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Tually, Selina; Beer, Andrew

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Positioning Paper

Housing assistance, social inclusion and people with disabilities

authored by

Selina Tually and Andrew Beer

for the

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Ltd.
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSTDA	Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Australian Government)
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NDS	National Disability Strategy
NPA	National Partnership Agreement
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
NRV	National Research Venture
NPWDACC	National People with Disabilities and Carer Council
SPP	Specific Purpose Payment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The election of the Labor Government to office in 2007 has heralded a number of changes in the focus of public policy in Australia. Paramount among these changes has been a renewed focus on three key areas: housing, disability and social inclusion (discussed in Chapter 2 of this report), and the interconnectedness of, and interrelationships between, these three, and other policy spheres. Accordingly significant policy innovation has occurred with respect to these areas of public policy, supported by a range of new national policies, as well as reforms to state and Commonwealth financial relations. Such reforms and policies include:

- For social inclusion—introduction of a whole-of-government approach to social inclusion, focuses, in part, on assisting people with disabilities and improving the housing circumstances of the most vulnerable Australians.
- For disability—development of a National Disability Strategy (currently under development) and reform to (and in some cases increased money for) disability services, including supported accommodation.
- For housing (and housing assistance)—the introduction of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and supporting actions through the National Partnerships on Homelessness, Social Housing and Remote Indigenous Housing; the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and significant investment in social housing under the Social Housing Initiative as part of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

Given the focus on these areas within Australian Government policy—and the flow-on effect of reforms and actions in these areas for states and territories—a focus on the interaction between these areas is warranted. This research does this by specifically examining the role of housing assistance (for example social housing, rental subsidies etc.) on social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities.

The project addresses two pressing conceptual and policy challenges:

- What impact does housing assistance have on social inclusion for persons with disabilities?
- How can governments ensure that they maximise the social inclusion benefits from the housing assistance they provide now and into the future?

To address the overarching objectives of this project, the research focuses on three core research questions:

1. Do non-institutional or mainstream forms of housing assistance promote social inclusion for people with disabilities?
2. What are the implications of the social inclusion impacts of housing assistance on the development of public policy and the delivery of housing assistance programs into the future?
3. How can housing assistance and other policies be best integrated to achieve social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities?

Exploration of these research questions will allow the following project aims to be met:

- To develop a deeper understanding of the ways housing assistance programs contribute to social inclusion for people with disabilities.
- To identify those aspects of housing assistance that have social inclusion impacts in order to produce policies which produce stronger social inclusion outcomes in the future.

- To document the ways in which social inclusion among people with disabilities varies by location (metropolitan/non-metropolitan; inner versus outer urban) and type of disability, as well as the role housing assistance plays in these outcomes.
- To examine the housing transitions of persons who have moved from institutional to more independent forms of housing and how this has affected their level of social inclusion.
- To examine why some people may choose not to move from institutional settings and what impact institutional housing assistance may have in terms of social inclusion outcomes.
- To explore the relationship between type of disability and social inclusion outcomes. Positive social inclusion outcomes may be relatively predictable for some people with disabilities, e.g. the mobility-impaired. However, for other groups, e.g. those with a psychiatric disability or cognitive impairment, the dimensions of housing assistance that contribute to positive social inclusion outcomes will be difficult to predict and they need to be known in order to better tailor both the housing stock and housing assistance.
- To consider ways in which housing assistance and support services could be integrated to maximise social inclusion outcomes.

This stage of the research will integrate a number of data sources—including qualitative data derived from interviews with people with lifetime disabilities and service providers working with/assisting people with disabilities—in order to understand the level of social exclusion/inclusion experienced by those with a disability and the role of housing, or specifically housing assistance, in that outcome. This research will take place in three jurisdictions: NSW, South Australia and Victoria. The interviews undertaken for this stage of the research will examine the level of social inclusion among this group based on the central tenets of the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda: learn, work, engage, have a voice.

This research is timely given that we know little about the housing aspirations and expectations of people with disabilities and we know even less about the impact of housing assistance on social inclusion outcomes for this group (discussed in Chapter 3). It is also important given five other important points raised in the discussion about housing, housing assistance and disability in Chapter 3. That is:

- Disability has a significant presence within the population occupying housing in Australia, with one in five households reporting that at least one member of the household has a disability.
- A significant proportion of the population has a profound or severe disability (some 6.3% of the population) and this level of disability will likely determine the housing needs of people with such disability.
- Most people with disabilities live within the community, with specialist accommodation only used by a small minority.
- The nature, source and extent of the disability can affect an individual's housing experiences.
- The published literature shows that people with disabilities experience social exclusion and are confronted by multiple processes that remove or limit their capacity to participate fully in society.

Importantly, the research will contribute to the social inclusion priorities of governments by shedding light on the way in which housing, and housing assistance, shapes the ability of people with disabilities to participate fully in society. It will provide a better understanding of the ways in which non-institutional and social housing provision contributes to higher-level outcomes, such as the improved social and economic wellbeing of families and individuals affected by disability. Also, it will explore which components of housing assistance have an impact on social inclusion outcomes. It will explore both the social inclusion impacts of the *bricks and mortar* of housing support (the shelter impacts) as well as the impacts of living or tenancy assistance that may be provided by non-government organisations.

The research will assist governments to form policies on:

- The role housing assistance plays in the lives of individuals affected by disability, their households and the communities within which they live.
- Future stock profiles as issues of property location, amenity and design are likely to determine social inclusion outcomes and social landlords may need to review their stock holdings in order to achieve better outcomes for people with disabilities.
- The forms of housing assistance that make the most positive impact on the quality of lives of people with disabilities.
- How to better design housing assistance in order to maximise the outcomes for people with disabilities while supporting family members, carers and the communities within which they live.

These contributions to housing (disability and social inclusion) policy and the wider housing, disability and social inclusion literatures are fundamental to building our understanding of what are appropriate supports for the large and growing number of people with disabilities in Australia, and especially for ensuring that people with disabilities are able to participate in the social and economic life of the country to the extent they desire and are capable of: the Australian Government's social inclusion vision.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The project addresses two pressing conceptual and policy challenges:

- What impact does housing assistance have on social inclusion for people with disabilities?
- How can governments ensure that they maximise the social inclusion benefits from the housing assistance they provide now and into the future?

These questions sit with a number of areas of focus in the 2009 AHURI research agenda, including: the functioning of the broader housing system and housing assistance programs generally; program integration and housing assistance; and the relationship between housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes for vulnerable people.

The research is an important area of investigation at the current time, particularly given the dearth of literature on the role that housing and housing assistance plays in facilitating and supporting the economic and social participation of people with disabilities (i.e. their level of *social inclusion*). The 2009 AHURI research agenda acknowledges this in a general sense, noting that:

Housing assistance interventions not only aim to meet housing needs, they also contribute to higher-level outcomes, such as improved social and economic well being for individuals, families and communities. (AHURI 2008, p.70)

and, that...

Government is seeking to better appreciate how housing assistance interventions improve other aspects of people's lives. There is a need for government to more fully understand:

- The role that housing assistance plays in the lives of individuals, households and communities.
- Which attributes of housing assistance make a difference to the quality of people's lives.
- How to design housing assistance interventions that support communities in the ways that they most need assistance.

Where changes are made to housing assistance there are likely to be flow-on effects, not just for individuals, but also for the breadth of government programs that help to meet their needs such as employment, health and welfare programs. Given this, there is a need to understand the government-wide fiscal implications (monetary and other costs and benefits) of possible changes in housing assistance. (AHURI 2008, p.70)

Further, the research agenda also notes that in terms of housing assistance programs (AHURI 2008, p.70, emphasis added):

While the primary focus of this research area is on the effect of housing assistance on economic and social participation outcomes, consideration needs to be given to the range of mediating factors (such as gender) and differential effects for different population groups such as young people, older households, Indigenous people, people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, *people with disabilities* and carers.

and...

Housing research has not developed a full understanding of the links between aspects of housing and social inclusion.

This research aims to fill this gap in the literature specifically by investigating the public policy implications of housing assistance and social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities.

This research is an important addition to AHURI's body of literature as it extends and builds on AHURI research that has examined the relationship between housing and/or housing assistance and social inclusion/exclusion and social cohesion generally, as well as more specific research on housing and people with disabilities, and research on housing assistance, including the impact of housing assistance on non-shelter outcomes. Relevant AHURI work in this regard includes: the review of Australian and international literature on *Social exclusion and housing* by Hulse and Jacobs (2003); Hulse and Stone's (2006) research on *Housing, housing assistance and social cohesion*; and Hulse and Saugeres' 2008 work on *Housing insecurity and precarious living in Australia*.

In terms of broader housing and disability research, other pertinent AHURI research includes: Bleasdale's research on *Supporting the housing of people with complex needs* (2007; 2006); Bridge et al.'s (2002a; 2002b) exploration of *Housing and care for older and younger adults with disabilities*; the research by O'Brien et al. (2002) on *Linkages between housing and support – what is important from the perspective of people living with a mental illness* (see also Reynolds et al. 2002); as well as the research into the housing careers of people with disabilities and their carers conducted as part of AHURI's second National Research Venture: *21st century housing careers and Australia's housing future* (for example, by Beer & Faulkner 2009; Tually 2007; Kroehn et al. 2007). This research complements and extends AHURI work such as that by Phibbs and Young (2005) and Bridge et al.'s (2003) on *Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes*; Mullins and Western (2001) on *Examining the links between housing and nine key socio-cultural factors*; and a number of the publications from AHURI's first National Research Venture: *Housing assistance and economic participation*.

