



Community economic development
and public housing estates

December 2004

Community economic development and public housing estates

By Melanie Hughes

December 2004

© Shelter NSW and Melanie Hughes 2004

Shelter NSW
377 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000
www.sheltersnsw.org.au

This research paper may be reproduced in part or whole by nonprofit organizations and individuals for educational purposes, so long as the author is acknowledged and the original meaning is retained.

Thanks to Craig Johnston, Mary Perkins, Harvey Volke, Hazel Blunden and Flora Armaghanian. Thanks to the individuals and agencies who agreed to be interviewed, who attended the July 20 workshop, and otherwise provided information. Particular thanks to Michelle Roberson and Raquel Carvajal of the NSW Department of Housing.

This research paper is based on a project report assisted by an internship from the Ronald Henderson Research Foundation. Many thanks to Sally Cowling for her input and support during my internship with Shelter NSW.

Ronal Henderson Research Foundation
PO box 3011, Burnley VIC 3121
www.ronaldhenderson.org.au

Any opinions expressed in this research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Shelter NSW or the Ronald Henderson Research Foundation.

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 <i>Scope</i>	1
1.2 <i>Background</i>	1
1.3 <i>Methodology</i>	3
Chapter 2. Issues and programs in New South Wales	5
2.1 <i>Economic, social and public policy contexts</i>	5
2.2 <i>Overview of initiatives</i>	12
2.3 <i>Strengths, weaknesses and potential</i>	27
Chapter 3. Issues and programs in Victoria	39
3.1 <i>Economic, social and public policy contexts</i>	39
3.2 <i>Overview of initiatives</i>	40
3.3 <i>Strengths, weaknesses and potential</i>	47
Chapter 4. Issues and programs in South Australia	54
4.1 <i>Economic, social and public policy contexts</i>	54
4.2 <i>Overview of initiatives</i>	57
4.3 <i>Strengths, weaknesses and potential</i>	62
Chapter 5. Conclusions	65
Attachments	67
<i>Attachment 1: Report on workshop – Community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates</i>	67
<i>Attachment 2: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – employment initiatives</i>	71
References	74

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

This paper discusses:

- the economic, social, and public policy contexts of labour market programs targeted to public housing estates in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia;
- the labour market programs targeted to public housing estates in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia;
- the strengths, weaknesses and potential of these programs in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the policy and program management issues surrounding labour market initiatives with public housing tenants as part of estate regeneration strategies. It is not an evaluation as such. It does not assess the outcomes for tenants except where these are identified by informants. A tenant-based ‘customer satisfaction’ methodological approach would have required a bigger research project than the project resources allowed.

1.2 Background

The socio-economic profile of public housing tenants throughout Australia presents a picture of disadvantage compared with the general population. Public housing is not what it was after the Second World War, when it was directed at returned servicemen and low-income workers and their families. The profile of tenants has been affected by public policy changes and by changes in broader society in contemporary capitalism, including unemployment, under-employment, targeting of public housing to people with very low levels of income and with complex needs, and reconfigurations of family structures including the growth of single person and sole parent households. Substantial reductions in funding over time (especially in the last decade), targeting, and increased demand for public housing has led to tighter rationing, with a perverse outcome being the residualization of public housing – it has become a refuge of last resort, and now serves a welfare function. The increasing length of waiting lists has meant that priority allocations are common in most locations across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Broadacre public housing estates were developed on the urban fringes, often in areas remote from jobs, transport and services, with the development of consequent problems such as vandalism, petty crime and various anti-social behaviours. Estate areas typically suffer from problems of spatial mismatch due to their geographically distinct location from job rich areas, skills mismatch between workers and job opportunities, and locational discrimination arising from neighbourhood stigmatisation often having an adverse effect on employment outcomes (Croce 2001, p.iii). These factors are further compounded if there is a lack of access to private transport and inefficient public transport networks.

Estate tenants might also find themselves in a poverty trap if getting paid work means they lose social security benefits (and price concessions) and have to pay more in rent. Opportunities to take up work might be denied by housing-transfer policies.

A key, perhaps determining, component of social exclusion is being in a low-paid job or under-employed or being on a low fixed income such as a social security payment. Labour market programs throughout Australia are a Commonwealth government responsibility with state government agencies tending to undertake a facilitating role in economic development, often in less-developed regions.

In a study of three regional cities in South Australia, Beer and Maude (2002) found that significant numbers of public housing tenants could be assisted into employment. While there were low levels of employment among tenants, this was not explained simply by the location of public housing. The authors suggest that Australian community renewal strategies should be widened to encompass economic development activities.

The importance of economic development activities has also been stressed in various studies of estate renewal initiatives in New South Wales (e.g. Stubbs and Hardy 2000) and Victoria (e.g. Temby and others 2004). Broad (2003) comments that 'investments in building strong communities are also investments in prevention and early intervention' (p.5). Furthermore, labour market programs offer the prospect of reducing a growing demand for expenditure on high-cost support services. Accordingly, such initiatives may result in a more efficient allocation of public funds.

When successfully implemented, labour market programs have the capacity to equip eligible public housing tenants with sufficient skills necessary to engage in paid employment. In addition to breaking the welfare dependency that can be associated with public housing tenancy, labour market programs can potentially result in tenants becoming self-sufficient. Beer and Maude (2002) reported that many tenants of public housing in Australia are socially excluded. The tenants consequently experience great difficulty entering or re-entering mainstream educational and training programs, and in gaining paid employment. If unemployment is found to be a major cause of social exclusion, then assisting public housing tenants into employment is essential in tackling their social exclusion.

This policy approach is consistent with Quiggin (2001) who stresses the importance of human capital redevelopment for the long-term unemployed in general. Quiggin explains that, while being in employment is associated with the accumulation of human capital, prolonged unemployment leads to skill atrophy as skills depreciate over time. Skills tend to become rusty due to lack of practice and knowledge becomes obsolete and is not updated. In addition, employment is associated with a particular set of learned behaviours and attitudes about punctuality, modes of dress and communication, etc. Prolonged unemployment tends also to result in the erosion of these behaviours (Quiggin 2001, p.53). Some 50% of all unemployment benefit recipients have been on income support for over one year, with the majority of these being unemployed for over two years (ACOSS 2003, p.3); hence the need to develop human capital within areas where concentrations of the long-term unemployed can be found is imperative.

Community economic development activities in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia fall generally into the categories indicated in the typology given in Box 1. Such activities are consistent with the ‘mixed approach’ identified by Temby and others (2004, p.2) whereby employment initiatives are coupled with education and training programs.

The typology indicates that a broad approach can be taken to community economic development – community economic development strategies do not need to be confined to job creation and business development (as fundamental as those are) or vocational training. From their study of disincentives to work faced by public housing tenants and private renters Hulse and Randolph (2004, pp.54-55) proposed a suite of options including:

- creating jobs in, or attracting jobs to, areas where unemployed renters live;
- assisting renters with transport to work in areas that have more jobs
- locating and relocating public housing so that is in areas with available jobs; and
- introducing tenancy management policies to enable public housing tenants actively seeking work to live in or transfer to areas with better prospects of getting a job.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology for this research project had two dimensions:

- a desk-based literature review of labour market programs as paths to social inclusion for public housing tenants;
- a field-work component in two parts:
 - Interviews with key informants (e.g. program managers, nonprofit service providers, public housing tenants) to collect data on relevant programs in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia; and
 - A small-group, workshop discussion with key players to collect qualitative data in the form of views on the advantages and disadvantages of programs and options, held at Parramatta on 20 July (see Attachment 1 on page 67).

Prior to all interviews consent for participation was obtained from respondents. Those further consenting to the use of information provided are identified according only to their method of preference.

BOX 1: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN DISTRESSED URBAN AREAS

Capacity for economic development:

Provision/renovation community based facilities
Support for community based economic strategies
Community needs appraisals
Capacity building

Job-creating initiatives:

Facilities for youth enterprise schemes
Community enterprise/self-help initiatives
Workspace/incubator provision
Start up/employment cost support for small and medium enterprises
IT take-up projects
Business counselling, after care services
Developing an entrepreneurial culture

Pathways to skills, training and employment:

Support to set up local training schemes
Improvements to existing training facilities
Outreach, customised training
Pre-vocational, basic training
Re-skilling, improving skills
Targeted training linked to job opportunities
Vocational qualifications, vocational training
Community leadership training
Work placement initiatives
Cost of trainee's dependents care
Career guidance counselling services

Environmental regeneration:

Security measures to assist economic development
Targeted environmental improvements
External renovation of key buildings
Urban landscaping

Transport:

Improvement to public transport links, facilities
Study into long-term transport needs
Research into public transport improvements

Source: European Commission (1996, p.37).

Chapter 2. Issues and programs in New South Wales

2.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

The financial eligibility criteria for a public housing allocation in New South Wales lead to a tenant profile dominated by those at the lower end of income distribution: see Table 1.

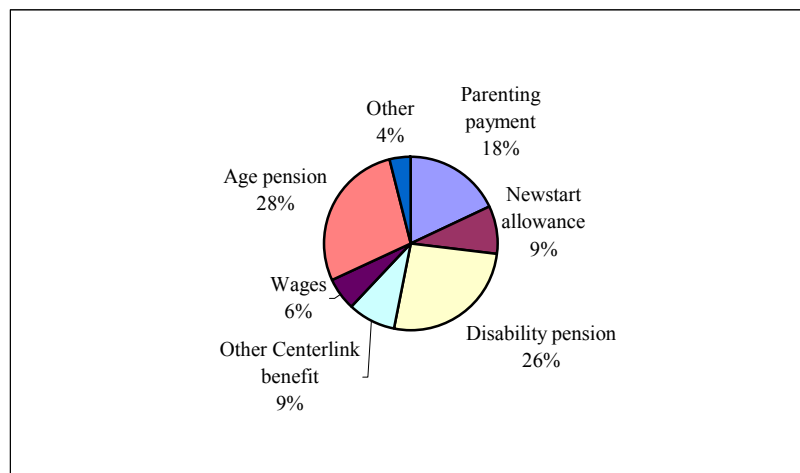
TABLE 1: NSW PUBLIC HOUSING INCOME ELIGIBILITY LIMITS

Household size	Total gross household income, a week
1 person	\$395
2 people	\$500
3 people	\$580
4 people	\$665
5 people	\$720
6 people	\$775

Note: Dollar amounts as at 31 October 1996; still current.
 Source: NSW Department of Housing 2004, viewed 26 February 2004,
 <<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/services.htm>>.

For the overwhelming majority of public housing tenants in New South Wales (90%), government benefits are their primary income source: see Figure 1. Some 6% of NSW rent-subsidized public housing tenants are wage-earners. High percentages of residents receive parenting (18%) and disability payments (26%).

FIGURE 1: NSW PUBLIC HOUSING SUBSIDISED TENANTS – INCOME SOURCE

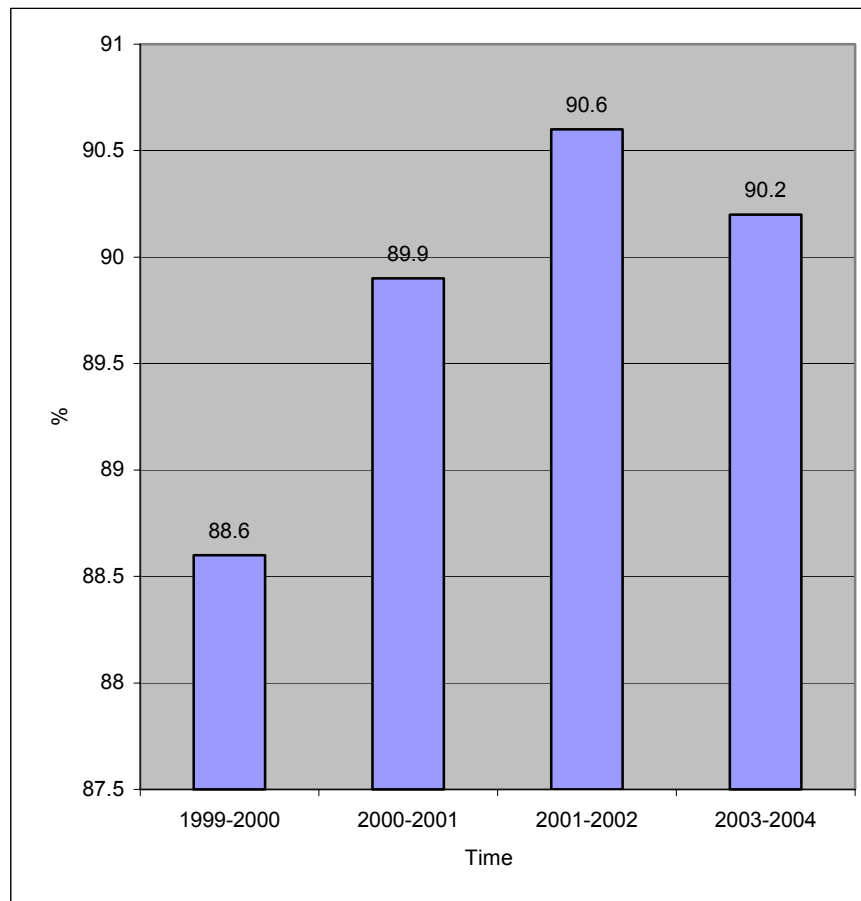


Note: Rents for low-income tenants are generally subsidised. Tenants are charged market rent but receive a rebate from the Department of Housing so that the amount they pay is no more than 25% of their income.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003a, p.7).

Figure 2 provides an indication of the historical dependence on unemployment benefits by public housing tenants in New South Wales. Currently, only 10% of tenants across the state pay the full market rental value for their housing. This stands in direct contrast to the 1970s when 60% paid full rents, and also when more tenants were in paid employment (NSW Department of Housing 2001b, p.4).

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF NSW PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS RECEIVING CENTRELINK BENEFITS



Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003a, p.15).

Randolph and Murray (2004) reviewed basic information about the labour market position of public housing tenants in the work force from 2001 Census data. Table 2 indicates the employment status of adults living in public housing in Sydney, and also indicates the proportion of public housing tenants in Sydney with differing employment statuses compared with Sydneysiders generally. While 55% of Sydneysiders were in full-time or part-time employment, only 23% of Sydney public housing tenants were so. While 33% of Sydneysiders were not in the labour force, 64% of Sydney public housing tenants were not in the labour force.

The employment status of public housing tenants in Sydney differs from Sydneysiders not only in its extent, but in its nature. Public housing tenants in Sydney are much more likely to be in labouring and related occupations; intermediate production and transport occupations; elementary clerical, sales and service occupations; and intermediate clerical, sales and service occupations, than Sydneysiders generally

(Randolph and Murray 2004). They are much less likely to be in professional, managerial, and advanced clerical and service occupations, than Sydneysiders generally. Public housing tenants in Sydney are much more likely to work in the retail trade, manufacturing, and health and community services industries, than Sydneysiders generally. They much less likely to be in the property and business, education, and finance and insurance industries, than Sydneysiders generally.

TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ADULTS LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING, SYDNEY, 2001

Employment status	Sydney – public housing tenants (N)	Sydney – public housing tenants (%)	Sydney – population (%)
Employed full-time	17,166	13.1	39.0
Employed part-time	12,360	9.4	16.9
Employed, hours not stated	2,139	1.6	1.8
Unemployed	11,420	8.7	3.8
Not in the labour force	83,555	63.7	33.4
Labour force status not stated	4,470	3.4	5.2
Total persons	131,110	100	100

Source: Randolph and Murray (2004).

An indication of the financial hardship faced by public housing tenants is their diminished ability to obtain emergency money, with the majority (68%) unable to raise a sum of \$2,000 within one week. Table 3 demonstrates that public housing tenants have a reduced capacity to draw on their own savings, obtain loans from various sources and sell assets, compared with people in other tenures.

The financial stress experienced by public housing tenants is compounded by the finding that some 21% of all public renters have some type of formal household debt (Burke and Ralston 2002, p.15). Although less than the proportion of household debt held by home purchasers (98%) and private renters (38%), lower-income earners typically borrow from institutions that have the highest lending costs whereas the more affluent from those with the lowest (Burke and Ralston 2002, p.30). It has been suggested that this is due to the reluctance of banks to take on what they perceive may be households with a greater lending risk. Finance companies are generally willing to take on higher risk households, and do so at much higher interest rates (Burke and Ralston 2002, p.30). This compounds the financial burden experienced by public housing tenants.

TABLE 3: ABILITY TO RAISE EMERGENCY MONEY (\$2,000), PERCENTAGE OF TENURE TYPE, 1998-99

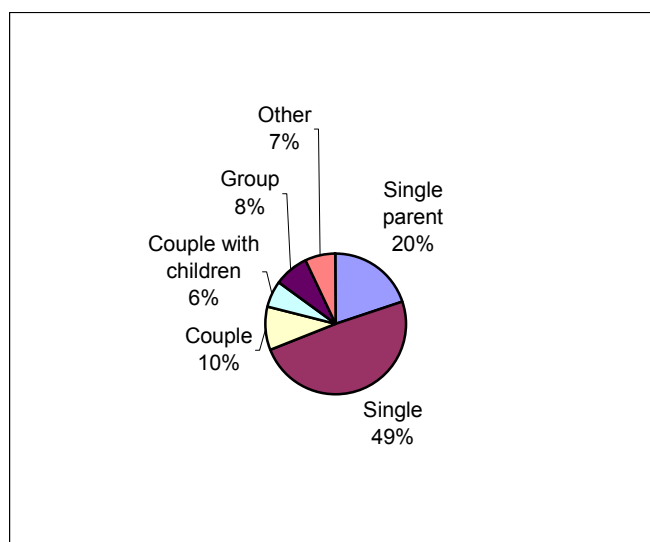
	Renting, public	Renting, private	All tenures
Could raise \$2,000 within a week	31.7	47	80.8
Could not raise \$2,000 within a week	68.3	53	19.3
<i>Source of emergency money*</i>			
Own savings	11.7	16.8	47.7
Loan from a bank, building society or credit union	7.1	7.2	29.3
Loan on credit card	2.3	9.9	23
Loan from family or friends	13.8	29.9	29
Loan from a finance company	1.2	2.9	8
Loan from welfare or community organization	1.1	1.4	0.8
Sell something	3.6	9.6	12.1
Other sources	2.1	1.3	2.6
<i>How many sources of emergency money?</i>			
One source	24.7	26.9	48.5
Two or more sources	7	20.1	32.3

* Multiple sources

Source: Adapted from Burke and Ralston (2002, p.28).

