renewal projects in NSW. The information in this section is drawn primarily from information published on the Housing NSW (HNSW) and Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) websites, supplemented where appropriate with information from other sources including media reports and press releases and information published by tenant and resident groups.

It should be acknowledged that the information presented here is *partial*. There appears to be no publicly available source of comprehensive, up-to-date information on public housing renewal projects in NSW. It has been beyond the scope of this report to investigate this information in the depth required to provide this kind of comprehensive picture. As a result, some of the information presented here is somewhat dated and many projects are likely to have *progressed* further than the information here indicates.

In 2014 this project identified 21 locations in which there were recent, current or planned urban renewal projects. It also identified seven locations (including 20 different individual estates) which have been subject to recent community renewal projects through the Building Stronger Communities program which ran from 2007 to 2010. A further 8 current locations receive funding under the Housing Communities Program, which has funded community development activity on selected public housing estates since 1993. An additional community renewal project is the "Working from the Ground Up" project jointly sponsored by Housing NSW, NSW Health, TAFE NSW and the University of NSW in the Maroubra-Matraville area between 2008 and 2013. There is some

overlap between the community renewal and urban renewal projects. While some projects are underway or planned for regional areas of New South Wales, the majority of the activity is in the Sydney area.

In early 2016 the NSW Land and Housing Corporation announced a further series of ambitious redevelopment projects under a program labelled Communities Plus. This program involves four major estate redevelopments and fourteen smaller sites labelled as "neighbourhood projects". The Communities Plus approach is presented as the NSW Government's approach to all its urban renewal activities rather than as an "add-on" to pre-existing approaches, although some projects that are well advanced will continue as they are. The eighteen Communities Plus sites announced so far include a number of projects that have already been the subject of planning and consultation under previous approaches.

One of the things that becomes clear in examining this suite of projects and proposals is that this area of work is extremely fluid. Projects are continually being proposed, investigated, placed on hold, revised, accelerated and delayed. Particularly in large-scale redevelopments, it is normal for several different concepts to be proposed over a number of years before actual redevelopment activity is commenced, and even then the project will often change significantly during its implementation phase.

The following is a summary of the projects as best we understand them at the time of writing.

***Communities Plus Projects***

Communities Plus is still at a reasonably early stage and details of most of the projects are not clear. However, the projects listed under this program are highly ambitious redevelopments based on a high level of intensification (generally, the complete rebuilding of the suburb or site), with the redevelopment privately financed and ultimately funded by the sale of many of the resulting dwellings. Projects are expected to adhere to the LAHC's policy of including no more than 30% social housing in any site. These projects are at different stages of the planning process, so more details are available about some than others, and it is not entirely clear from the publicly available documentation what process will be used to finalise these details and how local community members will be involved in planning. Projects proposed under this program are as follows.

- The redevelopment of the Ivanhoe Estate in Macquarie Park. This estate currently consists of approximately 260 dwellings on an 8.2 hectare site. The proposed redevelopment will result in 2,500 new dwellings in a fairly intensive built form, with 556 of these retained for social housing, 128 for affordable rental housing and the remainder sold on the private market.
- The Waterloo Renewal. This location has been the subject of a number of planning processes in recent years, most recently through the release of the draft Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan in 2011. This plan envisaged a 20-25 year timeline during which the housing density of the suburb would be gradually reduced, while the level of social housing was retained at about 40% of the total – when fully implemented there would be approximately 2,800 social housing dwellings and 700 of "affordable housing". The Communities Plus proposal, linked the announcement of a new Metro station to be built in the suburb by 2026, appears to involve far more ambitious densities, with some information

suggesting the site may eventually include up to 7,000 dwellings. However, more detailed planning is intended to take place over the next 12-18 months.

- The Riverwood Renewal Program is proposed as the next stage of the Riverwood North project described under "Smaller Scale Projects" below. It proposes the redevelopment of the remaining 30 hectares of Riverwood which currently contains approximately 1,000 lower density social housing dwellings. Details of proposed development form and intensity do not appear to be available at the time of writing.
- The Telopea Estate near Parramatta has also been subject to previous redevelopment planning exercises. The previous Telopea Renewal Project envisaged the transformation of the estate from its current 523 dwellings to a more intense urban form with approximately 1900 dwellings including just over 500 social housing dwellings. Phase 1 of this project was completed in 2012. A revised draft master plan released in August 2016 proposes even greater densities, with between 3,500 and 4.500 dwellings overall and approximately 1,000 social housing dwellings clustered around a proposed new light rail station.

Communities Plus also includes fourteen smaller "Neighbourhood Projects" which are being released on two clusters. Release 1 includes sites in Glendale, Gosford, Liverpool, Seven Hills, Telopea and Tweed Heads, while Release 2 includes sites in Corrimal, Lane Cove North, Liverpool, Padstow, Parramatta North, South Granville (2 sites), St Mary's, Wagga Wagga and Warwick Farm.

***Other Past and Current Major Estate Redevelopments***

Prior to the announcement of Communities Plus there were seven major estate redevelopment projects under way or recently completed in NSW. Six of these are in the Western Sydney area and the seventh is in Dubbo. The information on the NSW Government website about many of these projects is well out of date so it is not possible without further detailed research to update progress on these. It is our understanding that some of the major projects that are well advanced will continue to completion in their current form, while others may be incorporated under the Communities Plus program. The projects are as follows.

- The Minto Renewal Project, commenced in 2002 and with an estimated completion date around 2016. This project is being managed by Urban Growth NSW on behalf of LAHC, and involves the wholesale redevelopment of the suburb in a number of stages. In the process approximately 1,000 social housing dwellings will be redeveloped in a reconfigured urban design that will see 1,210 new dwellings. 850 of these will be sold on the private market and 360 retained as social housing.
- The Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project commenced with a consultation and planning phase from 2004-2007. In 2007 a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement was signed with the consortium which is now known as Newleaf Communities to carry out the project. Redevelopment commenced in 2011 and was expected to be completed in 2021. However, since its commencement the project has been delayed by financial problems experienced by its main developer and has had to be significantly restructured. This project will see a major intensification of the community, with 833 social housing dwellings replaced by over 2,000 new dwellings, 699 of which will be retained as social housing. This project also involves transfer of management of the social housing to St George Community Housing.

- The Airds Bradbury Redevelopment Project commenced with a consultation process in 2009, with a Concept Plan finalised in 2011 involving progressive redevelopment of the suburb over 9 stages between 2012 and 2019. This project will see the existing 1,400 social housing dwellings in the area redeveloped to yield 2,000 new dwellings, of which 600 will be retained as social housing. This project was to be managed as a PPP along the same lines as Bonnyrigg, but this tender process was abandoned in 2013 and the project is now being managed by LAHC in partnership with Urban Growth NSW. The original timetable for the project has suffered some delay as a result but overall it is proceeding as planned.
- The Rosemeadow/Ambarvale upgrading strategy involves the redevelopment of some 550 dwellings in Ambarvale and an unspecified number in neighbouring Rosemeadow. Some properties are being demolished and new subdivisions are being created to provide homes for sale to private buyers.
- The Claymore Urban Renewal Project is in its early implementation phase. This project is conceived as a major redevelopment with all but 140 of the existing 1,123 social housing dwellings rebuilt or refurbished, and new developments expanding the amount of housing in the suburb to approximately 1,500 dwellings. This redevelopment is intended to be accompanied by a substantial sales program with the eventual aim of reducing the proportion of social housing in the suburb to about 30%. However, at this point the overall timetable and process for this project are unclear.
- The Macquarie Fields Sales Program is the most recent element of a long-term change in the makeup of this suburb. It was completed in 2012 and involved the sale of 135 social housing dwellings including a number of whole streets. This program was preceded by extensive upgrades to approximately 1,000 properties in Macquarie Fields, and other sales have taken place opportunistically before and since the formal sales program.
- The Dubbo Transformation Strategy commenced in 2006 and is substantially complete at the time of writing. It involved the complete exit of the public housing program from the Gordon Estate in West Dubbo and the sale of all its approximately 300 public housing dwellings on the private market. The program involved the construction of 112 new dwellings in other Dubbo locations and the transfer of the Gordon Estate tenants to these new properties, to other social housing in Dubbo or, if they chose, to social housing in other locations.

Although it is not strictly a redevelopment project, it is also worth noting that in 2014 the NSW Government resolved to sell 294 social housing units in Millers Point in inner city Sydney, representing the sale of all the social housing in this location. This program of sales is now well advanced.

While each of these projects has its own dynamics created by its location, current configuration and appropriate planning outcome, there are a number of common elements:

- All the projects involve the demolition or substantial refurbishment of ageing public housing stock.
- All the projects involve some degree of intensification of urban development – most dramatic in Bonnyrigg, the least so in Rosemeadow/Ambarvale.
- All involve major changes to the urban fabric including demolition and reconstruction of housing and changes to urban design by such strategies as realignment of lots or creation of new lots, changes to street layout and changes to public facilities.

- All involve at least some level of relocation of tenants – some of these relocations will be temporary as tenants will be able to return to their existing dwelling or community, others will necessarily be permanent as the overall numbers of social housing dwellings in each location will be reduced (although some projects include a commitment to replace this in other locations).
- All the projects involve the specific objective of creating mixed tenure communities by selling at least some proportion of the homes for owner-occupation – in most cases this is the majority of the homes.

***Smaller Scale Redevelopments***

Alongside these major redevelopment projects, the NSW State Government has also been engaged in a number of smaller scale redevelopment projects. Some of these have been completed in the past few years, others are still under way. Projects vary in scale from a few dwellings to a couple of hundred. These projects, in 2014, included the following:

- The demolition of four dwellings in Camperdown to make way for the new Common Ground homeless persons facility, completed in 2011.
- The sale of between 100 and 150 houses in Coledale, West Tamworth and refurbishment of other properties for transfer to community housing.
- The redevelopment of public housing in Cowper St, Glebe and transfer of the newly redeveloped housing to a community housing provider.
- The Lethbridge Hub and Shalvey Hub precinct redevelopments, which primarily focus on redevelopment of items in the public realm such as closing pedestrian tunnels and re-aligning intersections, along with a modest level of refurbishment of housing.
- The Lilyfield Redevelopment Project, completed in 2011, which saw 40 low-rise social housing dwellings replaced by 88 newly built units.
- The Riverwood North Redevelopment Project, in which 150 existing social housing dwellings in this middle suburban area were redeveloped into over 600 units, 150 of which were retained as seniors housing. The redevelopment of the remainder of the public housing in Riverwood has since been announced as a major Communities Plus project.
- The replacement of eight existing detached social housing dwellings adjacent to the railway station in West Ryde with a development made up of 138 dwellings in all, including up to 61 social housing dwellings – this project has received planning approval but is still awaiting funding.

These projects have many elements in common with the larger scale redevelopment projects, including the aim of producing mixed tenure communities via sale and the focus on redeveloping aged assets. However, many of these projects don't involve a reduction in the amount of housing in the location – in some cases they involve its increase. One reason for this is that many of the projects are in inner city locations where intensification of development is a real possibility and this enables the creation of tenure diversity without a reduction in public housing. Many of these projects are also in communities which already have mixed tenure. Many of these projects also involve a transfer of the redeveloped social housing to a community housing provider, as does the Bonnyrigg project.

***Projects in the Planning Phase***

As well as projects under way or completed and those proposed under Communities Plus, a number of other projects are on the drawing board. For some the planning is just beginning, others are almost ready to move to implementation. It is likely that the list here only represents the most significant of these, since smaller projects may not be publicised widely in their earlier planning stages. The projects under planning are hugely diverse in their nature and scope.

At the lowest level of specificity at the time of writing is the Anzac Parade South Urban Activation Precinct. This is a "whole of community" planning exercise being managed by Urban Growth NSW, aimed at setting a strategic planning direction for the area stretching from South Kingsford to La Perouse. This is not specifically a public housing exercise and to date no specific plans have been announced for the public housing in the area. Public consultation for this process took place in 2013 but the project is currently "on hold". While this is not specifically a public housing process, this area contains over 2,500 social housing dwellings in Maroubra, Matraville, Malabar, Chifley and Little Bay. These public housing areas have been the subject of a number of previous planning processes and plans produced in earlier phases may eventually inform any final Urban Activation Plan.

Also at an early stage of development is the South Kempsey Urban Design Framework and Social Plan which is a joint project of the Kempsey Shire Council, LAHC, the Indigenous Coordination Centre and the local Aboriginal Land Council. This plan envisages, among other things, sale of some of the social housing in the area and refurbishment of other dwellings. However, at this point the plans are in draft stage and it is not clear what level of commitment the partners have to implementation.

Other projects are a little less complex but there are still some ambitious ones on the books. These include:

- *Villawood East Masterplan:* This plan covers the area of Villawood East which includes approximately 740 social housing dwellings, over 70% of all dwellings in the area. A masterplanning process commenced in 2011, funded by the Housing Affordability Fund, but no draft masterplan is available at the time of writing. In the meantime in 2011 the then Minister for Housing announced a partnership with Watpac to redevelop one precinct in the suburb yielding 280 dwellings of which 60% would be sold and the remaining 40% retained for social housing.
- *Windale Transformation Strategy:* Like the Villawood East strategy, this strategy for the Windale area to the south of Newcastle combined some initial rapid action – in this case the sale of 59 dwellings for owner-occupation – with the intention of developing a longer term masterplan for an area which includes 1500 public housing dwellings. Despite its intended release date of 2012, no masterplan has yet been released.

If nothing else, these projects hint at the challenges faced by the NSW Government in planning for estate redevelopments. Many of these planning projects have experienced significant delays, multiple changes of direction and changes in governance and partnership arrangements.

***Community Renewal Projects***

There have been a number of community renewal-style programs implemented by the NSW Government in the past 20 years. The most recent of these was the Building Stronger Communities

program which ran from 2007 to 2010. This program targeted 6 priority locations - Claymore, Mt Druitt, Macquarie Fields, Dubbo, Killarney Vale/Bateau Bay/Tumbi Umpi in the Central Coast area and Bathurst/Orange. These six locations between them include 18 separate public housing estates.

The NSW Department of Housing publication *A New Direction in Building Stronger Communities 2007-2010* from March 2007 lists five overall outcomes that were sought from these projects, as follows:

- Better urban environments
- Appropriate services in the places where they are needed
- Better social environments
- Jobs, skills and higher levels of employment
- A plan for each priority location that everyone can understand.

The program was conducted with high levels of participation from residents and organisations in each community as well as from government service providers. Each location had its own Neighbourhood Management Board which oversaw the project and working groups implementing specific actions. This participation resulted in a detailed action plan for each area. We understand that an evaluation of this project was completed but this had not been released at the time of writing and so it is difficult to judge what results this program achieved.

Alongside the Building Stronger Communities Program and its predecessor programs is a longer-running but lower intensity program called the Housing Communities Program. This program has been in operation since 1993 and currently funds community development workers in eight public housing areas on NSW — Cranewood/ Kingswood Park, Ambarvale/ Rosemeadow, Mt Druitt, Redfern/ Waterloo, Riverwood, South Wollongong, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo. While this program has fewer resources each year than the higher-profile community renewal strategies, the longer term nature of the projects and their embedding in local community organisations is designed to enable sustainable outcomes, with program approaches based around community development principles and collaborative working arrangements.

A final recent example is the Working from the Ground Up project, jointly sponsored by Housing NSW, NSW Health, TAFE NSW and the University of NSW. This project operated from 2008 to 2013 in the public housing estates of Maroubra and Matraville with the stated aim “to identify and trial ways of working with communities that can bring about sustainable changes to health and well-being in social housing neighbourhoods using an action research approach.” While this project has produced a large volume of research material including a detailed final report on lessons learned from the project, the actual work on the ground is relatively modest.

The Government’s *Future directions for social housing in NSW* strategy indicates that the Department of Family and Community Services will encourage and coordinate ‘place-making’ projects in a number of areas with a view to strengthening the existing social-housing communities. The first projects are at Eden, Griffith, Kempsey, and Moree.

## 2.2 Why Renew?

Urban renewal projects in NSW, as elsewhere in Australia, have four main objectives: renewing or replacing ageing and run-down housing stock; realigning the public housing portfolio to meet the changing needs of tenants and applicants; fixing urban design features on older public housing estates which are perceived as contributing to crime and anti-social behaviour; and reducing concentrations of disadvantage by creating "social mix". These projects are taking place in a severely constrained financial environment with public housing authorities facing ongoing issues of financial viability, and this means financial considerations often take precedence in decision-making.