1.2 Background

The election of the Labor Government to office in 2007 has heralded a number of changes in the focus of public policy in Australia. Paramount among these changes has been a renewed focus on three key areas: housing, disability and social inclusion, and the interconnectedness of, and interrelationships between, these three, and other policy spheres. Accordingly significant policy innovation has occurred with respect to these areas of public policy, supported by a range of new national policies, as well as reforms to state and Commonwealth financial relations.

The commitment of the Australian Government to social inclusion specifically is demonstrated by the appointment of a Minister for Social Inclusion and the creation of a Social Inclusion Unit within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in November 2007, as well as the establishment of the Australian Social Inclusion Board in May 2008. The actions of these organisations and the Minister are informed by the Social Inclusion Board's recently released *Social Inclusion Agenda* (outlined in detail in Chapter 2). An agenda that the Australian Government has committed to implementing across all government activities and programs, and that is specifically being pursued in the areas of access to employment, education, housing and social services, as well as a range of other activities and services necessary for the full

participation of individuals in the community. Achieving and promoting social inclusion for all Australians is now an overriding outcome and performance indicator for the Australian community generally, with specific attention paid to promoting social inclusion for the most vulnerable individuals and groups.

As noted in Chapter 2, the Social Inclusion Agenda cuts across current national housing policy and disability policy (to the extent that this has been developed to date). And, in investigating the current policy focus on social inclusion it is evident that the *issues of housing and disability are of central policy relevance in discussions around social inclusion*, as they are current priorities for the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda:

- Addressing the incidence of homelessness.
- Employment for people living with disabilities or mental illnesses.

On this issue it should also be noted that significant policy innovation has surrounded housing across the country, tied specifically to improving affordability outcomes for vulnerable Australians. Accordingly, significant investment has been directed toward social housing over recent months as part of reforms under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan (for discussion see other recent AHURI research by Tuohy et al. 2010). And, following a now entrenched trend in the provision of housing assistance across the country, State Housing Authorities and other social landlords are increasingly focussed on meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, and as this research will show, direct provision of housing assistance has important implications for the degree of social inclusion experienced by people with disabilities. Effective delivery of housing assistance is important in achieving social inclusion as many people with disabilities are at risk of homelessness (especially those with psychiatric disabilities) or live in insecure housing. Inadequate or poorly located housing can be a significant impediment to employment for people with disabilities (Kroehn et al. 2007). In many instances the history of institutional housing provision has left a legacy that operates counter to the principles of social inclusion. Those affected by disability may also be socially excluded in consequence of: high housing costs relative to incomes; limited capacity to move through the housing market; limited appropriate housing; and the need for the support of carers. In many instances there are limited housing options for people with disabilities (Beer & Faulkner 2009) and extensive waiting lists for social housing and other forms of housing assistance.

Additionally, the importance of promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities is a key guiding principle that has been strongly emphasised in the preliminary documentation for the National Disability Strategy (NDS) currently under development.

This research then will add to the evidence base in an area of prominent policy interest, spanning multiple policy areas. Moreover, it adds further weight to the (light) body of literature and our general understanding on the relationship between housing and disability.

1.3 Research questions, aims and policy relevance

This project will answer three core research questions.

1. Do non-institutional or mainstream forms of housing assistance promote social inclusion for people with disabilities?

2. What are the implications of the social inclusion impacts of housing assistance on the development of public policy and the delivery of housing assistance programs into the future?
3. How can housing assistance and other policies be best integrated to achieve social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities?

Exploration of these research questions will allow the following project aims to be met. That is, to:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the ways housing assistance programs contribute to social inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Identify those aspects of housing assistance that have social inclusion impacts in order to produce policies which produce stronger social inclusion outcomes in the future.
- Document the ways in which social inclusion among people with disabilities varies by location (metropolitan/non-metropolitan, inner versus outer urban) and type of disability, as well as the role housing assistance plays in these outcomes.
- Examine the housing transitions of persons who have moved from institutional to more independent forms of housing and how this has affected their levels of social inclusion.
- Examine why some people may choose not to move from institutional settings and what impact institutional housing assistance may have in terms of social inclusion outcomes.
- Explore the relationship between type of disability and social inclusion outcomes. Positive social inclusion outcomes may be relatively predictable for some people with disabilities, e.g. the mobility-impaired. However, for other groups – e.g. those with psychiatric disabilities or cognitive impairment – the dimensions of housing assistance that contribute to positive social inclusion outcomes will be difficult to predict and they need to be known in order to better tailor both the housing stock and housing assistance.
- Consider ways in which housing assistance and support services could be integrated to maximise social inclusion outcomes.

Importantly also, this research will contribute to the social inclusion priorities of governments by *shedding light on the way in which housing, and housing assistance, shapes the ability of people with disabilities to participate fully in society*. It will provide a better understanding of the ways in which non-institutional and social housing provision contributes to higher-level outcomes, such as the improved social and economic wellbeing of families and individuals affected by disability. Also, it will also explore which components of housing assistance have an impact on social inclusion outcomes. It will explore both the social inclusion impacts of the ‘bricks and mortar’ of housing support (the shelter impacts) as well as the impacts of living or tenancy assistance that may be provided by non-government organisations.

The research will assist governments to form policies on:

- The role housing assistance plays in the lives of individuals affected by disability, their households and the communities within which they live.
- Future stock profiles as issues of property location, amenity and design are likely to determine social inclusion outcomes and social landlords may need to review their stock holdings in order to achieve better outcomes for people with disabilities.

- The forms of housing assistance that make the most positive impact on the quality of lives of people with disabilities.
- How to better design housing assistance in order to maximise the outcomes for people with disabilities while supporting family members, carers and the communities within which they live.

The research has the potential to set benchmarks in terms of social inclusion for people with disabilities that would assist the current development of the NDS.

1.4 Structure of the Positioning Paper

This Positioning Paper is structured in the following manner. Chapter 1 provides a short overview of the research, including research aims and policy relevance, as well as briefly contextualising and showing the importance of the research. Chapter 2 outlines the policy context for the research. It specifically looks at the social inclusion vision and priorities and agenda of the Australian Government, as well as discussing the structures supporting the Australian Government's whole-of-government social inclusion focus and relevant programs and initiatives. The discussion in this Chapter also focuses on the implications of social inclusion for housing and disability in Australia, including commentary on social inclusion and recent innovation in both housing policy and disability policy. The last section of the Chapter notes that social inclusion is also a focus of the actions of a number of state governments across Australia, and identifies key state government activities in this regard.

Chapter 3 examines the relationship between housing, housing assistance and social inclusion. It estimates the size of the population in Australia with a disability. The discussion also considers the nature of social inclusion/exclusion and summarises our current knowledge of disability and housing in Australia.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology being used in the second stage of the research to answer the overarching research questions for the project. The discussion in this Chapter notes the centrality of the experiences and views of people with disabilities themselves, and service providers assisting people with disabilities with their housing, support, community participation and related social inclusion outcomes in the overall research. It also outlines the geographical focus of the research.

Chapter 5 concludes the Positioning Paper, highlighting the important contribution of both stages of this research—and especially the empirical research with people with disabilities—to housing (disability and social inclusion) policy development at this opportune time.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The election of the Labor Government to office in late 2007 has heralded a number of changes in the focus of public policy in Australia, all aimed at 'working with all sectors of the economy and local communities to build an Australia which is stronger, fairer and better prepared for the future' (Prime Minister of Australia 2009). Paramount among these changes has been an increased focus on strategies to promote and achieve social inclusion¹ for all Australians, and especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups. Box 1 shows the current Australian Government's policy priorities. Notably in terms of this research, these priorities also highlight the importance of providing support for vulnerable individuals and groups, including people with disabilities, and addressing homelessness and housing affordability problems.

Box 1: The policy priorities of the Australian Government

Building a stronger Australia

The Government has taken strong, early and decisive action to build a stronger Australia in the face of the worst global economic conditions in three-quarters of a century – resulting in Australia enjoying the highest growth in the first quarter of 2009 of all the advanced economies reported to date.

The Government is committed to:

- dealing with the global economic recession
- nation building and jobs
- further economic reform
- defence and national security
- building a more secure and prosperous world.

Building a fairer Australia

The Government is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity, *a proper safety net as well as a compassionate response to entrenched social and economic disadvantage* – in other words a fair go for all.

The Government is committed to:

- a fair and balanced workplace relations system
- *providing support for new parents, low income earners, pensioners, seniors, carers, people with disabilities and veterans*
- *addressing housing affordability, homelessness and indigenous disadvantage*
- *reducing violence against women and children and promoting social inclusion.*

Preparing for future challenges

Like many nations, Australia faces the long-term challenges of the global economic downturn, climate change, the ageing of the population and long-term food and water supply, among others. That is why the Government believes we must prepare today for the challenges of the future.

The Government is committed to:

- the Education Revolution
- infrastructure and innovation
- health and hospital reform
- addressing climate change and water
- a new way of governing.

Source: Prime Minister of Australia 2009, available via links at http://www.pm.gov.au/Policy_Priorities

¹ The concept of social inclusion is defined in section 3.1.1.