The current household structure of public housing tenants in New South Wales is graphically illustrated in Figure 3, which indicates that a high proportion of single parent families live in public housing in New South Wales (20%).

FIGURE 3: NSW PUBLIC HOUSING SUBSIDISED TENANTS – HOUSEHOLD TYPE



Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003a, p.7).

There are approximately 125,000 publicly-managed public housing units in New South Wales. More than 30% of these housing units are in estate areas. Many tenants of public housing are socially excluded, in that they are generally characterized by:

- low incomes;
- high levels of unemployment;
- high levels of welfare dependency;
- poor educational attainment;
- poor health;
- high proportions of single parent families; and
- limited mobility (Beer and Maude 2002, p.vi).

They consequently have difficulty entering or re-entering mainstream educational and training programs and in attaining mainstream work.

Socio-economic and education data are not generally available for public housing estate areas as a statistical unit. However, as part of the Airds–Bradbury Employment Plan, a suburb profile of Airds was devised comparing the area with the Campbelltown local government area (LGA) using 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data. See Table 4 and Table 5.

The data indicate that the vast majority of Airds and Bradbury residents live in public housing (85%). Also, higher concentrations of single-parent families, Indigenous populations, people on lower incomes, and with records of poor educational attainment are reported. A strikingly high unemployment rate (30% compared to 9%), a poor labour force participation rate, and a lack of car ownership have also been identified.

A cross-section of participants who attended an Employment Plan Workshop identified the following specific barriers to finding employment in Airds:

- lack of access to computers, Internet, telephone and fax;
- information being very confusing, so that people get lost in the system and do not know what support they are entitled to and what is available;
- jobseekers being too old;
- jobseekers having no relevant recent work experience although have had some training;
- criminal records and high fines that people simply cannot pay off;
- childcare and family responsibilities;
- reading, writing and numeracy difficulties;
- health and disabilities;
- lack of appropriate training for the current labour market;
- unreliable transport system and disqualified drivers licences (Airds Bradbury Community 2004, pp.1-2).

The issue of a spatial mismatch between people's housing and work opportunities and work places, identified by the Airds–Bradbury community, reflects analysis by Croce (2001).

TABLE 4: AIRDS–BRADBURY AND CAMPBELLTOWN LGA: COMPARISON OF SELECTED INDICATORS (%)

	Airds	Campbelltown LGA
<i>Family type (proportion of all families):</i>		
Couple with children	36.6	54.3
Couple without children	11.6	22.9
One parent family	50.5	21.6
Other family	1.4	1.2
<i>Indigenous population (proportion of total population)</i>	11.2	2.5
<i>Tenure type (proportion of all tenure types):</i>		
Owned outright	2	28.5
Being purchased	2.3	35
Rented, state housing	84.7	14
Rented, other sources	1.5	16
<i>Income (proportions of persons over 15 years by weekly income):</i>		
\$0-199	41.1	27.6
\$200-399	24	18.1
\$400-599	11.4	16.8
\$600-799	3.9	12.7
\$800-999	1.2	7.1
\$1,000-1499	0.5	6.8
\$1,500+	1	2
<i>Level of schooling completed (highest level of schooling completed as a proportion of persons over 15 years):</i>		
Year 8 or below	12.9	7.3
Year 9 or equivalent	15.4	10
Year 10 or equivalent	26.2	32.1
Year 11 or equivalent	6.3	6
Year 12 or equivalent	14.8	30.9
Still at school	5.5	4.4
Did not go to school	2.1	1.1
Not stated	16.9	8.2
<i>Post-school education completed (proportion of population over 15 years)</i>	11.5	29

Source: Airds Bradbury Community (2004, pp.3-13).

TABLE 5: AIRDS–BRADBURY AND CAMPBELLTOWN: COMPARISON OF SELECTED INDICATORS, CONTINUED (%)

	Airds	Campbelltown LGA
<i>Post-school education types</i> (proportion of all post-school education):		
Postgraduate degree	2	3.2
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	0	2.2
Bachelor Degree	7.5	19.1
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	13.7	16
Certificate	76.8	59.4
<i>Employment:</i>		
Full-time (% employed persons)	55.7	67.9
Part-time (% employed persons)	35.3	28.5
Unemployment rate	30.1	8.5
Total labour force (% of total population)	23	46.30
<i>Occupation</i> (proportion of employed persons):		
Managers, administrators	1.3	5.1
Professionals	5.2	11.7
Associate professionals	4.8	10
Tradespersons	9.4	14.1
Advanced clerical	2.1	3.9
Intermediate clerical	17.7	20.7
Intermediate production and transport	19.6	12.4
Elementary clerical	13.7	10.6
Labourers	20.8	9.4
<i>Car ownership</i> (motor vehicles per household as a proportion of all households):		
No motor vehicles	27.8	10.9
1 motor vehicle	42.8	39.7
2 motor vehicles	12.9	31.1
3+ motor vehicles	2.3	11.5
Not stated	14.2	6.7

Source: Airds Bradbury Community (2004, pp.3-13).

2.2 Overview of initiatives

The NSW Commonwealth – State Bilateral Agreement 2003/04 to 2007/08 is the first of its kind to explicitly identify community economic development as one of its priorities: see Box 2.

BOX 2: NSW COMMONWEALTH STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT OBJECTIVES

NSW proposes four priorities to meet the challenges for the period of this Agreement. These are to:

- Provide flexible and sustainable social housing responses for clients;
- Work more effectively with the private market, local government and the non-government sector;
- Strengthen local housing communities to help address social and economic disadvantage; and
- Provide efficient, effective and viable services.

Source: NSW CSHA Bilateral Agreement 2003/04 to 2007/08

The NSW Department of Housing's principal objectives include:

- Assisting those with priority needs,
- Building sustainable communities and successful tenancies,
- Creating a financially sustainable and accountable organization,
- Diversifying our services to meet community needs (NSW Department of Housing 2000, p.4.)

It is under the general heading of 'sustainable communities' that the Department has recently developed and implemented a series of employment and training initiatives specifically designed for estate tenants as part of its recognition that 'housing is more than just shelter. It is an intrinsic part of people's lives, the foundation for good health, for strong families and for economic and social participation. Working together with social housing tenants and neighbourhoods we will continue to support initiatives to build and maintain strong, thriving communities' (NSW Department of Housing 2003b, p.7). In particular, the Department believes that 'the best way to help tenants build better lives and communities is to help them find training and employment opportunities' (NSW Department of Housing 2000, p.18).

In the first of such measures, the NSW Department of Housing – with funding assistance from the Regional Assistance Program (consisting of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business) – undertook a 12-month pilot project in the late 1990s to establish and evaluate a range of employment and training initiatives for long-term unemployed public housing tenants. The original aims of the Department's initiatives are outlined in Box 3.

BOX 3: BENEFITS OF THE TENANT EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Prior to piloting tenant-specific employment and training programs, The NSW Department of Housing identified the following benefits for participants and regions alike:

Economic outcomes:

Increased rental revenues as participants' reduce their need for rental subsidies,
Higher incomes improve the scope of housing choice for participants,
Savings to social security payments,
Increased taxation revenue,
Economic benefits to the local area as disposable income increases.

Employment outcomes:

Participation in the economy through employment,
Increased self-esteem and empowerment of participants,
Increased opportunity for ongoing, long-term employment.

Skills outcomes:

Development of new skills,
Upgrading of existing skills,
Contribution to the economy through skill use,
Increase the national human capital base.

Disadvantage or inequity:

Development of a local labour market and culture of employment,
Increase in choice and living standards,
Provision of local jobs for local residents,
Involvement of residents in all areas of the Department of Housing's investment in the local area,
Benefits to children and families of participants,
Reduced discrimination against public housing residents in local labour markets.

Improved understanding:

Development of effective strategies to address long-term unemployment in severely disadvantaged communities,
Improved relationship between the Department of Housing and its clients,
Improved co-operation and linkages between the Department of Housing and other government and community organizations.

Source: Tenant Employment Project (2000, pp.1-2).

The Department's community regeneration agenda took the early form of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), which began addressing social exclusion on public housing estates in 1994 (NSW Department of Housing n.d., p.1). The vision of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program was to remove the stigma associated with public housing estates and to ensure that they look and operate in a way comparable with other residential areas. The Radburn planning design in suburban estate areas was found to create dysfunctional neighbourhoods and exacerbate symptoms of social exclusion. Selected estates were the Airds, Macquarie Fields and

Waterloo housing estates (Randolph and Judd 1999, p.5). NIP was specifically aimed at asset management and reconfiguration, but did not in itself address community renewal as distinct from asset renewal.

The Department's NIP was replaced with the Community Renewal Strategy, and this is currently being transformed into the Community Regeneration Program. High priority estates remain the focus of the Community Renewal Strategy with the impact of the concentration of socially excluded individuals evident in a number of housing management indicators. These estates often have high:

- turnover;
- refusals of offers of housing;
- rent arrears;
- vacancy rates; and
- levels of complaint about anti- social behaviour (NSW Department of Housing 2001b, p.5).

The NSW Department of Housing has invested approximately \$150 million towards the community renewal of its public housing estates, with activities focusing on the following areas:

- Improving the houses and public spaces,
- Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour,
- Developing opportunities for employment and training,
- Better and more responsive housing management,
- Reducing concentrations and diversifying social mix,
- Increased tenant involvement and participation,
- Improving access to and co-ordination of services, and
- Building community capacity and social networks (NSW Department of Housing 2001b).

The following labour market programs form part of the Department's Community Renewal Strategy:

- Community contracts,
- the WorkiT Program,
- the Handypersons Program,
- Landscaping Traineeships,
- WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, and
- the support of tenant-driven businesses.

Community contracts

Community contracts are contracts to perform works for the NSW Department of Housing that are selectively tendered to Job Network Agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Such bodies then employ a specified number of unemployed public housing residents to undertake the work under appropriate supervision. It is the Department's belief that certain types of skill tasks are particularly suited to tenant employment, including:

- lawns and grounds maintenance,
- landscaping,
- fencing,

- painting and
- cleaning (Tenant Employment Project 2000, p.1-2).

Community contracts began on a small scale in 1999 and have been successful since their inception. During the 2001-02 financial year:

- 10 Community Contracts were awarded.
- 119 public housing residents secured employment, mainly on a casual or time-time basis.
- Around 50 residents participated in associated training courses (NSW Department of Housing 2002, p.34).

The following case studies are indicative of the potential of the Community Contracts program.

BOX 4: TWO BISHOPS TRUST

Public housing residents in the Hunter Region are gaining work skills and employment opportunities thanks to an enterprise initiated by two local bishops. Known as the Two Bishops Trust, the project is facilitated by Department of Housing and the Samaritans Foundation and supported by the Newcastle Leagues Club to provide services in public housing estates.

Under this Arrangement, the Samaritans Foundation has formed a business that gained a contract for maintaining lawns and grounds for housing estates in East and West Lake Macquarie. The business provides employment for 22 local residents who received training in horticulture through TAFE.

Samaritans Maintenance Services currently has 16 full-time employees and is working towards creating full-time positions. A number of these employees are hoping to start their own business in the future.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2002, p.34).

BOX 5: PARTNERSHIP WITH HOTLINE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN GOONELLABAH

In 1999 public housing residents living on the Goonellabah estate in Northern NSW identified that access to casual work opportunities was a key need. In response to this, the Department developed a partnership with Hotline Employment and Training in Lismore to provide employment opportunities for residents. Under the partnership, the Department contracts Hotline Employment and Training to carry out some of its maintenance work in the area. Hotline Employment and Training finds residents on the Goonellabah estate interested in doing the work, supervises the work and provides informal, on-the-job training for participants.

Over 60 residents have participated in the project so far. A high percentage of residents have found employment or training outside the project including:

Full-time or permanent part-time work for 9 residents;

Casual work for 15 residents;

More than 14 hours of work per week on average maintained by 9 residents; and

Enrolment in further accredited training, TAFE or university for 4 residents.

Lex, The Hotline Employment and Training worker who supervises the project has also noticed a number of non-employment outcomes for participants including:

The building of greater respect between people through the interaction of people from different age groups, genders and ethnic backgrounds in the project;

Being able to get employment and character references from Hotline Employment and Training;

Being more involved in community activities; and

Being more motivated to achieve things or improve their life in other areas.

Overall, Lex says that 'the biggest improvement or change that I see in people is confidence and a belief in themselves'.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2002, p.34).

More recent data indicate that by 2003, 150 residents had been employed by the program. Of these, 33 had gone onto outside employment (including full time, part time and casual employment), 10 had begun TAFE courses and 3 residents commenced university studies (Johnston and Hopkins 2003).

BOX 6: RESIDENTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

'I could work flexible hours that fitted in with children going to school' – Maryanne

'The extra income meant I had Christmas with my children last year, a great dinner and presents for the kids' – Anita

'It's good to experience that going-to-work feeling' – Terry

'I now walk with confidence, my spirits are uplifted' – Tony

'I have gained a lot of experience doing different types of work, it really builds up your confidence and self esteem' – Bill

Source: Johnston and Hopkins (2003).

The WorkiT Program

The WorkiT program provides resources to partner organizations who deliver tailored training and employment opportunities for long-term unemployed social housing residents (NSW Department of Housing 2003c, p.28). The program also entails the general principles of Community Contracts and the Handypersons Programs.

The overall objective of the program is ‘to create and assist the local community of social housing residents into tangible employment and training outcomes in defined project locations across New South Wales’ (NSW Department of Housing 2003c, p.3). Specific program objectives are to:

- Assist social housing residents into employment and training;
- Ensure the local community is aware of and actively participating in the WorkiT projects;
- Assist the community to participate in the WorkiT projects and identify needs and priorities;
- Develop skills and confidence in the community to enhance training and employment prospects resulting in increased independence, safety, self-esteem and/or quality of life within the community;
- Build stronger communities and social capital by providing an effective training and employment service (NSW Department of Housing 2003c, pp.3-4.)

The program generally targets all unemployed social housing residents, however, particular attention is paid to residents who are:

- Long-term unemployed,
- Young people,
- Single parents,
- Disadvantaged in the labour market, such as indigenous residents, disabled residents and residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (NSW Department of Housing 2003c, p.5.)

WorkiT was launched in 2003. Table 6 provides a list of estate areas where the program is currently implemented.

TABLE 6: WORKiT LOCATIONS

WorkiT Location	Partner Organization
Newcastle LGA	HGT Australia
Inner West, Inner City and Eastern suburbs	Oasis Youth Support Network
Parramatta and Blacktown LGA	Maincom
Campbelltown LGA	Spectrum Employment Services
Illawarra LGA	Wesley Institute
Taree	Newtrain Inc.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2004e, p.5).

The facilitating role played by partner organizations is indicated by HGT Australia pledging to:

- recruit workers, drawn from unemployed or disadvantaged social housing residents and employ them in garden maintenance and cleaning positions to fulfil contracts with the Department of Housing, as well as seeking additional business for these employees;
- source a variety of employment opportunities that could provide work for residents,
- source training opportunities that could enhance the work readiness of residents;
- develop partnerships with the private sector, local government, educational institutions and other bodies to stimulate new employment opportunities and training pathways;
- encourage and support the development of work cooperatives, sole trader enterprises and small businesses among residents;
- facilitate opportunities for residents to take up further education and vocational training; and
- work with Job Network Providers to identify opportunities to improve employment outcomes for mutual clients (HGT Australia).

BOX 7: WORKIT RESULTS IN THE HUNTER REGION

Between September 2003 and June 2004, the WorkiT Program in the Hunter area assisted 64 clients from the Hamilton South estate. Assistance includes employment, enrolments in further education and training, updating resumes, referrals to job network providers and work experience placements.

BOX 8: TAILOR MADE EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR GOVERNMENT ASSISTED HOUSING RESIDENTS
LAUNCHED IN NSW

The Hon Carl Scully, Minister for Roads and Housing, will meet with employees of a unique new employment initiative tailor made for people living in government-assisted housing, in Redfern on Wednesday 4 February. The scheme has already created 36 jobs across NSW and is set to remove employment barriers for people without references or employment experience.

Mike Allen, Executive Director for the Department of Housing said, '\$1.9 million has been invested in the scheme that is operating at six core areas across NSW: Redfern, Newcastle, Campbelltown, Parramatta/Blacktown, Illawarra and Taree. Here in Redfern the Department is working with Oasis Youth Support Network who will receive funding of \$200,000 over two years, to help social housing residents access training and work opportunities.

'The Oasis Youth Support Network has also been awarded \$1,197,248.20 worth of Department of Housing maintenance contracts and 75% of that work will go to local social housing residents. The other five organizations involved in the WorkiT scheme around the state will also be awarded Department of Housing maintenance contracts.'

