



Non-shelter outcomes of housing as a policy driver

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Introduction

- The theme of non-shelter outcomes is an important research theme in the AHURI program





The rationale for the research

- Housing assistance interventions not only address the objective of meeting housing needs, they also contribute to other outcomes, such as improved social and economic well being for individuals, families and communities.
- These can be called **non-shelter outcomes**





Research aims

- 1. *To describe the changed social and economic well-being of individuals and families before and after receipt of housing assistance;*
- 2. *To describe the key non-shelter impacts of different modes of housing provision;*
- 3. *To examine the relative importance of price and non-price characteristics of public rental housing.*





Conceptual framework

- When we provide housing assistance to households, the focus is often on the benefits that the dwelling itself provides
- However, the dwelling is only a small part of the assistance package





The nature of housing as a good

- A dwelling provides a shelter but it also provides access to a bundle of goods
- The housing assistance package provides.....





The Housing Assistance Package



- The dwelling
- The neighbours
- The area
- The community





Methodology

- Approach is based on a longitudinal survey
- Interviews were undertaken in Sydney and Brisbane but recruitment of households was very difficult in Sydney





Methodology

- Tenants were interviewed twice:
 - Once when they have just moved into social housing (T1)
 - (178 households);
 - Once about six months later (T2)
 - (151 households)