The Australian Government's focus on social inclusion cuts across a range of areas of policy priority, and is specifically being pursued in the areas of access to employment, education, housing and social services, as well as a range of other activities and services necessary for the full participation of all individuals in the community. Such policy innovation is being supported by a range of national policies and initiatives, as well as reforms to state and Commonwealth financial relations – through such mechanisms as the six new National Agreements associated with the five Specific Purpose Payments (SPP) under the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) new Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (see Chapter 2) and the new National Partnerships supporting this Agreement. These partnerships fund specific projects and reward jurisdictions delivering on agreed nationally significant reforms. These reforms have seen a boost in funding for a range of services under each SPP for: healthcare; schools; skills and workforce development; disability services; and affordable housing (COAG 2008a).

This Chapter discusses the Australian Government's current focus on social inclusion. It pays specific attention to the range of current priorities of the Australian Government with regard to their recently released Social Inclusion Agenda, including, and importantly for this research, in terms of housing and disability. The discussion also outlines the Government's measures regarding social inclusion, as these will be used in the second stage of this research to investigate the impact of housing assistance on social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities. Following this, the discussion turns to an examination of innovation in both housing and disability policy under the current government, and specifically, the interrelationships between such policies and social inclusion outcomes. A later section of the chapter focuses on the social inclusion initiatives and programs operating at the state/territory level across Australia.

2.2 The Australian Government's social inclusion agenda

Immediately following their election to office in November 2007 the current Labor Government implemented a range of actions focused on supporting, achieving and promoting social inclusion for all Australians. Such actions include a whole-of-government commitment to promoting social inclusion as a desired outcome of all government activities and programs, and development and introduction of a Social Inclusion Agenda to be used as a framework for guiding policy development and government reform agendas. To support this, the Australian Government also created a Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in December 2007, appointed a Minister for Social Inclusion (supported by a Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector), and established the Australian Social Inclusion Board in May 2008. Moreover, SIUs have also been created within other key areas of government. These include the Social Inclusion and Participation Group within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Social Inclusion Division in the Attorney-General's Department (Commonwealth of Australia 2009e). In addition, social inclusion – or, more specifically, strengthening communities, supporting families and social inclusion – was one of the critical areas of debate at the Australia 2020 Summit in April 2008 (Australian Government 2009a; Commonwealth of Australia 2008a, 2008b).

2.2.1 Australian Government SIU

Under the arrangements described above, the SIU provides strategic policy advice and has a coordinating function across government on social inclusion policy. The SIU reports to the Prime Minister and Minister for Social Inclusion and works collaboratively with the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion. The unit is comprised of three work groups:

- Board Secretariat. The Board Secretariat provides support to the Australian Social Inclusion Board, including arranging board meetings, board correspondence and communication, as well as coordinating input from other areas of the SIU and from other Government agencies regarding the Board's work.²
- Applied research, locational and data analysis. This work group provides research and statistical support to the SIU and the Australian Social Inclusion Board, including assisting the Board in development of its research, advice and reporting to Government. Activities of this group to date have included developing social inclusion indicators to measure social inclusion outcomes and progress.
- Policy, Strategy and Coordination Section. The work of the Policy, Strategy and Coordination Section group demonstrates the whole-of-government approach to social inclusion fostered by the Australian Government, including working with departments across the Commonwealth and with the states and territories. This group provides strategic policy advice and coordination across Government on social inclusion.³

2.2.2 Australian Social Inclusion Board

A key plank in the delivery and development of the Australian Government's whole-of-government social inclusion focus is the Australian Social Inclusion Board. The Board was established in May 2008, and serves as 'the main advisory body to the government on ways to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged in our community and to improve the social inclusion in society as a whole' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009a).

The Social Inclusion Board has three specific terms of reference that guide its actions:

- 'Provide advice and information to the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Inclusion, the Hon Julia Gillard MP.
- Consult widely and provide input on different aspects of social inclusion—including issues of measurement, how to increase social and economic participation, and how to engage communities on social inclusion matters.
- Report annually and provide advice on other specific matters referred to it by the Minister.' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009a)

The Social Inclusion Board has been instrumental in the development of the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda and supporting vision (discussed in the next section), and especially in advising on the priorities for addressing social exclusion/promoting social inclusion. Initially, these priorities were: providing inclusive services to jobless families; and effective services for children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage (Australian Social Inclusion Board 2008, p.2). These priorities have now been expanded to encompass a larger range of areas (discussed further below).

The Board has also produced a range of publications on social inclusion, many of which are relevant to this research. These include:

- *Social inclusion in Australia: how Australia is faring* (released January 2010).
- *Building community resilience* (released June 2009).
- *A compendium of social inclusion indicators: how's Australia faring?* (May 2009).

² The Board Secretariat also supports the activities of the Community Response Task Force (see Appendix 1).

³ The SIU also assisted with the *Not-For-Profit Sector Reform* program (see Appendix 2).

2.2.3 Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda: vision and priorities

The Australian Government's vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australians *feel valued* and *have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society*.

Achieving this vision means that all Australians will have the *resources, opportunities and capability* to:

- Learn, by participating in education and training.
- Work, by participating in employment or voluntary work, including family and carer responsibilities.
- Engage, by connecting with people, using local services and participating in local civic, cultural and recreational activities.
- Have a voice, in influencing decisions that affect them. (Commonwealth of Australia 2009c, emphasis added)

The recently released National Statement on Social Inclusion – *A Stronger, Fairer Australia* (also referred to as a *new social inclusion strategy*), promotes the overriding aspiration of the social inclusion strategy as:

Building a stronger and fairer Australia through a new approach to reducing disadvantage and increasing national prosperity (Australian Government 2009b, p.2).

It further notes that:

'Social inclusion means building a nation in which all Australians have the opportunity and support they need to participate fully in the nation's economic and community life, develop their own potential and be treated with dignity and respect.

Achieving this vision means tackling the most entrenched forms of disadvantage in Australia today, expanding the range of opportunities available to everyone and strengthening resilience and responsibility.

This involves making sure that income, financial support and services meet people's essential needs. It goes beyond minimum standards of living to the skills and relationships that underpin people's long-term wellbeing and the economic opportunities through which they can develop themselves. In the long run, individuals, families and communities are the most important shapers of social inclusion.

An inclusive Australia is one where all Australians have the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to learn, work, connect with others and have a say'.

To achieve this vision, the Social Inclusion Agenda emphasises, and is underpinned by, a series of principles and approaches (known as Aspirational Principles and Principles of Approach). These are detailed in Box 2 and 3 respectively.

Box 2: Principles underpinning the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda

ASPIRATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Reducing disadvantage

Making sure people in need benefit from access to good health, education and other services.	Funding and service delivery should <i>promote equitable access to universal benefits and services for Australians in all their diversity</i> , and invest more intensively in those at risk of, or experiencing, social exclusion.
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Increasing social, civil and economic participation

Helping everyone get the skills and support they need so they can work and connect with community, even during hard times.	<p>Maximum participation in economic, social and community life is a defining characteristic of an inclusive society. Achieving this outcome for all Australians means delivering policies and programs which support people to learn and strengthen their ability to participate actively in the labour market and in their communities.</p> <p>Over time people's opportunities and capabilities are formed through their experience of family life and their participation in the communities, economies and institutions around them. People with well-established social networks and institutional connections are more likely to deal successfully with personal crisis and economic adversity. Policy design should be mindful of costs and benefits and the evidence about returns for investments. Resources should be weighted towards tailored approaches for those most in need while maintaining universal access and participation in services and community life. Services should be responsive to the diverse attributes, circumstances and aspirations of their clients.</p> <p>A key aspect of boosting participation is capacity building – supporting individuals' personal capacity to address the issues that arise over the course of their lives, and supporting people to take independent decisions and to negotiate priorities through participation in their workplaces, their neighbourhoods and their communities. This is especially true for communities struggling with intergenerational disadvantage.</p>
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A greater voice, combined with greater responsibility

Governments and other organisations giving people a say in what services they need and how they work, and people taking responsibility to make the best use of the opportunities available.	<p>Achieving social inclusion depends on the active involvement of the entire community. Providing opportunities for citizens and communities to identify their needs and give feedback about the design and delivery of policies and programs will be important.</p> <p>Individuals and service users must have a say in shaping their own futures and the benefits and services that are offered to them. Detailed feedback from users and community members and genuine and inclusive consultation are important sources of information to improve policy settings and service delivery.</p> <p>Where people are part of a democratic community and able to access opportunities, benefits and services, they also have an obligation to use their best efforts and take personal responsibility for taking part and making progress.</p> <p>Organisations—both government and non-government—also have responsibilities to listen and respond, and to make sure their policies, programs and services help to build social inclusion.</p>
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Source: Commonwealth of Australia 2009f: pp.1–2

Box 3: Approaches underpinning the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda

PRINCIPLES OF APPROACH

Building on individual and community strengths

<p>Making the most of people's strengths, including the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from other cultures.</p>	<p>Taking a strength-based, rather than a deficit-based, approach means respecting, supporting and building on the strengths of individuals, families, communities and cultures. Assuming, promoting and supporting a strong and positive view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and culture will be particularly important ways to reduce social exclusion for Indigenous Australians, working in parallel with specific initiatives to improve their health, education, housing and employment prospects. Recognising the varied and positive contributions of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will also be an important feature of the social inclusion approach.</p>
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Building partnerships with key stakeholders