As the scheme progresses, it is expected that partner organizations will start bringing in contracts from other organizations. This will mean more work for residents who might otherwise find it difficult to enter the job market. It is also anticipated that participants will 'graduate' from the scheme and move on to other employment making space for other social housing residents to take part in the project.

The WorkiT program works in tandem with another Department of Housing initiative, the Handypersons scheme that employs qualified Department of Housing tenants to do minor repairs and maintenance such as replacing hinges, handles, gates, doors and fence palings.

It is anticipated that the Handypersons scheme will be expanded into 18 locations across the state, including 3 locations in Central Sydney including Redfern. Oasis Youth Support Network has been employing qualified residents as Handypersons since August 2003.

'People in need of minor repairs get faster service, the handyperson develops workplace skills and also puts him or herself in a better position for future employment,' said Mike Allen.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2004c).

BOX 9: JOBS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Social housing residents from Western and South-Western Sydney Are benefiting from a unique Government employment initiative, Minister for Housing, Carl Scully, said today.

Mr Scully spoke after meeting people newly employed through the Department of Housing's 'WorkiT' scheme, which recently started operating in the Parramatta, Blacktown and Campbelltown local government Areas.

'The Government is providing Maincom, a local organization, with \$200,000 over two years, to help public housing residents in Parramatta and Blacktown access both training and work opportunities' he said.

'Spectrum Employment Services, operating in Campbelltown, will receive \$200,000 to help residents in the Campbelltown LGA.

'But more than offering just training, both organizations are also directly employing residents.

Spectrum has been awarded \$173,043 work of local Department of Housing maintenance contracts and Maincom \$328,828.

'Seventy- five per cent of that work will be done by residents, allowing them to actually build-up a record of employment, and the workplace skills and experience needed for long-term work opportunities.

'Already, Maincom has employed 9 local residents and Spectrum 4, and as things move along, I expect some changes will take place.

'Firstly, Maincom and Spectrum will start getting contracts from organizations other than the Department of Housing, meaning there'll be more work available for residents.

'I also expect that some people now working in the program will move on to other, permanent long- term employment, allowing other residents to move into the program and take their place, having their turn developing on-the-job skills and experience.

'The benefits are clear – essential cleaning and maintenance work gets done and residents develop workplace skills, putting themselves in a better position for future employment', Mr Scully said.

At six WorkiT locations Around NSW, employment and training organizations receive \$200,000 over two years to run the scheme, as well as being awarded local Department of Housing maintenance contracts.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2004d).

BOX 10: BIG WINS FOR WORKiT AND HANDYPERSONS

The Minister for Housing, Carl Scully, has launched four WorkiT and 13 Handyperson initiatives since November 2003, with the aim of improving the lives of residents living in these communities.

WorkiT

The WorkiT initiative benefits the long-term unemployed, young people, single parents and other unemployed residents by helping them find jobs and training opportunities through our partner organizations. These organizations provide a tailored employment and training service, as well as manage a number of lawn, garden and common Area cleaning and maintenance contracts in their respective Areas and employ residents to do this work.

HGT Australia Ltd. is the Department's partner organization delivering the WorkiT program in Hamilton South (Newcastle). Currently, HGT has employed 9 social housing residents at Hamilton South under a traineeship program. Not only are they given practical workplace skills and experience, but residents involved will also conclude their traineeships with an accredited Certificate II in Horticulture and Certificate III in Asset Management (Cleaning Operations).

HGT also provides a community outreach service at Rosella Cottage, Hamilton South, where they assist residents to access training and employment services. HGT is now working in strategies to extend their service to other housing residents within the Newcastle Local Government Area.

Oasis Youth Support Network is our partner organization in Central Sydney, employing 14 residents full-time and 7 on a time-time basis, in gardening and cleaning jobs. The Department funds an employment worker to help these new employees make the transition into the workforce and develop strategies to create other job opportunities.

In Greater Western Sydney, our partner Spectrum Employment in the Campbelltown Area employs 2 social housing residents and Maincom, our partner in the Parramatta and Blacktown Area, employs 3 full-time residents in lawns, gardens and common Area cleaning jobs.

Handyperson Program

The Handyperson Program is a 38-hour week service that employs qualified residents to carry out minor repairs and maintenance to homes in the community, where ITM offices are located. Not only will homes in need of repairs receive fast service, the Handyperson gains confidence, meets other residents, develops workplace skills and as a result, is in a better position for future employment.

A project was recently awarded to Newcastle City Mission, to run the Handyperson Program in Hamilton South.

Oasis Youth Support Network employ two Handypersons in Central Sydney, while in Greater Western Sydney, there are 9 Handypersons, employed with our three partner organizations, Hume Community Housing Association, Argyle Community Housing and Bligh Appointments.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2004b, p.8).

Handyperson Program

The Department's Handyperson Program provides a responsive minor maintenance and repair service for tenants. The goals of the Handyperson Program are to:

- improve quality of life and customer satisfaction for individual tenants;
- improve the look and feel of large housing estates;
- help protect the value of the Department's assets by preventing small problems from becoming bigger;
- provide employment for a small number of appropriately skilled social housing residents; and
- teach interested residents how to do small repair and maintenance work for themselves.

Following a successful trial in a number of locations the program has now been expanded to all 18 Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) sites. The Department has contracted a range of organizations in these locations to employ a social housing resident as a full-time handyperson (NSW Department of Housing 2003a, p.28), including those involved in the WorkiT Program.

Handyperson initiatives are currently in operation in the following areas:

- Newcastle LGA,
- Central Sydney, and
- Greater Western Sydney.

BOX 11: HANDYPERSON PROGRAM OPERATING IN BOLTON POINT

The Handyperson Program for the Bolton Point estate began as a pilot in February 2001. Ron, a tenant of the Bolton Point estate since 1994, has been the handyperson for this estate since April 2002. His local knowledge and sense of community has allowed Ron to build a fantastic rapport with other tenants.

Ron's dedication to his job, combined with a reliable and prompt service, has ensured the initial pilot of this project has been a resounding success.

The Handyperson Program is now ongoing on this estate.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003a, p.28).

Landscaping traineeship

Since 1996, the Department has conducted a landscaping traineeship program. The traineeships are for 12 months and are available to 10 people each year. Mission Australia currently runs the program, which is tendered annually. Approximately 75%-80% of participants in the Landscaping Traineeship program find employment at the conclusion of the program (Garret 2003, p.70).

Neighbourhood technology centres

In an increasingly information-oriented society, the lack of access to information technology is a critical area of disadvantage as it forms a barrier to sustainable employment outcomes and a hurdle to overcoming welfare dependence.

Research confirms that the lack of Internet access is creating a new dimension of disadvantage in Australian society with 2001 ABS census data indicating that only 4% of households with an annual income up to \$14,000 have access to the Internet, and 15% of this income group having a computer at home. Only 10% of households with an annual income of \$25,000 or less, have access to the Internet (WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, viewed 7 July, <www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>).

WorkVentures Connect is a multi-sector network response to this phenomenon with neighbourhood technology centres (NTC) located on public housing estates experiencing disadvantage. It is envisaged that the provision of computer access and training will enable acquisition of technical and social skills, resulting in sustainable employment outcomes (WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, viewed 7 July 2004, <www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>).

The first neighbourhood technology centre was established in Macquarie Fields in 2000 and has attracted high usage from seniors and young people alike, including students and job seekers. From this successful pilot, additional Neighbourhood Technology Centres can be found in the Claymore, Waterloo and Woolloomooloo.

There are further plans to replicate neighbourhood technology centres on up to fifty public housing estates in New South Wales and throughout Australia (WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, viewed 7 July 2004, <www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>).

At the launch of the Claymore NTC, WorkVentures chief executive Steve Lawrence said, 'This is an urgent response to an important need in our society. As governments and the wider community race to embrace technology in every aspect of life, the gap for those who cannot access technology just widens their disadvantage and exclusion from opportunities the rest of us take for granted. It is hoped that through the benefits of computer skills training and access residents will develop new skills, become active IT users, improve their quality of life and find employment as a result of the support they find here' (NSW Department of Housing 2003f).

In addition to the neighbourhood technology centres, a number of new technology projects were established on the Cranebrook estate in 2001. The very successful Internet café, set up by Barnados Australia and funded by the (former) Department for Women, continued to operate and is complemented by another innovative project aimed to bridge the digital divide, The E-Commerce @ Cranebrook Project. This is a partnership with the Department of Information Technology and Management and supported by a range of stakeholders such as Penrith City Council and provides residents of Cranebrook with improved access to information about employment opportunities, government services, online commercial transactions and education and information services (NSW Department of Housing 2002, p.31).

BOX 12: WORKVENTURES CONNECT @ MACQUARIE FIELDS

Macquarie Fields is a large public housing estate with nearly 1,400 dwellings. The provision of community on-line learning, technology, access and Internet facilities is a direct response to what has been recognised as a widening gap between the information rich and the information poor. The inability of many tenants to access information on the Internet is increasingly being seen as a barrier to sustainable employment and also as a barrier to ending welfare dependence. The establishment of a NTC on the estate is an attempt to address this issue.

The purpose of the NTC is to enable local people of all ages who do not have computers to access a client focussed 'friendly' facility where they can gain computer skills and make use of available computer applications such as email and the Internet.

The overall aim of NTCs is to strengthen community networks by allowing easy Internet communication, and to encourage skilled people to share their skills with others through volunteering. It also provides accredited training programs in computer use for local residents, relevant to the needs of the labour market.

During 2001-02 the Macquarie Fields NTC at Eucalyptus Cottage recorded:

An increase in clients using the facility, from 50 local residents in July 2001 to 234 by June 2002;

That there were slightly more women participants (131) than men (103);

The age groups using the facility covered the whole community ranging from children under 12 to people aged over 60; and

7,507 access hours were logged by clients during the year.

During the year, Macquarie Fields residents made the following comments about the NTC at Eucalyptus Cottage.

'It's the perfect place to gather, to share, to learn and to explore. With this facility, there is no longer a need for anyone to miss out on experiencing Internet technology. I have four teenagers who now come along to build web pages, play games, chat with friends and hit the chat lines.'

'My family and I use the Internet Café and Eucalyptus Cottage on a regular basis. The whole family is experiencing and embracing technology. My daughter (14) makes great use of chat rooms and instant messaging. My son (13) is currently into playing games but also has a strong interest in learning more HTML.'

'I have found the centre very appropriate for my learning process regarding computers. It has a very friendly atmosphere, which allows you to learn at your own pace. The teachers are helpful and make you feel at ease.'

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003a, p.24).

BOX 13: WOOLLOOMOOLOO RESIDENTS TO HAVE AFFORDABLE INTERNET ACCESS ONLY A STEP AWAY

The Premier of NSW Bob Carr and Minister for Housing Carl Scully will today launch a new Neighbourhood Technology Centre (NTC) at Woolloomooloo, providing easy and affordable Internet access to social housing residents.

The NTC is a joint initiative of WorkVentures, Microsoft, The Westpac Foundation and the Department of Housing, and is the fourth centre to be launched since the concept was piloted in December 2000. The technology centres have been highly successful in social housing communities, and have provided many residents with first time access to computers.

The Woolloomooloo centre will revolutionise the way residents live enabling them to search for jobs, learn skills, gain useful information, develop resumes, keep in touch with family and friends via email, and conduct research on the Internet. It will provide access to 15 computer terminals as well as printing, faxing and Internet services for only \$2 an hour or \$10 for a weekly family pass.

Users will be offered accredited computer training courses through the NTC which will assist to develop their IT skills for current and future employment. There have been many positive stories in regards to how the facilities have changed the lives of both residents and volunteers.

One volunteer at the Macquarie Fields NTC was unemployed and unable to find work. Since volunteering he has gained an interest in customer service, and developed excellent IT support skills. He recently accepted a new position as a result of skills he gained through his volunteer work.

Another resident visits the Macquarie Fields NTC to surf the Internet and send emails to friends. She is amazed by what she can do in her local NTC and visits regularly. She even helped her husband carry out research on road rules for his driving test and has since set up the Internet at home.

The Department of Housing has provided rent-free premises for the Woolloomooloo NTC, WorkVentures will manage the daily operations, Microsoft has contributed software, equipment and, with the Premier's Department, funded operational costs for the first year. The Westpac Foundation has provided a grant to develop and support a network of centres throughout Sydney.

WorkVentures Connect@Woolloomooloo is the fourth of 10 planned Neighbourhood Technology Centres to be set up across Sydney over the next three years.

These centres are part of the Department of Housing's Community Renewal Strategy, which aims to develop communities through partnerships, tenant participation and employment opportunities.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2003g).

Tenant-driven businesses

In 2000 the Department began providing assistance with the administrative processes involved in registering cooperatives for public housing tenants seeking to establish individual or cooperative small businesses in New South Wales. This support was channelled through an employment initiative that linked tenants with the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NSW Department of Housing 2001a, p.27).

One such business was Cover-Up Curtains: see Box 14. However, as this particular cooperative was heavily reliant on the input of one particular Departmental official, the business ceased when the official moved out of employment with the Department (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

BOX 14: COVER-UP CURTAINS

Cover-Up Curtains Cooperative was formed in 2000-01 as part of the Department's Tenant Employment Project. Cover-Up Curtains is a tenant cooperative which manufactures a range of curtains. Members of the cooperative have been trained in small business management as well as sewing for use in soft furnishings. As well as taking orders from the Department, they are hoping to compete for business in nursing homes, motels and from private households. Currently there are five public housing residents involved in the Cover-Up Curtains Cooperative, with an aim to attract and train new members.

Source: NSW Department of Housing (2001a, p.27).

The Department currently supports the following tenant-driven businesses:

- Riverwood – Furniture recycling business,
- Claymore – Triple C Catering, The Enterprise Project, Dust Devils cleaning business, Coffee Shop and Laundromat,
- Macarthur area – Paint and Play mobile playgroup.

Triple C Catering operates within the Claymore suburb of Campbelltown, where 95% of residents are public housing tenants. The concept for a cooperative grew out of a community-visioning day held in September 2001. Triple C was envisaged to form part of a network of cooperatives in the Claymore area, amalgamated under the Claymore Community Development Cooperative (CCDC). Under this plan, it was thought that Triple C would become one of a number of enterprises engaged in 'relationships of reciprocal growth and support', where the CCDC would provide business plan, payroll system, accounts and marketing resources; and the cooperative would feed the growth of the umbrella cooperative structure with finance, resources and marketing.

The original objectives of the CCDC were to:

- create sustainable, long-term and meaningful employment for the people of Claymore,
- be a model of good employment practices for the people of Claymore,
- establish and/or support viable businesses,
- create pathways to employment and education,
- assist in building a positive image of the Claymore community,

- create a learning environment that acknowledges and develops the skills and experience of the CCDC members.

Triple C began with just 16 members and the single essential criteria for membership was residency in Claymore and a genuine desire to support the project. Within the group experience levels continue to differ regarding food preparation and small business procedures. Members have the opportunity to explicitly define the nature and level of their participation, with the group preferring to divide their work and responsibility on the basis of tasks, as opposed to establishing formal job descriptions.

Triple C services various clients, including the NSW Department of Housing, along with other public and private sector organizations as well as private functions.

Training, employment, experience, personal development, and relationship building outcomes are reported to have collectively arisen due to tenant participation in the Triple C project. See Box 15.

BOX 15: TRIPLE C CATERING – INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

‘... a sense of being able to work and earn money.’
 ‘I’m so proud of what I can make for my friends at a party.’
 ‘I’m very happy, I’ve learnt a lot of things.’
 ‘If I’ve done a good job, I’ve earned my money.’
 ‘I’m more open and self confident.’
 ‘... self esteem – I feel like I’m worth something.’
 ‘Friendships...’
 ‘It’s given me training and experience.’
 ‘At first I wasn’t exited about doing it, but now I’m learning heaps – it’s good for the future.’

Source: Smeaton and Fabian (2003).

2.3 Strengths, weaknesses and potential

The fundamental strengths, weaknesses and potential of the estate tenant employment and training initiatives have been derived predominantly from qualitative interviews and available literature.

Strengths

The utilisation of in-house Department of Housing opportunities

The efficiency benefits resulting from the utilisation of in-house NSW Department of Housing opportunities have been cited as a strength. A specific example of this is the Handypersons Program where not only are employment and training outcomes met, the efficiency of service provision is a welcomed additional benefit.

‘The lawns and grounds contracts have been very useful, because we [The Department of Housing] outlay significant amounts of money so it is a way we can actually outlay that money to actually get some outcomes we want for those communities... There has been a flow on effect, apart from the fact that we suddenly had the ability to service minor maintenance within 24 hours, which is something that we never had, people have also not had to travel (to work), it’s just been a really good role model for the community’ (M McRae [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘The Handyperson program provides quicker responses to minor maintenance work’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

Diversity of projects available

A number of respondents indicated that the diversity of initiatives available has been helpful in the achievement of training and employment outcomes for public estate tenants.

‘A strength is in recognising the need for different programs to be in place to capture the skills and knowledge within tenants in estates’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘There has been a raft of initiatives, all hitting different spots’ (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

The targeting of specific employment barriers for estate tenants

All initiatives have been specifically designed to address the key barriers to employment that exist for estate tenants.

The lack of positive role modelling

‘We target estate areas, look at the recruitment of social housing tenants to work in communities they know, re-connect with people, provide better role models for people, see opportunities around the estate and use those opportunities’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

The lack of self-esteem and confidence

‘Identifying those who really want to take on opportunities. Many in public housing estates don’t have access to tap into the labour market, they need encouragement’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘Community engagement is all about networks, so however much we can further those networks, the better, amongst people as well as with all levels’ (L Tinney [The Benevolent Society] 2004, interview, 12 July).

