

# Integration and Social Housing

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# Research details



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Status:           Positioning Paper awaiting publication  
                  Final Report being finalised

# Research aims and questions

## Critically examine the themes of policy and service integration

- What is driving policy interest in integration in the Australian social housing context
- What are stakeholders' view about key integration issues and initiatives
- What sort of integration initiatives are happening?
- What facilitate and impedes their implementation?
- Where does integration most benefit clients and enhance social housing service delivery?
- What principles and practices should underpin integration endeavours?

# Methodology

## Key Stages:

- Literature Review
- Policy Review

## Positioning Paper

- Workshops in Qld, NSW and SA
- Key informant interviews
- Analysis

## Final Report

# Social Housing integration

## Drivers

- Contracting social housing supply
- Increasing waiting lists
- Complexity of tenant needs
- Diversity of housing providers
- Reducing private market affordability
- Diversity of housing assistance programs

**Scarcity**

**Complexity**

**Diversity**

# Social Housing integration

## Three challenges



1. Linkages within social housing between public, community and Indigenous housing
2. Linking with other human services, including homelessness services
3. Linking with housing assistance and affordable housing

**Policy**

**Service Delivery**

# Integration initiatives within Social Housing



## Queensland

- One Social Housing system: common application and allocation system

## South Australia

- Housing SA: governance structures
- Housing One Stop Shops: integrated information and referral

## New South Wales

- Common Access Strategy: cross sector relationships

## Other

- Linkages with Indigenous housing; regulation; client appeals; integrated regional planning; common training

# Integration initiatives with other human services



## New South Wales

- Human Services Accord
- Housing and Support Initiative (HASI)

## South Australia

- Super- agency for housing and human services

## Queensland

- Whole of government response to homelessness

# Housing affordability linkages



## South Australia

- Private Rental Liaison Officers
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Continuum of housing options and more flexible pathways for clients

# Human services integration

## Literature



### Core Objectives:

- Improved client outcomes
- Enhanced client access
- Greater equity and consistency
- Increased efficiency
- Enhanced accountability and control

# Human services integration

Literature

Cont...



## Modes:

- 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' (*Martinson, 1999*)
- 'loosely coupled' or 'tightly coupled' (*O'Looney, 1993*)

## Instruments:

- Focus of intervention may include: clients, service delivery, programs, organisations and policies (*Morgan, 1995; Yessian, 1995*)

# Implementing integration

## Success factors:

- Leadership (formal and informal)
- Trust and commitment (effective relationships)
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Allocation of responsibility (effective governance)
- Multi-level interventions
- Shared infrastructure (IT, forms, procedures)
- Adequate time and resources for change management
- Cross agency / cross professions networking and training

# Evaluating the benefits of integration

- Evaluations have tended to focus on service provision and program management
- Less focus on evaluating the experience or outcomes for clients
- Conflicting evidence about whether client outcomes have been improved as a result of integration efforts
- Methodological challenges in evaluating integration initiatives
- Effectiveness of initiatives is context specific

# Example

## Social Housing access

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>South Australia Housing One Stop Shop</b>	<b>Queensland One Social Housing System</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Enhance client access</li> <li>→ Improved client outcomes</li> <li>→ Efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Enhanced client access</li> <li>→ Equity and consistency</li> <li>→ Accountability and control</li> </ul>
<b>Instruments</b>	Common information, referral and assessment	Common eligibility and allocations policies, application form, waiting list
<b>Scope</b>	All <b><i>housing assistance</i></b> and support products and providers	All <b><i>social housing</i></b> providers (common waiting list only long term and affordable housing)
<b>Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Top-down</li> <li>→ Loosely coupled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Top-down</li> <li>→ Tightly coupled</li> </ul>
<b>Domains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Service delivery</li> <li>→ Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Service delivery</li> <li>→ Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Strong mandate</li> <li>→ Staged implementation</li> <li>→ Incremental change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Strong mandate</li> <li>→ Staged implementation</li> <li>→ Radical change</li> </ul>

# Findings

- Increasing policy interest in integration
- Many different responses to same issue
- Policy focus primarily on top down initiatives
- Lack of recognition of good existing local practice and expertise
- Social/ market boundaries are blurring
- Underlying issue of lack of affordable housing options

# More Findings

## **Integration:**

- is a tool, not an outcome
- Is context specific
- can both benefit and disadvantage clients
- occurs and is generated at both policy and service delivery levels

## **Requires:**

- engagement of full range of stakeholders in development and implementation
- to be explicitly resourced
- leadership and to be sustained over time
- wider recognition and support in govt. for responsive bottom up initiatives

# Policy and practice implications

## Integration:

- is a core and ongoing policy and service delivery problem in complex and diverse environments
- is essentially a governance issue of managing multiple participants and new types of relationships
- requires new governance approaches that cross program, agency and public, community and market sector boundaries
- requires new sorts of relationships, structures, tools and skills (collaboration, networks, common IT, common assessment practices)