<p>Governments, organisations and communities working together to get the best results for people in need.</p>	<p>All sectors have a role to play in building a more socially inclusive Australia and the approach will rely on encouraging and supporting the diverse contribution of all. Strong relationships between government and these other stakeholders are key to achieving the joined-up approach required for sustainable outcomes and to sharing expertise to produce innovative solutions.</p> <p>Building effective partnerships to tackle shared priorities is essential to improving social inclusion over time. Whether in forming city wide plans to reduce homelessness, or strengthening service provision in parts of the community sector, or jointly investing in new social innovations, policy on social inclusion needs to advance work through a diverse range of cross-sector partnerships.</p>
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Developing tailored services

<p>Services working together in new and flexible ways to meet each person's different needs.</p>	<p>For some members of the Australian population experiencing, or at immediate risk of, significant exclusion, mainstream services may not be sufficient or appropriate to mitigate against exclusion.</p> <p>Deep, intensive interventions tailored at an individual, family or community level are one way to support those experiencing deep and complex social exclusion, by helping them tackle their actual problems. Different service providers may need to link together to do this. For example, linking health and family support services may make the most difference to parents of children at risk. Linking employment preparation effectively with drug or alcohol treatment may be necessary as a pathway out of homelessness.</p> <p>Successfully overcoming social exclusion may also involve learning to change deeply held attitudes and behaviours, for example through anger management or family counselling, in order to access new opportunities.</p> <p>Overcoming the fragmentation of government service systems for people at high risk of social exclusion, and in relation to important milestones in the lifecycle, such as transitions from adolescence to adulthood or the end of working life, is a priority.</p>
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Giving a high priority to early intervention and prevention

<p>Heading off problems by understanding the root causes and intervening early.</p>	<p>It is important to tackle the immediate problems of social exclusion that many be faced, such as homelessness. But in the longer term it is clearly preferable to prevent such problems arising in the first place.</p> <p>Identifying the root causes of disadvantage and the connections between different types of disadvantage allows interventions to be</p>
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	<p>designed to prevent the occurrence of problems and provide more effective support to those who are vulnerable before the disadvantage becomes entrenched. This is particularly important in preventing intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Universal services such as schools and hospitals provide a range of opportunities to identify those at risk of disadvantage at an early stage. Giving priority to early intervention and prevention means focusing on children and young people, on the early identification of potential problems, and on taking effective action to tackle them.</p>
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Building joined-up services and whole-of-government(s) solutions

<p>Getting different parts and different levels of government to work together in new and flexible ways to get better outcomes and services for people in need.</p>	<p>The multifaceted nature of social exclusion means that the services offered by any one agency can only go so far in meeting the complex needs of a person or groups of people. Separate silos of funding, policy-making and service delivery can be systemic barriers to providing effective support.</p> <p>Flexibility and cooperation across agencies, both between Commonwealth agencies and across levels of government, is one key to comprehensively address social exclusion. Integration, transparency and collaboration between Commonwealth, state and territory governments are particularly important. Priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Taking a 'people-first' view of what people and communities need, using evidence about their actual experiences and life outcomes. → Developing policy through integrated, problem-solving projects which draw together all relevant agencies and knowledge. → Developing programs within a comprehensive social inclusion framework, researching and understanding the links between programs operating on the ground, and working across all levels of government, including through the Council of Australian Governments, to join up service delivery in strategic as well as practical ways.
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Using evidence and integrated data to inform policy

<p>Finding out what programs and services work well and understanding why, so you can share good ideas, keep making improvements and put your effort into the things that work.</p>	<p>Progress towards social inclusion must be accompanied by better information, faster learning and better use of knowledge to improve outcomes. As far as possible, interventions should draw on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Practical experience of community and other delivery organisations. → Existing research and the evidence base on what works. → Monitoring and evaluating strategies as they develop, focusing on outcomes as well as processes. <p>To the extent that interventions are experimental, they should be designed and evaluated in a way which builds on this evidence base.</p> <p>It will also be important for government to report regularly on progress in social inclusion, using clear indicators and reporting from the perspective of the individual, the family, the neighbourhood or the community affected. Indicators should be responsive to effective policy interventions and identify the essence of the problem and have a clear and accepted interpretation.</p>
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Using locational approaches

<p>Working in places where there is a lot of disadvantage, to get to people most in need and to understand how</p>	<p>Evidence shows that different kinds of disadvantage can be concentrated in particular locations in Australia. Focusing effort on building social inclusion in particular locations, neighbourhoods and communities can ensure that they are not left behind, and help us learn how planning, economic development, community engagement and service delivery can be integrated to achieve better overall</p>
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different problems are connected.	outcomes.
<i>Planning for sustainability</i>	
Doing things that will help people and communities deal better with problems in the future, as well as solving the problems they face now.	<p>Policies and programs should be focused on long-term sustainable improvement. To do this, it is important to ensure that interventions build an individual's capacity and develop protective factors that will enable them to self-manage through life-course events.</p> <p>For the government, it will be important to establish benchmarks and adopt formal quantified targets that are ambitious but attainable, measurable and time specific, focus on long-term policy goals, and integrate long-term social inclusion objectives in broader reform efforts, such as budgetary reform and reforms being pursued through the Council of Australian Governments.</p>

Source: Commonwealth of Australia 2009f: pp.2–4

Moreover, clear initial priority areas are identified in the Agenda in order to address social exclusion and promote social inclusion outcomes:

- *Supporting children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage* by providing health, education and family relationships services.
- *Helping jobless families with children* by helping the unemployed into sustainable employment and their children into a good start in life
- *Focusing on the locations of greatest disadvantage* by tailoring place-based approaches in partnership with the community
- *Assisting in the employment of people with disability or mental illness* by creating employment opportunities and building community support
- *Addressing the incidence of homelessness* by providing more housing and support services
- *Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians* with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement and employment outcomes.' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009g)

Also, in working to improve social inclusion outcomes in these priority areas and for these priority groups, the Australian Government is committed to assisting and supporting 'vulnerable new arrivals and refugees' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009g).

Importantly, the National Statement on Social Inclusion (and the key aspects of it discussed above) is the key vehicle and guiding framework for meeting the Government's five 'pillars' for building a stronger and fairer Australia. That is, for:

- 'Maintaining a strong and internationally competitive economy.
 - Creating the opportunities and resources that every Australian needs to participate in the economy and community life.
 - Ensuring that services which are provided to all Australians meet high standards.
 - Supporting families and building strong and cohesive communities.
 - Building new and innovative partnerships with all sectors of the economy.'
- (Australian Government 2009b, p.64)

The rationale for the current emphasis on improving social inclusion outcomes for all Australians, and for particular disadvantaged groups, is because...

'Despite a long period of strong economic growth, not all Australians have benefited from increased prosperity. Without determined action they and their families may fall further behind' (Australian Government 2009b, p.5).

The Social Inclusion strategy is about rectifying this concern, ensuring that 'over time, every Australian can play an active part in shaping their own life and contributing to the economy and community' (Australian Government 2009b, p.2). However, in working toward the aspirations outlined above, the Strategy underlines the fact that the social inclusion framework being applied across government is not just about economic growth and hoping the effects of such growth will trickle down to all Australians, including the most vulnerable, socially isolated and marginalised. Instead, it's about individual and community responsibility, and about 'all Australians working together', with Government playing an 'active' role in driving outcomes, but not the only role. As described in the National Statement, the Agenda is about:

... helping individuals to develop their skills and abilities. It's supporting local communities to respond with confidence to new pressures and problems. It's recognising our national responsibility to share the costs of giving all Australians a decent life and a fair go at a better life. (Australian Government 2009b, p.2)

In ensuring all Australians get 'a fair go at a better life', the Social Inclusion Agenda (and actions of the Australian Government) pay specific attention to the needs of individuals and groups experiencing 'multiple' disadvantage and those at risk of multiple disadvantage. Analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the most recent *General Social Survey* by the SIU reveals that around five per cent of Australians aged 15 and over experience such multiple disadvantages that impact on their abilities to learn, work, engage with the community and have a voice in the decisions that affect them (Australian Social Inclusion Board 2010, p.5). The same research notes that multiple disadvantages include: low income and low levels of assets, low skills, problems finding and sustaining employment, housing stress, poor health and lack of access to services (i.e. people of low socio-economic status) (Australian Social Inclusion Board 2010, pp.5–12; see also Australian Government 2009h, p.5). It also notes that disability and mental illness, exposure to domestic and family violence, substance misuse, discrimination because of a range of factors (including disability) and homelessness, or a combination of these factors are known contributors to multiple disadvantage (Australian Government 2009h, p.5). Moreover, 'available evidence suggests that multiple disadvantage is most likely to be experienced by people renting public housing and people in lone households and single parent households' (Australian Government 2009b, p.6) and multiple disadvantage can be a geographical issue.

Accordingly, the following groups are specifically identified in the Social Inclusion literature and National Statement as priority groups:

- homeless people
- children at risk of long-term disadvantage
- Indigenous Australians
- people living with disability or mental illness
- communities (and locations) experiencing concentrations of disadvantage and exclusion
- jobless families (including the long-term and the recently unemployed)

→ low-skilled adults who are at greater risk of unemployment (Australian Government 2009h, p.9).

Current social inclusion actions by the Australian Government are being directed at assisting these groups (see next section); improving access to (and breaking down the barriers to) the services and support they need to improve their social and economic participation. This includes tailored support to improve access to *universal and specialist services*, particularly education, employment and health services and support. However, that said, there is a strong focus within the social inclusion strategy (and government policy generally) on building the capacity of universal services to meet the basic needs of these and other disadvantaged groups.