Transport problems

‘Many job network agencies wait for people to come to them, they’re not actually out there so the Department’s clientele is missing out on resources’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘That’s a real barrier, just travelling, going beyond that area. In a recent partnership between Centrelink and a training provider, they had a work preparation type course

(i.e. confidence, presentation etc.) located in Liverpool, outside the area. They noticed that that had a very good attendance rate, people came despite the travel, a couple of work opportunities came up in that location at the end of it, women took them up. It is interesting because they probably wouldn't have taken that before, but just getting them familiar with travel and to establish those patterns' (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

'Bringing it to the community has been successful. E.g. Hamilton South is a community with 750 tenants, it has quite good access into Newcastle CBD, but it's amazing the different motivation levels. We have an employment agency outreach service in the core of the estate where people can literally walk out their front door and drop in, versus having to go and motivate themselves to access it. What a difference. This has been a direction that has worked very well' (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

'One of the things we've really noticed amongst our 9 trainees and casuals is that only one of them has a driver's license... Their opportunities for seeking other employment is limited in some degree... So there's some alienation from mobility which is a key factor of employment – the more mobile you are, the much greater your job chances are. By being reliant only on public transport, especially in regional communities, their employment opportunities are very limited. This project has allowed people who don't have a license to access employment which is basically on their doorstep' (C Webb [HGT Australia] 2004, interview, 7 July).

Lack of access to information technology

'Technology is a critical factor for people these days, you need to keep up with the level of advancement, providing access in estates so that tenants and their children gain access in order to break the digital divide in disadvantaged communities' (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

Dated employment references

'A lot of these people have had quite lengthy employment in other situations, but not necessarily recently, so the age of their references and so on is starting to date and that is another alienating factor when it comes to their competitiveness for other employment... That recency of experience would certainly be a factor in improving their job prospects' (C Webb 2004, interview, 7 July).

The linking of training initiatives to actual job opportunities

The Department's labour market programs endeavour to integrate training with employment, as 'it's important to always link it (training initiatives) to job opportunities, it would be dangerous to start a program and get a community's expectations up and then to not actually have outcomes at the end of it' (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

Tenant-driven initiatives

The use of tenant input, particularly in identifying the barriers to work that exist has been a key driver of the success of labour market initiatives. Literature support this approach as 'there is a unique opportunity to incorporate real community participation

into the NIP, opportunities whose effect will be potentially more far reaching than the life of the Program itself. It is also likely that the savings to the community in social and economic terms will be greater and longer lasting if effective community participation strategies are put into place from the outset of the Program' (Stubbs and Storer 1996, p.46).

'The residents have been involved with the Community Renewal Strategy meetings from day 1. We've worked with residents, getting their opinions, their ideas... The residents have had a fairly good voice on what we've been able to achieve here' (G Smith [Cranebrook Housing Communities Assistance Program] 2004, interview, 8 July).

The specialised contribution of partner organizations

The provision of specialised support and understanding by partner organizations, with common objectives to those the Department of Housing in pursuing these initiatives, is crucial to tenant employment and training outcomes.

'We've had experiences with our staff where they may not turn up, or something else might have happened. A lot of employers might have said 'too bad, the job's not there for you', but because we're in a closer relationship with the Department of Housing and also because of the values of this organization [HGT Australia] too, we've supported people through various things that were happening in their lives, and that's been a big area of success for the program... Our experience in social housing has been that there are many other aspects affecting their [tenants'] opportunities for employment, you need to be able to support a number of those things through their transition in becoming a full- time employee again... It's been good for us to get in at a very grassroots level and work with people and understand that you do employ the whole person. I don't know that anyone chooses to live in social housing. If you're in a situation where you are living in social housing but you're trying to develop the most productive lifestyle you can for yourself, then there might be other things that impact negatively on your ability to do that, just because of – sometimes – the location in which you live' (C Webb 2004, interview, 7 July).

'A very important part of my job is supporting and assisting remaining residents who were not successful into other training and employment options. You can't do that if you're not prepared to support them along the way... The large support role that I play now is to actually walk them through every step of the way. Even the trainees in the WorkiT program who've been there for 8 months, for the first 6 months they required very high levels of support from me because they live and work on the site and their personal lives do flow over into the workplace' (C Bastow [HGT Australia] 2004, interview, 7 July).

'It's important to get partners that, at least, share some fundamental philosophical beliefs in the program. HGT have been fantastic partners because of where they're coming from, it's not just economically driven, it is around the whole social justice framework. Given the complex clients that we are dealing with they (the partner organizations) have to be coming from that background otherwise it is difficult to make it work' (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

Integration among partner organizations

The degree of integration among partner organizations has complemented the involvement of tenants.

‘Tenant-driven initiatives have been successful. For Claymore, agencies have signed the ‘Working Together in Claymore Agreement’, therefore it’s not just the Department of Housing or Argyle Community Housing or the Benevolent Society, but they are all working together, each of them taking responsibility for the courage of tenant-driven services’ (B Murnane [Argyle Community Housing] 2004, interview, 6 July).

‘Where I’ve seen success has been where agencies do work together... There are lots more projects happening now where you’ve got training providers working with (the Department of) Health, working with government, the Department of Housing, so you’re actually working across those sectors and not in isolation, working in a co-ordinated approach’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

‘WorkiT is a very resource intensive program to implement, it requires a certain level of expertise. It is essential that people working in this area understand the labour market program field, the importance of working in partnerships and who those partners are, the contracting system area and being able to marry those two effectively so that people in the program get as much support as they require. It is a difficult area to work in anyway because the kind of people we are targeting have a host of other issues to deal with – complex needs require, sometimes, complex solutions. Oasis Youth Support Network in the inner city are working with very disadvantaged groups that have had multiple barriers to employment and training, e.g. they have been through Corrective Services, have had intergenerational unemployment, homelessness etc’ (Respondent no. 3, 2004, interview, 2 July).

Literature also support to this view with Randolph and Judd (1999, p.2) emphasising the interconnectedness of the problems of disadvantaged families and the ‘consequent need for an integrated and holistic policy approach’; this is seen in the Department’s Community Renewal Strategy as policies implemented have often had beneficial effects on multiple program objectives.

Success stories

Without fail, all NSW respondents indicated that labour market programs have been successful in achieving training and employment outcomes for public housing estate tenants.

That more than 200 public housing tenants have benefited to date from strategies designed to increase their access to employment and training opportunities (NSW Department of Housing, 2001b, p.20) is testament to the success of such initiatives. Specific case studies are reported in the following pages.

Aside from the actual numbers of tenants who have received employment and/or training support, respondents indicated their individual perceptions of successful community economic development activities.

‘If one person gets employment, that’s a success.’ (J Paszek [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July)

‘A lot of the success, personally for myself, is seeing a person grow and take up new opportunities with confidence. Giving something a go is one of the best outcomes that you can hope for’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

‘One significant outcome where people live and work in the same area is that they generally protect what they’ve worked on. For example, in Cranebrook, we (the Department of Housing) used the Landscaping trainees to upgrade the childcare centre, it was finished in 1999. To this day there is no graffiti or vandalism to any part of the building/precinct. There is a sense of pride and ownership, the more you can generate this, the better individually and also for the community. It’s very important to do this, role modelling. Similar stories are repeated elsewhere’ (J Paszek 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘As another indication of success, we’ve (Housing Communities Assistance Program worker) been in this building for 5 years. We have not had a graffiti attack on this building in 5 years. It’s got lovely cream shutters, it really just warrants to be graffitied, but it has not been. I think that’s how the community sees this building. It’s their building, in some ways there’s some community ownership... The lack of graffiti/vandalism is important in terms of how the community sees this place... I think that’s an indication that we are doing the things that people need’ (G Smith 2004, interview, 8 July).

This creation of pride and lack of vandalism is especially significant in light of the high rates of nuisance, annoyance and crime sometimes reported in public housing estate areas. These social benefits complement the employment and training outcomes.

Weaknesses

Although there is little doubt that community labour market programs have been beneficial for the public housing estate tenants of New South Wales, various limitations have presented themselves. The following weaknesses, if overcome in the future, would contribute to better training and employment outcomes for estate tenants.

The lack of available information

The NSW Department of Housing has procedures in place relating to the administration and evaluation of their employment and training initiatives; such as the maintenance of tenant databases and the direct measurement of outcomes, objectives and key performance indicators (Tenant Employment Project 2000, p.2). WorkiT Program Guidelines contain very specific outcomes and performance indicators and program management procedures which include the production of 6-monthly and yearly data reports, briefings, program evaluations and forums. The program evaluation guidelines contain requirements to be met by both Departmental staff and the relevant partner organizations (NSW Department of Housing, 2003c, p.7-9). It is crucial that any public policy be evaluated, and it is therefore promising that the Department has gone to such lengths to ensure a streamlined and consistent

methodology for evaluation of its employment and training initiatives. However, the information stemming from such procedures predominantly remains internally within the Department and is not publicly available.

Various respondents mentioned that the unavailability of information about labour market programs is an impediment to their ability to meet outcomes. This is especially significant in the geographically diverse and widespread field of community economic development where, aside from the structured Department of Housing initiatives like the WorkiT and Handypersons programs, various initiatives have been trialled in individual areas with no dissemination of information taking place.

‘There is a lack of sharing around the best practice that is happening around the different communities’ (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘I certainly feel that there is a need for bringing that sort of material (evaluative material) together. Its been really quite difficult to source a review of what’s out there, what’s been working, what hasn’t and why... I would really like to know if there are any small business models that have been run on community enterprise models, without some form of subsidy. If there are, myself, and I’m sure, other people, would really like to identify them’ (Respondent no.11, 2004, interview, 12 July).

‘I would like to get some information too, some evaluative information because you can use historical information to improve and more forward. I don’t have any of that [evaluative information]’ (C Bastow 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘Some really hard research and evaluation done on the projects would be invaluable...’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

Resourcing issues: funding and the rigidity of guidelines

By far, the most commonly-cited weakness of community economic development initiatives centred on issues of resourcing.

‘There is the problem of State and Commonwealth funding issues. The Commonwealth funds bits and pieces, its role is not really understood’ (J Paszek 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘There are issues around the resourcing of these projects. Adequate funding is important’ (Respondent no. 3 2004, interview, 2 July).

‘The biggest constraint is money, it’s needed for start up and also for economic incubators, though it’s not always forthcoming’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘There’s not enough dollars to help all these people. Some people require such intensive personal support/intensive rehabilitation just to even get them to the point of putting their name down for a training course... I don’t think there’s enough resources allocated to actually help those people’ (C Bastow 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘For Claymore, the constraint has been a lack of funding. There is funding, the problem is that the government makes policy decisions to do something that doesn’t

match the needs of the community. The ‘Strengthening Families and Communities guidelines are so tight that they don’t match anything you can do. So in developing programs at the local level to try and meet guidelines (which are not very flexible), you need flexibility to bend around the guidelines’ (B Murnane 2004, interview, 6 July).

‘There needs to be greater flexibility between middle level and community level to achieve the outcomes the government wants to achieve... The ideal would be for policy decisions to be made at the government level and then bureaucrats and local communities come to some decision of the guidelines’ (B Murnane 2004, interview, 6 July).

The lack of business guidance

Business guidance, necessary for the establishment of tenant-driven businesses has been deficient.

‘With Triple C, it’s difficult if you’ve got community ownership, the constraint is getting the entrepreneurial leadership that is often an important part of building a successful small business...’ (Respondent no.11 2004, interview, 12 July).

‘The social enterprise approach is the new way of doing things, I don’t think there are very clear guidelines about the outcomes that we really want to achieve...’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

Stability of staff

The stability of staff has also been identified as a factor contributing to the success of employment and training initiatives as estate tenants build rapport with departmental and partner organization staff and develop trusting relationships which serve to further the objectives of the program.

‘The limitation has been the Department constantly undergoing restructure. Over the years we’ve gone from the NIP to the Community Renewal Strategy and there’s often been a lot of staff change within the Department... Part of the problem has been this constant mode of restructure, unless you have consistency in their staffing, it’s very difficult to set up positive programs with the tenants if there’s all this staff changeover. This is one of the complaints that a lot of tenants have had with the Department in general, that their staff do change...’ (G Smith 2004, interview, 8 July).

Rigidity in allocated timeframes

The importance of developing adequate timeframes for longer-term outcomes has been raised.

‘The other constraints, in the training programs I’ve been involved with, are that they have had a fairly set timeframe... But the (training) program has only been for an identified period. For some, at the end of 12 weeks, if they haven’t got a job they’re back at home’ (G Smith 2004, interview, 8 July).

Randolph and Judd (1999) agree that longer term strategies are necessary with a more structured approach to the development of policy, including monitored pilot projects, a commitment to acting on the outcomes and clear exit strategies for what happens once funding is removed, the authors recommend that ‘we must move away from the current approach of *ad hoc*, short-term and unlinked initiatives that do not *embed* themselves properly once completed’ Randolph and Judd (1999, p.16).

Initial lack of understanding of the implications of servicing a disadvantaged client base

The need for more thorough understanding of the situation faced by those residing in socially excluded areas was highlighted by respondents.

‘The experience we’ve had is that we didn’t have enough understanding of the complexity of the issues – e.g. literacy issues, job readiness issues, the amount of background support that’s required to get people job ready... For people who haven’t worked in a long time even those social interaction skills are lacking, there’s a lot of initial hiccups even in working with other people... E.g. in the Handypersons interviews you forget how hard it is, particularly for people without a driver’s license, a lot of people don’t have a driver’s license or they have outstanding fines, lack of car ownership, all those limitations that you forget with a very disadvantaged client base’ (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘About the Claymore project, one of the constraints was that the original model was based on models that weren’t suitable for this context... That was a flaw in the original application... Also in the original model, it was aimed that there was going to be an umbrella cooperative that then supported these micro businesses. It was an incredibly complex structure that placed a huge responsibility on residents for governance issues... The residents said ‘we don’t want it, we don’t want to be responsible, it’s confusing, it’s complex.’ Not complex in the sense that they can’t understand, but it just wasn’t suitable’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

Potential

Issues regarding the future of labour market programs have been identified.

Sustainability

Frequently cited by many respondents, the issue of sustainability is paramount to the future viability of community economic development initiatives.

‘With WorkiT we are experiencing this very issue at the moment. The Department (of Housing) has been able to put forth its funding to implement the program for the next 2 years, but it is crucial that we are able to identify options for sustainability beyond those 2 years so that those organizations that are doing it well can continue working and providing those services’ (Respondent no. 3, 2004, interview, 2 July).

‘There are time issues involved, sustainability. Funding goes for 2 years, then the projects begin to make a difference and then the funding stops’ (B Murnane 2004, interview, 6 July).

‘In looking at community enterprise, for this to work it needs to be able to translate into an ongoing sustainable business once you pull out the support. I’m not sure whether this will happen, there are a lot of difficulties in getting a model that works well when you’re blending business and enterprise with community ownership ... Sustainability is a key thing’ (Respondent no.11, 2004, interview, 12 July).

Financial disincentives to gaining employment

The NSW Department of Housing implemented an Employment Incentive Project which reformed the previous policy of immediate recalculation of rental subsidies when any household member attained employment. Under this reform, the previous policy was amended to give tenants who enter into employment an exception from having their new additional income assessed for rental purposes for a period immediately after employment commences. The period of grace allows for the new income to be assessed at the previous subsidy level, to act as an incentive to seek paid employment. The duration prior to reassessment of rental subsidies had been suggested as 12 weeks because:

During 12 weeks the tenant and their employer would have determined whether the employment was to continue into a long-term arrangement. Twelve weeks would give the tenant an opportunity to meet the costs associated with return to work, such as increased transport costs, suitable clothing, child care etc., and one adjustment after a 12-week period would keep administrative tasks to a minimum.

These reforms encompass all types of work tenure; full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal and self-employment. The Department expect to be notified within a four-week period after a tenant has secured employment (NSW Department of Housing, 1999b).

Despite these measures, the need to address the financial disincentives that persist for long-term welfare recipients has been highlighted by numerous respondents.

‘The balancing of the disincentives that exist for people in accessing employment and training is a real challenge because a family that is on income support, for example, needs firstly to make sure that there is a regular stream of income support available to meet the needs of that family, and if the type of employment available does not equate to what income support offers, then it is very difficult to actually get those people to move from an income support status to not’ (Respondent no. 3, 2004, interview, 2 July).

‘When people do start earning more money, their rents go up. There have been cases of people going back to work and they have become behind the 8 ball in their rent, because their income is not sustaining their new rental amounts plus their living expenses. The Department [of Housing] does have a cooling-off period of 8-12 weeks that tenants don’t pay the new rent on. But, sometimes, that just doesn’t seem enough either’ (G Smith 2004, interview, 8 July).

‘Incentives need to be in place for public housing tenants whose role modelling has been restricted to an environment of unemployment, it is difficult to change... Trying to get people interested in work is a real challenge, due to the lack of positive role models, intergenerational unemployment... The major problem is that you can’t change the mindsets of people in short times’ (J Paszek 2004, interview, 5 July).

The NSW Department of Housing’s core business

An often-cited issue is the fact that, for the Department of Housing, the provision of employment and training lies outside its prime function. Therefore, the need for strategic partnerships with key agencies is essential for drawing on the expertise and resources available to other organizations with training and employment as their core function.

‘For the Department [of Housing] it is an area that is not our core business, so trying to provide enough resources and focus, because it is an important area, in bringing as much as possible of that area into core objectives, is also challenging’ (Respondent no. 3 2004, interview, 2 July).

‘We need a better framework for delivering resident employment strategies. The Department’s expertise is different, it’s public housing management not employment. It would be good to have a stronger link to Job Network agencies where we could use their expertise. The Department has done much but are novices in the employment field, we don’t know what opportunities are out there for use. Need a better framework for sharing of information...’ (J Paszek 2004, interview, 5 July).