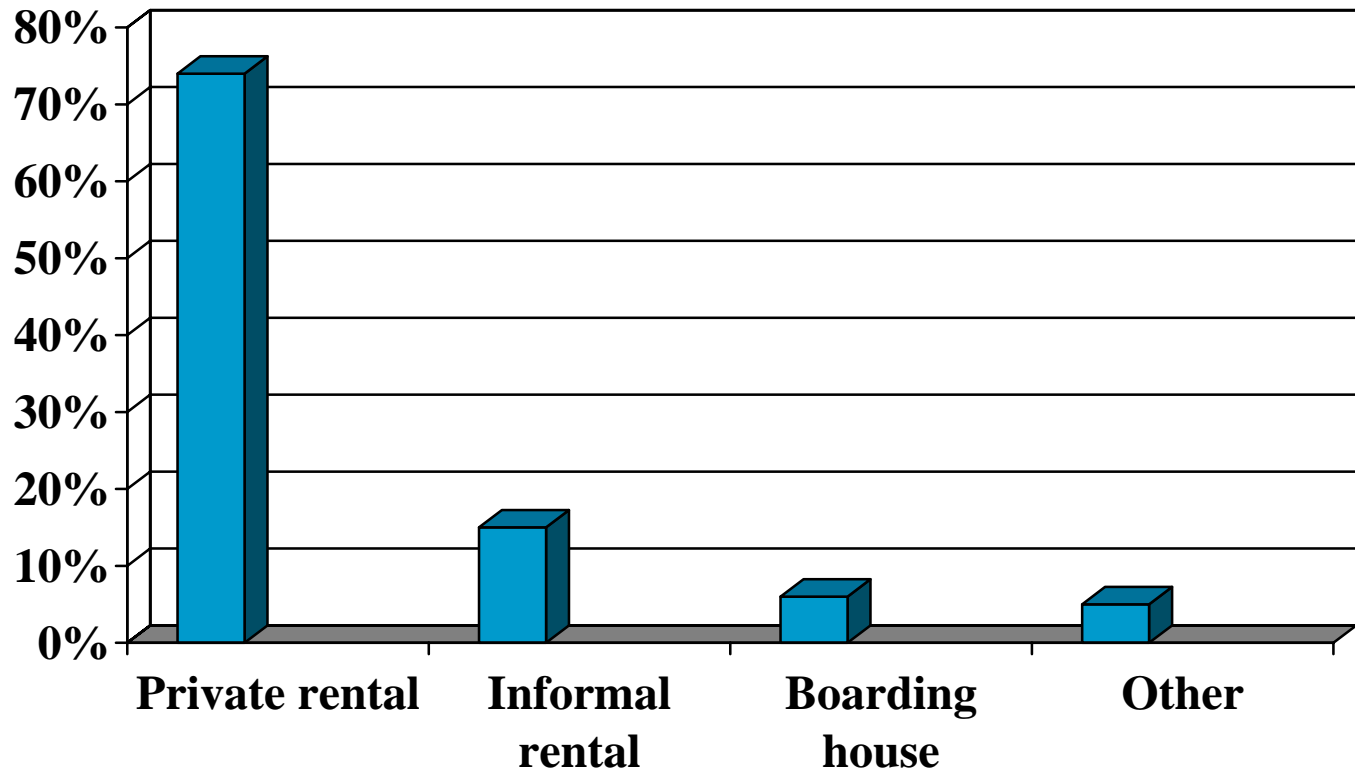
The study

- Brisbane households recruited via a letter at the allocation stage
- The main regions selected were Brisbane North and Brisbane Central





Tenure of previous residence





Household status before moving into public housing

- Only 61% were living as separate households
- Many adopted strategies of living with friends and family or sharing housing