It should also be noted here that the Government's current focus on improving social inclusion outcomes for all Australians also notes, and has been shaped by, acknowledgement that there are costs to individuals, society and to government from social exclusion, for example, from the costs of poor health outcomes seen in a range of disadvantaged individuals/groups such as the homeless and the long-term unemployed; the costs of income support and housing assistance for those not working; and also because with a rapidly ageing population Australia needs to maximise the productivity of its workforce—a key way of achieving this is increasing participation in employment by as many individuals and groups as possible (including those with traditionally lower participation rates).

The aspirations, principles and pillars for building a stronger, fairer Australia discussed in this section are also currently guiding the development of the *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion* with state/territory governments (and have guided the development of the National Compact with the Third Sector). This Plan is the joint state/territory and Commonwealth Government Plan driving efforts toward/for social inclusion, and ultimately, to meet the five pillars for building a stronger and fairer Australia, particularly as the economy emerges from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Importantly, it will outline collaborative actions and common approaches for addressing social exclusion. To date, relevant state and territory ministers and the Australian Government have agreed to prioritise the following areas: children at risk of disadvantage; disengaged young people; jobless families; and locational disadvantage. Relevant ministers agreed to meet about these actions in the first half of 2010 (Australian Government 2009b, pp.61, 65,67; FaHCSIA pers. comm (13 May 2010)).

The whole-of-government focus on social inclusion (outlined here) is being driven and backed up by specific actions to ensure a social inclusion focus across the Australian Public Service (APS). Within the APS now, policy design and delivery must accord with social inclusion principles and aspirations, and as such, the Social Inclusion Unit (in conjunction with key government departments) has prepared *The Australian Public Service Social Inclusion Policy Design and Delivery Toolkit* (Australian Government 2009h) to assist agencies meet these requirements. This document, launched in August 2009, has the express purpose of changing 'the approach of the APS to policy design and delivery, so that the needs of disadvantaged people are better met' (p.1). Commonwealth agencies must now use the following six-step method in policy design/redesign and delivery outlined in the *Toolkit* to ensure and promote social inclusion across government, for the individuals, families and the community/population as a whole, and for disadvantaged and at-risk groups (individuals, families and communities) in particular:

1. Identify groups at risk of exclusion.
2. Analyse the nature and causes of disadvantage and exclusion.

3. Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors (including through early intervention actions, building resilience).
4. Work with other agencies to coordinate efforts across government and other sectors.
5. (Re)design delivery systems and promote changes in culture.
6. Establish a clear implementation plan and monitor delivery.

In implementing these six steps, the *Toolkit* (pp.9–19) asks agencies to consider how policy (re)design and (re)development processes, and new coordination and delivery processes, address the following key questions.

- Does your policy/delivery change have an impact on excluded groups?
- How are members of disadvantaged groups affected by your policy or delivery change?
- Can your policy design or delivery be adjusted so that it strengthens protective factors or reduces risk factors for disadvantaged groups (i.e. at key transition points in the life of an individual, family or community)?
- Are there existing or emerging policies that support or detract from your policy or delivery change for at-risk groups?
- Does the service delivery system take at-risk groups' needs into account?
- Do you have a clear implementation plan and a process for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the policy or delivery change on at-risk groups?

Significantly for this research, the *Toolkit* emphasises the 'protective factors' the Government is seeking to strengthen and the 'risk factors' they seek to reduce in order to positively affect social inclusion outcomes for individuals, families and communities (see Box 4). As shown, access to affordable housing and good physical and mental health are keys to social inclusion. Access to appropriate services, and especially to affordable and secure housing, is one of the key areas discussed in the many examples of Australian Government agencies working for social inclusion outcomes for (at-risk and disadvantaged) clients in the *Toolkit*.

Box 4: Protective factors to strengthen social inclusion and risk factors for social inclusion

<i>Protective factors</i> (these help people to deal with set-backs and manage potentially negative impacts on their lives and thereby strengthen social inclusion)	<i>Risk factors</i> (these undermine a person's ability to cope when faced with adversity and thereby increase social exclusion)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → stable, safe and resilient communities → good relationships → <i>access to appropriate services in local area</i> → <i>good physical and mental health</i> → good literacy, English language and communication skills → economic security e.g. <i>having affordable housing</i>, secure employment and reliable transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → experiencing discrimination or feelings of social isolation, high crime rates, past traumatic events e.g. torture, natural disaster → damaging relationships, including the receipt of poor parenting → lack of access to appropriate services → poor physical and poor mental health → substance misuse → poor literacy, English language and communication skills → poverty

Source: Australian Government (2009h, p.13) emphasis added

The actions of state and territory governments and the Australian Government to encourage social inclusion are also being supported by regional and local partnerships and structures at the grassroots level. A range of important partnerships and structures have been or are being put in place to facilitate and support local/regional efforts (most centring on employment), including:

- The Australian Council of Local Government (established 18 September 2008): a new partnership between the Australian and local governments 'giving a voice to local government on matters of national significance', including economic, social and environmental issues and challenges (see <http://www.aclg.gov.au/>).
- Introducing Local Employment Coordinators in the 20 priority employment regions identified by Government as in need of extra assistance to deal with the longer-term impacts of the GFC and economic restructuring generally (see Appendix 3). This initiative is part of the Jobs Fund and coordinators are contracted to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) until mid-2011 to facilitate and oversee local responses to employment losses and declining/changing economic demand (DEEWR 2009c).
- Initiatives in remote and discrete Indigenous communities as part of the Australian Government's *Closing the Gap* policy for addressing Indigenous disadvantage and actioned through such measures as the National Partnership on Remote Service Delivery and the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Remote Indigenous Housing. The appointment of a Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services is an important regional level initiative here, working to overcome obstacles to remote service delivery and coordinate efforts across jurisdictions for the benefit of Indigenous people and communities (see <http://cgris.gov.au/home.html>).
- The Regional Development Australia network – a partnership between all levels of government to support regional social and economic development (for further information see <http://www.rda.gov.au/>).

2.2.4 Social inclusion measures and progress toward social inclusion

A range of measures have been recently released by the Social Inclusion Unit for quantifying social inclusion/exclusion baseline and impacts. These have been determined after extensive research into measuring social inclusion/exclusion by the Social Inclusion Board (see Australian Social Inclusion Board 2009; also Australian Social Inclusion Board 2010; Zapalà & Lyons 2009) and are important for this research as they will inform the direction of the questions being asked of participants in the second stage of this research. Box 5 identifies the specific social inclusion/exclusion measures (and the indicators developed for each measure). The measures are broken down into three areas: participation, resources and measures. Within these classifications, measures are provided under particular 'domains' and headline and supplementary indicators have been developed for most domains. The participation measures centre on the key elements of the Australian Government's social inclusion vision as outlined above – work, learn, engage, have a voice. Importantly, for this research, the resource domains include housing and health and disability, among other domains. The indicators developed for each domain are broad measures, designed to give a national picture of social inclusion/exclusion.

While the current Government focus on social inclusion and the National Statement on Social Inclusion are recent policy developments, some progress has already been made toward promoting social inclusion outcomes. There is not room here to outline all of this progress—the Australia Government's Social Inclusion website briefly summarises key programs and initiatives working for social inclusion/to address social

exclusion (see <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Initiatives/Pages/default.aspx>). Some of these initiatives are new, others are expanded or renewed past initiatives, as promoting social and economic participation for vulnerable groups has been a goal of Government actions for some time, albeit to varying extents and with varying degrees of success. The specific actions for promoting social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities and in terms of housing, or rather homelessness, are discussed in the next two sections of this report, as they are the key features of new Commonwealth disability and housing policies.

Box 5: The Australian Government's social inclusion (exclusion) measures

Domains	Headline indicators	Supplementary indicators
Participation measures		
Work	Employment rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment/population ratio Children in jobless families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 15 years in jobless families (where parents are jobless) Long term income support recipient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term (12 months) and very long-term (2+ years) full-rate, non-education related, working-age income support payment recipients (including transfers between payments) as proportions of the population aged 15–64 years 	Persistent jobless families with children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons in jobless families with children under 15 years (where jobless for 12 months or more) Jobless households <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons living in jobless households Long-term unemployment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment rate
Learn	Young people not fully engaged in education or work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of 15–24 year olds that are fully engaged in education and/or work Year 12 equivalent attainment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of 20–24 year olds attaining Year 12 or Certificate II 	
Engage (Social and community participation)	Contacted family/friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who contacted family/friends in past week Participation in community groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of the people aged 18 years and over that were involved in a community group in the last 12 months 	Got together socially with family/friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people who got together socially with friends/relatives not living with them in past month Voluntary work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people aged 18 years and over that undertook voluntary work in past 12 months Participation in community events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion people aged 18 years and over who participated in a community event or activity in past 12 months
Have a voice (Political and civic participation)	Participation in citizen engagement activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people aged 18 years and over that participated in selected citizen engagement activities in the last 12 months 	
Resources measures		
Material/ economic resources	Low economic resources and financial stress/material deprivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite measure of low economic resources (to be determined, based on low levels of income, wealth & expenditure, & deprivation) Persistent low economic resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low economic resources (as defined above) for 2+ years (a minimum of 3 time points marking the beginning, middle and end of a 2 year period) Note: These two indicators need conceptual and data development. For example, need to develop the actual indicator and more frequent household wealth and/or expenditure data	Low economic resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population with low disposable income and low wealth (bottom three deciles equivalised of both disposable income and wealth) Financial stress/material deprivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population with five or more selected financial stress/deprivation items Real change in income for low income households <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in average real equivalised disposable household income of 2nd and 3rd deciles Relative income inequality
Health and disability	People with long-term health conditions affecting their abilities to participate in employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and employment rate of people with disability (by level of severity) People with mental illness affecting their abilities to participate in employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and employment rate of people with mental illness (by level of severity) Self-assessed health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population with fair or poor self-assessed health 	Life expectancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life expectancy (years) Subjective quality of life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population reporting overall satisfaction with their lives
Education & skills	Literacy and numeracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of Year 9 students achieving literacy (reading & writing) & numeracy benchmarks 	Poor spoken English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people aged 5 years and over who do not speak English well or at all Non-school qualifications