‘WorkiT has provided partners who have those specific job requirements. In terms of Housing, how far does our role go? We don’t have skills in that area. How do you get those partnerships going? We have a client base and a raft of opportunities but we need other agencies to provide those other linkages, we can’t do that alone...’ (M McRae 2004, interview, 7 July).

The need for further integration has been stressed as ‘there should be better links across sectors... Wouldn’t it be better if you had partnerships and that governments were actually working together? At our local level we’re actually working with business people to try and bring that knowledge in. At a government level, to actually work across departments would bring a lot of benefit...’ (L Tinney 2004, interview, 12 July).

Funding

‘How big is the pot of gold? Cynically, at the end of the day, how much money is the government willing to put into programs like these [WorkiT] to support people?’ (C Bastow 2004, interview, 7 July).

‘It would be good to have better linkages with the Commonwealth government in terms of different funding sources available’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

The desire to replicate learning elsewhere

‘It would be a shame to lose all the learning and all the experience we’ve had in this project by not being able to transfer it to others and/or to expand its applications ourselves...’ (C Webb 2004, interview, 7 July).

In recognising the future benefits of program replications, the development of exit strategies for these programs has also received recent academic attention (for instance, Jacobs and others 2004).

Youth programs

A possible future role for specific programs targeted at youth has been suggested. Such initiatives may prevent the role modelling and disincentive issues from developing and acting as the severe barriers that they currently pose to employment.

‘We need to focus on youth in the estates, they are the next generation, need to develop their focus now otherwise we will lose them. The problems in estates centre on youth due to the lack of aspiration, training programs etc. It’s a Department of Housing problem and also a problem for society.’ (M Yeum 2004, interview, 5 July).

The need for information to dictate future directions

‘Before looking at where these things should go, there’s a need to really identify what is happening out there that is working and learn from those models, if they exist... Without that objective data, you can’t say where they should go, really’ (Respondent no.11 2004, interview, 12 July).

The introduction of more gradual steps to employment for estate tenants

There exists potential for more introductory training initiatives.

‘What should be offered is more training opportunities for the tenants that can gradually wean them back into the workforce. Expecting people to go from being long-term unemployed, from looking after children for a number of years, straight back into employment, is a very big ask... The whole routine of getting up in the morning, maybe getting the kids off to school, and then getting to work is a fairly major ask for someone who has had a lot of free time on their hands... I don’t think that any training or employment program is going to happen quickly, it’s going to be a fairly slow process as we wean people back into the workforce’ (G Smith 2004, interview, 8 July).

This same issue was also mentioned by Colleen Bastow, particularly in relation to the overflow issues that arise when estate tenants live and work in the same area, ‘because they live on site and they work on site their personal lives do flow over into the workplace. They are not used to how the workplace environment operates, it’s basic skill training that has to go on...’ (C Bastow 2004, interview, 7 July).

Chapter 3. Issues and programs in Victoria

3.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

Despite the Victorian economy having grown in recent years, the distribution of the gains from economic growth have not been dispersed equally across all communities. There remain concentrations of poverty in some Victorian neighbourhoods, with some of the hardest hit being those with high concentrations of public housing. Some of these areas are characterized by poor-quality housing, poorly-designed public spaces, run-down parklands and poor access to transport, key services and job opportunities (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002a, p.5). There is, therefore, an impetus to change in achieving a more balanced distribution of economic gains across Victorian communities. When compared with the Victorian state average benchmark of 100, Neighbourhood Renewal areas suffer from various indicators of disadvantage.

- Residents are 83% more likely to be unemployment benefit holders.
- Residents are 45% more likely to be health care card holders.
- Residents are 63% more likely to hold a disability support pension.
- Crime rates are 58% higher.
- Child protection notifications are 129% higher.
- There are 148% more single parent families.
- 53% fewer students complete Year 12.

The low levels of participation in the labour force point to a number of crucial barriers to employment that exist in these areas, particularly the:

- lack of advice and advocacy to individuals to consider employment and learning opportunities,
- lack of access to affordable childcare,
- local culture of welfare dependency,
- lack of supportive work and learning models, often resulting in intergenerational unemployment and welfare dependency, and
- lack of public transport to and from Neighbourhood Renewal areas to allow easy access to work and learning.

The Victorian Government's Growing Victoria Together agenda, led by the Office of Housing in the Department of Human Services, endeavours to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the state and the rest of the state via working in partnership with local communities, business and service providers.

In achieving this, Neighbourhood Renewal has developed locally responsive action plans covering the key areas of community renewal:

- Increasing people's pride and participation in the community,
- Enhancing housing and the physical environment,
- Lifting employment, training and education opportunities and expand local economic activities,
- Improving personal safety and reduce crime
- Promoting health and wellbeing, and

- Increasing access to transport and other key services and improve government responsiveness (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002a, p.3).

Each Neighbourhood Renewal area has its own Community Action Plan, where the specific barriers to obtaining employment and training are targeted with initiatives tailored to individual communities.

3.2 Overview of initiatives

Locations have been chosen not only because of their relative disadvantage compared to other parts of Victoria, but predominantly because there are high concentrations of low-income residents living in older and relatively-neglected public housing. Neighbourhoods have also been selected on the basis of assets available and resident enthusiasm about bettering their situation.

Neighbourhood Renewal commenced in 2000 with projects in:

- Latrobe Valley (Morwell, Moe, Churchill and Traralgon)
- Wendouree West (in Ballarat)
- Collingwood Public Housing Estate
- Atherton Gardens (in Fitzroy)
- East Eaglehawk (in Bendigo)
- Long Gully (in Bendigo)
- Parkside (in Shepparton)
- Seymour
- Maidstone and Braybrook (in Melbourne's West)
- Corio and Norlane (in North Geelong) (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2002a, p.7).

Recently new projects were implemented in:

- Broadmeadows
- Colac
- Werribee
- Doveton/Eumemmerring
- Chadstone/Ashwood/Ashburton (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2003a, p.5).

Current employment and training initiatives include:

- Work experience and accredited training opportunities through the Victorian State Government's Community Jobs Program.
- Traineeship schemes and allocated places via the State Government's Youth Employment Scheme (YES); development of linkages between Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Government to recruit residents under the Victorian Jobs for Young People traineeship program.
- A dedicated Employment and Learning Coordinator funded for each Neighbourhood Renewal area to assist in the strategic targeting of resources and programs to create ongoing and sustainable employment and learning opportunities.

- Local work and learning infrastructure established in partnership with employment and training providers to assist residents better access employment programs and services.
- Pilot Cleaning and Gardening Contract across two inner city high-rise estates with a requirement for contractors to employ one-third of their workforce as tenant employees. The contract requires local employment providers to deliver recruitment and employment support services to assist residents with their transition to sustainable employment.
- Centrelink and NR Engagement Framework to provide a more cohesive environment to establishment of locally-based community enterprises.
- Targeted training to Neighbourhood Renewal areas including job preparation, Leadership Skills, Information Technology and Aged Care.
- Residents employed by local contractors in the upgrading and maintenance of public housing estates.
- Residents employed directly by the Office of Housing in a range of activities such as concierge, office administration and maintenance.
- Pilot 16-week rent freeze program for Neighbourhood Renewal public housing resident who secure employment. (Neighbourhood Renewal Victoria 2004)

Community Jobs Program

The Community Jobs Program (CJP) is the largest community economic development initiative. It comprises employment initiatives, and job and training initiatives.

Community Jobs Program – employment initiatives

These aim to enhance the employability of the long-term unemployed and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed through increasing the access of targeted groups to the labour market via funding organizations to assist unemployed job seekers.

Specific target groups include public housing tenants aged over 15 years, who are unemployed and disadvantaged in the local labour market because they:

- experience multiple barriers to employment;
- are ineligible for or receive limited assistance through Job Network; and/or
- need additional support to access Job Network assistance (e.g. 15 to 20 year-olds, Indigenous job seekers).

This includes:

- recently arrived migrants less than two years in Australia, or temporary protection visa holders up to three years in Australia;
- job seekers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- young unemployed people 15-24 years of age – particularly those who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) or at risk of long-term unemployment, including young offenders and early school leavers;
- Indigenous job seekers;
- long-term unemployed mature-aged (45 years and over) job seekers; and
- retrenched workers (Department for Victorian Communities 2004b).

‘Attachment 2: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – employment initiatives’ contains a listing of current initiatives and is indicative of the vast range of projects and partner organizations involved.

BOX 16: STRONG INJECTION OF FUNDS FOR JOBS

A plan to give jobs and training to 100 long-term unemployed people at Wendouree West was yesterday described as ‘pennies from heaven’ by the area’s residents’ group.

State Employment Minister John Pandazopoulos announced the initiative at Violet St, Wendouree, yesterday as part of the Wendouree West Community Renewal project.

Under the plan, 100 long-term unemployed people will earn award wages for 16 weeks and get nationally accredited training through the State Government’s Community Jobs Program.

Another 65 long-term unemployed would get temporary jobs and training in and around Ballarat through the program at another six community projects.

The government was spending \$1.4 million providing jobs and training for the 165 people, he said.

Mr Pandazopoulos said the project, state-wide, has recorded a strong success rate, with nearly two-thirds of participants continuing in work or education.

But acting executive director of BRACE Ruth Barnes said the Ballarat jobs agency had seen much higher success rates.

On a recent Community Jobs Program involving 20 people, 18 had gone on to further work or education.

BRACE is co-ordinating the jobs and training program at Wendouree.

Wendouree West Residents Group chairwoman Gayle Britten said the project was vital for a community often blocked by distance from education and job opportunities.

‘This jobs project will have a flow-on effect for the whole community,’ Ms Britten said.

‘This is just like pennies from heaven.’

Source: Easton (2002).

Community Jobs Program – jobs and training

Under this program a minimum of 12 job seekers are employed for up to 15 weeks and provided with the opportunity to experience paid work, develop skills, be involved in projects that benefit the local community and improve their prospects of finding ongoing employment and/or further education within their local communities (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2004).

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), a registered training organization, has been involved in assisting residents in public housing estates in Fitzroy and Collingwood gain mainstream employment. Tenants of the Atherton Gardens estate experience the following indicators of economic depression:

- 95% of the 2000 residents are on income support,
- 26% are single parents,
- 17% are on disability support, and
- 24% are on Newstart allowance.

Additionally, the multi-cultural community consists of various nationalities, nearly two-thirds of which are from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Collingwood estate area shares a common demographic theme, with both areas suffering from a high incidence of unemployment.

In the 18 months to July 2004, BSL had been successful in taking 103 residents through tailor-made pre-employment programs and traineeships across various sectors.

The tenant group assisted was diverse in terms of age structure, gender and type of benefit received, and 75% had been out of work for more than two years. Nevertheless, various achievements have been reported, including:

- 24 people placed in the Office of Housing work and training program,
- 20 people placed in entry- level government traineeships,
- 14 people employed in the estate cleaning companies as a result of the insertion of a Public Tenant Employment Clause in the Department of Human Services commercial cleaning and gardening contracts.
- 6 people employed in a not- for- profit cleaning company established by the BSL and the Adult Multicultural Education Service,
- 27 people placed in aged and child care service facilities which have experienced difficulty in recruiting to entry-level positions, and
- 12 young people placed in youth traineeships within government and community organizations (Temby and others 2004, p.4).

Factors identified as key to these successful outcomes include community engagement, intensive support, pre-vocational training, work experience, traineeships, post-placement support and the whole-of-government approach adopted (Temby and others 2004, pp.4-6).

Neighbourhood Renewal activities have been successful in the achievement of their employment and training objectives:

- 734 community job places have been created through the partnership with the Employment Programs Division in the Department for Victorian Communities; over 50% of graduates of the program are going into further employment or training.
- A number of local community-based enterprises have been created to provide continuing employment for residents in professions such as catering, construction and furniture removal and restoration (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2003a, p.3).

BOX 17: CREATING EMPLOYMENT IN THE LATROBE VALLEY

Employment participation rates for public residents are estimated to be just 14% in the four neighbourhood renewal Area towns of Morwell, Moe, Churchill and Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley.

This compares with the national employment participation rate of 64%. Many families experience generations of unemployment and children grow up without seeing their parents as role models in the workforce.

To begin to tackle unemployment in the Latrobe Valley, the Office of Housing created a partnership with Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, the City of Latrobe, TRY Youth and Community Services and local residents.

Two hundred and forty places have been funded through the Community Jobs Program and TRY Youth and Community Services, a local community organization. To date, 192 participants have gone through the program.

The CJP provides full award wages and accredited training to participants, combining a real job with active learning on and off the job. The positions are linked to the expenditure on housing improvements.

Participants are building fences and garden sheds, painting and renovating houses, learning skills to help them gain ongoing employment, and contributing to their own neighbourhoods by improving the amenity and quality of housing.

As a result of the program, a new business venture has been started by TRY to tender for shed and fencing works in the Area employing project graduates. In addition, three of the neighbourhood houses renovated by these employees have been sold at auction.

Pre-renovation valuations for the properties ranged from \$23,000 to \$30,000. Sale prices achieved after renovation ranged from \$52,000 to \$60,000. More diverse communities are being created and the profits are being put back into local projects.'

Source: Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2002b, p.16).

BOX 18: CULTURAL CATERING PROGRAM

Collingwood and Fitzroy housing estate residents have developed their own cultural catering program that specialises in catering for community events.

The cuisine features a variety of flavours from around the world and reflects the diverse inner city communities where the residents have come to live.

Communities flourish when new ideas are allowed to grow, and the cultural catering program has enabled residents to develop their own initiative into an enterprise that is benefiting the whole community.

Source: Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2003a, p.4).

BOX 19: TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

The homes of Wendouree West residents will be cooler in summer and warmer in winter thanks to a project that will also help train younger residents for jobs in the building industry.

The sustainable energy project will improve the energy efficiency of public houses with improved insulation in floors, walls and ceilings.

Gaps around doors, windows and other places will also be sealed as part of the project being implemented by Ballarat Group Training.

Ballarat Group Training has employed a team of five trainees for the project that will complete work on 40 houses but general manager Peter Lane is hopeful up to three teams could complete similar projects in the future.

‘I think the critical thing is when these young people have finished in 12 months they will have a certificate two in general building and construction and that will open the doorway to take on a full-time apprenticeship, or the like, in the future,’ Mr Lane said.

‘We are really proud to be able to work with the people of this area because of the opportunities we can open up together,’ he said.

Wendouree West Community Renewal project manager Gerardine Christou said a grant was received from the sustainable energy authority to complete the works.

She said the pilot project would be monitored to see what difference it made to the energy bills of renovated homes but already residents were reporting improvements.

Source: Pearce (2003).

Qualitative evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal activities has been obtained via a Community Survey, designed specifically to be implemented by residents in order to give them power over information in such a manner that assists in building a sense of community. The Community Survey was produced in association with the Swinburne University Institute of Social Research in 2002.

Further to the initiatives being evaluated, the use of estate tenants in administering the interviews has been said to be ‘not only a powerful tool for community engagement, but can yield research and statistical information which is just as reliable as that which might come from a more independent or ‘scientific’ process’ (Salvaris 2003, p.4). Despite encountering slight disadvantages, such as surveys being more timely to conduct, ‘using residents as interviewers clearly created a climate in which interviewees were prepared to talk more openly and candidly’ (Salvaris 2003, p.5), the quality of data obtained is subsequently thought to be of higher quality than if non-residents were interviewing.

The sample size of the Community Survey was large, with 609 face-to-face interviews plus an additional 300 phone surveys conducted in the two pilot areas of Wendouree West and Latrobe Valley (Salvaris 2003, p.6).

Most serious current problems were reported to be:

- Lack of community participation in local activities (net -52)
- Lack of job opportunities (-44)
- The poor state of the local economy (-31)
- The lack of pride in the neighbourhood (-23)
- Crime and personal safety problems (-19)
- Low general levels of health and well being (-15).

Conditions receiving the most favourable ratings included:

- people's own housing (+58);
- people's own health (+47);
- local community services generally (+42);
- public transport (+38);
- positive feeling about the neighbourhood as a place to live (+24);
- local education and training opportunities (+23);
- housing conditions in the neighbourhood (+17).

In both the Latrobe Valley and Wendouree West areas there were quite positive results regarding support for the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS), its key objectives, and high levels of awareness of initiatives with:

- 55% of people aware of the NRS overall, this increases to 66% for Wendouree and
- 95% of residents agreeing that it was a good idea (Salvaris 2003, p.8).

Indicative of the success of the NRS in its responsiveness to local needs are the high levels of support received for the six key goals of the strategy ranging from 9.18 to 9.51 out of a maximum of 10. Receiving the highest level of support was the objective of 'lifting employment and local economies' which achieved a rating of 9.51 overall for the two areas and 9.72 in the Latrobe Valley area.

Various beneficial changes were reported to have occurred in the 12 months to the interview in 2002, including residents noticing improvements in the following areas:

- Housing (+27)
- Community pride (+19)
- Local education and training opportunities (+17)
- The physical environment (+11)
- Public transport (+10)
- Community participation (+7)
- Health and welfare services (+5)
- Government performance (+5) (Salvaris 2003, p.9).

The following comments are representative of feedback gained after the completion of the interviews in both areas:

- 'You had faith in the residents who conducted the surveys, which gave them a lot of self-confidence and made them feel proudly part of the survey'
- 'Using local people was a good idea. People seem more comfortable knowing I was a resident and could meet them on equal footing... It made the community closer'

- ‘(I have got) a better perspective of the community and its wide range of opinions, lifestyles and beliefs’
- ‘I have gained a lot more confidence in myself. The interviewers were a fantastic group and I enjoyed working with them’.