A number of researchers have summarised the key reasons behind public housing renewal projects. Spiller Gibbons Swann (2000) describes the drivers of urban renewal this way:

> "The term *estate renewal* is commonly used to describe projects that aim to tackle the problems of physical decay and/or social dysfunction in these areas.
>
> "The characteristics of estates that cause concern include:
>
> - high concentration of public housing;
> - stigma and poor image for residents;
> - low client satisfaction levels and high vacancy rates;
> - high concentrations of the socially disadvantaged with high levels of unemployment, crime and other indicators of social dysfunction; and
> - tenancy management problems such as high arrears and neighbourhood disputes.
>
> "The estates often exhibit:
>
> - design problems, often relating to common areas and open space;
> - poor building condition relating to age, backlogs in maintenance and poor design or construction; and
> - in some instances, poor location with respect to jobs and urban services." (p2)

Randolph and Wood (2004) describe a set of desired outcomes for urban renewal projects which broadly match this list of perceived problems.

> "…it is possible to suggest that the principle benefits of these strategies for housing authorities appear to fall into three broad outcome areas:
>
> *"Asset management outcomes*
>
> - Creating the conditions within estates where property values rise leading to improved stock valuations for the remaining public housing and overall asset enhancement (stock revaluation).
> - Portfolio reconfiguration, especially in terms of disinvest stock that is perceived to be obsolete or with high maintenance costs and restructuring the stock mix and location to match emerging patterns of demand, often through a process called

'asset farming' where higher value stock is sold to generate revenue for new stock development (stock realignment).

*"Housing management outcomes*

- Reduced concentrations of public housing towards much lower 'average' levels across targeted suburbs (dispersing disadvantage).
- Improved housing management outcomes from a reduction of tenant based problems associated with larger concentrations of public housing (managing residualisation).

*"Social welfare outcomes*

- Reductions in wider social expenditures on welfare support in the renewal areas (generating service efficiencies).
- Anticipated positive social outcomes for remaining tenants in communities with a more 'normal' social profile: reduced stigma, stronger social networks, improved access to services and employment (tackling social exclusion)." (p5-6)

The material for each of the proposed and current urban renewal projects in NSW presents a variety of specific objectives, with variations resulting from the specific nature of the housing and its location. However, there are a number of common themes which run through most of the projects to some extent. These include:

- A need to replace older housing that is past its economic life and hence difficult and expensive to maintain.
- A need to re-align housing stock to meet the needs of current social housing tenants and applicants – changing the stock profile to include fewer detached houses and more small dwellings.
- A desire to fix perceived urban design problems on older public housing estates – a particular priority is to remove aspects of the Radburn urban design which are believed to increase the risk of crime.
- A desire to reduce concentrations of disadvantage by creating social mix, primarily by mixing tenures through the sale of a proportion of properties in each location.

While there are a number of social goals clearly articulated in relation to urban renewal projects, the financial and asset issues faced by public housing in NSW (as elsewhere in Australia) represent a key driver and also a limiting factor in devising urban renewal strategies. The NSW Auditor General's report into HNSW and LAHC (NSW Auditor General, 2013) presents a sobering summary of the asset position the NSW public housing system. They conclude as follows:

> "The current portfolio and funding arrangement does not enable HNSW and LAHC to meet the changing public housing need.
>
> "Public housing is ageing and increasingly not fit for purpose. It is declining as a proportion of overall New South Wales housing. There is an increasing shortfall between the supply of and demand for public housing. Changing tenants' needs and ageing stock are issues arising across Australian social housing systems.

> "Much of the public housing stock consists of larger properties while the greatest demand (and rising) is for smaller and accessible dwellings.
>
> "There have been initiatives and resources directed towards reshaping the public housing asset base to better reflect the needs of today's tenants, but not enough to keep pace with the changing client profile.
>
> "Public housing is now supporting fewer people than ten years ago, and its use is becoming less efficient with 30 per cent of three or more bedroom public housing properties occupied by a single person or a couple.
>
> "With constraints on rental and grant funding and existing assets requiring increasing maintenance expenditure, LAHC advised that to continue to operate within its means, it has implemented measures such as selling properties and delaying some capital and maintenance expenditure. This will impact the condition and level of stock, and is not financially sustainable long-term." (p11)

They reported that:

- Approximately 25% of all public housing stock is more than 40 years old, with only 10% constructed since 2000.
- LAHC is currently approximately $330m short of being able to sustain its current properties at reasonable standard.
- This gap is being made up by selling some properties – estimated at 500 properties in 2012-13 - and delaying some maintenance, with approximately $85m of maintenance and upgrading works delayed in 2012-13.
- Housing stock can rarely be sold at replacement cost, so sales inevitably result in overall stock reductions.

This situation is not unique to NSW – it is mirrored to a greater or lesser extent in public housing systems around the country. Nonetheless it presents significant challenges for LAHC and Housing NSW. If they are to manage their assets responsibly and meet demand for smaller dwellings they seem to have little option but to carry out substantial renewal of their housing.

The NSW Government has responded to this situation by the release in early 2016 of *Future Directions in Social Housing in NSW,* its ten-year strategy for the social housing system. Along with measures to improve the support and customer service available to social housing tenants, this strategy involves significant new funding for the development of social housing, the use of innovative financing models, and a significant redevelopment program labelled Communities Plus which is summarised in Section 2.1 of this report. These various initiatives are projected to deliver "up to 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings" by 2015 (p8).

These initiatives will go some way towards addressing the problems identified by the Auditor-General. However, they still represent a significantly constrained financial and asset environment, and these constraints are the key driver in shaping the ability of government to address the design, quality and social mix issues discussed here.

## 2.3 Evaluating Renewal

The complexity of urban and community renewal projects, particularly urban renewal projects, makes their evaluation a challenging task. There is a reasonable body of practice around the evaluation of community renewal, with a number of evaluations published, especially in Victoria. For urban renewal there is a body of literature which analyses methods of evaluation covering its financial, asset and social objectives. However, there is little evidence of any practice of evaluation of these projects anywhere in Australia.

Renewal projects aim to achieve a complex mix of financial, asset and social outcomes. The precise details of these outcomes vary from location to location, while sharing in common the four general outcomes listed on page 13. How do we know if the projects are successful?

Evaluation practice in urban and community renewal in Australia is significantly under-developed. This literature review only unearthed one published evaluation of a community renewal program in Australia, the evaluation of Victoria's Neighbourhood Renewal Program published in 2008 and referred to in Wood and Cigdem (2012). This is discussed later in this section. Of local community renewal projects, the closest are the summary of the Victorian Government's Eaglehawk Neighbourhood Renewal project discussed in Section 3.1 below, for which a summary has been published but not a full evaluation (Government of Victoria, 2011); and some of the progressive material produced by the Working from the Ground Up Project in Maroubra and Matraville, for which progress reports have been published but the final report is yet to appear (Working from the Ground Up, 2010 and 2012).

In the urban renewal front, the only recent project evaluation we have identified was carried out by researchers from the University of Melbourne on the Kensington renewal project in inner Melbourne, a project completed in 2012 (Chaplin and Shaw 2013, Shaw 2013). This project was similar to many of the NSW projects outlined in section 2.1 above, in that it involved a large-scale redevelopment of a public housing estate with a substantial proportion of the resulting new housing sold to private buyers and a substantial reduction in the overall stock of social housing. While the report of this evaluation has not been released by the Victorian Government, publications by the authors indicate that overall it found that the primary benefit of the redevelopment was financial, with the sale of housing paying for the redevelopment of the neighbourhood. They appear to have found that the projected social benefits deriving from social mix were largely not achieved, and that the overall loss of social housing resulting from the development made the approach unsustainable in the long run.

Other research projects would form components of an overall evaluation – for instance there are projects which examine the success of social mix objectives; which assess how tenants experience redevelopment and relocation; which compare the success of various approaches to crime reduction; and which examine the question of stigma. These are discussed in the relevant sections in Part 3.0.

There is also a varied literature on how one *could* evaluate urban renewal projects. Kristian Ruming cites Randolph and Judd (2006) who suggest that

> "…despite some variance reflecting local priorities and policies, objectives commonly include:
>
> - Improving the asset value of the remaining stock;
> - Addressing major repairs and maintenance backlogs;
> - Changing the mix of housing stock to meet increasing demand from smaller and older households;
> - Improving the quality of public spaces, infrastructure and community facilities;
> - Reducing stigmatisation and improving integration with surrounding communities;
> - Improving community safety and security;
> - Increasing the level of social and economic participation and 'social cohesion'; and,
> - Improving integration between the delivery of housing and other community services." (Ruming, 2006, p15)

Ruming also draws attention to a tension between the financial incentives (to increase the value of State assets through sales and redevelopments) and social goals (to reduce the disadvantage of tenants) shown by this list of objectives. This tension is shown in a number of ways, including a reduction in overall supply of social housing for financial reasons. The difficulty of evaluation is compounded by lack of clarity on objectives and lack of clear evaluation processes and data to show what the results of these projects are. Further to this, he identifies lack of a clear evaluation framework within which to test performance against these varied objectives. He then examines a number of evaluation methodologies including cost-benefit analysis, social cost benefit analysis, balanced scorecard approaches, impact analysis, objective- and indicator-based evaluation, a context-mechanism-outcome framework, the formative/summative approach and the program logic approach.

Perhaps ironically, Ruming's report was written as the first phase in an Australian Research Council funded longitudinal evaluation of urban renewal projects. However, no further reports from this project are available and there appears to be little further development of evaluative methodology, at least in the public realm.

Much of the literature on evaluation focuses on the difficulty of finding reliable measures of the social outcomes of urban renewal which can be evaluated cost-effectively. This makes some sense given current constrained finances but it does beg the question – how much is it appropriate to spend on evaluation of such a major government initiative?

Spiller Gibbons Swann completed an earlier ARC project which also examined the potential evaluation strategies for urban renewal projects (Spiller Gibbons Swann, 2000). They suggest a modified version of cost-benefit analysis. They characterise the costs and benefits as follows.

> *"Direct* costs and benefits relate to the specific objectives of the intervention. In public housing renewal projects these generally include:
>
> - the opportunity cost of employing the land and improvements in question (that is, capital not realised by selling the assets on the open market);

- the benefit derived from the proceeds of sale of land and improvements (eg. houses) not being employed in the project;
- the benefit derived from the proceeds of sale of all of the employed assets (land, houses and infrastructure) at some point in the future (normally on project wind-up);
- the capital costs of housing and infrastructure;
- the recurrent costs associated with housing and infrastructure;
- tenant relocation costs such as removal costs and compensation; and
- benefits for tenants of high standard dwellings, good neighbourhood amenity and reduced stigma.

*"Indirect* costs and benefits relate to by-products of the intervention. In public housing renewal projects these generally include:

- changes in access to social support networks for relocated tenants (often, but not always, thought to be of an adverse nature);
- changes in housing opportunities for prospective public rental tenants (often, but not always, thought to be of an adverse nature for people on waiting lists if the project results in a net reduction of dwellings);
- benefits for other residents in the neighbourhood of higher standard public rental dwellings, better neighbourhood amenity and reduced stigma (note these are grouped together because they lend themselves to a single measure of their aggregate value – market rent increment); and
- benefits of society-wide reduced social dysfunction as reflected in social indicators (for example, on crime rates, health, employment, etc.).

"Indirect costs and benefits are of course difficult to quantify …" (p38)

In practice, however, it seems that the final item on their list of direct costs and benefits – "the benefits for tenants of high standard dwellings, good neighbourhood amenity and reduced stigma" - is also very difficult to quantify. This provides a quandary for evaluating these projects because the property and asset side of the projects, while complex, is readily quantifiable whereas most of the "people" side of the projects – neighbourhood amenity, reduced stigma, access to support services, benefits to neighbours and wider social indicators – are essentially qualitative.

Spiller Gibbons Swann's proposed solution to this dilemma is the use of the "Social Return on Investment" methodology which assigns "shadow prices" to the less tangible social outcomes. They have developed this concept in quite some detail in the manual that accompanies their research – however, the core concept is contested, and different assumptions about the value of the intangible costs and benefits yield widely differing results, casting doubt on the usefulness of the exercise.

Wood and Cigdem (2012) illustrate the difficulty of evaluating the social outcomes of renewal projects by citing the evaluation of the Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program, a program focused on community renewal activities. This project was evaluated by means of detailed community surveys conducted at intervals in each location. An overall positive evaluation on a number of social measures (discussed in more detail in Section 3.1 below) was tempered by the flowing remark.

> "These are impressive findings but are open to the objection that all areas of multiple deprivation in the state have made relative improvements. The period over which neighbourhood renewal programs were implemented and evaluated was pre-GFC and

> coincided with sustained economic growth and healthy expansion of employment. The advances reported above may then be common to both areas exposed to renewal action plans, as well as those not selected for renewal, but equally disadvantaged." (p6)

Further research compares the changes in this data for the neighbourhood renewal areas with those for surrounding communities and finds what appears to be a statistically significant improvement.

These results are encouraging for the value of community renewal programs and it would be extremely useful to have the same kind of data for urban renewal projects. However it also provides a classic example of the difficulty of separating out the various causes of social changes over time. Communities are never static, whether governments are purposefully intervening at a local level or not, so it is always difficult to identify what changes are a direct result of government intervention and what would have happened anyway. As projects become more complex and take place over longer time-scales (as is the case for major urban renewal projects) this task becomes progressively more complicated.

Wood and Cigdem propose their much simplified version of "shadow pricing" by trialling a methodology to evaluate the impact by measuring the "price gap" between property in neighbourhood renewal areas and that in neighbouring non-renewal areas. This data once again shows a positive change, with prices in renewal areas rising faster than in non-renewal areas. This, according to the researchers, suggests that the projects are effective in improving amenity and reducing stigma and this is reflected in a willingness of buyers to pay more for housing in that location. The logic appears sound, but this method will only work where there is not extensive redevelopment of the housing as it relies on the fact that the housing remains comparable over time.

Another approach to evaluation was developed in 2004 by the South Australian Department of Families and Communities in the context of nine separate redevelopment projects being undertaken by the South Australian government at that time (Rogers and Slowinski, 2004). It proposes to measure the impacts of redevelopment within the following framework.

> "What are the impacts of urban regeneration in the areas of:
>
> 1. Housing and built environment
> 2. Environment
> 3. Social
> 4. Economic
> 5. Community
> 6. Financial
>
> In the
>
> 7. Targeted area
> 8. Surrounding areas
> 9. Broader region
>
> In the
>
> 10. Short term
> 11. Longer term" (p46)

They then propose further ways of addressing the question of attribution, and of building individual project evaluations into a meta-analysis across sites to draw out lessons for future practice. While this framework appears practical and carefully thought-through, there is no evidence that such evaluations have been carried out.

The closest any project comes to a publicly available evaluative process at this point is the longitudinal panel study for the Bonnyrigg renewal project, which will interview approximately 100 current and former Bonnyrigg residents at two year intervals over the life of the project. The first round of interviews was conducted in 2012 and reported on in 2013 (Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph, 2013). This provides extremely useful information about the experiences of tenants through the redevelopment, but does not constitute a formal evaluation. It has also already run into continuity problems, with the financial problems of the Bonnyrigg development company effectively placing the second round of interviews (originally due in 2014) on hold for an indefinite period – they appear not to have been conducted yet at the time of writing.

All this leaves us, at the present moment, without a comprehensive and reliable means of evaluating the success of urban renewal projects or of the program as a whole. Nor does it seem that governments anywhere in Australia have committed any resources to carrying out such evaluations, at least not for public consumption. The only reference to a comprehensive evaluation of an urban renewal project we have been able to find was that carried out by researchers from the University of Melbourne on the redevelopment of Kensington in inner city Melbourne (Shaw, 2013). However, while there is some commentary from the researchers in the public domain the actual evaluation report has never been publicly released.

In practice, urban renewal projects are complex, long term ventures. They involve intensive consultation and communication with tenants over a period of years (both collectively and one on one) major physical changes to the urban environment and a change in the social makeup of particular communities. They are often also accompanied by a change in the way housing is managed – in some cases management is transferred from a government to a community provider, in others the government provider implements a more intensive localised management model. For many projects, the urban renewal activity is accompanied a significant amount of resources directed at community building. On top of this there are changes unrelated to the project itself such as natural turnover of residents, ageing of long-term residents, macro-economic fluctuations, wider urban development events or changes to broader social housing management practices.