	<p>Adult literacy/ numeracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of 15–75 year olds with at least minimum standard of prose literacy and numeracy <p>Early child development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children in first year of school assessed as “developmentally vulnerable” on two or more domains in the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 25–64 years and over with non-school qualifications
Social resources	<p>Support from family/friends in time of crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who feel that they are able to get support in time of crisis from persons living outside household <p>Autonomy – having a voice in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who do not feel able to have a say in the community on issues that are important to them <p>Access to Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people with access to the Internet on home computer 	<p>Autonomy – having a voice in family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who do not feel able to have a say in their family on issues that are important to them
Community & institutional resources	<p>Access to public or private transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who say they have difficulty accessing public or private transport <p>Access to health service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People deferring recommended treatment due to financial barriers 	<p>Access to justice services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 and over reporting difficulty accessing justice services <p>Access to service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over reporting difficulty accessing services, by type of service and private/public provider (e.g., aged care, child care, employment services) <p>Tolerance of diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptance of diverse cultures in local community
Housing	<p>Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population that are homeless (total and those experiencing primary homelessness [rough sleeping]) <p>Housing affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of low income private renter households with housing costs exceeding 30 per cent of household income 	<p>Housing affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affordable houses available to purchase per 10 000 low income households <p>Repeat homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness
Personal safety	<p>Feelings of safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who feel unsafe at home or in their local community at night (excluding family violence) <p>Children at risk/Child protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aged 0–17 years in substantiations of notifications received during (year) (number and rate per 1000) 	<p>Family violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of persons experiencing family violence in past 12 months <p>Victim of personal violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims (aged 18 years and over) of selected personal crime <p>Victim of household crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims (aged 18 years and over) of selected household crime
Multiple & entrenched disadvantage		
Multiple & entrenched disadvantage	<p>Multiple disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more of the six selected areas of disadvantage (income, work, health, education, safety and support) <p>Entrenched disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 or more of the 6 selected areas of disadvantage for 2 years or more <p><i>Note: indicators need further development based on analysis of other social inclusion indicators for selected key disadvantage groups.</i></p>	<p><i>Indicators to be developed – for several key life stages (early childhood and school age children), youth, working-age population and older people</i></p>

Source: Australian Government (2009b, pp.78–81)

On the issue of social inclusion measures and progress it would also be remiss not to mention that the National Statement on Social Inclusion notes the Governments' clear intention to evaluate the programs working to promote social inclusion, as well for collecting appropriate data against which to measure social inclusion outcomes and to benchmark progress. These facts are also presented in the report released by the Australian Social Inclusion Board in January 2010—*Social inclusion in Australia how Australia is faring*—which provides a comprehensive assessment of how Australia as a whole is positioned currently in terms of disadvantage, and particularly for certain key groups (based largely on analysis of the ABS *General Social Survey*). The report presents a range of data and benchmarks against which to identify disadvantage and exclusion and to measure progress. It notes the absence of appropriate small geographic area data, and longitudinal and disaggregated data generally for many of the groups experiencing disadvantage, especially multiple and entrenched disadvantage. The Australian Government intends to produce a major report such as the *how Australia is faring* report biannually (from the ABS *General Social Survey*), with reports on particular measures and disadvantaged groups to be produced as needed and as data become available. The Government has also outlined its intention to develop a range of short-term indicators – known as strategic change indicators – to measure progress in terms of policy and service delivery. They further note that:

Over time, governments will work together to improve and standardise the collection of data at the small geographic area level to get a better understanding of what is happening in locations. (Australian Government 2009b, p.70)

Also, importantly, in terms of accountability in/for Government actions:

Australian Government departments will be held accountable for their progress on social inclusion through reporting in departmental annual reports on *strategic change indicators of social inclusion relevant to their portfolio*. This information will be collated by the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to produce an annual consolidated report on progress on social inclusion. It will include all of the strategic change indicators as well as selected headline indicators which have frequent data and can be expected to change over a year. The first of these reports will be released around December 2011. (Australian Government 2009b, p.70, emphasis added)

It is evident from this discussion then that while the Government (through the Social Inclusion Board and Unit and commissioned work) has undertaken much work against which to measure and benchmark progress, much work is still needed here to provide a comprehensive picture of progress and need. This research aims to fill one of the identified gaps in our knowledge about social inclusion outcomes for one known disadvantaged group—people with disabilities—at the same time contributing to the conversation around the relationship between housing assistance and social inclusion outcomes generally, and for people with disabilities in particular.

2.2.5 Other important social inclusion initiatives

The Government's actions to promote social inclusion outcomes for all Australians, and particularly vulnerable individuals, and groups are supported by two other important groups within Government:

- The Social Inclusion and Participation Group (within DEEWR).
- Social Inclusion Division (in the Attorney-General's Department).

The Social Inclusion and Participation Group (formed in August 2008) has three core functions. First, to develop social inclusion and (employment) participation policies for disadvantaged groups, particularly for early childhood, education, skills development and training, employment and workplace relations. Second, to provide support and advice to the Minister for Social Inclusion and the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector. Third, oversee the \$41 million Innovation Fund for projects to assist the most disadvantaged job seekers (Commonwealth of Australia 2009e). The Innovation Fund supports innovative place-based projects connecting disadvantaged job seekers with training and employment opportunities, and overcoming barriers to employment. The first two rounds of the Fund have supported 47 training and employment projects, most of them aimed at either supporting key vulnerable groups with employment and training (i.e. the homeless, people with mental health issues, Indigenous Australians, people seeking employment living in jobless families) and/or providing assistance to specific locations experiencing significant disadvantage and high levels of unemployment. The Innovation Fund complements the Australian Government's restructured employment services, Job Services Australia (which commenced operation in mid-2009) (DEEWR 2010a), and the new disability employment services (which commenced March 2010) specifically for people with disabilities and/or mental health issues with more complex or multiple needs (DEEWR 2010b; 2010c).

The Social Inclusion Division ensures social inclusion has a higher-level presence. It is responsible for 'policy, legislation, advice and programs related to human rights, legal assistance, Indigenous law and justice, and native title' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009e, p.1).

Together with the Social Inclusion Board and Unit, and guided by the National Statement on Social Inclusion—*A stronger, fairer Australia* and *Australian public service social inclusion policy design and delivery toolkit*, these initiatives aim to set in concrete the national focus on promoting social inclusion, and ensure all Government actions (policies, departments etc.) are informed by the social inclusion framework.

2.3 Social inclusion and innovation in national housing and disability policies

As noted in the previous section, the Australian Government is committed to a whole-of-government approach to promoting social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable Australians. Accordingly, key areas of public policy have been informed by (fit within and are key to the success of) the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda. Housing policy and disability policy are two such areas of public policy strongly aligned with the Agenda. They are also policy areas that have seen significant innovation since the Labor Government came to office. This section briefly outlines innovation in these policy spheres. It also points to the clear and strong links between these policies and initiatives and the Social Inclusion Agenda and outcomes. Understanding changes in housing and disability policies and the links between these policy spheres is important as it shows the direction and desired outcomes from all these areas of policy, as well as providing the current context for understanding the importance of certain actions and measures (such as housing assistance) and how these affect or support social inclusion outcomes for vulnerable people (such as for people with disabilities: the subject of this research).

2.3.1 The housing policy environment

Over the last 2–3 years the Australian Government has undertaken extensive reform of housing policy, with the Council of Australian Governments agreeing to drive these

reforms nationally and at the jurisdictional level. Such reforms are aimed at addressing the ongoing housing crisis across the country, and have seen a change in the structure and delivery of housing policy. The NAHA is now the cornerstone of housing policy nationally (replacing the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement), supported and complemented by a number of other programs and measures focused on boosting the supply of affordable housing for vulnerable Australians (including people with disabilities), addressing barriers to the supply of housing generally, and reducing homelessness. These programs and measures include: the three NPAs that support the NAHA (on Social Housing, Homelessness and Remote Indigenous Housing); the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) that sits under the NAHA; as well as the boost to social housing across the country under the Social Housing Initiative that is part of the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

The key features supporting the NAHA are described in Boxes A2 and A3. A more detailed analysis of these and other recent innovations in housing policy is provided in the recently released AHURI Positioning Paper by Tually et al. (2010) on *The Drivers of Supply and Demand in Australia's Rural and Regional Centres* (see Chapter 2).