Actual employment outcomes resulted from the Community Survey with 5 Latrobe resident interviewers obtaining outside work with Telstra due to their interviewing skills (Salvaris 2003, p.10).

3.3 Strengths, weaknesses and potential

Strengths

The decentralised approach

That the initiatives are driven from the ground up, and have stemmed from real community involvement is an often-cited asset of labour market programs.

‘Part of Neighbourhood Renewal’s approach is that action plans, ideas and activities are generated from within the community. We just help to try and focus that if we can. Each community is developing its own employment and learning strategies designed to improve access to employment programs and employment services...’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

‘It used to be about us and them – us as tenants and the Government as landlord. Now everyone is working together to make the area a better place.’ Kevin Waugh, resident, Wendouree West. As cited by The Office of Housing, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2002, p.12).

This has specifically been the case for the Atherton Gardens estate area, where the Brotherhood of St Laurence worked in partnership with the Office of Housing.

‘We trialled a program with the Office of Housing; to take 12 tenants through a 15-week paid employment program and we designed 3 types of jobs.

- The Handyperson/maintenance position, which was to respond to the needs of tenants,
- Security, attempting to have a different form of engagement via a concierge instead of a security guard,
- An administration position.

All of this came out of community consultation, which took place prior to us starting and the community had identified that safety, security and employment were their key wants. We designed employment around those wishes’ (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

‘The most significant achievement is that we’ve embedded ourselves in a community and we’re not delivering welfare...’ (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

The diversity of partner organizations

The variety of partners involved complements the tenant-driven nature of the initiatives as there exists a wide field of specific expertise available to be drawn upon by local communities.

‘This needs to be a whole of community approach, needs to be tackled by all of the key stakeholders in a consensus model’ (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

‘They (Employment and Learning Co-ordinator position) are auspiced by quite a variety of organizations, from local government to employment and training type organizations, to health and welfare type organizations. So a very wide variety of auspice there, which is terrific from our point of view. We should be able to use that to really enhance the overall capability, I think, of the network...’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

‘We believe partnership between the three tiers of government, community and business to plan, implement and continuously improve these programs is vital to making them effective’ (Temby and others 2004, p.6)

Role of the Employment and Learning Coordinator

The importance of physical presence in disadvantaged communities has been highlighted. Through this, residents are given the opportunity to develop trusting rapport with individual staff which enhances employment and training outcomes.

‘We are very keen, as part of that Employment and Learning Co-ordinator role, to have a presence within the community, both physically and in terms of contact...’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

The tailored approach undertaken

Identification of the extreme lack of engagement with mainstream work opportunities has been mentioned as a pillar of the initiatives undertaken.

‘The particular families we are dealing with have a very high level of [support on pensions such as] disability support pension [and] sole parent benefit. [They are] recipients of those kinds of categories [of pension] that don’t necessarily have contact with the Job Network through cause. They also probably have a few more barriers to employment, whether they have been through looking after their children or possibly substance addiction type problems. So there is an issue around disengagement. So, certainly one of the key things that we are looking to do is just develop some trust and some confidence in the communities, provide some of the services on site in the place itself, with the idea of really moving those who we can encourage to go there towards employability, as in many cases, they are not probably there yet, there is a gap between them and a job, a pretty significant one’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

The specific community approach adopted, in recognising the various inhibitors of disengagement is a further asset.

‘You are dealing with a community that has been ignored for a long, long period of time, in all sorts of ways across all of that range of things, crime and safety, health and well being, physical place, employment and learning. They’re not very confident in dealing with government. They’re not very confident in dealing outside their communities; in many ways sub-cultures and things develop within their community and enables them to operate reasonably effectively within their own communities here, so it is breaking down some of those barriers as well which are very, very difficult. It’s all about confidence and trust’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

This has resulted in successful training outcomes as ‘because we provide intensive traineeship support to both the trainee and the employer, we have a retention rate of approximately 90%’ (Temby and others 2004, p.5).

Success stories

The various success stories reported indicate the accomplishments of initiatives undertaken. Furthermore, labour market programs have encompassed the several additional positive effects as tenants regain confidence and become enthusiastic about participating in such programs, and as the amenity of estates improves.

‘The training makes me want to get out of bed in the morning and do a day’s work instead of sitting at home watching TV.’ Graham, CJP employee, Latrobe Valley (as cited by the Office of Housing, Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002, p.15).

As a result of the Community Jobs Program’s existence since 2000, the program’s success is also evident in the growing number of residents applying for positions resulting from the cleaning and gardening contracts. ‘No longer does so much effort have to go into encouraging residents to apply for these positions’ (Broad 2003, p.11).

Community surveys undertaken in the Wendouree West and Latrobe areas in 2003 indicated a 24% increase in education and training opportunities (Victorian Department of Human Services 2003b, p.9).

‘There are some incredible economic spin-offs from this process. As you get people who live in the community to work in the community, there seems to be greater ownership of that community... Estates are cleaner. For the upkeep of an asset, there is a better return, anything that’s going to prevent damage/less wear and tear will only improve the longevity of the asset. They are assets (housing). We know that, in the investment in the concierge model, that safety has increased considerably... We now know that the community is responding in a much more responsive way around participation in employment which can only be a positive thing. It means that those people are getting off benefits, which is a prime objective... (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

‘It’s 90% better now with the security guards in the foyers.’ Vic Lau, resident of Atherton Gardens Estate, Fitzroy. As cited by The Office of Housing, Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002, p.17). Along with the security improvement, ‘more job opportunities will help people break the cycle of dependency, drugs and crime’.

Weaknesses

Funding

The dependence on government funding and the need for more in order to continue and enhance programs has been raised as a limitation.

‘We haven’t got program dollars, it’s more about focusing the attention than actually providing a service... There is an obvious financial and structural constraint... Money from employment programs to this kind of client group is not great. Most of the employment program money really does seem to suit people who are more or less work ready or just one step away... (Respondent no. 1 2004, interview, 19 May).

‘There’s still a huge dependence on government funding... (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

The changing nature of target populations

To date, initiatives are not adequately developed to effectively reach all residents in socially excluded areas due to the unstable nature of disadvantaged populations.

‘You’re working with transitory populations, people coming in and out of these public housing estates, they’re not fixed communities. There’s a complex flow of people coming in and out so the issues constantly change. What does the sea wash up? We know that 20-30% of the estates are stable/remain the same people, but we know that the rest of them are changing. We have to come to terms with it in terms of our program delivery and our economic model to cater for that’ (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

Potential

The need to be led by evaluation

Respondents and literature alike indicate the dependence of future directions on project evaluations.

‘There’s the side of going through our evaluations, how effective are we being in getting that whole-of-government support? How effective are we being in getting through the engagement, just through our offices? So through the Neighbourhood Renewal sites themselves, are we being effective? So setting ourselves a task to engage government and engage the communities, some of that will inform future processes... What is successful in terms of engaging the communities will have a significant influence on approaches into the future’ (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May).

‘It is important to constantly review and consider what seems to be working, and what is contributing to the positive outcomes to date. This is particularly relevant when considering how we apply these lessons to other locations and community building initiatives’ (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2003c, p.12-13).

The Swinburne Institute of Social Research recognise that there exists an important task of making information publicly available as soon as possible' (Salvaris 2003, p.11).

Tackling the financial disincentives to employment

Common throughout Australia, the centrality of tackling the financial disincentives that exist for those traditionally dependent on welfare to enter work is also evident in Victoria.

'Centrelink benefits can be adjusted if you start to earn money. A whole lot of issues seem to thrust up that barrier and not encourage them out of their current circumstances.' (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May) This issue needs to be further addressed in order to facilitate better future outcomes.

Sustainability issues

Financial and political viability are key to the direction taken by Neighbourhood Renewal activities.

'The dilemma we face is, where does the employment come from? The first two pilots were about government providing the resources to create more employment. That was an economically unstable model and vulnerable politically, as governments change and could re-direct this program and funding. We're going through this now. We need to think about more economically sustainable models. We know that unless you have a firm economic and social model, you can't move away from welfare. We want to move away from welfare. We want to move out of it and into more constructive and alternative ways of job creation.' (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May)

'There is a horizon for funding at the moment and it's not the sort of thing that 3 or 5 years of funding is going to achieve long-term results, you are looking at 10, 15, 20, 30 years effort in that community to achieve long-term results. By the same token you can't expect government just to keep channelling money... So what is the sustainable model into the future is the question, where do we operate? How do we continue to engage and cajole and do all those sorts of things, when really, if we've been successful we shouldn't need to be doing that? There is a bit of a conundrum there because you wouldn't want to not be around in case it started not to happen, because you need to be there to re-encourage and re-engage, if things start to fail.' (Respondent no. 1, 2004, interview, 19 May)

The importance of devising more appropriate timeframes has also been raised.

'We've got to be careful that we don't look at this in a short-term context, this is a long-term investment. We now know that we've got to be there for at least 5- 10 years, embed structures in there long-term. Not just welfare, but embed a different form of engagement. Looking at working through issues, one of the major ways of doing this is through a job' (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

Facilitators of the sustainability of employment and training initiatives have been identified as follows:

‘The objectives of Neighbourhood Renewal provide an effective focus and resonate with local residents, government departments and political leaders. These will determine whether Neighbourhood Renewal has made and continues to make a difference, but the sustainability of the change will depend upon three factors:

- Whether the residents’ and other people’s perceptions of each neighbourhood are changed for the better,
- Whether Government agencies are more co-ordinated, strategic and flexible in responding to local needs and priorities, and
- Whether local governance structures continue to provide an effective mechanism for advocacy and local decision-making’ (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2003c, p.12).

Additional to these facilitators, the key themes of setting a tangible goal, intensive support and commitment have been postulated to contribute to ‘quality sustainable outcomes’ (Temby and others 2004, p.3).

Desire to implement initiatives elsewhere

There exists a need by non-government organizations involved in Neighbourhood Renewal labour market programs to replicate programs in other locations.

‘With little or no thought we can redistribute some of our resources as opposed to adding new resources, the tenant employment clause is a model that can be implemented right across this country, and in theory, create more jobs. We need to be thinking about these communities in skill shortage areas, and the relationship between jobs that are becoming less and less favourable and how we bridge that gap... Longer term, we’ve got a financially sound model, making an investment up front and probably getting it back over the longer term’ (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

The Swinburne Institute of Social Research report on the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy recommends that the procedure of employing residents to assist in evaluations be replicated in other locations, in light of its successful information delivery, coupled with personal confidence benefits and employment outcomes.

Further utilisation of a new style of liaison between government and nongovernment organizations

A desire to further develop the newly-discovered innovative method of government–nongovernment organization liaison was also raised.

‘What we’ve been able to explore, over the last two years, is a very different form of communication between nongovernment organizations and government. Historically, the problems of an advocacy organization have played a key role in pushing/prodding government to be more accountable. For my team of people, we’ve been involved in a very different liaison with government. More partnership, more “let’s work this out, let’s see if we can do this better”. A huge step forward.’ (G Housakos 2004, interview, 20 May).

‘The challenge is for Government agencies across the board to respond flexibly and strategically according to the agreed local priorities. This does not come naturally, and can often cause tensions with centrally determined programs and accountability requirements. Strategic and joined up local solutions remain a challenge for traditional bureaucratic structures, and resolving these issues will require goodwill and new thinking at all levels’ (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2003c, p.12).

Chapter 4. Issues and programs in South Australia

4.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

There was a steady growth in the number of public housing tenants in South Australia eligible for rental rebates over the 1990s. Over the same period, the percentage of new applicants working has consistently declined with the percentage not working also growing considerably. See Table 7.

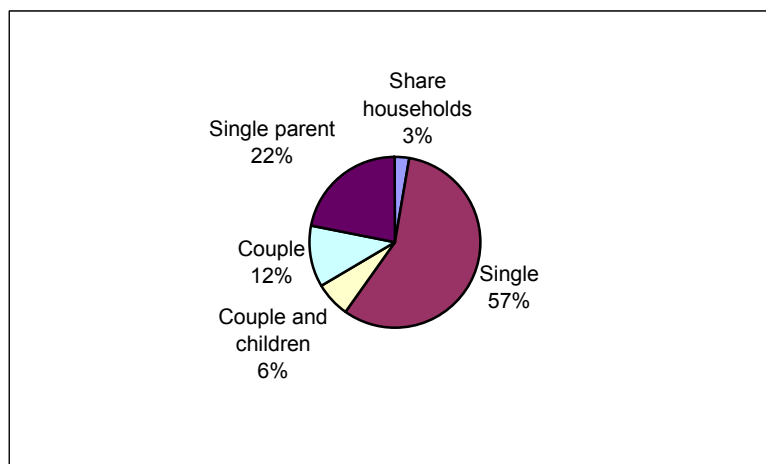
A snapshot of the household structure of South Australian public housing tenants illustrates that the majority are singles (57%). A high percentage of single parent families (22%) is also evident. See Figure 4.

TABLE 7: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF NEW APPLICANTS

Year	Percentage of new applicants	
	Working	Non-working
1989-90	33.5	66.5
1990-91	28.8	71.2
1991-92	21.0	79.0
1992-93	16.0	84.0
1993-94	15.3	84.7
1994-95	15.8	84.2
1995-96	13.4	86.6
1996-97	12.5	87.5
1997-98	10.7	89.3
1998-99	8.9	91.1
1999-00	12.9	87.1

Source: South Australian Housing Trust (2000, p.4).

FIGURE 4: REBATED TENANTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE AT 30 JUNE 2000



Source: South Australian Housing Trust (2000, p.8).

South Australia has also experienced an increase in the number of priority allocations over the last decade. See Table 8. This is primarily due to reduced incomes and increased levels of unemployment.

TABLE 8: PRIORITY ALLOCATIONS OVER TIME, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Year	Priority allocations as % of total allocations
1990-91	9.5
1991-92	11.1
1992-93	13.1
1993-94	11
1994-95	14.5
1995-96	14.3
1996-97	17.5
1997-98	26.1
1998-99	32.6
1999-00	41.8

Source: South Australian Housing Trust, 2000, p.12.

While receipt of age pensions and the Newstart allowance has remained relatively stable over the past decade, Table 9 shows the fall in applications for state accommodation by wage and salary earners. This has been accompanied by an increasing number of applications from disability support recipients and single parents.

TABLE 9: RENTAL APPLICANTS MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Year	Wage/ Salary	Age pension	Disability support pension	Sickness allowance	Single parenting payment	Newstart	Other
1990-91	28.8	5.6	4.4	2.2	17.7	32.6	9.4
1991-92	21	6.6	5.4	3.4	15.2	32.5	15.7
1992-93	16	5.3	4.8	2.8	13.7	30.4	27
1993-94	15.3	7.1	5.1	2.9	15.4	31.9	22.4
1994-95	15.8	7.6	5.6	2.4	14.7	29.4	24.5
1995-96	13.4	5.5	5.6	2.5	14.8	30.7	27.4
1996-97	12.5	5.9	7.5	1.7	15.7	31.7	25
1997-98	10.7	5.4	9.4	1.2	17.5	31.4	24.4
1998-99	8.9	5.4	10.6	1.1	16.8	29.5	27.6
1999-00	9.8	5.6	14.1	0.6	24.1	31.2	14.6

Source: South Australian Housing Trust (2000, p.19).

The South Australian Housing Trust has, as one of its strategic directions, the creation of sustainable communities. The Trust is committed to pursuing the following objectives where state accommodation has a major presence:

- Building community capacity, and
- Improving the physical, social and economic elements of communities.

A whole-of-government approach has been adopted with the involvement of key organizations (South Australian Housing Trust 2002c, p.10).

The Urban Renewal strategy forms part of the overall sustainable communities objective. Although primarily centred on physical housing improvements, Urban Renewal activities have included specific employment and training measures as part of the Trust's recognition of the 'number of complex and inter-related issues in areas selected for renewal... including poor socio-economic performance and a concentration of households that have limited incomes and resources' (South Australian Housing Trust 2002b, p.20)

One area chosen for urban renewal is Parks in north-west Adelaide. The area consists of 5,100 houses, 58% of which are owned by the Housing Trust. The area has a declining population of ageing tenants, most of whom are not actively participating in the labour force. Sixty percent of households are on low incomes, with high unemployment and youth unemployment recorded. In 1996, for instance, in comparison with the high unemployment rate for South Australia (10.4%) in general, Parks experienced a severe 24% unemployment rate. Data indicate that sizeable portions of this pool of unemployed workers were unskilled and/or migrants lacking in English-language skills. Due to the non-English-speaking migrant influx, Parks is further characterized by poor literacy and numeracy skills. Also reported is the lack of aspirations of community members, low confidence levels, poor educational attainment and evidence of subsequent lack of motivation to participate in training and employment opportunities (Ward 2000, p.14).

The poor employment record of the Parks area was identified as a problem in its own right, but it is also symptomatic of more fundamental problems like lack of educational attainment and lack of competitiveness in an increasingly demanding employment market (Ward 2000, p.6). The Parks area clearly suffers from social exclusion.

TABLE 10: SELECTED EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING DATA FOR MURRAY BRIDGE, PORT LINCOLN AND WHYALLA

	Murray Bridge	Port Lincoln	Whyalla	South Australia
Unemployment rate September 2000 (%)	11.2	10.7	11.8	7.8
Unemployment rate September 2001 (%)	8.7	10.6	11.2	7.3
Percentage of total city in Housing Trust accommodation (1996)	13.4	17.5	30.4	-

Source: Adapted from Beer and Maude (2002, p.18 and 23).

Table 10 indicates discrepancies that exist between sites chosen for urban renewal activities and South Australia in general. Although unemployment rates fell in South

Australia, Murray Bridge, Port Lincoln and Whyalla, from 2000 to 2001, the persistence of the Urban Renewal area's unemployment rate above that of the state is cause for policy intervention.