Previous tenancy

- 82% were receiving rent assistance
- In previous 2 years, the average number of moves for households was 3.2, with the maximum of 9 moves
- Evidence for some families of “hypermoving”





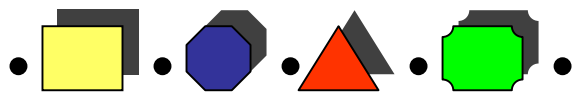
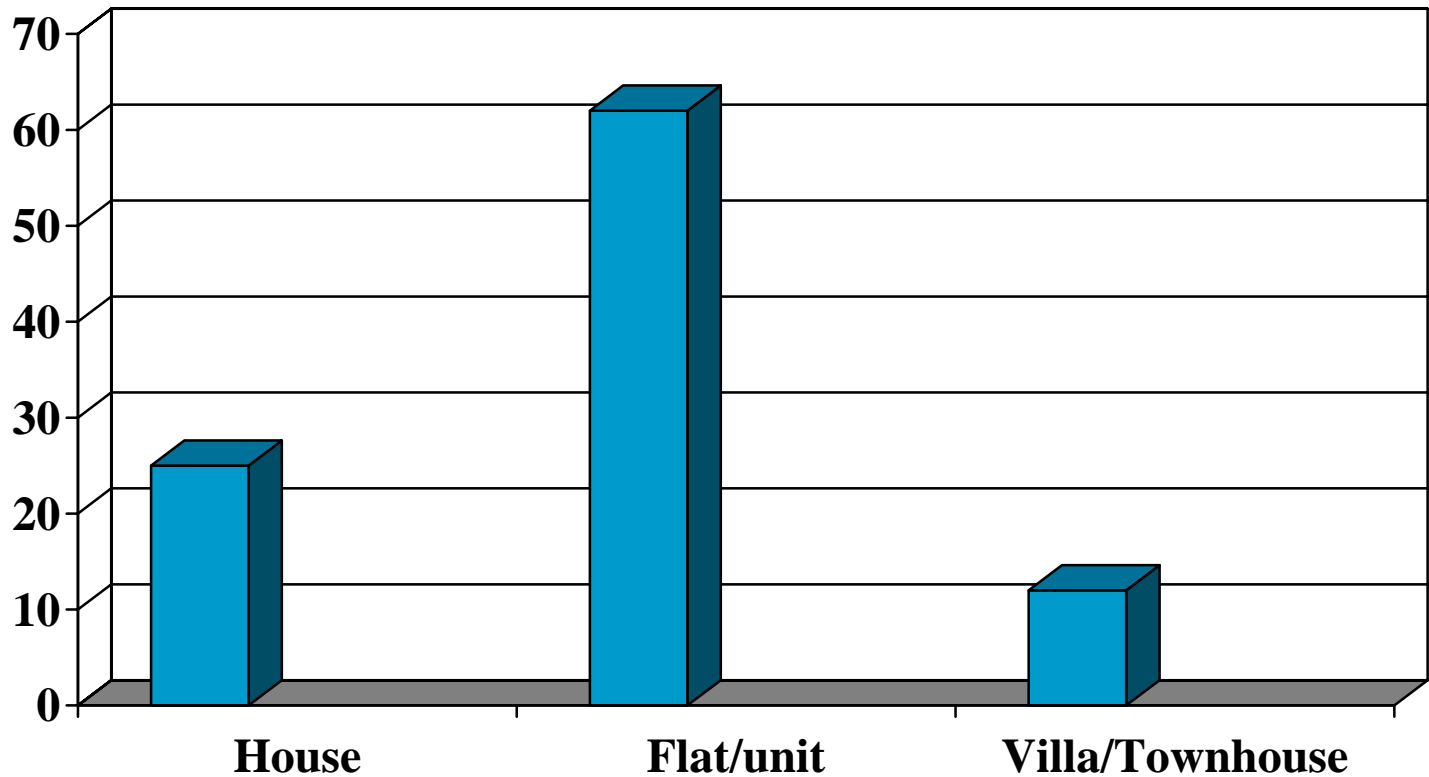
Number of schools attended in last 2 years