Importantly, the measures in the new housing policy environment (summarised in Appendices A2 and A3) have seen a significant increase in investment in affordable, and particularly social, housing across the country. Further, the Australian Government's social inclusion focus is clearly woven through such measures to increase the supply of affordable and social housing. In fact, the Preliminaries to each of the NPAs stress this overriding commitment to social inclusion up-front:

The Parties are committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage. That commitment is embodied in the objectives and outcomes of this Agreement. (COAG 2009a, p.3; 2009b, p.3; 2009c, p.3; 2009d, p.3)

Closer examination of the measures discussed above, reveals that many of the reforms state and territory governments have already agreed to, or must agree to, in order to secure funding for housing programs, and especially for growth in the social housing sector, are conditional on meeting social inclusion outcomes. This fact is best demonstrated in terms of the 'reform directions' in the NPA on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan that outlines the objectives, outcomes, outputs and progress measures for the Social Housing Initiative, i.e.

C7. In addition to the key objectives and outcomes of this initiative, the allocation of funding to each jurisdiction under the initiative will be contingent on the jurisdiction agreeing to implement a number of reforms in the social housing sector and making a detailed progress report to COAG by December 2009. These reform directions will include:

... (b) better social and economic participation for social housing tenants by locating housing closer to transport, services and employment opportunities; ...

(d) reducing concentrations of disadvantage through appropriate redevelopment to create mixed communities that improve social inclusion; ...' (COAG 2009e, p.14)

Overwhelmingly, the social inclusion focus in the NAHA and supporting measures centres on governments working together to promote the social and economic participation of individuals and better meeting the support and services needs of such individuals—particularly for those housed in social housing or who have been homeless in the past. Housing assistance then is clearly seen as a key avenue for achieving this outcome.

2.3.2 The disability policy environment

As with the national housing policy environment discussed in the previous section, the national disability policy environment has been, or more so, continues to be, an area of significant policy innovation under the current Labor Government. National disability policy is not as developed as housing or social inclusion policy at the current time; however, it is possible to make some comments about the course of disability policy relevant to this research based on key developments and progress toward the NDS – the broad policy document that will guide disability policy across jurisdictions, for example, based on:

- Progress toward the development of a NDS itself (date of release not yet known). This includes the information contained within the (consultation) Discussion Paper *Developing a National Disability Strategy for Australia* (Australian Government 2008) released by the Australian Government in October 2008 and the results of consultations on the NDS – summarised in the report *SHUT OUT: the experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia, National disability strategy consultation report* (Australian Government 2009g) prepared by the National People with Disability and Carer Council (August 2009).
- The work of the Disability Investment Group (DIG), established by Government ‘to explore innovative funding ideas from the private sector that will help people with disability and their families access greater support and plan for the future’ (FaHCSIA 2010a), and especially their report *The way forward – a new disability policy framework for Australia* (DIG 2009), launched in December 2009.⁴
- Other actions that are part of, or inform upon, the development of the NDS, including the National Disability Reform Agenda agreed to by COAG in mid-2008 and the Government-commissioned Productivity Commission inquiry/feasibility study into a National Disability Long-term Care and Support Scheme (see Appendix 4 for the background and terms of reference to this inquiry).
- The COAG National Disability Agreement⁵—introduced to improve and expand Government-funded and provided disability support and services (COAG 2008b). The National Disability Agreement sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators for Commonwealth and state/territory actions under the \$5.3 billion National Disability Services SPP which came into effect in January 2009. The NDS will sit under this broader Agreement, and work toward its broad objectives and outcomes.

These documents and actions demonstrate the Australian Government's commitment to elevating the needs of people with disabilities to a higher priority level within Government. They also stress the renewed approach to the provision of support and services being introduced across government based on *person-centred service delivery and supporting the social and economic participation of people with disabilities*.⁶

⁴ This report states the need for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

⁵ The National Disability Agreement commenced January 1 2009, replacing the former Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement.

⁶ And, like the NAHA and National Partnership Agreements that support it discussed in the last section, it is also noted up-front in the Preliminaries to the National Disability Agreement that the parties to the Agreement are committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion and responding to Indigenous disadvantage (COAG 2008b, p.3).

The focus on promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities is now a clear key priority of government, emphasised in disability and social inclusion policies alike. Background information on the National Disability Strategy, for example, states that:

‘The Strategy aims to address the barriers that are faced by Australians with disability and *promote social inclusion*’ (FaHCSIA 2009b).

The Minister and Parliamentary Secretary responsible for disability services further reinforce this point in the forward to the Discussion Paper on *Developing a National Disability Strategy for Australia*:

‘The aim of the National Disability Strategy is to increase the social, economic and cultural participation of people with disability, to eliminate the discrimination experienced by them and to improve disability support services for them, their families and carers. For those living with profound disability and complex needs, we must ensure support and living arrangements meet the same standards of dignity and choice as all Australians expect; and

Achieving better outcomes for people with disability and their families and carers is an important part of the government’s new Social Inclusion Agenda.’

(Australian Government 2008, p.2)

Moreover, both the Discussion Paper *Developing a National Disability Strategy for Australia* and National Disability Agreement outline that ‘People with disability achieve economic participation and social inclusion’ is a core desired outcome that will underpin the NDS, along with ‘People with disability enjoy choice, wellbeing and the opportunity to live as independently as possible’ and ‘Families and carers are well supported’ (Australian Government 2008, p.10; COAG 2008b, p.4). These outcomes sit under a broader umbrella outcome that ‘People with disability and their carers have an enhanced quality of life and participate as valued members of society’ (Australian Government 2008, p.10; COAG 2008b, p.1). Importantly, these desired outcomes fit with the overriding results of the consultation on the National Disability Strategy summarised in *SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*:

‘People with disabilities want to bring about a transformation of their lives. They want their human rights recognised and realised. They want the things that everyone else in the community takes for granted. They want somewhere to live, a job, better health care, a good education, a chance to enjoy the company of friends and family, to go to the footy and to go to the movies. They want the chance to participate meaningfully in the life of the community. And they are hopeful. They desire change and they want others in the community to share their vision. They recognise that governments cannot work in isolation and they want others to see the benefits of building more inclusive communities’ (Australian Government 2009g, p.9).

The documents and actions informing the development of the National Disability Strategy also note the commitment of Australian governments to a whole-of-government and whole-of-life approach to addressing disability. This commitment extends to investigating and responding areas of unmet need for people with disabilities, as well as better understanding the services and support needs of, and targeting support to, sub-groups within the disability population, i.e. Indigenous people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse people with disabilities and people with disabilities in rural and remote areas. These focuses, and the person-centred and social inclusion focuses discussed above, are in addition to ten other (initial) agreed priority areas for disability reform being worked on by the Australian and state/territory

governments as per the National Disability Agreement and COAG National Disability Reform Agenda.

1. *Better Measurement of Need* – Under this priority: a national model to estimate demand will be developed by mid-2010; there will be improvements in the data collected through the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, which will provide a stronger basis for demand estimates; and improvements in the quality of data reported under the National Minimum Data Set, and jurisdiction-level unmet demand data.
2. *Population benchmarking for disability services* – a National Population Benchmarking Framework will be developed and initial population benchmarking of disability services, based on information available, will be achieved by mid-2010 and improve the evidence base to assist in policy, service and planning decisions.
3. *Making older carers a priority* – the National Disability Priorities Framework will assist governments to target services to more vulnerable population groups based on relative need (including older carers and Indigenous people with disabilities).
4. *Quality improvement systems based on disability standards* – a National Disability Quality Framework with a national quality assurance system for disability services will be developed to introduce a national approach to quality assurance and the continuous improvement of disability services by mid-2010.
5. *Service planning and strategies to simplify access* – the National Framework for service planning and access will be developed, focusing on providing a person-centred approach to service delivery and to simplify access to specialist disability services.
6. *Early intervention and prevention, lifelong planning and increasing independence and social participation strategies* – an Early Intervention and Prevention Framework will be developed to increase governments' abilities to be effective with early intervention and prevention strategies and to ensure that clients receive the most appropriate and timely support by mid-2011.
7. *Increased workforce capacity* – a National Workforce Strategy will be developed to address qualifications, training and cross-sector career mapping issues and establishing the disability sector as an 'industry of choice' by the end of 2010.
8. *Increased access for Indigenous Australians* – a National Indigenous Access Framework will ensure that the needs of Indigenous Australians with disabilities are addressed through appropriate service delivery arrangements.
9. *Access to aids and equipment* – more consistent access to aids and equipment by end of 2012.
10. *Improved access to disability care* – systems that improve access to disability care and ensure people are referred to the most appropriate disability services and supports, including consideration of single access points and national consistent assessment processes in line with nationally agreed principles by end 2011' (FaHCSIA 2009a).

It should also be noted here that the housing needs and circumstances of people with disabilities are paid significant attention within the documents and actions outlined above and that are informing the development of the National Disability Strategy. The focus in this regard is largely on:

- Supporting people with disabilities to live as independently as possible.
- The provision of sufficient (meaning more) appropriate and affordable accommodation options and associated support for people with disabilities.

- Ensuring accommodation options meet the individual and changing needs of people with disabilities (and where relevant, their carers), and for the duration of their need.

Beneficially, these issues are broadly addressed in the desired outputs of the National Disability Agreement (COAG 2008b, p.4):

‘(8) The Agreement will contribute to the following outputs in support of the agreed outcomes:

- (a) Services that provide skills and supports to people with disability to enable them to live as independently as possible.
- (b) *Services that assist people with disability to live in stable and sustainable living arrangements.*
- (c) Income support for people with disability and their carers.
- (d) Services that assist families and carers in their caring role’.