4.2 Overview of initiatives

Urban renewal

Urban renewal activities have been implemented in the following estate areas:

- The Parks (Westwood),
- Salisbury North (Hawksbury Park),
- North Haven (New Haven),
- Windsor Gardens (Windsor Green),
- Mitchell Park (The Avenues),
- Port Pirie (Risdon Grove),
- Port Lincoln (Lincoln Gardens),
- Wandana,
- Whyalla,
- Kilburn South, and
- Gilles Plains.

Urban renewal – the Westwood project

Westwood is the largest urban renewal project in Australia, generating an estimated \$340 million investment over the 15-year projected life of the project (Ward 2000, p.13). It is a joint initiative between the South Australian Housing Trust and Adelaide based developer Urban Pacific Limited, in conjunction with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

Strategic objectives of this project are:

- improving access to employment and training opportunities;
- improving the job readiness and competitiveness of the local economy; and
- improving business development and support mechanisms (Ward 2000, p.3).

Before the implementation of the project, it was envisaged that a range of initiatives would be necessary in order to achieve the project's objectives, encompassing:

- short-term specific initiatives to be completed within 12 months;
- medium-term initiatives to commenced within 3 years and achieve objectives within 5 years; and
- long-term initiatives to be revised throughout the life of the project (Ward 2000, p.3).

Proposed short-term actions included:

- Promoting and assisting attendance at the Morgan and Banks Youth Jobs Day
- Local business questionnaire survey and promotion of employment incentives
- Promoting New Apprenticeship Group Training Scheme to Contractors
- Promote the establishment of Master Builders Association facility
- Establish local Job Search touch-screen facility and Job Network service
- Environmental scanning to identify new employment opportunities

- Creating employment links
- Establishment of jobs noticeboard
- Sponsor Vocational Education Training (VET)
- Liaison with local employers
- Promotion of local jobs fair 'Youth Festival of Opportunities'
- Develop landscape and horticulture work experience and training opportunities,
- 'New Day Programme' pre-employment and motivational training (Ward 2000, p.24).

Medium term responses consist of the:

- Development of work experience and training opportunities in areas of identified skill shortage
- Investigation of jobs potential for local employment arising from the Adelaide-Darwin railway project
- Preparation of local business index
- Promotion of development of vacant land sites
- Development of training and recruitment packages for incoming businesses
- Development of support to local business arising from feedback to enquiries
- Development of university- industry links
- Development of job rotation scheme to provide work experience
- Investigation of the potential for local domestic appliance recycling training and work experience project
- Develop proposals for Parks Community Centre craft and multicultural business incubator
- Continue the provision of Landscape Training and Work Experience opportunities for the local community
- Investigate the potential to establish a small business
- Continue to develop basic entry level and pre-vocational training
- Improving public transport links to new job locations (Ward 2000, pp.39-40).

Long-term proposals will be developed following the monitoring and review of both short- and medium-term objectives.

The Westwood project: program successes

Under the Western Youth Directions Program, which assists young people who have left school early to return to school, undertake training or obtain employment, over 60 people have secured employment (South Australian Housing Trust 2002a, p.23).

Successful training programs conducted over the twelve months to 2004 were conducted in the aged care, automotive, hospitality, office administration, retail and stores and warehousing industries.

Hospitality training was delivered under the Office of Employment, Youth Employment Program. The training conducted by the Quality Training Company saw over 50 young people gain skills in bar work, waiting and gaming. The course included the participants spending a week working at the Buffalo restaurant, which operates as a training restaurant. A large number of the young people have secured employment in the hospitality industry as a result of the training program.

Certificate I in Automotive course for young people aged up to 24 years – covering mechanical, tyre fitting, wrecking yard, car yard/ detailing, exhaust and under-body industries conducted by The Vehicle Technology Centre which is now located at the Parks Community Centre.

The Office Administration course was aimed at young people wishing to secure employment in an office environment. This introductory course offered training in:

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Internet/ E-mail
- use of office equipment
- customer service
- occupational health and safety
- work experience

The Westwood Local Employment Program has created more than 130 employment outcomes to date (South Australian Housing Trust n.d.).

Urban renewal – Salisbury North

This 10-year, \$100m regeneration project is a joint initiative between the Housing Trust and the City of Salisbury. One element of this community-based renewal initiative has been the development of a successful apprenticeship training program designed for unemployed tenants, whereby builders provide training and employment opportunities within renovation contracts. In pursuing the community development objectives of the renewal program, Bagster Community House was opened in 2000 (South Australian Housing Trust 2000, p.22). Bagster House contains a fully-equipped computer room and teaches a variety of computer courses.

Salisbury North: program successes

As part of the Urban Renewal of Salisbury North, an Employment and Enterprise Coordinator has been enlisted to work closely with the area's unemployed residents to create sustainable employment opportunities: see Box 20. The focus of these efforts has been to identify employers willing to take on new staff, and consequently train unemployed residents to fill these specific positions. Under this alternative approach, trainees are guaranteed work before they even begin training. Outcomes during 2001-02 included:

- 20 graduates of an Ingham's training course gaining employment,
- 10 graduates from the Community Youth Information Technology project providing training to over 60 residents throughout the Salisbury community,
- The provision of a home based business course, and
- The recruitment of residents to provide aged care services (South Australian Housing Trust 2002a, p.24).

An apprenticeship training project was undertaken at McInerney Place by the Housing Trust, Master Builders Association, Alpine Constructions, the Building Industry Training Scheme, TAFE and the City of Marion. Through this project, 30 unemployed young people were given the opportunity to participate in an accelerated training program. With a value of \$2.6 million, a team of dedicated apprentices completed the construction of 24 villa style dwellings, consisting of attached and detached homes,

units and townhouses. 12 of the homes were retained for Housing Trust rental and the other 12 homes were sold on the open market.

BOX 20: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SALISBURY NORTH

Businesses in Salisbury North should look to the local area for the perfect employee, says Salisbury North Employment and Training Coordinator, Michelle Brodie.

‘We have a wealth of talented people in this suburb who are just waiting to be given the opportunity to break into the labour force. It’s often just a matter of giving them some confidence so they can prove what they have to offer,’ she says.

In her role, Michelle is focusing on finding sustainable employment opportunities for local residents through coordinating training programs with local employers. She also assists residents who may not be eligible for employment assistance such as high school students, sole parents and those in the community not receiving any financial assistance from the Government.

Michelle is now liaising with a number of employers who are looking for staff in a range of industries, such as food processing, automotive manufacturing and light engineering (welding).

‘Full training is provided for some of these positions and in some cases, no experience is necessary.’

A new course focussing on ‘employability’ skills is being offered at Bagster Community House.

Source: South Australian Housing Trust, 2004, *Trust talk tenant link*, issue 13, p.5.

BOX 21: EASY COMPUTER TRAINING

The Easy Computing Community Centre’s Computer Training is a project designed to provide low-cost, in-house computer training for the local community.

Located at Midway Road Community House Elizabeth East, the project provides training in a friendly, non-threatening environment where participants feel at ease. The pace of training is set at an easy level to encourage understanding and prevent any participant feeling inadequate.

Participants acquire knowledge and skills in:

- basic computing,
- computer terminology,
- buying a computer,
- Computing virus protection,
- word processing,
- desktop publishing,
- creating a budget,
- writing reports and letters,
- preparing a resume, and
- Microsoft Windows programs.

Source: South Australian Housing Trust, 2004, *Trust talk tenant link*, issue 13, p.6.

Recent employment and training outcomes

The South Australia Housing Trust has reported the following achievements regarding its tenant employment and training initiatives, during 2002-03:

- Employment of 122 people who participated in training activities linked to the Westwood project;
- Participation of 225 people in training programs conducted by the Westwood project, covering various sectors including construction, automotive, trades, stores and warehousing, aged care and hospitality services;
- Celebration of individual, business and community achievement with the inaugural Westwood Awards;
- Recruitment of Economic Development Officers in the large regeneration projects including Westwood and Hawksbury Park,
- Incorporation within maintenance zone contracts of a requirement for contractors to engage at least one apprentice;
- Collaboration with Inskill SA to require all contractors engaged by the Trust for a contract in excess of \$250,000 to be registered with Inskill SA. This requires contractors to gain appropriate credits by employing apprentices, graduates and staff with special needs. Contractors are also required to provide work placement experience and vocational training for staff;
- Sponsorship of the Port Adelaide Central Mission to undertake heritage garden restoration work at Paralowie House through the Commonwealth Government's Work for the Dole program. Paralowie House is leased to Port Adelaide Central Mission under the Supported Tenancy Scheme and offers a range of programs and services for young people in Salisbury;
- Management of the Doorways to Construction project in collaboration with TAFE and the Construction Industry Training Board in Elizabeth and Whyalla. This project encourages year 11 and 12 students to participate in the renovation of Trust properties. Students participating in this project have secured apprenticeships and traineeships while others have been provided with an incentive to continue with their studies (South Australian Housing Trust 2003, p.24).

Work Bank

Additional to the Housing Trust's Urban Renewal activities, an innovative community capacity building project entitled Work Bank has been operating in the Salisbury North estate area. Work Bank endeavours to provide employment opportunities to disadvantaged job seekers whilst simultaneously increasing their confidence, giving them greater control over their work situation and providing a mechanism to network with other work seekers and employment providers (Zivkovic 2000, p.2). The model encompasses a movement away from traditional full-time work and emphasises the potential for volunteer and part-time employment to assist residents from disadvantaged communities back into the workforce.

4.3 Strengths, weaknesses and potential

Strengths

Integration among partner organizations

Not only does the variety of organizations enhance the success of employment and training outcomes, but so too does the opportunity for organizations and tenants alike to assess the suitability of work relationships between the parties.

‘Work experience is most valuable when integrating with local organizations, with current and future recruitment requirements. It also provides prospective employee experience for local organizations, without long-term commitment on their part. It allows for assessment of both the suitability of the worker and the organization. Clear job outcomes have resulted’ (M Ward [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 18 October).

Wide variety of programs available

In light of the multicultural and diverse population residing in South Australia’s public housing estates, the range of initiatives available has been cited as crucial to ensuring the most beneficial outcomes result.

‘There have been a variety of government training and employment opportunities provided, in various industries; warehousing, fork lifting, retail, aged care, etc. The key is to ensure that a broad range of training and employment opportunities are provided to meet diverse needs and skills’ (M Ward 2004, interview, 18 October).

The decentralised approach adopted

Consistent with the experience of New South Wales and Victoria, the involvement of tenants in the development of labour market programs has been identified as a strength. This is particularly evident in the Work Bank model which stemmed from participants of the ‘How to be enterprising in the world of work?’ course gaining the confidence to develop their individual business ideas.

Success stories

The number of participants in training and employment courses alike are testament to the success of the labour market programs implemented as part of the South Australian Housing Trust’s commitment to Urban Renewal.

For instance, ‘With the ‘How to be enterprising in the new world of work?’ course, an amazing 100% of participants went onto other training opportunities due to the motivation gained, an incredible outcome’ (S Zivkovic [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 8 October).

Weaknesses

The need for evaluation

The importance of project evaluation was highlighted by Ward, (2000, p.23) 'The precise number of jobs expected from each initiative is difficult to assess, as each initiative will be affected by other factors that determine their success. Inevitably there will be success and there will be failure, and these will generate a need for review and fine tuning of the action plan as the initiatives progress'.

The lack of support available for social enterprises

The capacity for social enterprises is limited due to the lack of support for such structures currently available.

'In SA there are no support services for social enterprises. If you're lucky enough to have a sympathetic business services centre for business advice it's easier. Advice and support needs are difficult due to the focus on social ownership and aims being different than small business. There is a need for management advisors who have those skills, to link business advice with social enterprises' objectives. Much needs to be done for infrastructure to promote social enterprise...' (S Zivkovic 2004, interview, 8 October).

Potential

Need for a higher level agreement between governments

'There is a need for a strategic higher level of agreement between Commonwealth, State and local governments, and between local Chambers of Commerce to facilitate more employment and training opportunities. At the moment, funds tend to be for individual Commonwealth initiatives and individual State initiatives, there's not always as much cooperation or collaboration as there ideally should be' (M Ward 2004, interview, 18 October).

Desire to expand initiatives elsewhere

Following successful outcomes, the need to replicate programs elsewhere and expand exists as 'there is a desire to expand' (M Ward 2004, interview, 18 October).

The need for more support and agencies involved

A need for further support and more integration among agencies was indicated.

'A holistic approach would be good, to get on board a range of different agencies' (M Ward 2004, interview, 18 October).

'I would like to see everyone support what's happening, so communities can take more control of their opportunities and develop and address those opportunities. Much is to be taken from the small business sector to support community businesses. It's a

direction to be seen as favourable, use as training and advice service. The upskilling of small business training and advisory providers of social enterprise is an opportunity' (S Zivkovic 2004, interview, 8 October).

Chapter 5. Conclusions

The implementation of innovative labour market programs for public housing estate tenants has resulted in successes throughout New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Although these programs are in their infancy, the evidence to date indicates a movement towards social inclusion, with numbers of public estate tenants moving into employment, thereby abating a key indicator of social exclusion.

Improvements in employment result in both increased incomes for individuals and reductions in government expenditure allocated to unemployment benefits. In the context of public housing, however, additional benefits present themselves as the increased earnings from employment serve to reduce the rental subsidies outlaid by the various state housing budgets. Further to the financial benefits, labour market programs have demonstrated their ability to contribute to community development as tenants develop a sense of pride in their work efforts.

The various programs in the three states surveyed had a number of common features. These are indicated in Table 11.¹

TABLE 11: LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS AND REGENERATION – COMMON THEMES RAISED

Strengths	Diversity of initiatives available
	Specific targeting of barriers to work for public housing estate tenants
	Tenant involvement in the development of initiatives
	Specialist contribution of partner organizations
	Integration among partner organizations
Weaknesses	Lack of information available
	Lack of evaluation conducted
Potential	Tackling the financial disincentives to employment
	Funding sustainability/continuity
	The desire to replicate initiatives in other locations
	The need for information to guide future directions
	Sustainability

New South Wales has much to gain from the experiences of Victoria and South Australia.

One of the matters raised in New South Wales was the extent to which the NSW Department of Housing should directly provide labour market programs to its tenants, because of a potential clash with its core business and because public housing tenants should have effective access to generalist labour market programs provided by employment and economic development agencies. The whole-of-government approaches taken in Victoria and South Australia deal with this by formalizing partnership relationships between the state housing authority and other agencies. This

¹ These issues have been raised by respondents in more than one of the three states covered by this research.

potentially results in more efficient outcomes and less resourcing stress within the housing authority.

Broad (2003, p.14) identifies six factors crucial for the success of projects implemented via a whole-of-government approach:

- leadership – the importance of local leaders who command respect and can harness resources;
- involvement of a wide range of stakeholders – the broader the partnerships, the greater the likelihood of a strong network of relationships emerging;
- local ownership and control – addressing the challenge for government in supporting ‘bottom up’ initiatives while still retaining levels of accountability and state government policy frameworks;
- encouraging the involvement of volunteers- the active involvement of volunteers is a clear indicator that community-strengthening objectives are being delivered;
- facilitating innovation and creativity – highlighting the importance of doing things differently;
- sustainability – Does the project have the capacity to respond to changing circumstances, and take on a life of its own?

These issues have also been raised by various respondents in New South Wales.

The need for information to be made more readily available to the general public remains a key area in which the Department can contribute to the growth of labour market programs for tenants on estates.

The importance of evaluating public policies cannot be over-stressed. There is a great thirst for evaluative material by partner organizations and stakeholders alike. The NSW Department of Housing has factored in evaluation with implementation of its WorkiT program. The key findings from such evaluations need to be made publicly available in order to facilitate information sharing and guide the future direction of initiatives implemented.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Report on workshop – Community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates

10 August 2004

Shelter NSW organised a workshop on community economic development and public housing estates. It was held on Tuesday 20 July 2004, at Parramatta Mission, Macquarie Street, Parramatta.

There were 36 participants.

The format involved two presentations and three facilitated, workshop-style discussions.

Presentation #1 – Public housing tenants and the Sydney labour market

By Professor Bill Randolph from the University of Western Sydney's Urban Frontiers Program

ABS Census Data indicated that public housing tenants are under-represented in the Sydney labour market with over 11,000 public housing tenants unemployed in Sydney. A piece of AHURI research on work disincentives/ barriers for tenants to work was presented, from research with both public and private tenants.

Location has been identified as a key barrier to employment. Geographically, the bulk of public housing is in Sydney's west and public housing tenants tend to work very locally due to mobility, transport and car access issues. Due to the spatial imbalance, most public housing tenants do low paid jobs in low-paid industries.

Given these findings, the biggest policy implication identified was providing affordable accommodation in job-rich locations.

Presentation #2 – The Claymore Integration Project and Triple C Catering

By Robyn Brookes, Director, Centre for Women's Health, Campbelltown, Liz Tinney Community Engagement Strategist, The Benevolent Society, Campbelltown, and Pat Jackson, member of Triple C Catering, Claymore

The various lessons learned from the Claymore Integration Project (CIP) were discussed, including the methodology involved in organisations working together and the procedures necessary for the conduct of community enterprises.

Triple C, a pioneering tenant-run catering business, emerged from the CIP with very positive results. Not only does the enterprise provide employment and income for those tenants involved, a range of quality catering services are offered to various

clients. Triple C is run on the housing estate in Claymore so transport and car accessibility issues to and from the office are overcome.

The venture has been operating successfully for 2 years in the absence of any formal marketing, but issues such as profitability and sustainability are beginning to emerge. Furthermore, a need to develop the business with an appropriate legal structure has become evident.