In the absence of a comprehensive evaluation process, one of the difficulties in assessing urban and community renewal projects is identifying what intervention caused the particular outcomes that were being sought, or that actually took place? Was it the physical redevelopment, the social interventions, the changed management practices, or would the change have happened anyway? These questions will recur in the sections which follow.

## 3.0 Issues for Tenants in Public Housing Renewal

This part of the report addresses a number of issues that affect tenants as a result of urban and community renewal projects, with the major focus being on urban renewal. In assessing these issues, it is important to bear in mind that as a population group social housing tenants in NSW, as elsewhere in Australia, have some significant differences from the population of the State as a whole.

Social housing tenants suffer higher levels of disadvantage than other segments of the population. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2010) reports that:

- About 16% of their sample of NSW social housing tenants were unemployed and looking for work
- About half of all people aged 18 or older in the households surveyed were not employed and not looking for work for reasons including ill health and disability, retirement or parenting.
- Almost one-fifth of social housing households contained at least one person who needed help with self-care, communication or body movement activities.
- One-fifth of public housing (21%) and one-third (31%) of community housing respondents indicated that they had been homeless at some time in the past. Of these, one quarter of public housing (24%) and one-third (31%) of community housing respondents had been homeless during the past 5 years.
- Over half the households surveyed were single persons and over 10% were couples without children – less than one third had dependent children.
- Two thirds of public housing tenants were women, and two thirds were aged 55 or over.
- Social housing tenants on average have lower levels of educational proficiency – over 60% reported that their highest level of educational attainment was Year 10 or less, including one fifth who had either primary education only, or no formal education at all.

Public housing tenants tend to stay in their housing for the long term – 38% of respondents to the AIHW survey had lived in public housing for 20 years or longer.

These characteristics are not accidental or surprising – it is the clear policy of Housing NSW and the NSW Government to target social housing to people with high levels of need. This has important implications for tenants affected by renewal programs. Age, disability and poor health can leave people with less resilience to cope with major change in their housing. They also limit people's mobility, leaving them more reliant on services and facilities within close range of their home. Low incomes limit peoples' ability to absorb even quite minor extra costs. Lower levels of education can limit many people's ability to understand written communications or complex paperwork.

Understanding this level of disadvantage is essential background to the analysis of the specific issues reported in the sections below, as it colours the way tenants understand and interact with renewal processes and the impact these renewal processes have on them.

## 3.1 Community Renewal

Community renewal projects have been implemented around Australia over the past two decades. These projects typically target highly disadvantaged communities (most often public housing estates) and aim to reduce crime, improve community cohesion and service coordination and address priority issues as identified by each community. These projects are highly participative and collaborative. Information from evaluation of community renewal projects in Victoria and NSW shows success for these projects where there is a long term (at least 7-8 year) commitment to the project. However, it is not clear even for these long term projects how long the benefit continues after the project is wound up, particularly if this leads to an overall reduction of resources in these communities.

Similar techniques are often used in urban renewal projects but may be less successful as other elements of the urban renewal process, particularly the level of "churn" created by the de-concentration of public housing, tend to work against the community development approaches used in community renewal.

The majority of this report focuses on issues around urban renewal projects. However, it is also worth paying some attention to the dynamics of community renewal projects and there is considerable overlap between the issues and the approaches as well as considerable differences.

Community renewal is a lower cost and, in a sense, lower risk approach to addressing locational disadvantage. It is lower cost because it does not generally involve large-scale capital works, and it is lower risk because it largely leaves residents where they are.

Community renewal projects around Australia have most often been led by the housing agency, but involve a partnership between a number of different government departments and community organisations (Arthurson, 2003 and 2004; Working from the Ground Up, 2010, 2013). They may involve a range of activities, including the creation of cross-departmental committees to foster greater local service cooperation (often with direct resident involvement) along with specific community initiatives including arts projects, children's activities, improvements in public spaces, community crime prevention activities and community celebrations.

Mant (2007) suggests that one of the key issues contributing to social exclusion in public housing estates is the failure of public housing authorities to make the transition from large-scale construction agencies to welfare agencies managing highly targeted housing. This failure includes continuing to build housing on broadacre outer suburban estates when it was clear this would not serve the new purpose of social housing, and retaining a highly centralised management model when the new role required flexible locally –based management. Community renewal projects can be understood as attempts to overcome this inflexible, centralised decision-making by siting teams in local communities with flexible resources to spend on locally-identified priorities.

Arthurson (2003, 2004) in her review of five community renewal projects in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales suggests that these initiatives are driven by two objectives – greater government efficiency (including cost savings from reduced duplication) and addressing

social inequality through improved service delivery. Some of the key elements she identified affecting the success of the projects included:

- Funding availability, with projects that had their own dedicated pool of funds producing much better outcomes than those that relied on agencies contributing from existing budgets.
- Stability in wider government arrangements – in some cases, where projects coincided with restructures or cost-cutting in other government services, outcomes where severely limited.
- The quality of relationships between the individuals involved – in the project she examined in regional Queensland, the project gained extra impetus from the fact that many participants had long-standing relationships including relationships that extended beyond their official roles. This environment is harder to create in urban projects.
- The level of buy-in from various levels of government – she particularly noted the lack of buy-in from Commonwealth departments in the projects she examined as a limitation on success.

Arthurson is relatively sceptical about the potential for success of these projects, viewing the drive for resource-efficiency as limiting their success by creating an impetus to cut services rather than improve them. Others however are more upbeat about the potential of these initiatives to make a positive contribution. Working from the Ground Up (2013) cites a number of prominent researchers who affirm the possibility of making real improvements in communities through measures including community gardens, arts projects and children's activities. They claim that such activities can lead to benefits including:

- reduced social isolation by creating friendships
- creation of cultural connections
- improved public spaces
- improved health and wellbeing
- reduced crime
- creation of "positive senses of energy".

Mills and Brown (2004) point to the success of community and cultural development programs in building relationships within a community, providing a neutral venue for them to engage with government workers on a basis of equality and allowing them to shape government policy and priorities as well as building a sense of place and connection to community.

The evaluation of the Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program (cited in Wood and Cigdem, 2012) found and impressive array of successes for this program.

> "The 2008 neighbourhood renewal evaluation summary report concludes that the initiative is reducing disadvantage and social exclusion. On numerous indicators the disparity between renewal locations and the rest of the state has contracted. Key outcomes emphasised in the summary report (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2008b, p.1) include:
>
> - 4 per cent reduction in unemployment from 17 to 13 per cent, double the rate of reduction in unemployment for Victoria.
> - 12 per cent increase in further education qualifications.
> - Reduction in average secondary school absenteeism by 3.5 days.

- 4 per cent increase in perceived levels of community participation.
- 12 per cent reduction in overall crime.
- 27 per cent decrease in property crimes.
- 22 per cent increase in acceptance rates for public housing.
- 8 per cent decrease in public housing turnover.
- 6 per cent reduction in substantiated cases of child protection.
- 14 per cent increase in resident perceptions that neighbourhood renewal has improved government performance.
- 33 per cent perceived improvement in housing conditions.
- 23 per cent perceived improvement in the physical environment." (Wood and Cigdem, 2012, p6)

There are two caveats to this overall picture of success. The first, reiterated by a number of researchers cited by Working from the Ground Up (2013), is that successful projects require long term commitment. They cite Vinson (2007) as suggesting a realistic time-frame of 7-8 years for meaningful improvements while their own assessment (2010) simply highlights the need for long-term commitment. Randolph and Wood (2004) reinforce this finding in their own research.

Working from the Ground Up's final report (2015) identifies a number of key learnings from their five years of engagement in Maroubra and Matraville, which amount more or less to a primer in community development practice.

- "A more flexible and expansive approach to participation is key
- The importance of starting with a social justice framework
- Community engagement and developing connections takes time
- Collaboration is key to strong partnerships
- The creation of spaces where people can speak and be heard
- The value of persistently working with a 'from the ground up' ethos
- The centrality of working with the strengths of the community
- The importance of trusted, committed and respectful brokers
- In action research the local community is key in the production of knowledge." (p11)

Materials from the Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program back up this focus on long-term engagement. An integral part of this program was the conduct of relatively large-scale surveys of residents every two years throughout the life of these projects. Year 1 was used as the baseline and then subsequent years measured a change against this baseline in key indicators or residents' wellbeing. Savage, Meade and Taket (2007) in their two-year review of the project at Corio and Norlane in regional Victoria, found little change in the large majority of indicators over the first two years of the project. However by three years later Shield, Graham and Taket (2011) were able to measure significant improvements in Corio and in Colac. In a similar vein, after eight years the project at Eaglehawk recorded significant improvement on 17 out of the 25 indicators measured (Government of Victoria, 2011).

However, a more critical academic report of this same research (Shield, Graham and Taket, 2011) suggests that the evidence for this change may not be as strong as that presented in the more "official" summaries. Their review of surveys of residents in Corio Norlane and Colac in 2005 and 2009 with comparative results from neighbouring non-renewal locations indicates a mix of successes and failures on improvements to government services and to services more generally, an increase in

trust of government but decreased trust in other residents. They also highlight sampling issues which raise some doubts about the validity of the survey comparisons.

In any case it can be difficult for governments to make this kind of long-term funding commitment. The Building Stronger Communities program, for example, ran for three years. In such a period some individual goals can be achieved but it is difficult to make the kind of lasting change communities are seeking and hoping for. The Working from the Ground Up project, although it highlighted the need for long term commitment, only had resources for three years of activities. Only the Housing Communities Project has lasted through multiple changes of government and one suspects that in this case part of the reason may be that it's low profile means it has less scrutiny along with more modest resources. It is easy for projects like this to be derailed by changes of government or changes in funding priorities and this can lead to a failure to realise their full potential. There is also no evidence at this stage on whether, even for long-term projects, the changes are sustained for any length of time once the project is completed and what factors might promote such sustained improvements.

The second caveat on this success relates to the association of community renewal or similar activities with urban renewal projects. Current wisdom in urban renewal is to acknowledge that physical changes on their own will not accomplish the social goals of urban renewal projects, and hence that these need to be accompanied by community building and service enhancement initiatives (Shelter NSW, 2003; Coates, 2013). This has led to the adoption of many of techniques used in community renewal projects.

The caveat is that these techniques rely for their success on building relationships and cooperation between residents. However, most of the urban renewal projects reviewed in Section 2.1 have an explicit objective of changing the makeup of the community by relocating some proportion of tenants – in many cases a majority of them. At least in the short term it seems inevitable that this relocation process will undermine the success of any community-building initiatives (Stubbs, 2005; Flanagan, 2010; Randolph and Wood, 2004). This suggests that to some extent community renewal and urban renewal may be alternative rather than complimentary approaches, although alternatively it could indicate that timing is crucial – that engagement before and during urban renewal may be better focused on managing the change, with community-building activities taking over where and when housing and the revised tenure mix has already been completed.

## 3.2 Tenant Engagement

Tenant engagement is widely acknowledged as central to the success of urban renewal projects. Good practice on tenant engagement includes a number of elements, including providing support and education for tenants on the issues at stake, engaging through a wide range of formal and informal processes at different times and venues, providing clear information and parameters for the engagement and engaging consistently throughout the course of a project.

Performance on tenant engagement in NSW has been variable. The Bonnyrigg renewal project provides a benchmark for tenant engagement and the Airds Bradbury project also appears to have engaged skilfully with tenants, but other projects before and since have not reached the same standard and even the Bonnyrigg project managers have struggled to sustain their quality of participation as financial issues have led to major changes in the project. Projects like the sale of public housing at Millers Point and the proposed major estate redevelopments under Communities Plus present particular challenges for tenant engagement as the proposed approach is highly likely to be opposed to tenants' preferences.

It is often remarked that community participation is firmly embedded in planning theory but more often than not is ignored or mismanaged in practice (e.g. Tighe and Opelt, 2014; Evans and Reid 2013; Pawson and Gilmour, 2012). Planners struggle to identify what type and level of participation is appropriate in what situations, and how to balance the input of local residents with wider considerations such as the welfare of the city as a whole or considerations of financial feasibility and economic development.

The result of these struggles can often be that residents in a community develop a distrust of planners and planning processes. Tighe and Opelt (2014) refer to this as "collective memory". This is more than simply a factual account of what happened in the past, it is a community interpretation of this history which shapes future interactions. They comment:

> "Cities and neighbourhoods are particularly powerful in terms of collective memory. When an event like urban renewal, which has been so thoroughly studied and discussed for its implications for racial segregation and class inequality, occurs in a place and to people that you know, the community narrative can be incredibly powerful. As Forester writes, 'Collective memories of these experiences can temper a community's willingness to engage in meaningful and intimate dialogue.' Communities that have experienced mistreatment, exclusion, or discrimination at the hands of planners in the past will likely continue to be suspicious of planning in the future. When perceptions are 'interpreted from a lens coloured by history' they can limit the effectiveness of deliberative planning endeavours. This is true even if the collective narrative does not perfectly reflect events as they occurred because, 'the imagination, rather than instrumental-rational thought, played an important and necessary role in how residents sought to make sense of the past, the present, and especially the future of their community.'" (p5)

This kind of collective memory is strong in public housing estates because residents stay for the long term (see page 14). It can also stretch beyond individual estates as stories are told across networks of public housing tenants (both formal and informal) and in the wider media. What kind of narrative is created by current and past practices of tenant engagement in NSW?

There is a wide acknowledgement in the literature on urban renewal that community engagement is crucial to the success of urban renewal projects. Stubbs (2005) identifies the centrality of participation in urban renewal projects. Xian (2009) cites Creighton's (2005) statement that "participation *must* be an integral part of the development process otherwise it is a complete waste of time". Bernie Coates, then a senior officer in LAHC, identifies on the basis of NSW urban renewal experience that

- "it is important to engage everyone meaningfully
- communities can embrace change if they are supported to do so
- the existing community needs to benefit from the change
- good relationships bring good results." (Coates, 2013)

One of the first questions to ask about this is: what form of engagement or participation is being sought, and for what purpose? Martin Wood (2003) in his review of participation practice in a number of Australian locations identifies two purposes:

- a managerial purpose, aimed at aiding greater efficiency in the use of scarce resources
- a citizenship purpose, aimed at promoting greater choice and control by citizens over decisions regarding their community.

Pawson and Gilmour (2012) express a similar duality by describing alternative views of participation as a consumerist strategy ("choice") or a citizenship strategy ("voice"). They refer to two key concepts:

- Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation" in which participation is pitched at various levels from coercion and manipulation, through therapy and consultation to citizen partnership and control. This model for understanding participation appears frequently in the literature (for example Evans and Reid, 2013; Romanin, 2013)
- The notion of "deliberative democracy", a way of giving decisions legitimacy and improving government responsiveness, with a corollary that this may represent genuine empowerment or may be a way of incorporating tenants into the existing framework of control.

Romanin (2013) draws on a number of sources to revise the concept of the Ladder of Participation for specific application to urban renewal projects, dividing it into three levels and eight sub-levels. These are:

- Two degrees of Non-participation – providing information, and seeking information.
- Three degrees of Tokenism – listening, consultation and dialogue
- Three degrees of Tenant Power – joint management, choice and control.

The key variable here is around how much "say" tenants have over renewal projects. Pawson and Gilmour (2012) explore this through questions to a small sample of participants in social housing including tenants, community and public housing managers and "experts". While this analysis is not specifically around renewal projects, it identifies some key issues around tenant participation in social housing more generally. These include:

- The way it is defined, with questions about how much is actually “on the table”, how strongly tenant feedback influences government decisions, and how in more recent years the definition of the term has often shifted from participation in decisions about housing management to a wider concept of participation in the community or community development.
- Its intersection with the organisational cultures of the housing providers and the levels of satisfaction tenants express with their housing. This also looks at the way staff in the organisation tend to conceive of their tenants and whether staff tend to stereotype tenants and treat them differently depending on this perception.
- Looking at the “direction of travel” with most participants indicating they felt the movement was away from meaningful participation, with fixed term tenancies and needs based allocation leading to tenants having lower levels of “buy-in”.

Wood (2003) identified a number of barriers to tenant participation in community renewal projects.

- The level of disadvantage experienced by tenants and life experiences which left them lacking the confidence to participate.
- Cynicism arising from past failed experiences of consultation.
- A gap in understanding between renewal professionals and residents, meaning residents often felt they didn’t understand what was being discussed and that they were being patronized.
- Practical difficulties with forums, such as language barriers for tenants from CALD backgrounds, absence of child care and the timing of meetings excluding some tenants.
- In some cases, a level of tension or conflict in renewal meetings meaning many residents stayed away.