Number of schools	Percentage
1	36
2	24
3	14
4	10
5 or more	16
Total	100



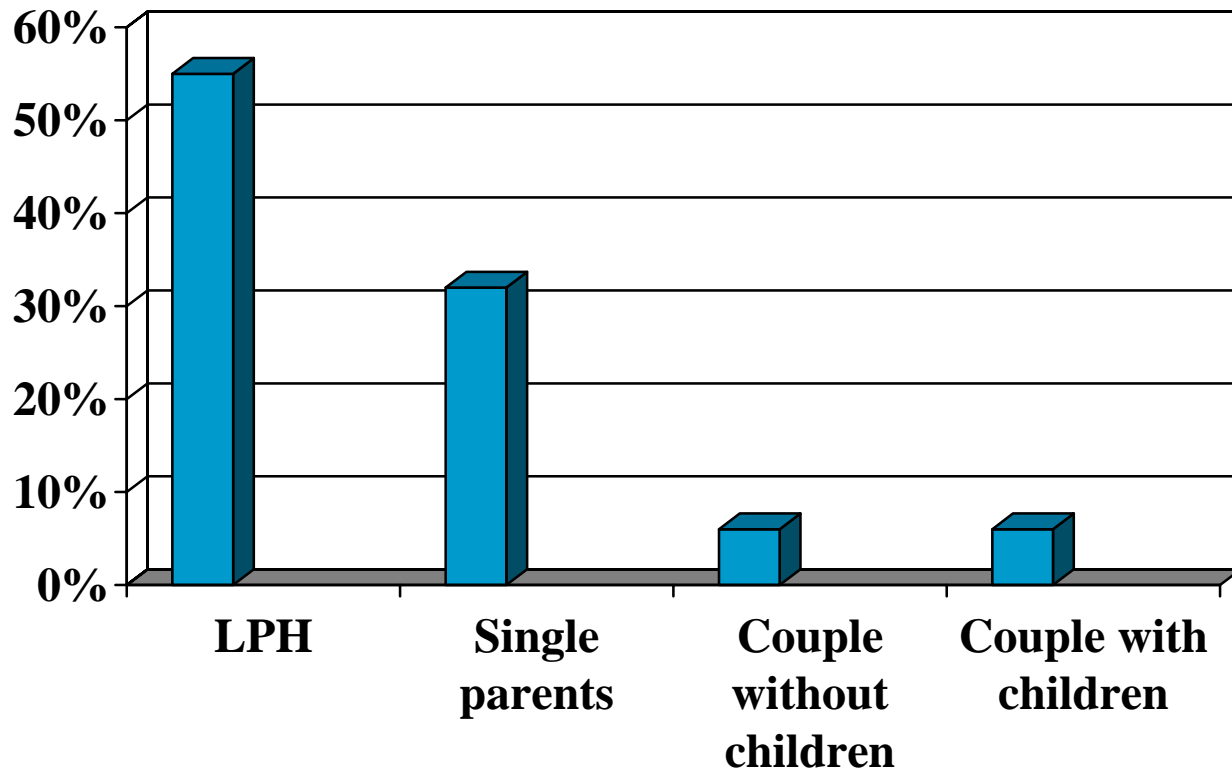


Dwelling they moved into





Family structure





Changes in neighbourhood (between T1 and previous housing)