Workshop # 1 – What are the main factors that inhibit or facilitate employment and self-employment outcomes for public housing tenants?

Inhibitors:

- Acting above expectations in life for public housing tenants
- Location
- Child care
- Department of Housing cooperation
- Disincentives, i.e. Centrelink benefits and income-related rents
- Lack of skills/long term unemployment
- Inadequacy of local support
- Public transport, particularly private ownership of public transport
- Discrimination, e.g. age
- Social Issues, e.g. youth peer pressure
- Schooling, for youth
- Macroeconomic policy, the priority of low inflation which results in higher unemployment
- Travel time
- Lack of Centrelink support
- Lack of *suitable* jobs in locality
- The complexities of Job Network
- Skills and training for the long-term unemployed
- Taxation and minimum wages

Facilitators:

- Available physical space
- Local support/training, e.g. neighbourhood technology centres
- The co-ordination of government agencies
- Clearer government roles
- Improving navigation of the system
- Assisted social housing in areas where work is located
- Rewards for support in the system/incentives rather than the current disincentives that exist, e.g. social security system and information
- Integrated planning, this is necessary due to the mismatch between housing, work and transport
- Adult education/school retention
- Greater access to support programs
- Matching training with job opportunities

- Improvements in the public transport system, public ownership of public transport
- Child care
- Mentoring/buddying

Workshop # 2 – What are the lessons from the various community economic development programs that have been part of regeneration activities on public housing estates?

Positive lessons learned:

- Increase incomes
- Provide positive role models
- Break down stigma of areas
- Create community partnerships and ownership
- Spirit of optimism is created
- Better public environment/maintenance
- Creation and development of skills and training
- Work provides social life
- Decreased vacancies, crime, vandalism, and rent arrears

Negative lessons learned:

- Infighting within the community, about control (who owns what?)
- Dependence on funding or a key person, creating sustainability issues
- The blurring of roles for employees who are also community members
- Unrealistic expectations
- Parochialism
- Mismatch of government funds to community needs
- Initial difficulty in identifying tenants for employment
- The difficulty of finding willing and skilled people to take up jobs
- Gender mix, e.g. the Handyperson Program is male-dominated
- Some people are difficult to place due to lack of confidence and self esteem, etc., e.g. youth
- English language skill problems also arise

Workshop # 3 – What are the opportunities for more or new community economic development with public housing tenants?

Possible future directions:

- Linkages between tenant cooperatives and community gardens.
- The need for specific data and discussion/research regarding labour market opportunities.
- The need for evaluation by different sectors/segments.
- The Department of Housing to employ tenants directly, e.g. Trainee Programs.

- The Department of Housing to offer traineeships to youth, e.g. Tenant Employment Clause.
- The need for consolidation, better communication, information sharing and evaluation; all of which facilitate and enhance learning.
- The development of a long term memory, in learning from past mistakes and successes.
- The need for flexible funding arrangements and guidelines.
- The role of the Department of Housing. Particularly in light of the fact that its core business is not the provision of training and employment services. Hence, the need to get key players together, the Department to broker from agencies whose core business is in the employment sector.
- Incentives regarding rent increases and taxation, especially for mature aged workers.
- The need for support regarding small business operations, particularly the need for realistic timeframes of funding. Three to five years is ideal, instead of the 1-2 years currently provided for. Also there exists a need for organisations to stay involved in these programs for the entire timeframe.
- The establishment of a register of groups to assist tenants into employment, perhaps a spread of different levels of government. The need for more information and integration stressed here also.
- Recognition of informal training needs to be strengthened, as does the ability of tenants to effectively communicate the skills they have learned through informal training mechanisms, e.g. the WorkiT program.

Note: The views expressed in this report are not necessarily the views of Shelter NSW. Furthermore, these views are not directly attributable to any one individual participant in the workshop discussions.

Attachment 2: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – employment initiatives

Sponsor Name	Region / LGA	Project location	Project Description
Broadmeadows Employment Project	North Western Hume/Moreland	Broadmeadows	This project will provide careers counselling, job search assistance, community education and post outcome support.
Geelong Ethnic Communities Council	Barwon Western Greater Geelong Golden Plains	Geelong West	The project will provide general employment and training support through a network of local community volunteers and an employment advocate.
Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre	Loddon Mallee Central Goldfields	Maryborough	The project will provide an intensive case management model to engage the target group.
Jobs A New Approach Ballarat	Central Highlands Wimmera Ballarat/Hepburn	Ballarat	Targeting unemployed youth (15-24 years), the project will provide ongoing support to the target group through a mentoring program involving local service clubs to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.
Jobs A New Approach Geelong	Barwon Western Greater Geelong Golden Plains	Geelong	Targeting unemployed youth (15-24 years), the project will provide an early intervention and case management model utilising mentors from local service clubs as well as networking with various education, training and employment providers to achieve outcomes.
Jewish Care	Statewide	Ripponlea	Targeting unemployed people in the orthodox Jewish community, this project will provide a comprehensive case management model which includes job search assistance, links to education and training, mentoring, job matching and life skills assistance

Migrant Resource Centre North East	North Eastern Melbourne Whittlesea Darebin	Preston / Epping	Targeting unemployed people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds with a focus on older unemployed people from the Greek and Italian communities, this project will provide a comprehensive case management model including ongoing support to the target group to achieve employment training or education outcomes.
Future Employment Opportunities	Loddon Mallee Greater Bendigo	Eaglehawk	Targeting unemployed youth (15-24) and mature age (45+), this project will offer training and skills development, enterprise creation and a job placement program that builds on strong local community links and partnerships.
Russian Ethnic Representative Council	Statewide	Ormond	Targeting unemployed people in the Russian and Slavic speaking communities, this project will provide a case management and mentoring program as well as group activities, including job clubs and tours to link with regional job opportunities for skilled migrants.
Serbian Welfare Association	Statewide	Dandenong	Targeting unemployed Serbian and Latin American people and unemployed migrant women, this project will provide an intensive case management model to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.
Migrant Resource Centre South Central	Statewide	Prahran	Targeting unemployed recently arrived migrants and Temporary Protection Visa holders including a focus on older unemployed people from the Greek and Italian communities, this project will provide intensive case management, work experience and industry forums to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.

Migrant Resource Centre South Eastern Melbourne South Eastern Dandenong	South Eastern Melbourne Greater Dandenong	Dandenong	Targeting unemployed people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds including a focus on the Vietnamese community, this project will provide intensive case management, mentoring, orientation to the Australian labour market, careers counselling and work experience to achieve employment, education and training outcomes.
Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups	Metro Melbourne	Coburg	Targeting unemployed people from the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq, this project will provide an intensive case management program including, workshops, work experience and training in the care industry meeting the community needs for culturally appropriate aged care, disability and child care services.
Western Metropolitan Youth Employment Project	Outer Western Melbourne Brimbank	Taylors Lakes	Targeting unemployed youth and people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds including a focus on the Vietnamese community, this project will provide careers counselling, workplace orientation, job search training and employment placements targeting apprenticeships and traineeships.

Source: Department for Victorian Communities (2004d).

References

- Airds Bradbury community 2004, 'Airds Bradbury employment plan'.
- Australian Council of Social Service 2003, 'Overcoming joblessness in Australia: 12 budget priorities', Strawberry Hills NSW.
- Beer, A & Maude, A 2002, *Community development and the delivery of housing assistance in non-metropolitan Australia: a literature review and pilot study*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Broad, C 2003, 'The Victorian Government agenda for building stronger communities', presented to the Centre of Public Policy, Melbourne University, 9 September.
- Burke, T & Ralston, L 2002, *Analysis of expenditure patterns and levels of household indebtedness of public and private rental households, 1975 to 1999*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Commonwealth – State Housing Agreement, Bilateral Agreement for NSW 2003/04 to 2007/08.
- communitybuilders.nsw 2004, Community Economic Development Action Strategies, viewed 10 May, <www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/building_stronger/enterprise/action2.html>.
- Department for Victorian Communities 2004a, '\$1 million to continue Wendouree West Renewal', media release, 13 July, viewed 7 May 2004, <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/newmedia.nsf/0/63BFE30CF67930EECA256ED0007F5423?Open>.
- Department for Victorian Communities 2004b, Community Jobs Program Employment Initiatives Program Overview, viewed 24 November, <<http://www.employment.vic.gov.au/CA256BC200830268/All/68A98F91FEF596A9CA256DBE000E50D5?OpenDocument>>.
- Department for Victorian Communities 2004c, Community Jobs Programs: Jobs and Training, Melbourne, viewed 24 November, <<http://www.employment.vic.gov.au/CA256BC200830268/All/E4CC4EA93309E6D2CA256E37007B921D?OpenDocument>>.
- Croce, C 2001, *Creating the links between housing, employment and income support*, National Shelter, Adelaide, SA.
- Department for Victorian Communities 2004d, Community Jobs Programs: Employment Initiative projects, Melbourne, viewed 24 November, <<http://www.employment.vic.gov.au/CA256BC200830268/All/BF7AFE6B25217A21CA256E3800234E9C?OpenDocument>>.
- Easton, A 2002, 'Your guide', *The Courier Ballarat*, 27 June 2002, viewed 6 May 2004, <http://ballarat.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story_id=159426&y=2002&m=6&class=News&subclass=Local&category=General+News&class_id=7>.
- European Commission 1996, *Social and economic inclusion through regional development: the community economic development priority in European Structural Funds programmes in Great Britain*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Garret, C 2003, 'Employment programs for social housing residents: An analysis of joblessness in social housing estates and an evaluation of four Sydney- based

- employment programs targeting social housing residents', M. Arts (City Policy) dissertation, Murdoch University.
- Hulse, K & Randolph, B 2004, *Work disincentives and housing assistance*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Jacobs, K, Arthurson, K & Randolph, B 2004, *Developing appropriate exit strategies for housing regeneration programmes*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.
- Johnston, L & Hopkins, F 2003, 'Tenant Employment Program: The Lex Model' Hotline Employment and Training and NSW Department of Housing.
- Neighbourhood Renewal Victoria 2004, 'Employment and Learning Initiatives', viewed 24 November, <<http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/oooh/web/nrwsite.nsf/doclookup/employment?opendocument>>.
- NSW Department of Housing 1999a, *Building partnerships: transforming estates into communities*, The Department, Liverpool NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 1999b, *Draft Issues Paper: Employment Incentive Project*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2000, *Annual report 1999-2000: homes and communities*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2001a, *Annual report 2000-2001: working in partnership*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2001b, *Community renewal: transforming estates into communities - partnerships and participation*, The Department, Liverpool NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2002, *Annual report 2001-2002: opportunities*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2003a, *Annual report 2002-2003: people first*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2003b, *Housing today 2002-2003*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2003c, *WorkiT Program: Program Guidelines, revised edition*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.
- NSW Department of Housing 2003f, 'Claymore residents to benefit from affordable Internet access at new Neighbourhood Technology Centre', media release, 9 September.
- NSW Department of Housing 2003g, 'Woolloomooloo residents to have affordable Internet access only a step away', media release, 1 December.
- NSW Department of Housing 2004a, 'Public housing eligibility', Ashfield, viewed 26 February, 2004, <<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/services.htm>>.
- NSW Department of Housing 2004b, *Your Home*, The Department, Ashfield NSW, issue 25, February.
- NSW Department of Housing 2004c, 'Tailor made employment scheme for government assisted housing residents launched in NSW', media release, 4 February.
- NSW Department of Housing 2004d, 'Local jobs for local people', media release, 6 February.
- NSW Department of Housing 2004e, *Your Home*, The Department, Ashfield NSW, issue 26, May.
- NSW Department of Housing n.d., *WorkiT program background case studies*, The Department, Ashfield NSW.

- Pearce, A 2003, 'Your guide', *The Courier Ballarat*, 26 January, viewed 6 May 2004, <http://ballarat.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story_id=205467&y=2003&m=1&class=Features&subclass=Features&category=Business+Extra&class_id=17>.
- Quiggin, J 2001, 'Active labour market policy and macroeconomic stabilisation', *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp.51-66.
- Randolph, B and Judd, B 1999, 'Social exclusion, neighbourhood regeneration and large public housing estates', paper presented to the Social Policy Research Centre Conference Social Policy for the 21st Century: Justice and Responsibility, held at the University of New South Wales, 21-23 July.
- Randolph, B & Murray, D 2004, 'Public housing tenants and the Sydney labour market', paper presented to Shelter NSW workshop on community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates, Parramatta, 20 July.
- Salvaris, M 2003, 'Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Department of Human Services Victoria – Final report of evaluation consultants', *Swinburne University of Technology Institute for Social Research*, Melbourne.
- Smeaton, T & Fabian, R 2003, 'Community Renewal Through Cooperative Endeavours: Claymore Community Development Cooperative', April, People, Place and Partnership 2 Conference, Sydney, viewed 10 May, 2004<http://www.bensoc.org.au/research/claymore_coop.html>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 1999, *Annual Report 1998-99*, Housing Trust, Adelaide SA, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=1&snId=6&pgId=197>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 2000, *In Focus 1999-2000*, Housing Trust, Adelaide SA, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=1&snId=6&pgId=197>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 2002a, *Annual Report 2001-2002*, Housing Trust, Adelaide SA, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=1&snId=6&pgId=197>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 2002b, *In Focus 2001-2002*, Housing Trust, Adelaide SA, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=1&snId=6&pgId=197>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 2002c, *Strategic Plan 2002-2005*, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=4&snId=24&pgId=78>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust 2003, *Annual Report 2002-2003*, Housing Trust, Adelaide SA, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=1&snId=6&pgId=197>>.
- South Australian Housing Trust n.d., Westwood Employment and Economic Development, viewed 25 November 2004, <<http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au/site/content.asp?swId=4&snId=21&pgId=230>>).
- Stubbs, J & Hardy M 2000, 'Evaluation of three Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies employed by South West Sydney region NSW Department of Housing, report prepared by for SWS Region NSW Department of Housing', Judith Stubbs & Associates, Bulli and Twyford Consulting, South Coast.
- Stubbs, J & Storer J 1996, 'Social Cost Benefit Analysis of NSW Department of Housing's Neighbourhood Improvement Program Case Study Area: Airds, NSW Department of Housing South West Sydney Region, Liverpool.

- Temby, P, Housakos, G & Ziguras, S 2004, *Helping local people get jobs – Insights from the Brotherhood of St Laurence experience at Fitzroy and Collingwood*, Brotherhood of St Laurence. Fitzroy, VIC.
- Tenant Employment Project 2002, 'Employment Project Action Kit: improving life chances through employment opportunities', NSW Department of Housing and the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002a, *Neighbourhood Renewal: Growing Victoria Together*, Office of Housing, Melbourne.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2002b, *Neighbourhood Renewal: Growing Victoria Together – Evaluation framework 2002-2003*, Office of Housing, Melbourne.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2003a, *Neighbourhood Renewal: Growing Victoria Together*, Office of Housing, Melbourne.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2003b, *Neighbourhood Renewal: Growing Victoria Together*, VCOSS Congress presentation prepared by Klein, Office of Housing, Melbourne.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2004, *Victoria points the way to sustainable communities*, media release, 22 September, viewed 7 May 2004, <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/newmedia.nsf/0/73C8D39F3B4077ADCA256F17007974BA?Open>.
- Ward M 2000, 'Economic development strategy – prepared for the local economic and employment development project reference group and the Westwood Project Committee', [South Australian Housing Trust], Adelaide SA.
- Wendouree West Community Renewal n.d., viewed 6 May 2004, <www.wendoureewest.com/renewal/residents.htm>.
- WorkVentures 2004, WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, Surry Hills NSW, viewed 7 July 2004, <<http://www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>>.
- Zivkovic, S 2000, 'Salisbury North Work Bank: towards a partnership between work providers and work seekers in Salisbury North', [South Australian Housing Trust], Adelaide SA.

Previous Shelter Briefs

1	Post budget analysis: the 1987/98 NSW state budget analysis	December	1987
2	How to use the media	February	1988
	Response to the Department of Housing's review of the Community Tenancy Scheme March 1992	July	1992
	Urban management, equity and affordable housing: submission to the Metropolitan Strategy Update	October	1992
	Submission to the draft report of the Industry Commission into Public Housing	September	1993
	The Olympics and housing	September	1994
	Rejuvenating our ageing public housing estates: the redevelopment of public housing – proceedings of a seminar	March	1996
	Housing policy green paper: a report on community consultations April-June 1996		1996
	Building a fairer housing system: Shelter NSW submission to the Senate Inquiry into Housing Assistance	May	1997
	Headleasing by the Department of Housing and gearing as an alternative strategy	October	1997
	Retention of low cost housing: options for state and local governments	January	1998
	Submission to the ministerial Inquiry into homelessness and the provision of affordable accommodation in the inner city	June	1998
	Low-income housing: where to from here? Proceedings of a Shelter NSW conference		1998
	Shelter NSW submission to the 'Plan making in NSW opportunities for the future' discussion paper	July	1999
	Counting Sydney's homeless: final report – a survey of Sydney's homeless around the Olympics September-October 2000	November	2000
	Housing us: community consultations on the future of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement in NSW	December	2001
	Financing affordable housing: a third way for housing assistance – a summary paper	December	2001
	Rent assistance to private and community sector tenants – a background paper	January	2002
	Housing policy and social mix – an exploratory paper	January	2002
	Housing tomorrow: report on community consultations on the next Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	August	2002
	Tenancies, communities, and the (re)development of public housing estates – a background paper	June	2003
2003/01	Land supply and housing affordability in Sydney – a background paper	September	2003
23	Levying developers for affordable housing – a resource paper	November	2004