This analysis led to a number of recommendations for good participation practice, including.

- use of community development approaches which start with local people and address their concerns they identify about their area, involving them in solutions
- involving local people from the outset
- the need to work with local activists, but not exclusively so, and to build democratic processes which involve them and other residents
- the value of generating early, visible success to build confidence in the participation process
- the use and strengthening of local resources such as neighbourhood centres
- the provision of training for residents to assist their participation
- the use of a range of meeting processes that suit various types of residents
- the need to ensure residents have genuine influence over decisions
- the need to communicate regularly and clearly – there shouldn’t be hiatuses in communication
- the need for cultural change at the government end to make participation “stick”.

In practice, the performance of the NSW Government on tenant engagement and participation over the years has varied. The two best-documented cases in NSW – Minto and Bonnyrigg – provide instructive contrasts in participation practice.

The Minto Renewal Project commenced in 2002 with the relocation of tenants in a number of precincts and the demolition of substantial amounts of housing. This intervention was preceded by very minimal consultation and tenants were given limited choices about their relocation. The result of this early commencement and limited consultation was a strong, vocal reaction from tenants and

residents, arising out of considerable feelings of anxiety and trauma by individual residents (Stubbs, 2005).

As a result of this backlash, the NSW Government had a significant rethink about the project, revising its approach to tenant engagement, slowing down the project in order to backtrack on some of these engagement issues, and making changes to the project as a result of tenant feedback. However the failings of participation at the outset of the project left a legacy which was difficult to overcome, as reported by Pinnegar et al (2011).

> "In 2005, Housing NSW embarked on a new approach to the redevelopment, and initiated the Working Together in Minto (WTIM) group, which sought to bring together a range of stakeholders including NGOs and residents' groups. By this time relationships between local residents and Housing NSW had become strained, and re-establishing trust was a major challenge. A gulf had been allowed to develop between what the partnership was thinking on the one hand and community perspectives and concerns on the other. By the time meaningful engagement started to take place through WTIM, the renewal process was seen more in terms of the destruction rather than renewal of place…." (p68)

Coates (2013) and Pinnegar et al (2011) both identify the lessons learned from Minto as a key driver for a more careful approach to tenant engagement in Bonnyrigg. The resulting engagement process, commencing in 2004, involved many of the pointers to good practice identified by Wood (2003) and summarised above.

- Educative work was carried out before formal consultation began to help tenants gain the skills and knowledge they needed to participate in design discussions.
- A range of techniques and processes were used to engage tenants, including formal workshops, informal coffee mornings, information provision, support for a formal tenant body and one-on-one sessions with tenants who would be personally affected.
- A lengthy time-frame was allowed for consultation and a genuine opportunity was provided for tenants to influence the course of the project.
- A careful process was established to support tenants through relocation decisions, and a number of options were offered to tenants (depending on their circumstances and location) including the opportunity to stay in their existing home where feasible, opportunity to remain in Minto or to move to another location. (Pinnegar et al, 2011; Xian, 2009; Romanin, 2013)

The results of this change are encouraging. In 2005, some three years into the Minto project, Stubbs (2005) presented a highly negative view of tenants' experiences of the project and their relationship to it. By contrast, the first round of tenant interviews in the longitudinal study of the experiences of tenants in the Bonnyrigg renewal project, conducted in 2012, approximately 3-4 years from the commencement of physical works, presented a much more positive view (Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph, 2013). In particular, residents felt they had a good understanding of the aims of the project, knew where they stood and, if not supportive, were at least accepting of the process that was taking place.

There is a very real sense in which Bonnyrigg represents an example of "best practice" in tenant engagement. Nonetheless, there are a number of aspects of this project that show scope for further

improvement and development. For a start, some aspects of the project made it easier to engage successfully than may be the case in some other locations and projects. The ability to significantly intensify the development on the site (the number of dwellings will be trebled as a result of the project) makes it financially feasible to achieve the project with only a comparatively small reduction in the number of social housing dwellings in the suburb. This means that tenants were able to be offered a genuine choice to stay or go and this reduced the level of personal angst compared to communities such as Minto or Airds-Bradbury where the overall amount of social housing will be reduced much more significantly. In addition, the financial environment during the planning phases of the Bonnyrigg project (2004-2007) was significantly more buoyant and optimistic than that for later projects and this created a more expansive set of possibilities for discussion with tenants. Subsequent events (see below) have reined these possibilities in to some extent.

Romanin (2013) identifies that despite the intense activity around tenant engagement in this process, the overall approach to participation remained at the "tokenism" level in his modified ladder of participation described above. (It should be noted that the term as used by Romanin does not indicate a pointless exercise, as the term often indicates in everyday speech, but that there is "listening, consultation and dialogue" but the tenants do not share the final decision-making).

> "…(T)he model found that the number of tenant participation mechanisms (structures, organisation and tactics) were insufficient in increasing tenants' influence in decision making, or providing assured, consistent and lasting influence. This was supported by three sub-findings. Firstly, that none of the variables placed tenants higher than the negotiation rung of the model, which is accordingly associated with a level of tokenism where tenants have the opportunity to express views but no guarantee or power to ensure they are taken on board. Secondly, that over time tenants have not attained greater influence in decision making and in fact there are indications that this has diminished from the Planning Renewal to Activating Renewal stage. Thirdly…tenants were not provided the mechanisms or possibility to leverage the participatory structures or organisation available to them, or external measures, to increase their level of influence." (p79)

Some tenants participating in the panel interviews stated more succinctly, commenting with resignation, "it's government housing, it's their money not ours" (Pinnegar, 2013, p6). Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph comment as follows.

> "A sense of resignation also set in among sections of the community, with the feeling that, since it was not 'their' money and not 'their' home, their opinions mattered little (if at all). Transparency, not least relating to progress on site – which residents can see for themselves – needs to be maintained even during these periods of uncertainty so that the community feel included rather than having a renewal imposed on them." (Key Messages section, page un-numbered)

Others have presented even more critical views of the Bonnyrigg process. Nunn (2013) has pointed to a number of weaknesses in the tenant engagement process.

- "The extent that public tenants could act in their own interests, even after having been engaged in Community Renewal strategies for tenant participation and capacity building, was impeded by structural, institutional and organisational factors.

- Public tenants deemed unwilling or unable to accept the responsibilities of 'community' membership were governed using coercive practices as part of Community Renewal, involving the exercise of disciplinary power.
- Community Renewal strategies to normalise public estates and tenants vis-à-vis private rental and home ownership suburbs, deployed through physical regeneration and tenant participation, relied upon a notion of 'community' that was constructed by government and imposed on public tenants, and not a phenomenon that arose from individuals collectively in that geographical space." (p166)

At the core of the issue for Nunn is that tenants are asked to buy into a concept of community over which they had little say, and that there is an element of coercion or exclusion for those who don't "buy in". In addition, "community" is constructed as a solution to problems that are not in fact local but structural and institutional, so it will never be a genuine solution. However, this critique is not replicated by all researchers, and it is possible to see the second element as beside the point – the fact that there are structural and institutional factors at play seems to be a misplaced critique of a local project.

Darcy and Rogers (2014) critique this same process using the framework of the "Right to the City" which suggests that inhabitance in itself should convey the right to participate in place-making. This is contrasted with the neo-liberal reliance on markets and individual consumer choice and the notion of social housing tenants as "flawed consumers" who forfeit their right to social participation by not participating in markets. They describe the process of engagement in Bonnyrigg as framed by this neo-liberal framework rather than a more expansive rights-based framework.

This framework was seen as limiting the ability of tenants to participate on their own terms, channeling their participation into government and partnership approved processes.

> "State- or private sector-driven place-making means these players control:
>
> 1. who is invited into the place-making processes;
> 2. the performative rules - e.g., the rights and responsibilities of tenants, the process, and the scope of action (collective and/or individual);
> 3. what is on and off the agenda;
> 4. what is recorded and reported.
>
> This reconceptualisation of citizenship limits the political options available to public tenants while simultaneously increasing the capacity for political action of various nonresident market and knowledge-producing actors." (p17)

This dynamic has led over time to a more restricted role for tenants – with tenants input relegated a special 'tenant engagement' sub-group within the project to which unhappy tenants are directed, the role of tenant advocate progressively narrowed and given reduced funding, and a shift from tenant engagement in the wider project to the staging of 'Tenants Rights and Responsibilities' workshops which are reported as focusing heavily on tenants' individual responsibilities.

Xian's (2009) comparison of Bonnyrigg with the renewal of Castle Vale in Birmingham, UK, shows the potential for greater tenant control over projects. Castle Vale tenants were supported to develop a formally elected tenant body, various aspects of the renewal project were subjected to a formal vote by tenants, and the exit plan for the project involved the transfer of significant responsibilities, with

appropriate resources, to resident-controlled organisations. Such a level of local control has yet to be contemplated in any Australian urban renewal project.

Another issue is that of seeking the views of, and informing, children who are affected by renewal. Stubbs (2005) reports on a project conducted by UnitingCare Burnside to gather the views and experiences of children (mainly Year 6) and their parents affected by the early stages of the Minto project. This used a range of methods to get to the views of children impacted by the redevelopment and relocation process.

- Parents identified issues about children moving schools, losing access to their sporting clubs, disrupted friendships, loss of public transport access and reduced access to separated parents and extended family living in the same area.
- The children reported a strong sense of attachment to the suburb as their home, identification with its landmarks and facilities, and strong feelings of grief and anger about its demolition and being forced to move.
- Many felt their houses were in poor condition and looked forward to moving somewhere better, and had hopeful or even unrealistic views about where they would move to.
- For many there was a fear of the unknown as they didn't know what would happen to them and this led to anxiety.
- For many there was a concern at the loss of friends in the neighbourhood and at school, and less access to extended family living nearby.
- Many felt confident of their ability to make new friends and could describe how they would go about it, as well as thinking through strategies to stay in touch with existing friends.
- The children were full of suggestions about how to do the project better!

However, this remains the only example in the literature of a deliberate attempt to engage children in discussions about renewal projects.

The Bonnyrigg experience, as well as the later experience of tenants in Minto, also highlights the difficulty in maintaining participation and engagement over the long time-frame of urban renewal projects, alluded to above by Romanin. Taverner Research (2011) reported Minto tenants' experiences of "floods and gaps" in information rather than a steady flow of contact at a pace they could absorb and respond to meaningfully. Bonnyrigg tenants (Pinnegar 2013) identified a period in 2011 when financial problems led to delays and difficulties for Newleaf Communities, the consortium managing the Bonnyrigg renewal project. Tenants felt they were given little information about these, and that significant changes to the renewal plan driven by these financial considerations were announced with minimal consultation. This also appears to be the case with the later restructure of the project, with a hiatus in redevelopment also leading to a hiatus in ongoing tenant input and the longitudinal panel study.

Announcements around significant changes in public housing estates in Claymore and Millers Point suggest that it can also be difficult to sustain the sort of organisational learning exemplified by the progression from Minto to Bonnyrigg within what was then Housing NSW. The early 2014 announcements about both Claymore and Millers Point were preceded by long silences in which tenants were left to speculate about the government's intent. In the case of Claymore, it is not clear how the announced actions relate to the previously-announced overall renewal plan.

In Millers Point, the planning and implementation of the project has been characterised generally by conflict between tenants and government rather than by engagement and negotiation. This has

been reflected in the fact that while both tenants and the independent Social Impact Assessment (Cred Community Planning, undated) expressed a preference to retain some social housing in the area, and to use the proceeds of sales to renovate this housing, the final decision was to sell all housing in the area. This sale is justified on financial grounds (the sale of high-value sites in Millers Point can fund the acquisition of a larger quantity of social housing in less valued locations), and on the grounds of benefiting the wider tenant and applicant population (NSW Family and Community Services, Undated).

The 2016 announcement of Communities Plus sites seems to follow a similar dynamic. The announcement of the most recent redevelopment parameters in Ivanhoe, Waterloo, Telopea and Riverwood do not appear to have been preceded by any significant tenant consultation, and offers of engagement post-announcement appear to focus mainly on information about relocation processes (Communities Plus website, accessed August 2016).

Developments in Millers Point and under Communities Plus tend to lend support to Darcy and Rogers' (2014) analysis outlined above. Tenant engagement takes place in an environment in which the NSW Government, as owner of the land, has ultimate say over what happens in the community. Its decisions may be strongly and even primarily driven by market and planning considerations such as "highest and best use". This becomes a particular problem in these sites, where the economic argument for wholesale change is extremely strong, because it is hard to imagine a constructive discussion with tenants which begins with the premise that the community they live in will not be preserved in anything like its current form.

To date, Communities Plus has not publicly indicated its approach to tenant and community engagement, though at the time of writing it was consulting with stakeholders in redevelopment of its Waterloo estate on a 'draft Waterloo stakeholder and engagement framework' (not publicly available). There is a danger that the learnings of previous processes, particularly those such as Bonnyrigg and Minto which have been extensively evaluated and reported, could be lost in the new program, just at the point where decisions will have a substantial impact on their lives.

The question here is not whether the decisions announced are the "right" or "wrong" decision in each case – it is simply a question of engagement practice, of communicating with tenants in good faith at each stage of the development of the project even if this involves the delivery of bad news. Failure to do so early in the case of Minto, and more recently in Claymore and Millers Point, involves the risk that the "collective memory" of public housing tenants around engagement will be built on these negative experiences to the exclusion of the positive experiences in Bonnyrigg and even in the later stages of the Minto project. Each negative experience makes positive engagement more difficult for subsequent projects and trust has to be rebuilt on shaky foundations.

## 3.3 Creating Social Mix

Creating social mix is one of the key objectives of most of the NSW urban renewal projects, as well as those in other states. This is primarily achieved through creating tenure mix in former public housing estates, selling a proportion of the housing generated by the renewal project to owner-occupiers. Social mix is claimed to provide a number of social benefits for public tenants including improved services, reduced crime, better access to education and employment and reduced stigma.

However, while tenants are frequently supportive of the concept there is little evidence that most of these benefits actually result from the social mix policies employed in Australia. There are conditions under which the policies may be more successful, including the presence of children in the community, "pepper-potting" social housing with private housing so that the two tenures are indistinguishable and significant physical improvements to the housing and urban infrastructure in the community.

The concept of social mix is further challenged by the fact that while public housing authorities are strongly in favour of it, and public housing tenants are at least not averse to it, private developers and home owners appear to be more wary of the concept and try to insulate buyers from the social housing parts of a development by advocating physical separation and downplaying the presence of social housing in their marketing of the development. These challenges are not insurmountable but public housing authorities need to negotiate strongly for their vision of social mix to make it a reality.

Creating social mix is one of the key objectives of most or all of the larger estate redevelopment projects in NSW, and those in the rest of Australia and overseas. There is an extensive Australian and international literature on the subject. However, this literature is at best ambiguous about the benefits of attempts to create social mix, and at worst completely sceptical.

Kathy Arthurson (2012) points out that the notion of social mix has its origins in the social reform and urban planning movements of the 19th century, advocated by social reformers like George Cadbury, Octavia Hill, Ebenezer Howard and Joseph Rowntree who were responding to the urban poverty created by the Industrial Revolution and its danger of social unrest. In response, they looked to recreate a version of the mediaeval village community where people of different classes mixed and the poor and working class families had middle and upper class role models to help them improve their lifestyle. These concepts were translated into a number of designs, some of which were partly implemented such as George Cadbury's village of Bourneville and the Garden City designs pioneered by Howard.

The idea was revived in the post-war reconstruction, where key planners advocated social mix as an alternative to the slum communities of the depression years, and again in the late 1990s when the idea experienced a resurgence as a result of economic change and the challenges facing public housing. According to Arthurson it is only in its most recent iteration that the concept has been

closely tied to public housing policy and to the creation of tenure mix in formerly mono-tenurial public housing estates.

Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) summarise the rationale behind recent social mix policies as follows.

> "In Australia and internationally, the problems associated with concentrated disadvantage in public housing estates such as high levels of crime, unemployment, anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood stigma and poor education, are being tackled through the implementation of urban renewal strategies that focus on creating a social mix (Arthurson 2012; Atkinson and Kintrea 2008; August 2008; Bond et al. 2011; Wood 2003). The absence of social mix is used to explain the dysfunctionality that often characterises homogeneous public housing estates (Cole and Goodchild 2001). Social mix has come to refer to a specific understanding of what constitutes a functional and sustainable community, namely one that is heterogeneous in a range of aspects, including 'housing tenure, ethnicity and socio-economic characteristics of residents' (Arthurson 2008, 209)." (p1)

Former Commonwealth Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek (2009) put a similar set of ideas in plainer terms.