- Moved into better neighbourhood (45%)
- Moved into a worse neighbourhood (21%)
- About the same (26%)





Medicare results

- About 80% of respondents gave us access to their Medicare records
- We were provided with data on total Medicare benefits and total number of visits per month by the HIC





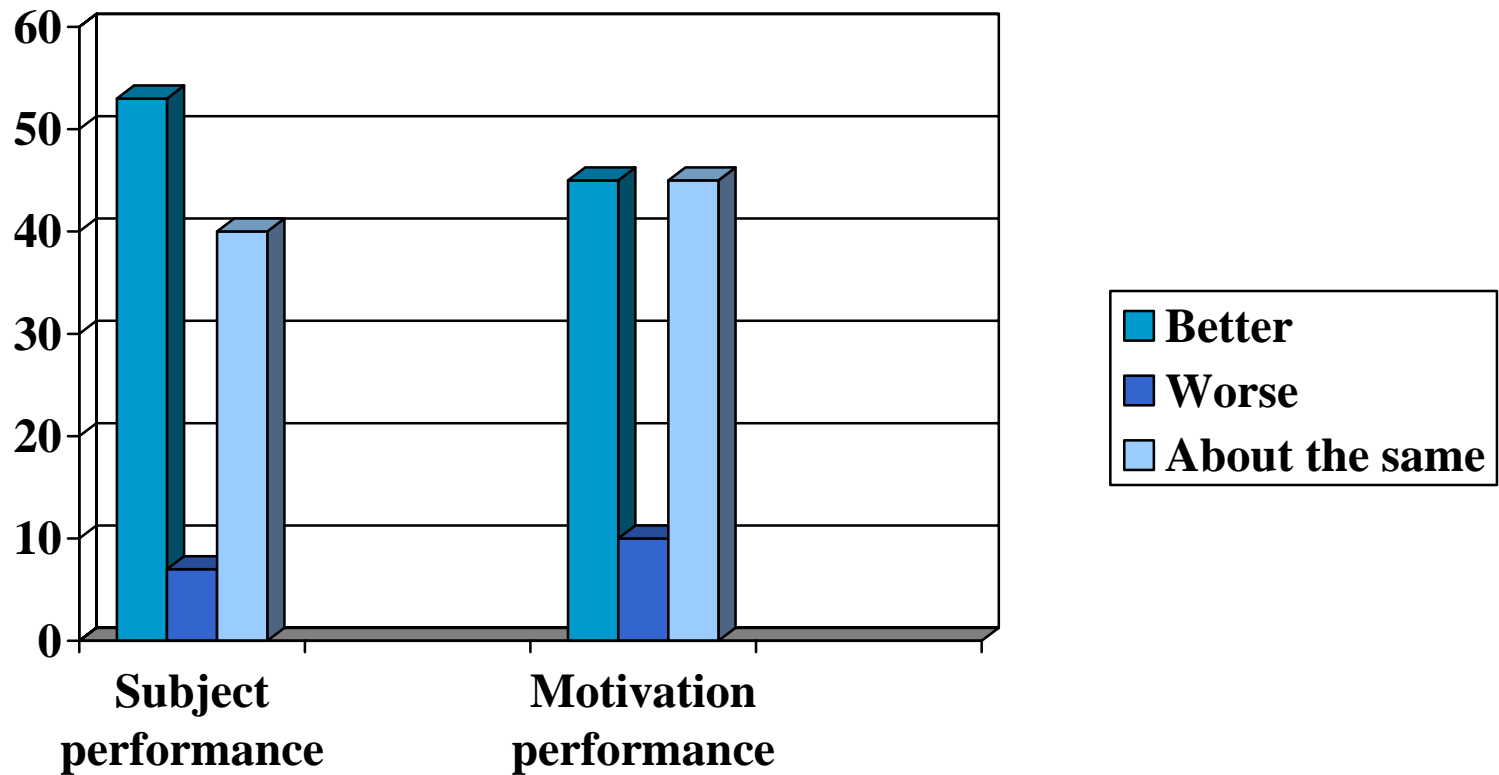
Medicare Usage before and After

	Average services per month before public housing	Average services per month after public housing	Average benefits per month before public housing	Average benefits per month after public housing
Total sample (N=130)	1.92	1.86	\$60.96	\$58.66
Light users*(N=42)	0.46	0.95	\$13.46	\$28.88
Heavy users (N=22)	4.32	3.39	\$152.36	\$106.23





Education: Comparison





Why education outcomes have changed?

Reason	%
Things are better at home	24
Child is happier	25
More motivated group of friends	18
Better teacher	13
Better school	12





What do you think has been the most important change?

Issue	%
Security of tenure	22
Control over own environment	20
More financially secure	10
Less depressed, better emotional well being	10