> "We need to create more mixed communities – where public housing dwellings are part - but not a feature - of the neighbourhood. Mixed communities are more likely to build social capital – the goodwill, shared values, networks, trust and reciprocity that exists in neighbourhoods….people who are well-connected 'are more likely to be housed, healthy, hired and happy'. In the long run I want to see state and territory governments redevelop the remaining broad acre public housing estates. They should be renewed to create mixed communities. This is the way of the future." (p7-8)

Looked at from the perspective of these statements and claims, social mix is one of the "big ideas" driving public housing policy in Australia and in other parts of the world. The statements above imply big expectations of a policy of turning public housing estates into mixed-tenure communities – it is seen as a key strategy for overcoming disadvantage.

Sitting behind this policy direction is the concept of "area effects" or "neighbourhood effects" (Flanagan, 2010; Shaw, 2013). This concept suggests that living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood compounds the effects of poverty for individuals, making their situation worse than it would be if they lived in less disadvantaged locations. Flanagan (2010) summarises the ways in which area effects are assumed to work.

- High levels of disadvantage in a community lead to overburdening of support services and hence to poorer quality service delivery.
- Poor areas tend to become stigmatised which leads to "postcode discrimination" in areas such as employment, credit and insurance.
- People growing up and living in communities made up exclusively of poor people have poor role models and limited opportunities for social support, tending to entrench their poverty.
- Poor areas tend to have poorer quality housing and public amenities which in turn affect peoples' health and wellbeing.

Recent public housing estate redevelopment projects in Australia and elsewhere aim to overcome these negative area effects through creating mixed tenure, replacing a substantial proportion of

their public housing with owner-occupied or privately rented housing. The policy logic of this approach is outlined succinctly by Chaplin and Shaw (2013). This logic flows roughly as follows.

1. Mixing of tenures will lead to social mix – that is, to a community having people in a wider mix of economic and social circumstances.
2. Social mix will lead to social mixing – that is, people from different social backgrounds and economic circumstances will form relationships in the community and this will benefit the most disadvantaged through role modelling and social support.
3. The influx of more affluent and better connected residents will lead to an improvement of services to the community as these people are able to create more effective demand.
4. These processes will overcome neighbourhood effects and lead to concrete improvements in the wellbeing of the most disadvantaged members of the community.

This suggests there are many points at which this policy could fail. The first is at the point of whether neighbourhood effects exist. Chaplin and Shaw quote Manley:

> "Social mixing through creating mixed tenure neighbourhoods obviously only has the desired outcome if neighbourhood effects exist in the first place. … [If they don't exist], tenure mix policies will only replace the poor residents (social renters) by more affluent residents (homeowners). As a result, the neighbourhood might improve, but not the lives of the original residents." (Manley et al 2012:153, quoted in Chaplin and Shaw, 2013)

However, the evidence for the existence of neighbourhood effects is limited. Flanagan (2010) concludes as follows.

> "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)." (pp9-10)

Kathy Arthurson's review of the international literature on this subject (Arthurson, 2012, pp51-54) points to the inconclusive nature of the evidence. The notion of area effects relies heavily on an individualised idea of poverty and disadvantage – that these are characteristics of individuals, rather than products of wider social and economic factors. This question is difficult, if not impossible, to resolve empirically since it is impossible to reliably separate out the various influences that lead to an individual or family experiencing disadvantage.

Leaving this question aside and accepting the premise of area effects at face value, we can then examine four key policy questions – does tenure mix lead to social mix, does social mix lead to social mixing, and does the creation of social mix lead to concrete improvements in the wellbeing of disadvantaged tenants, and do social mix policies result in any negative effects? We can then ask the practical questions that flow from the implementation of this policy –what practical policy measures can be taken to improve the chances of success?

***Does tenure mix lead to social mix?***

One of the assumptions behind current renewal programs is that the mixing of tenures will lead to social mix. This is not necessarily a *fait accompli.* For instance, many UK redevelopment projects

have created tenure mix by selling properties to existing tenants (Arthurson, 2012) meaning there is in fact no change in the social make-up of the community.

It stands to reason that in Australia, where social housing is a far smaller proportion of all housing than in Great Britain and far more tightly targeted to disadvantaged households, the introduction of owner occupation into a community will lead at least to a greater mix of incomes and an increase in the number of people employed and in the workforce.

There is little recent evidence in the Australian studies on this subject one way or another. However Randolph and Wood (2004) compared the socio-economic profiles of their study areas between the 1996 and 2001 censuses. They studied four communities undergoing renewal – one each in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia – and compared these to four nearby "control" estates which were not undergoing redevelopment. They found a very varied pattern which they summarise as follows.

> "Overall, however, the social impacts associated with these changes in tenure structure were very variable. Social outcomes are therefore highly dependent on the local circumstances of the renewal estate and do not appear at this stage of the renewal process to be generalisable across all renewal programs. Generally speaking, while there were increases in the proportions of economically engaged people in the diversified estates, the evidence for a significant increase in higher skilled (and by implication, income) workers was only found in (one location)…. Significantly, in all the renewal estates the occupational profile remained distinctly disadvantaged compared to that of the metropolitan areas in which they were located. On the other hand, the numbers and proportions of unemployed people had generally fallen. The proportion of lone parents had fallen in (2 locations), but it had increased in (the other two). Nevertheless, these trends were generally greater, and in some cases much greater, than in the metropolitan areas in which the estate was located, indicating a substantial degree of social restructuring had accompanied the tenure diversification in most cases. The changes in most of the estates where renewal had taken place also contrasted to the relative lack of change in the control estates." (p24)

This suggests that the projects did have some impact on social mix but that this impact was not dramatic, and these remained relatively disadvantaged communities overall compared with the cities in which they were located.

***Does mix lead to social mixing?***

There is a good deal more evidence on the second question – does the creation of socially mixed communities actually lead to mixing between people in different social and economic circumstances? Do home owners and social housing tenants make friends?

Arthurson (2008) conducted a review of international literature from 1990 to 2007 and concluded as follows.

"Overall the literature suggests that:

- little social interaction takes place between residents across different housing tenures in mixed tenure neighbourhoods
- where social interaction does occur, it is more likely between residents with similar socioeconomic characteristics – it generally involves casual interaction, such as in

playgrounds and hallways or through volunteer activities. Children are more likely to interact than adults

- social interaction is more likely to occur across tenures where owner and rental housing is spatially integrated or where owners have connections in the neighbourhood, such as children attending local schools
- schools are key institutions to facilitate mixing between residents across different housing tenure groups – but this is only possible if everyone sends their children to the local schools
- where low income tenants are relocated to other neighbourhoods some maintain ties outside of the area with their previous residential neighbourhoods, still attending church or socialising there
- in the busy world of today many residents' activities take place outside of the local neighbourhoods – eg. shopping, recreation, visiting friends and relatives
- not surprisingly some studies have found a direct relationship between the level of spatial integration and the contact that occurs between owners and renters. Interaction is not facilitated if social housing is grouped in particular streets, down one side or as clustered groups of units or with social housing tenants mainly located in houses in other separate parts of the estates, to home owners." (p6-7)

There is limited Australian evidence on this question but what there is tends to confirm Arthurson's summary of the international literature. Arthurson (2012) conducted interviews with 40 residents of redeveloped public housing estates in South Australia, including a mix of public tenants and home owners. They reported that in the main their communities were harmonious and people got on reasonably well but that most of these relationships were superficial, at the level of day to day contacts. Some also reported a level of segregation along tenure lines, with public tenants feeling they were "looked down on" and both public tenants and home owners expressing some negativity about the presence of private renters who were seen as transient and hence with little care for their housing or neighbourhood. Many public housing tenants attributed this lack of mixing to the fact that home owners often spent little time in the community, being out at work all day and then carrying out social and recreational activities in other places on the weekends. An exception to this generally low level of interaction came from families with children, where the experience of having their children attending the same school led to more mixing. She also reports an interesting "distancing" of former public tenants who have now bought homes in the same neighbourhood and seek to distance themselves from public housing as a tenure.

Randolph and Wood (2004) conducted focus groups with tenants on four redeveloped estates as well as four "control" estates which had not undergone redevelopment. Tenants on the redeveloped estates were much more likely to say that community spirit and social cohesion had improved in their community – however, they also reported that they had fewer friendships and knew fewer people in their community than those on estates which had not undergone redevelopment.

In their review of 11 recent research reports into estate renewal and social mix, Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) found a distinct difference between social interactions in mixed developments that have grown "organically" over a long period of time, and those that have been created as a result of deliberate renewal efforts. Those which had grown organically were likely to have a far higher level of interaction across tenures and social situations than those that had been recently created. They found that in general, social housing tenants and home owners occupy different social worlds, although once again the presence of children reduced this separation.

***Does social mix produce the desired benefits?***

The most important question is, of course, whether social mix "works" – does it produce the benefits for disadvantaged tenants that are claimed for it? Once again the evidence for benefits is fairly slight.

The expected benefits of social mix are expressed in a number of different ways. Arthurson (2008) summarises them as follows:

> "The positive effects of residing in neighbourhoods with a more balanced social mix are thought to include:
>
> - Improved access to social networks, which link residents to other opportunities such as employment;
> - Positive role models to assist in integrating residents into the 'appropriate' behaviours of wider society. This factor is linked to ameliorating problems of crime, low education retention rates, poor health and high unemployment;
> - Decreased postcode prejudice and lowering of the stigma associated with residing in neighbourhoods that are perceived as negative or undesirable; and
> - Increased access to a range of health, education and community services that is difficult in areas of concentrated socioeconomic disadvantage due to service 'overload' within these particular neighbourhoods." (p6)

Randolph and Wood (2004) summarise the expected benefits more succinctly.

- "Reductions in wider social expenditures on welfare support in the renewal areas (generating service efficiencies).
- "Anticipated positive social outcomes for remaining tenants in communities with a more 'normal' social profile: reduced stigma, stronger social networks, improved access to services and employment (tackling social exclusion)." (p6)

These predicted benefits have two characteristics – they are broad and ambitious, and many of them are difficult to measure. In the context of urban renewal projects where a lot of activities are going on at once, it is also difficult to identify what effects are a result of social mix and what of other measures, like the physical renewal of the estate or the community engagement that takes place during the project.

Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) found that the majority of the supposed benefits didn't seem to be realised in most of the studies they reported. However, they did identify some evidence of a "threshold effect" – where the proportion of social housing was reduced to below 30% some measures improved, but at concentrations of social housing higher than this, mix appeared to provide no benefit. In summary they found:

There was no evidence that mixing reduced stigma – while it may reduce the stigma of an area this was likely to be transferred to the specific social housing tenants within the area.

Mixing had minimal impact on aspects of social wellbeing, although where the mix involved less than 30% social housing wellbeing did improve over against areas with higher concentrations.

Social housing areas report higher levels of anti-social behavior problems than other communities, but the benefits of mix once again only become apparent where there is clear dominance of owner-occupiers.

The quality of the physical environment was better in mixed neighbourhoods than in social housing areas. However this finding appears ambiguous in light of the fact that urban renewal projects specifically set out to improve the physical environment so this effect seems unrelated to the level of social mix.

Randolph and Wood (2004) used a focus group and interview process to gauge tenants' and other stakeholders' views of the benefits that accrue to them. Their use of "control" estates in which there was no renewal taking place allowed them to compare impressions across communities. Tenants overall were positively disposed towards the concept of social mix, but were sceptical about many of its supposed benefits.

- The result on improved social cohesion and "community spirit" was mixed, with some tenants and focus groups from redeveloped estates feeling it had improved while others believed it had declined as a result of the project.
- Most tenants in the redeveloped estates felt that stigma had been reduced, although tenants in all estates reported liking their communities and intending to stay, attributing stigma to a minority of "problem" tenants.
- Tenants reported no improvement and a good deal of scepticism about improved employment and educational opportunities and improved services.
- Tenants mainly reported improvements in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (i.e. perceptions of crime – no data is reported).
- Most groups (including new buyers groups) reported concern about the effect of sales policies on those on the waiting list for public housing due to overall stock reductions.
- Concern was expressed by all groups about the management of "problem" tenants, with groups from the control estates expressing a view that "problem" tenants from the redeveloped estates were being decanted into their estates instead.
- Tenants felt that poor quality housing and under-maintenance was one of the key causes of stigmatisation. Hence this is addressed to some extent by estate renewal but is a wider problem, and points to the need for better asset management generally.

Flanagan (2010) points to research which is particularly critical of the notion of social modelling . She reports:

> "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)." (p26)

She also reports similar findings from one study in Bonnyrigg in which tenants expressed the view that social mix was an attempt to force a particular lifestyle on them. This notion reflects the tenor of much social housing tenant input to these debates, which tends to suggest that social housing tenants don't see themselves as in need of any role modelling and that the main stigma of social housing is the result of small numbers of "problem" tenants.

She also finds that social mix may attract more or better mainstream services (shops, medical facilities, etc.) but risks the loss of specialist services as concentrations of demand are reduced – this would impact negatively on the most disadvantaged residents (mainly public housing tenants) but not on the better-off and residents who are less likely to use these services.

***Does social mix have any potential negative effects?***

Most research which identifies tenants' views of social mix in urban renewal indicates that tenants are positive about the notion overall (e.g. Randolph and Wood, 2004; Arthurson, 2012 and 2005). However, the literature discusses two main risks.

Firstly, many researchers either express concern, or report tenants expressing concern, about the overall loss of social housing and the consequent impact on other social housing communities and on those on the waiting list (Arthurson, 2012; Shaw, 2013; Randolph and Wood, 2004; Flanagan, 2010; Stubbs, 2005). In one sense, this is not a general issue with social mix, so much as a specific issue with its implementation in the current environment where urban renewal is funded through the sale of property and results in an overall reduction in social housing supply. The NSW Auditor-General (2013) acknowledges that this strategy is unsustainable.

A second concern is the potential for conflict between home owners and social housing tenants. Flanagan points to the following:

> "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).'" (p25)

This finding does not seem to be replicated in the Australian studies in a general way, but incidents of conflict or stigma are reported in some literature. Arthurson (2005, 2012) found that to some extent the stigma that had attached to the public housing estate as a whole had been re-attached to the public housing within that estate. Randolph and Wood (2004) report isolated incidences of conflict but not a general pattern.

Arthurson (2008) points to the nuance of views about this issue.

> "… whilst generally, owners and renters do not seem to mind living near to each other, resistance increases exponentially as spatial geographic proximity between the tenures increases. Jupp (1999, 45) found higher levels of cross-tenure contact between residents (and no conflict) where there was street-level mixing of housing – so he advocates for pepper potting of different housing tenures but cautions that even then the levels of social interaction studied 'are hardly sufficient to create a considerably more inclusive society'. Conversely, Beekman et al. (2001) found that street-level mixing led to conflict – so does not advocate for pepper-potting, Dansereau (1997) argues that scale is a desirable goal at the neighbourhood rather than building or housing cluster. He advocates for a hierarchy of spaces from private to semi-private to semi-public to public so people can choose when to mingle or stay apart. For instance, parks and shops as sociability cannot be dictated by design, only allowed for or facilitated." (p7)

In general, it seems that there are some potential negative social effects that can go with the creation of social mix, and that these at least need to be managed although there is no clear advice in the literature about how to manage them. The good news is that these do not seem to be catastrophic and are not enough to put public tenants off the concept in general.

***Practical policy responses***

The evidence seems to suggest that social mix by and large doesn't deliver the benefits its advocates claim for it, but neither does it seem to be particularly harmful. Morris, Jamieson and Patulny's finding (2012) that social mixing and social benefits are greater in communities where mixing has developed organically over time may also provide hope that with the passing of time the level of social mixing and community cohesion in the renewed communities may increase.

Shaw (2013) seems close to the mark when she comments that the main benefit of social mix in renewal is financial, with the return from the sale of housing paying for the desired improvements. The current financial challenges faced by LAHC (as outlined in Section 2.3 above) means that these financial benefits will be front and centre in decisions for some time to come and this alone will ensure that urban renewal projects continue to involve a substantial sale component. Given this, how can policy-makers get the best possible outcomes within the modest scale of benefits that actually flow from mixing of tenures?

Randolph and Wood (2004) point to a number of policy implications from their research. These include:

- The need to sustain social interventions post-program.
- The need to manage the negative impacts of allocation process and to address the impact of redevelopment policies on social housing waiting lists
- The need to improve tenant consultation and participation
- The need for evaluation methods which assess the impacts on both providers and tenants
- The need to actively facilitate the renewal of local services along with the renewal of the housing.
- The need to monitor the impact on welfare service providers (as de-concentration can lead to fewer clients in the local area and hence loss of funding)
- The need to manage local expectations and perceptions over the long term – given that the projects have a 10-15 year lifespan it is difficult for both tenants and providers to sustain relationships and vision over that period.

Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) suggest that the following measures contribute to improved success of social mix policies.

- *"The quality and homogeneity of the housing across tenure groups*. For purposely built social mix neighbourhoods to be successful it is important that differences between privately owned and social housing be negligible and the physical placement of homes is random within the estate, thereby creating a genuine physical mix of tenures. When this occurs residents tend not to take cognisance of tenure status.
- *"The quality of the urban planning and facilities in the area*. Another key feature contributing towards the success of social mix is the physical layout and high quality of the services provided. Well-planned and attractive areas ensure that the neighbourhoods concerned remain desirable and that stigma attached to living in

the areas concerned is minimised. Good services and facilities in the neighbourhood encourage residents to use the local neighbourhood for most of their activities. This encourages a sense of belonging and facilitates casual interaction between residents.

- *"Presence of children*. The presence of children and a good neighbourhood school encourages contact between children from different tenures and the parents. The studies indicate that children are more likely to establish friendships that were not bound by tenure.
- *"Adequate and transparent consultation with residents*. The study by Stubbs et al. (2005) suggests that if the establishment of social mix by government intervention is to be successful it is crucial there be substantial and transparent discussion between the public housing residents affected and the government bodies responsible for the intervention. Residents need to be given every opportunity to make a contribution as to how the social mix strategy will unfold. This could prevent serious disruption and resentment.
- *"The level of mix*. Social mix does not necessarily contribute to the well-being of social housing tenants. The study by Graham et al. (2009) concludes that only when the proportion of social renters drops below a certain proportion is there evidence that their social well-being is enhanced." (p12)

Levin, Arthurson and Ziersch (2014) suggest four design principles that can maximise the chances of social mixing in redeveloped communities.

- Scale of development, with mix ideally at the scale of the neighbourhood or project rather than the individual building although there are a variety of views on this aspect.
- The degree of integration, with the best outcomes achieved through full integration via "pepper-potting" with the private and public housing indistinguishable and no designated "public" or "private" precincts. However, they point to research which indicates that public and private developers prefer more segregation for ease of management and because private interests believe segregation makes the private units easier to sell.
- The degree of difference in external appearance, with the best outcome coming from making the two indistinguishable both in design treatment and in maintenance.
- The design and use of public spaces, with a gradation between private and public and means for people in different tenures to meet naturally in public spaces, especially parks, shops and footpaths.

Their case study of a redevelopment project in Carlton (Victoria), however, points to some of the challenges of implementing these principles in practice. The Carlton redevelopment, delivered by a private developer who was obliged to return one third of the units to the public housing authority as payment for the land, was originally planned as fully integrated development. However, in the post-GFC environment the developer succeeded in persuading the government to modify this to the creation of a stand-alone public housing building and two fully private buildings, each facing different streets. Further barriers to mixing were created through the provision of a garden area which all residents could see but only the private residents could access, and the application of different rules to private and public tenants over such matters as acceptable use of verandas and the care of public areas. This resulted in a fairly "hard" social separation between social tenants and the residents of the private sector housing (mainly tenants).

Part of the difficulty in this example, which appears likely to be repeated elsewhere, is that while public housing authorities are very positive about social mix, and public tenants have no strong

objections to it, private developers fear that their customers will not want to buy housing where there is public housing in the vicinity (Arthurson and Darcy, 2015). Ruming (2014) points to this factor in his study of the use of social mix arguments in resident opposition to social housing projects funded under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Program (NBESP) in NSW. While the majority of NBESP projects did not attract any opposition, for those that did social mix arguments were a powerful protest tool.

> "…mobilising the discourse of social mix allowed residents to oppose local social housing construction under the NBESP while positioning themselves as active supporters of social housing provision, rather than NIMBY opponents." (p. 168)

While appropriating the general rhetoric of government policy, such opponents rarely accept its detail, with one local councillor reported as advocating a 1:100 ratio of social to private housing as opposed to the prevailing government policy of 20-30%.

This type of opposition, and the sub-optimal outcome in Carlton, appear to spring directly from a prevailing social stigma attached to public housing. This issue is examined further in Section 3.5 below.

If there are to be any social benefits from social mix (and these are likely to be modest) they will not happen automatically. Rather, governments and policy-makers need to work deliberately to create them by insisting on good design of housing and public spaces, tenure mix at the appropriate level and equal quality of public and private housing. To achieve this, they may need to stand firm against opposition from private sector partners who fear a reduction in saleability, and take concurrent measures to address the wider stigma on social housing and its tenants.

## 3.4 Community Disruption and Loss of Place

While public housing estates targeted for urban renewal are often portrayed as socially dysfunctional, this is rarely the perception residents have of their communities. Repeated surveys in various public housing estates show that a majority of tenants like where they live, believe they have a strong positive community ethos and attribute the bad reputation of their neighbourhoods to a few "problem" tenants. A key risk of urban renewal projects is that they will disrupt the strong relationships which already exist in these communities and lead to tenants being more isolated and less supported. This can have particular impacts on older or more highly disadvantaged residents who may face increased physical and mental health issues during times of change. These can be mitigated to some extent by careful community engagement, personalised approaches to the issues faced by the most vulnerable tenants and proper attention to the issues of disruption, grief and loss of place. Community renewal techniques have been used extensively to build on existing community strengths but these can be challenging to implement in an urban renewal context.

The justification for urban renewal programs is often presented in terms of community dysfunction. Older public housing estates are portrayed as poor places to live, with rampant crime, poor urban infrastructure and multiple disadvantage compounded by the effects of stigma. Who would not want to get out of such a place, given the opportunity?

However, this is rarely the view tenants themselves have of their communities. Peel (2003) draws on extensive interviews with residents in Broadmeadows (Victoria), Mt Druitt (NSW) and Inala (Qld) to present these large and often maligned public housing estates as places with a vibrant community life characterised by mutual community support, high levels of commitment to the community by some, and a strong sense of history and identity. Karnilowicz (2011) identified a number of positive aspects of the Flemington community in Victoria as reported by residents of that community.

> "Most of the positive factors centred on high satisfaction ratings with housing, the quality and accessibility of public transport services, close proximity of services including the city, shops and transport, quality and availability of health services, personal health and personal life, positive neighbourly relationships through connections to the community and participation in selected community and personal interactions and confidence in the local council." (p7)

Shelter NSW (2003) cite research which suggests that low income households are more likely to have a close identification with their local community.

> "There is a correlation between social class, tenure and community attachment. Mullins and Western (2001) surveyed south-eastern Queenslanders in 1997. They found that people who are well educated and in the workforce are less likely to have strong local ties, and less likely to live in cohesive communities. They also found a statistically significant relationship between community, on the one hand, and social exclusion, on the other hand. They concluded that disadvantaged households were likely to come together for mutual assistance, and their lives were also concentrated locally because of disadvantage. The same study found that public tenants had stronger community attachment than owner-occupiers and low-income private renters (Mullins and Western 2001, p.27). This was because public tenants were far more likely to have strong local ties. Mullins and Western wondered whether, if public housing tenants already live in cohesive communities and if the strengthening of communities is a policy goal, policy initiatives taken in this direction might not bring the desired outcomes anticipated." (p27)

The same can be said of many of the communities which are currently undergoing renewal in NSW. Stubbs (2005) found that 60% of Minto residents surveyed were overall more positive than negative about the suburb, over 70% had intended to stay in Minto long-term prior to the renewal project, 60% would like to return and 70% would like to return if the physical state of their housing was improved.

Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph (2013) note that the Bonnyrigg residents they interviewed tended to have an affectionate but realistic view of their community.

> "Our interviewees – especially those who had lived on the estate from the outset – demonstrate a strong level of commitment to, and sense of ownership of, Bonnyrigg. This deep-seated attachment to the locality is not framed by rose-tinted glasses, nor is it simply articulated as a story of 'good place turned bad'. Most acknowledge that it has always been a pretty tough place to live, has had its ups and downs, and indeed probably some of the

> most challenging times were in those early years. Many of the early residents talk about almost immediate problems with crime and safety, noting that it was a place where people (inevitably) had few connections and a sense that those who ended up on Bonnyrigg were those who had few other choices." (p40)

They continue:

> "Much is written in the urban renewal academic literature about the importance of building more socially inclusive, socially cohesive societies. Fostering a greater sense of community – whether in terms of neighbourliness, engagement or participation – is seen as a fundamental component of the community regeneration process. There is an implicit, simplistic assumption from a policy point of view that there is something that needs 'fixing.' By contrast, the communities themselves see themselves as close-knit: something often backed up by community surveys conducted in such localities which pick up on 'social capital' characteristics. Indeed, in the 'baseline survey' carried out in Bonnyrigg during 2005 (Randolph, Stubbs & Judd 2005), the strength of Bonnyrigg as a community shone through." (p41)

The same is seen in a survey of public housing tenants in Redfern and Waterloo (Housing NSW, 2011). They found that overall, 70% of residents were satisfied with community life, with particular satisfaction with the location and physical amenity of the area, the housing and the quality of services. Randolph and Wood (2004) reported that tenants in all their social housing communities liked their community and intended to stay, attributing the stigma of their suburbs to a small number of "problem" tenants.

Martine August (2014) identifies a similar disconnect between public perceptions and tenants' perceptions of life in Toronto's Regent's Park community, a large public housing estate currently undergoing major redevelopment which will shift it from 100% public housing to a mixed tenure community with more than 70% private ownership. This redevelopment has been widely justified on the basis that the physical design and social makeup of the community make it isolated, dangerous and riddles with crime and dysfunction. However, in interviews with approximately 30 residents, August uncovers a very different perspective.

> "The realities of life in RP differ widely from the popular and damaging narrative that has been propagated by pro--redevelopment advocates. Contrary to the assertion it is physically isolated, residents described a well-connected neighbourhood with a great downtown location. Rather than social isolation, residents spoke of a supportive community where people help each other. They also pointed to some of the benefits of living in a concentrated poverty community, including a sense of mutual understanding based on the shared experience of poverty, and political strength based on shared struggles." (p1323)

One of the key risks of urban renewal projects is their potential to disrupt this strong community identified by residents. The experience of tenants in renewal projects is mixed on this front. Issues for tenants who have moved from the community are considered in Section 3.7 below. Here we discuss the potential impact (positive and negative) on those who stay behind.

As reported in Section 3.3, many residents in urban renewal areas felt that overall their community had been improved by the change. Randolph and Wood (2004) reported that many tenants felt that stigma had been reduced by the change. However they reported more mixed results on the question

of social cohesion and "community spirit". Arthurson (2012) also reports these mixed results, with some evidence of reduction in stigma, and other views indicating that stigma had simply been transferred from the suburb to the public housing within the suburb.

Liu (2013) reports that for Bonnyrigg residents, the loss of a "sense of place" is not confined to those who have to move home. The general sense of physical and social disruption, including loss of friendships and loss of local landmarks, impacts at a personal level in a sense of loss and grief, and for some a sense of disorientation. He reports, for instance, that the re-alignment of streets and their renaming can be disruptive, particularly to older tenants. However, there is also a flip-side to this as streets which had a "bad reputation" are given a new start.

Crawford and Sainsbury (2016) in their review of health impacts of redevelopment on residents of an (un-named) South-West Sydney suburb, found a mixed response depending on age, length of time on the estate and nature of participation in the relocation process.

- Older and longer standing tenants were likely to experience the relocation process as stressful, younger and newer residents as more hopeful and presenting opportunity.
- Residents who moved out of the estate reported improved housing quality and feelings of safety and security. Those who moved to renovated housing within the estate had less positive experiences on both fronts.
- Some residents, especially longer term ones, felt that the redevelopment process had a negative impact on social networks and friendships, irrespective of whether they moved out of the estate or not. Newer residents balanced this with seeing it as an opportunity for new friendships and networks in their new place.
- Access to services presented a mixed picture – some had better access, especially if relocated to a place with better public transport access. Others lost access to valued services, particularly older people who wanted to keep seeing their existing medical practitioners and had to travel back to the estate to do so.

They draw the following conclusions about the best approach to improving the social impacts of redevelopment on residents.

1. "A personalised approach should be used with tenants at all stages of estate renewal and rehousing, to ensure that they are well informed and that their needs, preferences and individual circumstances are taken into account. This may include consideration of age, length of tenure, family and social networks, physical and mental health conditions and use of social and health care services.
2. Priority and investment should be allocated to community engagement and capacity building resources during the planning and rebuilding phases of the redevelopment to enable individual tenants and residents' associations to be equal players in planning, design and activities;
3. Access to social and health care programs and services should be an integral component of the rehousing process. This should focus on establishing or maintaining links with service providers to enable ready and equitable access for residents, regardless of the location of rehousing;
4. Environmental, service and social disruptions and inconveniences felt by individuals and the community during the estate renewal and rehousing program should be minimised to reduce stress and anxiety;
5. Residents should be relocated to housing that is appropriate to their needs and preferences and allows them to live independently in the community; and

6. The redesigned neighbourhood should maximise safety and security for residents as well as encourage opportunities for community engagement, social networking and healthy activities." (p. 10-11)

## 3.5 Stigma

Combating stigma is another key objective of urban renewal programs. The evidence suggests that a number of elements of urban renewal projects can help combat this stigma, including physical improvements to the community, ensuring that social housing is indistinguishable from private housing, and the positive marketing campaigns that generally accompany the sale of some of the homes. However, there is a significant social stigma attached to public housing in general and local interventions are not sufficient to overcome this. It also requires a broad communication approach aimed at changing the public narrative around social housing tenants and communities.

Combating stigma is one of the key objectives of the creation of mixed tenure communities in place of public housing estates. This question is touched on in Section 3.3.

It is difficult to quantify the stigma attached to social housing. There is some evidence that the wider Australian population does not have a strong opposition to social housing in general. For instance, a report on market research carried out on behalf of the ACT government to assess public response to redevelopment proposals (Winton Sustainable Research Strategies, 2015) finds a general support for improving public housing and for its continued presence in the community. Findings include:

> "Over seven in ten Canberrans (72.5%) are in favour of the continued inclusion of public housing in their suburb, with 16.2% not in favour and 11.4% ambivalent or unsure."
>
> "Well over four in five Canberrans (84.4%) agree that public housing should be provided in smaller developments rather than in large public housing estates, with 9.3% disagreeing and 6.3% ambivalent or unsure."

However, the presence of stigma is often the background to events and attitudes documented in other studies discussed in this report (e.g. Peel, 2003; Levin, Arthurson and Ziersch, 2014; Ruming, 2014).

Morris, Jamieson and Patulney (2012) identify two strategies which contribute to reduced stigma for an area, and for social housing tenants within that area, in communities where social mix is being created.

- *"The quality and homogeneity of the housing across tenure groups*. For purposely built social mix neighbourhoods to be successful it is important that differences between privately owned and social housing be negligible and the physical placement of homes is random within the estate, thereby creating a genuine physical mix of tenures. When this occurs residents tend not to take cognisance of tenure status.

- *"The quality of the urban planning and facilities in the area*. Another key feature contributing towards the success of social mix is the physical layout and high quality of the services provided. Well-planned and attractive areas ensure that the neighbourhoods concerned remain desirable and that stigma attached to living in the areas concerned is minimised. Good services and facilities in the neighbourhood encourage residents to use the local neighbourhood for most of their activities. This encourages a sense of belonging and facilitates casual interaction between residents." (p12)

Arthurson (2005, 2008) reinforces the message about the homogeneity of public and private housing and the need to mix them seamlessly rather than keep them physically separate. She also highlights the effect on perceptions of the generally improved physical environment, and the effect of marketing campaigns to sell private housing on the general perception of the locality.