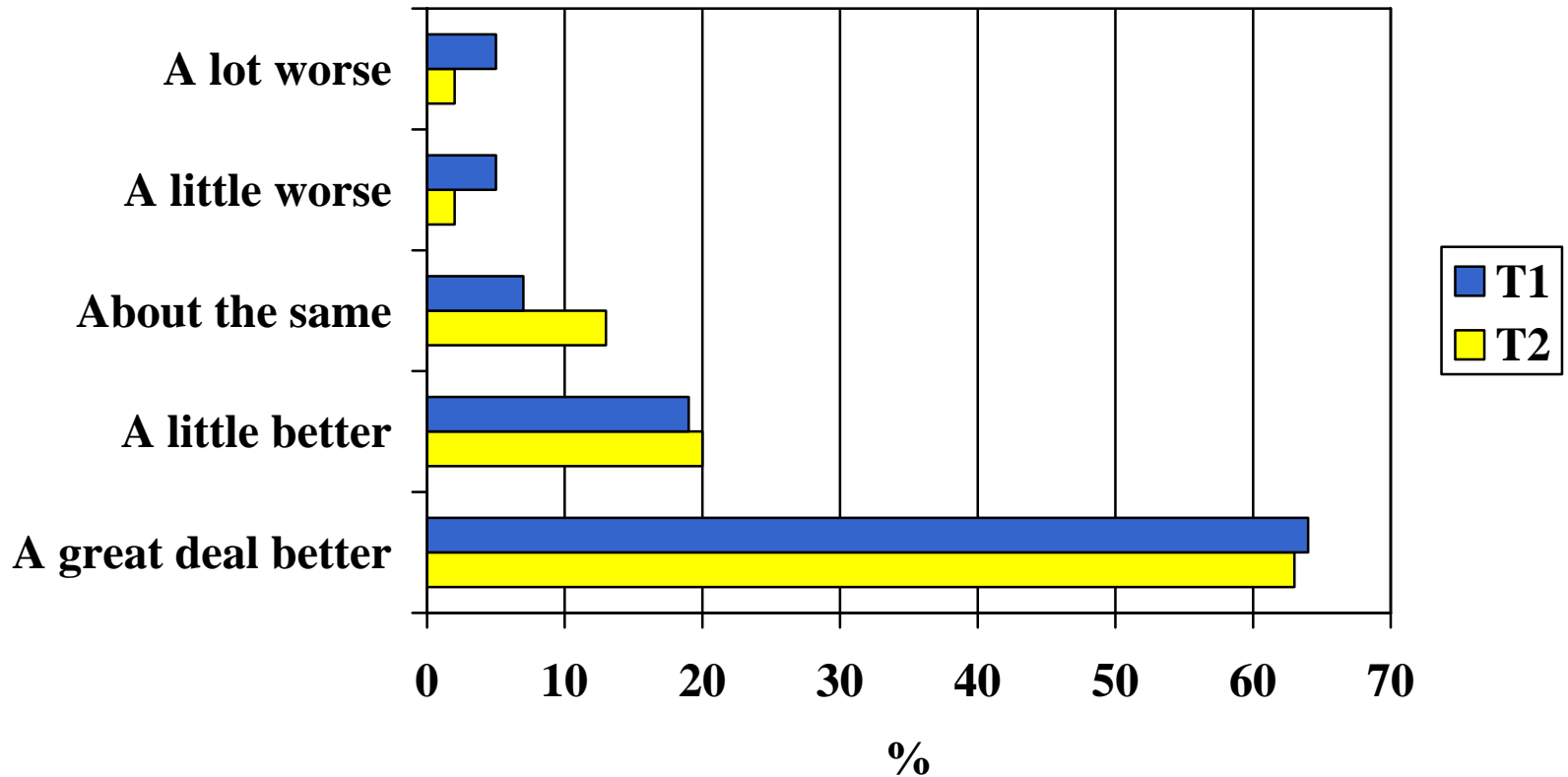
Other changes

- Small overall increase in the use of government and community services, largely because of better information
- Small increase in employment levels but not statistically significant





How would you rate your housing compared to previous housing?





Negative outcomes

- Neighbour issues;
- Area/location issues;
- Set up costs issues
- Self esteem issues
- Community issues





Conclusion

- The non-shelter outcomes appear very different for the Department of Housing tenants compared to those offered by the rent assistance product operating in the private rental market
- Tenants are very satisfied with their housing and consider their expectations have largely been met





Policy issues

- Consumers in the survey see two products – public housing assistance and rent assistance as very different. They generated very different outcomes for consumers





Policy Issues - Housing and Education

- As funding declines for public housing we need to review:
 - Who we prioritise for assistance, and
 - How we can assist people as efficiently as possible.





Who to prioritise for assistance?

- Typical categories for out of turn allocation:
 - Homeless/at risk of homelessness
 - Medical condition affected by present housing
 - To facilitate family reunion (eg. child returning to care of family)
 - Escaping domestic violence
 - Family member with a disability requiring accessible housing
 - Victim of natural disaster
- As well as....
 - To facilitate stock regeneration





Dimensions of out of turn policies

- An *aspect of housing* (too small, too expensive, very poor condition)
- A *household characteristic* (ill-health, disability, victim of violence, very low income)

Resulting in:

- A *non-shelter consequence* or impact (illness, violence, reduced quality of life or opportunity)

Based on:

- An implicit assumption about the *role or importance of housing* (better housing can improve health)





Applying our findings on education

- Households living in unstable housing and/or a history of frequent moves (an *aspect of housing*); and
- Households with a child requiring school based remediation (a *household characteristic*);

Such a policy may result in:

- Improved school attainment levels and retention rates (*non-shelter impact*)

Because:

- Unstable housing and changing schools is thought to reduce the effectiveness of school based remediation strategies (a *role of housing*).





Housing and education in partnership

- Not every child will benefit educationally from stable housing
- Some children require stable housing in a different place
- Developing and implementing this policy requires a partnership between State Housing Authorities and Education authorities
- Suggests new ways of measuring success





What forms of assistance to offer?

- Declining funding places greater focus on efficiency – cost per household assisted
- One approach is to put more effort into understanding what aspect(s) of housing require attention, and focussing assistance just on those aspect(s)
- Requires good client assessment systems, and a wider range of housing assistance products





Moving from super-supreme for a few to cheese-lovers for many

- Public housing provides affordability, security, location, appropriateness – a multi-need intervention (“the works”)
- Most SHAs have a limited range of single-need interventions, eg. bond loans
- Single-need interventions may be more efficient way to meet specific needs such as housing stability.
- Can we address the needs for housing stability for families with school aged children in ways other than public rental housing – eg. Brisbane Housing Company, Defence Housing Authority head-leases
- Some people will always need super-supreme





Research policy issues

The use of administrative data sets with a housing variable offer a possible alternative

- This sort of work requires the close co-operation of the SHA- other studies should be in conjunction with SHAs