However, Arthurson's (2012) finding that in many cases stigma was transferred from the location as a whole to public housing within the location points to a wider issue at play – the general social stigma that attaches to public housing tenants as a group. Tenants experience this for themselves in many ways. For instance, Straight Talk (2012) reports tenants experiencing discriminatory behaviour from some contractors working on the Minto renewal project. Arthurson (2005) reports former public housing tenants who have shifted to owner-occupation distancing themselves from public housing as a tenure and portraying their move as "up" on the social scale. That even social housing tenants themselves buy into this stigma shows just how pervasive it is. Across a number of studies tenants report being "looked down on" by neighbouring owner-occupiers and desiring nothing more than to "blend in".

Rogers (2016) identifies a series of media stereotypes which reinforce this stigma, shown in documentaries such as "Struggle Street" and fictional representations such as the satirical TV series "Housos". He collectively labels these types of presentations as "poverty porn", in which poverty and dysfunction are exaggerated for the entertainment of a wider viewing public, reinforcing negative views of public housing tenants.

Arthurson, Darcy and Rogers (2014) report on a participatory research process in which social housing tenants were invited to respond to the screening of "Housos" over the course of the show's first series. They find that such portrayals have a number of impacts on tenants.

- Tenants can feel "trapped" by this type of stigma, unwilling to mix with people from outside their community, keep where they live to themselves or constantly combat what they see as the sterotypes put on them by media.
- It can lead to self-limiting behaviour, where tenants will tend to set their own expectations of themselves in line with the stereotype.
- Public housing estates come to be seen as akin to prisons or ghettos – places where people who don't live up to expectations are sent, and from which they need to "escape" if they are to make anything of their lives.
- That tenants experience their lives as highly regulated, and that the stereotype of tenants gaming the system and defying the authorities is powerful even though highly exaggerated. This leads then to a discussion of the extent to which the welfare system is in fact a "game" at which you need to win, just as the fictional housos defeat the authorities in each episode.

- That the stigma leads to a "them and us" view of society in which middle class people see tenants as "other". This is a negative but also a positive in that tenants will tend to band together and support one another.

However, the find that "tenants are far from passive victims of stigmatisation. In this study they revealed a sophisticated understanding of how it operates through the media, various agencies and the nonresident community—and also of how it impacts their lives." (p. 1349)

This scope of problem requires more than just a local solution and a physical makeover. Jacobs et al (2011) report on the findings of a panel investigation into reducing the stigma of public housing. This report is based on a series of three panel discussions with experts from academia, the media and the housing sector to explore the following questions.

1. "What are the causal factors that accentuate the stigmatisation of social housing?
2. "What are the implications of stigmatisation for housing organisations, tenants and neighbourhoods?
3. "What practices are deployed by housing organisations to challenge the effects of stigmatisation and overcome opposition to new housing development?
4. "What role can media advocacy and marketing techniques perform in tackling stigma?
5. "How might media strategies complement other strategies (such as social mix policies and neighbourhood renewal)?
6. "What are the most effective policies that can be used by housing organisations to address the effects of stigmatisation?" (p3)

They identify three narrative frameworks through which the stigma of social housing is viewed – a "pathological" frame of reference in which it is related to problems within individuals; a "structural inequality" framework which sites the problem in social and economic structures; and a "reconstitutive" framework which views the issue as amenable to bureaucratic intervention through local programs. Within policy circles structural frameworks are little used as the solutions they require are beyond current resources, so that policy discourses mainly focus around pathological and reconstitutive frameworks.

Public opinion on the other hand, fed strongly by mass media and influencing political understandings, is almost exclusively focused on the pathological frame of reference. Peel (2003) records some striking incidents of media exaggerating and even creating stories that reinforce this picture, focusing on violence, loss of social values and "anti-social" behaviour and attitudes. According to Jacobs and colleagues this creates a wide public perception of public tenants as "problem people", reflected in government policies focusing on such ideas as social mix and management of anti-social behaviour.

This stigma can have real, direct impacts on tenants, who may experience discrimination in employment and service provision. They may also internalise this perception of themselves, resulting in lowered aspirations, depression and anxiety. However, while they may apply this view to themselves as an explanatory framework, they may also seek to escape the stigma by applying it to other "bad" tenants in order to boost their own self-image.

The strategies Jacobs and colleagues explore to address this issue mainly focus on addressing this pathological narrative and substituting a more nuanced view of the reality of public tenants' lives. Their strategies are focused around four things:

- A need for social housing agencies to be more deliberate and purposeful in engaging with media and putting alternative views of social housing tenants.
- A need to work with key journalists and editors to educate them on public housing and expose them to a range of views and a range of stories that do not fit easily into the framework around which stigma is based.
- A parallel process for fostering and supporting alternative and community media – while these media do not have the same audience reach they are more open to alternative stories and views, will often report lower-profile events which counter the dominant narrative, and can serve as sources for higher profile media outlets.
- The development of a consistent story through fostering a well-resourced national advocacy body for public tenants to ensure there is a consistent voice in the public realm putting this alternative narrative.

The key message for the current project is that while local interventions such as community renewal can contribute to reducing stigma, they are not enough on their own – wider work needs to be done to change the perception of public tenants across our society, or the stigma will simply be redirected rather than reduced.

## 3.6 Crime and Safety

Issues around criminal and anti-social behaviour are consistently identified by tenants of public housing estates as the aspect of their community they like least. Urban renewal programs attempt to respond to these problems through design changes, including undoing a number of elements of the Radburn urban design which are seen as facilitating crime and anti-social behaviour. However, evidence indicates that a successful crime prevention strategy needs to emphasise social over physical interventions, focusing on personal support, community engagement, inter-agency cooperation and community crime prevention initiatives. Redeveloping a community in the absence of this careful social engagement can even risk worsening crime and anti-social behaviour if it disrupts existing informal community controls.

Issues around crime and anti-social behavior feature strongly in many tenants' views about their community, and tend to be the most common negative element they express about their communities.

Stubbs (2005) identified that the main things Minto residents didn't like about their neighbourhoods were framed around criminal or anti-social behavior – problem neighbours (24%), drugs (14%), break-ins and theft (14%). (p24)

Redfern Waterloo residents identified a similar set of issues.

> "When asked about what they disliked about their local area, concerns about anti-social behaviour were most often mentioned, particularly:
>
> - Drug-related problems (29% overall)
> - Alcohol-related problems (21%)
> - Crime levels in general (21%)
>
> Concern about "the types of people living in the area" is reported by 28% of respondents" (Housing NSW, 2011, p21)

Comments such as these can be replicated, with variations, from a wide range of tenant surveys and consultations. It also appears as feedback in some of the surveys reported in Section 3.3 on social mix, and crime prevention is a key objective of both community renewal programs (as reported in Section 3.1) and of the shift from public housing estates to mixed tenure communities which is an explicit goal of many urban renewal projects.

One of the key foci of urban renewal projects is on eliminating some of the design features of older estates which are seen to contribute to the risk of crime. Of particular concern to tenants and housing managers is the Radburn design, which features pedestrian laneways, houses presenting their backs to the street and fronts to common space, and clusters of housing in *cul de sacs*. This design was originally intended to foster a sense of community by creating interactive neighbourhoods, but in many cases the laneways and common spaces are reported to have become "dead zones" and sites for criminal or anti-social behaviour. Hence the redevelopment efforts in places such as Minto and Bonnyrigg include measures to close the laneways, create through roads in place of *cul de sacs* and reorient housing to face the street.

Randolph and Wood (2004) report that tenants in communities that have experienced renewal mainly reported reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour. Similar views are reported in reviews of a number of community renewal locations as discussed in Section 3.1, especially in the Victorian locations where tenant surveys were repeated at regular intervals over an extended period. Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) report that creating social mix appears to reduce crime in locations, but only where the amount of social housing is reduced to a low level (e.g. below 30%).

The question is, what produces this effect? As mentioned at the end of Section 2.3, a number of interventions tend to be going on simultaneously in urban renewal projects. Which of these lead to reductions in crime and increased feelings of safety for residents?

Jacobs and Arthurson (2003) reviewed responses to anti-social behaviour across Australian public housing authorities and conducted case studies in two locations, one of which was undergoing renewal. A number of interventions were widely used and were perceived to have some successes as well as some drawbacks. For instance:

- Probationary tenancies were seen to be successful in setting behaviour expectations, but this effectiveness was seen to be limited because breaches of behaviour standards rarely resulted in evictions.
- The use of transfers were seen to have some success, but participants acknowledged that this may simply shift the problem rather than solving it.

They also found as follows:

> "The most successful housing management practices were widely reported to be those where housing staff worked directly and informally with tenants and used their knowledge of a locality and individual tenants to inform their decision-making. The benefit of having long term staff, so that relationships based on trust can be established, was seen as pivotal. Also apparent from the two case study investigations was the importance of having in place effective communication and publicity strategies." (p35)

Based on their research they advocate a holistic approach, with key elements including:

- wider efforts to reduce the stigma of a neighbourhood, giving residents a "pride of place"
- a mix of preventive and enforcement strategies
- development of good local knowledge and good working relationships with tenants and support agencies – this works best if staff are embedded in localities and able to form long-term working relationships
- flexibility for local staff to solve problems using their knowledge of tenants and local agencies.

Many of these elements are included in urban and community renewal projects and may go a long way to explaining the improvements experienced by tenants and residents.

Shelter NSW (2003) reviewed research by Matka (1996) and Stubbs and Storer (1996) on the connection between crime and public housing. They report Matka's finding that while the presence of public housing does correlate with a slightly increased level of crime, this increase is not strongly related to the public housing as such. Rather, it is related to a number of demographic factors, including the level of disadvantage (which statistically makes people more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of crime) and the demographic make-up of a community (for instance, younger males are more likely than other demographic segments to commit crime). They then review a number of pieces of research which variously associate decreased crime with urban renewal activities and with community renewal programs. They conclude:

> "The bottom line appears to be that *any* community renewal activity in an area that has been physically or socially neglected will have a long-term impact on crime, following increased resident satisfaction – and thus fewer turnovers and a maturation of the profile of the residents." (p13)

This general finding is reinforced by research from Samuels, Judd, O'Brien and Barton (2004). They conducted an in-depth review of crime prevention outcomes in six different locations in three states – three locations (one in each state) were undergoing extensive urban renewal while the other three were targets of community renewal projects without extensive urban renewal. They examined the initiatives under way in the six localities, and evaluated their success using detailed crime data and qualitative feedback from residents and stakeholders.

They found as follows:

> "A number of associations between interventions and crime patterns can be identified from the analysis of the crime data:
>
> 1. Social rather than physical/spatial interventions are associated with reductions in crime.

2. Whole-of-government strategies and intensive inter-agency collaborations create a context within which social interventions flourish.
3. Empathetic housing management and 'non-traditional' community policing interventions occurring at neighbourhood *and* individual level seem effective in reducing crime.
4. Neither de-concentration (tenure mix via asset sales) nor Radburn-reversal are associated with reductions in crime. Possibly, benefits were not yet apparent given the time-scale of this research. Future research could reflect on this." (p.iv)

Of particular interest in the NSW context was the fact that two of their study locations were Radburn-style estates, one undergoing major urban renewal including elimination of key Radburn design elements but with limited social intervention, the other involving no physical redesign but extensive community crime prevention activity. The physical redevelopment was found to have had no impact on crime levels, while the community crime prevention initiatives were associated with significant reductions in crime. These results are hardly conclusive but point to a key question which needs an answer.

As a result of their research they identify the following elements of best practice for crime reduction in public housing estates.

> "A best practice model for crime reduction in areas of public housing concentration is implied by strategies adopted in the two areas where crime is reducing, namely:
>
> 1. A broad whole-of-government, place-management approach involving housing, police, local government and a wide range of other government and non-government agencies.
> 2. Extensive community consultation and participation in problem identification, development and implementation of strategies.
> 3. Integrated initiatives targeting: early intervention, drug and alcohol abuse, training and employment, social enterprise development, domestic violence and family/community conferencing for offenders.
> 4. A locally based, empathetic housing management team with community development training.
> 5. A strong community policing approach, empathetic crime prevention personnel interacting with multicultural communities, and a social-control mechanism involving elders in informal liaison with local youths. Hot spot analysis and intelligence-based targeting of problem-generating households supplements these people-oriented approaches.
> 6. Organisation of community and cultural events to build community spirit and break down stigma.
> 7. As a general principle, the replenishment of social capital: aiming to enhance individual well-being and self-esteem, increase social cohesion and augment sense of responsibility and natural policing." (p.vi)

The cumulative message of these three analyses is that the most effective way to reduce crime and increase safety is through people strategies, rather than through physical changes to the urban fabric.

Urbanik, Thompson and Bucerius (2015) present a study of the impact of the redevelopment of Toronto's Regent's Park public housing estate which serves as a cautionary tale about the risks of redeveloping without paying proper attention to these social relationships. The Regent's Park

project is a full scale progressive redevelopment of the suburb, with residents relocated to other neighbourhoods with a “right of return” after their area is redeveloped. The project aims to achieve social mix as a way of breaking down criminality, anti-social behaviour and cycles of poverty. The researchers interviewed 150 residents aged between 16 and 30 over a period of four years.

Their research found that prior to the redevelopment there was clearly a level of violence and criminality, but that this was governed by a code enforced by established authority figures which had a significant protective effect on those not directly involved in criminality and even those who were involved but operated “by the rules”. The redevelopment disrupted this structure and as a result many young residents perceived that not only had violence increased (this was unable to confirmed or denied empirically due to lack of evidence) but it had become more unpredictable and more likely to affect people who were not engaged in criminality. This led to a perceived decline in safety, which in turn contributed to the loss of informal pro-social networks of support caused by the redevelopment. Hence an intervention designed to make the community safer (a goal study participants strongly supported) ended up making it more unsafe.

A further, more positive, example which reinforces the value of social engagement is the Ashburton Community Harmony Project (Keating, 2014). This 12-month pilot was originally intended to improve safety and harmony in the public housing estate of Ashburton in Melbourne. The project aimed to address high levels of neighbourhood disputes by increasing residents’ capacity to resolve conflict and to engage in alternative dispute resolution, including training peer mediators. However, it became apparent early in the project that this plan was not feasible due to the high levels of personal stress experienced by most residents.

As a result, the project worker simply functioned as a generalist support worker, assisting residents to deal with a wide range of issues including engagement with health and community service systems, resolution of legal issues, as well as some neighbourhood complaints. The conclusion of the project was that it added value to residents’ lives and to the work of other agencies primarily because the project worker was an extra resource in the community, able to help residents deal with significant life issues. This was seen to improve safety and lower conflict, not so much because of formal training in conflict resolution, but because the person was physically present on the estate for much of the time and appeared to be “official”, and because the conflicts in the neighbourhood themselves stemmed from the complex issues of disadvantage faced by tenants.

In the end, this serves as an illustration of the idea, largely supported by the other research cited here, that what is needed to address stress and anti-social behaviour on estates is a supportive, multi-faceted community based response rather than a formal one directed at particular behaviour issues.

## 3.7 Issues with the Renewal Process and Relocation

The process of urban renewal and relocation can be extremely stressful for tenants and place them at increased risk of physical and mental health problems. These risks need to be managed through consistent, high quality individualised communication, careful project management to minimise risk and disruption and contain these to the shortest time possible, and particular attention to crime and safety risks.

In the long term, tenants who have been relocated more often view this as a positive than a negative event in their lives. However, the process of relocation, whether to a new suburb or within the same one, can be a period of intense stress and grief, particularly for long-term tenants, and this needs to be managed carefully and sensitively.

Urban renewal projects take a long time, and involve major changes to the housing and the physical environment. It is inevitable that such projects will involve temporary, and sometimes major, disruptions in the lives of residents and tenants, albeit with the aim of delivering long-term improvements to their homes and communities. These disruptions can involve one or more moves, or no moves but substantial physical works to their home and neighbourhood.

This section draws on five key pieces of research seeking tenants' views on the experience of living through a renewal process, four with Minto tenants and one with Bonnyrigg tenants.

- A small series of interviews with tenants in Minto who stayed "in place" during major upgrades to their homes and neighbourhoods (Straight Talk, 2012)
- Another small series of interviews with Minto tenants including some who stayed in their homes, some who left and then returned, some who left permanently and some who moved within the suburb (Taverner Research, 2011)
- The *Leaving Minto* report which used a variety of methods to gauge tenants views in the early stages of the Minto project (Stubbs, 2005)
- A summary of a survey of tenants who had relocated permanently from Minto carried out on behalf of Housing NSW – note that we have not had access to the full report of this survey (Coates, Kavanagh and Kougios, 2010; Coates and Lilley, 2009)
- The first round of interviews in the longitudinal panel study of the Bonnyrigg renewal project (Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph, 2013)

Each of these pieces of research includes detailed feedback and quotes from tenants. Here we attempt to briefly summarise the key learnings from this feedback under a number of headings. These questions need to be seen in the context of the vulnerability of many public housing tenants outlined at the start of Part 3 – public tenants are likely to be in poorer health, more likely to have significant levels of disability or mental illness and generally have lower incomes than other members of our communities. As a result, their personal resilience and financial capacity to deal with stress and disruption is often significantly reduced and issues can impact on them more severely than on others.

***Information***

Section 3.2 summarises some key perspectives on tenant engagement in the development of renewal projects. The experience of living through renewal raises a different level of information need. Tenants express a need for concrete, timely information about things that affect them. This includes:

- The details and timing of work on their house, including what will be done, by whom, and the detailed time-frame – when it will start and when it will finish.
- Details of any changes to this time-frame or arrangements – if it will start later, finish later, happen in a different order, etc.
- If they need to leave their home, either temporarily or permanently, they need precise and up-to-date information about when they will have to leave and when they will be able to return, and be updated promptly if this changes.

Their need for information is greater the more a work item will affect them personally. Hence changes to their own dwelling and its immediate surrounds (footpaths, roads, fences) present the highest need for detailed information, with the need to be kept informed diminishing the further from their home the work is happening.

Tenants in the various research projects frequently report their dissatisfaction with the information they receive, the way it is provided and its accuracy. Common complaints include work not beginning when they are told it will, taking substantially longer than they are told, or beginning without them being told it will happen at all.

Straight Talk (2012) suggest that project managers carrying out major works have a fundamentally different point of view on their projects than the tenants who live in the communities they are renewing.

> "Tenants did not compartmentalize the staging, engineering, infrastructure and project management steps in the same way as the specialised NSW Land and Housing Corporation and contractor staff. Tenants experienced the scale of the civil works in relation to their home, radiating out from their home to the street and then to the neighbourhood….
>
> "This concentric view of place was in stark contrast to the systems view of place that is required of the specialised NSW Land and Housing Corporation and contractor staff, whereby the civil works are viewed as a collection of systems (i.e. essential services, roads, dwellings) that must be integrated within the urban landscape. … For urban planners, architects and engineers this systems view of place is not concentric, as one single space, civil works task or dwelling is not more important than the other.
>
> "The concentric and systems view of place were in conflict and therefore shaped tenants' experiences of the civil works project. For tenants, the home was a unique vantage point from which to evaluate this large-scale redevelopment project. Constructing a view of a public housing estate that recognizes both the concentric view of place of public housing tenants and the systems view of place of urban planners, architects and engineers might be a worthwhile undertaking" (p86-87)

Within a complex civil works project, timing and sequencing is a very complex matter and changes to the timing of individual works are the rule rather than the exception. Hence, tenants may not be kept abreast of these and indeed project managers may lose track of who has been told what. Yet

this is crucial for tenants. Not knowing what is happening is a major source of stress for tenants, particularly if their own lives and living arrangements are being disrupted for an unknown period of time.

***"Being in Limbo" and "Living in a War Zone"***

Two images that arise frequently in tenants' feedback about their experience of living through a renewal project are that of being in limbo, and of "living in a war zone". Both expressions are undoubtedly pieces of deliberate hyperbole, but they capture succinctly two key aspects of tenants' experience.

Being in limbo relates to the experience of tenants who have to temporarily relocate, or who know they will have to permanently relocate at some point in the future. However it also relates to tenants who know that there will be major changes to their home or garden. Tenants often feel that their life is "on hold" during this period, which can at times spread over a number of years. Part of their problem is about information and uncertain timing. Another part is about multiple moves and living in temporary accommodation. Tenants report experiences like living with boxes packed, not doing any work in the garden because there is no point, or delaying engagement in other activities like participation in community activities because they don't know how long they will be able to keep doing so. This issue is particularly significant for older tenants or those with chronic health conditions who may not have the physical or mental resilience to cope with these changes.

Part of the response to this is to provide clear, up to date information. However, another part of the solution is to manage the project so that the "limbo" period is as short as possible – for instance so that tenants who are relocated temporarily while their dwelling is renovated are moved right before the work commences, and the work is completed in the shortest possible time so they can move back. This can require a different approach to project management – for instance, adopting a "house by house" or "street by street" approach rather than spreading the work of contractors simultaneously over a large area.

The image of "living in a war zone" refers to the experience of living in the middle of construction. Tenants experience a number of issues in these situations.

- They may experience increased dust, noise and vermin as a result of demolition or construction works in their community, impacting on physical and mental health.
- They may experience interruptions to essential services such as water, electricity and phone as a result of street works, often stretching for an unknown period. Sometimes these are merely annoying, but can also present more serious risks, for instance being unable to phone for help for a person who experiences chronic illness, or not being able to use electrically-powered health equipment.
- The conduct of road or footpath works led to safety and access issues, particularly for older residents or those with disabilities.
- Changes to block alignment could lead to properties being unfenced for period of time, affecting those with companion animals who had no way of keeping them confined.
- A number of the changes involved in renewal – the partial depopulation of some neighbourhoods, the need to park cars a distance form home during road works, the presence of heavy machinery, the loss of street lighting for periods of time – were perceived to increase the risk of crime. Some residents reported speaking to project managers about security issues and being given reassurances which were not followed through.

Many of these issues are unavoidable but careful management can reduce their impact and duration.

***Relocating***

Some tenants relocate permanently to a new suburb or a new neighbourhood, others relocate temporarily. Some early projects revealed some serious difficulties with the relocation process, highlighted by Stubbs (2005) and also echoed to some degree in the later Minto interviews. These include problems with removalists and removal expenses, administrative problems between Housing NSW offices leading to tenants being charged double rent or having their rent payments recorded in the wrong account, inadequate compensation for improvements and poor communication over relocation. Later processes have ironed out these more obvious problems and tenants can now routinely expect

- access to a case manager who will work closely with them to manage their relocation
- payment of reasonable relocation costs, including utility connections and removalists, and assistance in arranging these
- compensation for any authorized tenant improvements to their property, although there may still be disputes about what was "authorized" and about the value of improvements.

Nonetheless, tenants still report issues they would like to see improved.

Firstly, there are issues around timing. Tenants often report having a relatively hazy idea about timing followed by a sudden rush as they are asked to make a decision about a new property and move within two weeks. This creates various annoyances for tenants. For instance, some talk about not having access to their new property after their initial inspection until they actually move in, and finding that their furniture doesn't fit, or realising they need to downsize (common in these processes as many older tenants are involved) and not having time to sort possessions.

Secondly, there are issues of choice. Tenants in the various reports frequently discuss the policy (or perceived policy) of limiting tenants to two choices of new property – they report being allowed to reject the first property they are offered but then having to accept the second, with properties offered sequentially so if the second is worse than the first they can't go back to the first because it will already have been allocated to someone else. This limited choice presents tenants with a dilemma if they are not entirely happy with their first offer – do they reject it and hope the second will be better, or accept it for fear the second will be even worse? Tenants reported this issue being solved by relocation officers making "informal" offers which don't count for the two choices, and through a careful assessment of their needs and preferences before any offers are made.

Running through these practical short-term issues is a wider issue of grief and loss, particularly for tenants who have lived a long time in one place or one neighbourhood. Tenants become emotional when discussing their experience of leaving the house or neighbourhood where their children grew up or where they have spent significant periods of their lives. This can be compounded for older tenants who are downsizing by the need to sort and dispose of possessions. Such issues are certainly not exclusive to public housing tenants but the added difficulty for them is that they have far less control over the timing and process of the move. It seems that relocation processes focus very strongly on the practical and financial aspects of the move, but this underlying emotion is rarely

addressed and despite them often reporting that relocation officers are sympathetic and understanding, tenants may have little support to deal with this underlying grief.

Tenants report a number of elements that help the relocation process to run more smoothly. These include:

- the involvement of a skilled, sympathetic relocation coordinator
- a strong focus on the quality and level of repair of the new home, including an ability to get "teething problems" addressed quickly
- the availability of an independent advocate to support the tenant in situations of dispute or difficulty.

***Living Somewhere New***

A large proportion of the Minto tenants, as well as a smaller proportion of those from Bonnyrigg, have moved or will move permanently to another suburb. Coates, Kavanagh and Kougios (2010) and Coates and Lilley (2009) report that the experience of moving to a new location has been positive for the majority of the former Minto residents. They report on a survey carried out with former Minto residents in 2008, including residents who had moved as early as 2002. They report the following:

- Tenants reported mean score of 3.6 on a five point scale for how much they liked moving to another house (5 being "liked it a lot", 1 "not at all")
- A number of reasons were given for liking the move – the quality of their new house, the perception they were in a nicer area, negative feelings about Minto, and positive experiences of dealing with HNSW staff.
- The highest positive outcomes as reported by tenants were feeling more settled (75%), better health (57%) and better training and educational opportunities (44%). Improvement in the job situation was the only one where more said they were worse off (30%) than better off (26%) (44% no difference). 27% felt less close to their local community with 31% neutral and 42% better.
- Results were even more positive in relation to children's wellbeing – no category of response recorded more "worse offs" than "better offs" with the highest negative result being for better recreational services (31% worse as against 46% better). There were strong positives for children making new friends (71%), being able to concentrate on their studies (58%) and improved school performance (53%)
- Main disappointments/areas for improvement included communication, the need for improved maintenance, the need for more choice in housing, poor communication/need for more caring staff, and a perception among some tenants that they were not told the truth.

This overall positive experience is encouraging for the prospects of other tenants needing to relocate. Nonetheless its analysis suffers from the absence of a benchmark for appropriate performance. For instance, the research shows that 57% report that they are in better health following the move and 17% in worse health. Is this a good result, or not? How does it compare with people in similar social circumstances who have not moved?

Research from other surveys closer to the date of relocation indicates that there is a period of adjustment for tenants. They often report difficulty in making friends and settling into their new location and feelings of isolation and disorientation. A number of reports show them maintaining an active social connection with their old community. For some, returning to their old home or

community raises a sense of grief which appears long-lasting. Pinnegar, Liu and Randolph (2013) sum up this experience for former Bonnyrigg residents.

> "Although most of our…interviewees acknowledge that they are now in a 'better' place, in terms of their new homes, neighbourhoods and their sense of wellbeing, it was clear from a number of our discussions that the passage to that point – from moving away from the estate to the current time – had been a very difficult one for some. A number reflected on the tremendous strain and anxiety caused in the early months post relocation, often coupled with a sense of isolation. As such, much of the support afforded to those remaining on Bonnyrigg to assist through the process of change did not extend to those who left: the emphasis on community building and renewal thus got lost for the not insignificant numbers making up the Diaspora." (p50)

The clear message here is that it may be better not to leave successful resettlement to chance. Most people will find their way in a new community eventually, and it will not happen overnight for anyone. However, relocating residents can be helped to process their move in a number of ways.

In looking backwards they can be helped to "leave well". Mills and Brown (2004) document an example of how this can be done from Kensington, a former public housing suburb in inner Melbourne which underwent extensive urban renewal and reduction in public housing. The City of Melbourne, along with the Tenants' Union of Victoria, sponsored an arts project which supported former residents to record stories and images of the "old" Kensington and the redevelopment process. The creative output included exhibitions in high-rise flats, oral histories, photographs, songs and published stories. The project culminated in a large-scale exhibition and performance of the work in the Melbourne Town Hall. Mills and Brown quote Melbourne Mayor John So on the project.

> "It documented this process of redevelopment in physical, social and emotional terms and celebrated the enormous contribution made by the tenants to Kensington and to Melbourne generally. It ensured that the individual and collective memories associated with the Estate were not erased with its physical demolition." (p53)

Looking forwards, they can be helped by practical measures such as information about their new communities, introduction to community groups or networks that reflect their particular needs or interests, and follow-up contact to support their settlement process.

## 3.8 Exit Planning

Both urban and community renewal programs require a proper, well thought out exit plan if gains are to be sustained beyond the life of the project. This plan needs to involve a clearly negotiated handover of responsibilities to appropriate local organisations or government bodies, along with adequate resources. Evidence on exit planning in Australian renewal programs is slight, but what there is indicates that performance may be patchy at best.

Appropriately, the final issue to be covered in this part of the report is the issue of exit planning. While renewal projects are often long-term, they are inherently time-limited. Community renewal projects are limited by program and budget cycles, urban renewal projects by the nature of the work itself which eventually comes to an end. How do renewal authorities exit the project, and who takes over responsibility for their work when it is complete? How can they ensure that this transition is done well?

There is limited research on this question in Australia. The most comprehensive piece of research was published by Keith Jacobs, Kathy Arthurson and Bill Randolph in 2005. The authors reviewed Australian and international research and reviewed the "state of play" in five Australian locations – four urban renewal projects and one community renewal project.

The paper starts from the point, based on international research, that a good exit strategy is important in sustaining the gains of renewal projects. They find that most of the projects reviewed had either no or patchy exit strategies. Staff involved in the projects had a general understanding that an exit strategy would be helpful, but there were a number of barriers to this happening, including:

- The day to day practice of managing a project tending to override long-term planning
- The multi-agency nature of these projects meaning it is not always clear who should "carry" the exit strategy - the complexity of decision-making can get in the way.
- The difficulty of providing certainty about resources over an extended period in the context of short-term political and funding cycles.

International exit strategies frequently involve handing responsibility to a group led by local residents, with appropriate resourcing. Xian (2008) for example, documents the process in Castle Vale, Birmingham in which a strong, elected tenant body was created and resourced through an Endowment Fund so that they had independent resources to carry out ongoing local projects.

Jacobs, Arthurson and Randolph found that turnover of residents and conflict within the community can work against development of such an exit strategy. They found that the presence of a locally based champion can help facilitate its development, but this kind of structure needs to be resourced – local residents can't just do it on their own and if there are strong resident "champions" there are often questions about how widely shared their views are in the community. They summarise their key findings as follows:

"The complexity of housing regeneration means that no single exit strategy model can be applied since each project has different objectives, funding mechanisms, time scales, physical and community assets etc. However, drawing on both overseas experience and that of the Australian examples reviewed here, it is clear that basic core elements of any exit strategy usually entail a combination of the following activities:

- capacity building and training programmes with residents during the renewal period;
- business planning and project viability testing of appropriate post-renewal service management structures;
- securing longer term funding arrangements for recurrent expenditures, such as the costs of maintaining a community organisation, or support staff;
- dedicated community based staff, such as a place manager, to oversee the transitionary period and implement policies to manage withdrawal and handovers;
- establishing successor organisations and community governance arrangements; and
- closure strategies for projects that have fulfilled remits.

"The challenge for each regeneration programme is to develop an appropriate exit strategy during the initial stages of the project to maximise the outcomes from the initial injection of resources and enhance sustainability. Evidence strongly suggests that the longer the timescales allowed for the development and embedding of appropriate exit structures and strategies during the lifetime of the renewal project, the greater the likelihood of a successful transition beyond the end of the project." (p.vi-vii)

## 4.0 Concluding Comments

In New South Wales and in other Australian states and territories, substantial resources are being devoted to the renewal of public housing estates. These renewals are driven to a large extent by the financial and asset issues faced by public housing authorities, with limited new funding, reduced rental incomes and ageing housing stock. Other factors driving renewal projects include the changing social profile and changing needs of applicants and tenants, and a perception of social dysfunction in large public housing estates. There is a significant body of research around these redevelopment projects, and this provides a wealth of evidence to inform decisions about renewal practice. This report represents an attempt to summarise some of this key research. It is hoped that over time this may provide at least a small contribution to improved practice in NSW and elsewhere in Australia.

One caveat on this research in the 2016 environment is that the redevelopments proposed in the Communities Plus program are far more ambitious than any of those reported here. There is a big difference between a project such as those in Bonnyrigg, Minto and Airds-Bradbury, which maintain the essential physical structure of the place while changing some aspects of its physical and social make-up, and those proposed for locations such as Ivanhoe and Telopea which envisage the complete demolition of the existing suburb and the building of a new community from scratch. In cases, even if current residents have a "right of return" they will not be returning to the same place they left. Such redevelopments are virgin territory in the research on urban renewal, and all we can confidently say is that we need to proceed with care.

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