What is evident from the above review of national disability policy (as far as it has currently been developed) is a clear and unwavering commitment to addressing social and economic participation outcomes for people with disabilities, and therefore their levels of community inclusivity and belonging. Central to this focus on social inclusion is stabilising the living arrangements of people with disabilities (a significant part of which is their housing/accommodation), and moving away from the crisis responses to addressing their accommodation, services and support needs that dominated in the past. Importantly, these actions are being backed up by new policies, actions and approaches with regard to the provision of disability services and support (including accommodation), significant investment in the disability sector and other actions within mainstream services to support people with disabilities.⁷

This research then will shed light on what is clearly an important part of current disability and social inclusion agendas — housing. It will build an evidence base around the importance or otherwise of housing, and housing assistance measures specifically, in driving the social inclusion outcomes discussed above and woven through both national housing and disability policies.

2.4 State and territory initiatives

In discussing the issue of social inclusion it is important to acknowledge that commitment to the concept of social inclusion is not just an Australian Government phenomenon, or one that has been pursued by state and territory governments only because of the COAG Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. Social inclusion initiatives have been pursued at the state/territory level in a number of jurisdictions, and in some cases for quite some time before the current Australian Government has vehemently pursued their whole-of-government agenda.

⁷ This includes, for example, in the employment arena, where the Australian Government has restructured *Job Services Australia*, revised disability specific employment assistance (now known as Disability Employment Services) (DEEW R 2008a; 2008b) and recently released the *National Mental Health and Disability Strategy* (Australian Government 2009f) – outlining specific actions to assist job seekers with disabilities. All of these actions have the ultimate aim of facilitating and supporting the economic participation of people with disabilities, and thereby assisting them to build resources to facilitate broader social and community participation, building community attachment and self-worth. Of course, increasing the labour force participation rate for people with disabilities will also reduce the need for/level of income support paid out by Government and assist with the looming labour force crisis (and taxation shortfalls) because of Australia's ageing population.

The South Australian government has led the way in this area, establishing a *Social Inclusion Initiative* back in 2002, and has a well developed suite of programs for addressing social inclusion (see <http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/>). The centrality of social inclusion to S A government actions and agendas is demonstrated in the strong focus on social inclusion in the SA Strategic Plan (Government of SA 2007):

South Australia's Strategic Plan is a bold and unique approach to the State's future. It touches on almost every facet of life in South Australia and recognises the interdependency that exists between issues and challenges of economic development, social inclusion and community development, and environmental sustainability.

The Tasmanian Government has followed suit more recently, establishing a Social Inclusion Unit in March 2008, and the Victorian Government has also initiated policies to address disadvantage and build resilient communities in that state through its *Fairer Victoria* social policy strategy, which now uses a social inclusion approach to achieve desired outcomes. There is a strong rights and citizenship focus for people with disabilities in that policy. Box 6 provides the results of a brief review of state strategic plans and specific social inclusion strategies, actions and initiatives (where they exist) undertaken as part of this research to demonstrate the focus on social inclusion (if any) and the depth of social inclusion activity at the jurisdictional level.

As noted in Box 6 the NSW and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) governments have had a 'community inclusion' focus across government for some time now, having promoted community inclusion as a key objective of the strategic plans for the future development of their jurisdictions (see NSW Government 2006b; ACT Government 2004).⁸ The NSW Government has strongly emphasised social inclusion in its new *NSW State Plan* (released March 2010), and has indicated a commitment to developing a state social inclusion agenda:

Through the development of a social inclusion agenda and collaboration with the non-government sector, we will build the capacity and resilience of communities and the independence, safety and wellbeing of individuals and families. (NSW Government 2010, p.44)

The NSW Government note in the State Plan that the stronger social inclusion focus in the Plan has also been shaped by the demands of NSW residents in the consultations held to develop the new Plan, i.e.:

The importance of social inclusion was also consistently raised, with a focus on better linking appropriate and affordable housing with public transport and community infrastructure to engage disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Priority groups include Aboriginal communities, ethnic communities, young people, women, elderly, people with a disability or mental illness, the homeless, and low income earners. (NSW Government 2010, p.6)

The ACT government has also had a Community Inclusion Board since 2004 (now in its fourth term), directing activities to promote social inclusion.⁹

The NT has recently noted their intentions to apply a social inclusion focus/agenda across government in their recently released strategic plans:

⁸ The NSW Government has used social and community inclusion and community participation to describe their activities in this area; and especially with regard to actions to support people with disabilities.

⁹ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/community_inclusion/home.

A social inclusion plan will be developed to ensure all people, no matter what their disadvantage, will have an equitable opportunity to contribute. Our community is stronger when all its citizens are active participants. Access and equity must be the cornerstone of decision-making. (NT Government 2009, p.20)

The WA government set up a social inclusion reference group to advise the relevant minister on social inclusion in August 2008. Also, the Queensland Government's recently released state plan— *Toward Q2: tomorrow's Queensland* —does not specifically mention social inclusion; however, it has a focus on fairness and equity mirroring many Federal and other state/territory government social inclusion priorities/actions.

All jurisdictions have incorporated a social inclusion focus in the joint Implementation Plans for the Social Housing Initiative and NPAs on Social Housing and Homelessness.¹⁰

In making these comments about state/territory social inclusion activity, it is important to reiterate a point made earlier in this chapter: that most governments in Australia have been pursuing social inclusion-type outcomes for some time now – couched in a number of different approaches and frameworks. These include community inclusion, as well as broader actions for equity in access to and the provision of government services. This said, it is clear from the discussion in this chapter that there is a much stronger focus now on addressing the specific needs of those experiencing multiple disadvantages and most vulnerable in the current economic climate. For example, the homeless, people with disabilities and Indigenous Australians. Also, significant resources have flowed to addressing the social exclusion of people in these groups, in a way not seen in recent history. Addressing the housing situation and pathways of people in these groups is clearly key to these actions—at the national and local level.

It is important to note the existence of these social inclusion initiatives and actions at the jurisdictional level – as they demonstrate the course and direction of actions within (as opposed to across jurisdictions) with regard to assisting disadvantaged groups, as well as the clear focus on social justice actions within governments at the current time. Moreover, it is also the case that a social inclusion framework will guide state and territory actions more comprehensively in future years (including links and interdependencies between policies and initiatives, for example, disability and employment, housing assistance and employment, and, hopefully, between housing and disability) than has necessarily been the case in the past. The Federal Government commitment to social inclusion and reforms to government-funded services will ensure this.

¹⁰ See http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/housing.aspx

Box 6: Some examples of jurisdiction-level social inclusion initiatives and programs

Jurisdiction	Social inclusion strategy/initiative	Comments
Australian Capital Territory	<p>Community Inclusion Board within Chief Minister's Department since 2004. ACT Government also has a Community Inclusion Fund 'designed to assist the most vulnerable members of [the] community as part of a concerted attack on the causes of poverty and social exclusion' (ACT Government 2004, p.8).</p> <p>Community inclusion focus within <i>The Canberra Social Plan</i> (ACT Government 2004), the guiding objective of which is: All people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community.</p> <p>New <i>Social Plan</i> being developed currently, and will include advice and actions from the experience of the Community Inclusion Board and evidence-based research (ACT Government 2009a).</p>	<p><i>Canberra Social Plan</i> priorities: Economic opportunities for all Canberrans; Respect, diversity and human rights; A strong, safe and cohesive community; Improve health and wellbeing; Lead Australia in education, lifelong learning and training; Housing for a future Canberra; and Respect and protect the environment.</p> <p>'Promot[ing] the inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of the ACT community' is a key goal under the priority: respect, diversity and human rights (ACT Government 2004, p.6).</p> <p>2009–10: appointed four Community Inclusion Advocates to listen to community needs (ACT Government 2009b, p.9).</p> <p>See: http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/community_inclusion/home</p>
New South Wales	<p>Strong social inclusion focus in new NSW State Plan (<i>Investing in a Better Future: NSW State Plan 2010</i>)</p> <p>Also focus on community participation/inclusion under the last NSW State Plan (NSW Government 2006, specifically Chapter 4).</p> <p>Social inclusion focus in to NSW Government's policy for disability services (Stronger together: a new direction in disability services for NSW, 2006 – 2016) (NSW Government 2006a).</p> <p>Some performance measures towards new priorities and goals in the NSW State Plan Annual Performance Reports 2010 (for each priority).</p>	<p>Priorities of the <i>NSW State Plan 2010</i>: Better transport and liveable cities; Supporting business and jobs; Clever state; Healthy communities; Green state; Stronger communities; Keeping people safe; and Better government.</p> <p>The priorities include a broad range of actions, including, for example, increase the out of home participation rate of people with a severe or profound disability to at least 85%.</p> <p>Community inclusion approach central to NSW Government's policy for disability services. This policy includes the focus: 'Count me in...promoting community inclusion — supporting adults with a disability to live in and be part of the community' (NSW Government 2006a).</p> <p>See: http://www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan</p>
Queensland	<p>No named social inclusion/community inclusion initiative specifically. Range of social inclusion priorities, however, covered in <i>Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland</i> (Queensland Government 2008).</p>	<p><i>Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland</i> priorities: Strong: Creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas; Green: Protecting our lifestyle and environment; Smart: Delivering world-class education and training; Healthy: Making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people; and Fair: Supporting safe and caring communities.</p> <p>Tomorrow's Queensland available at: http://www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx</p>

<p>Northern Territory</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of importance of social inclusion in <i>Territory 2030: Strategic Plan 2009</i> – the NT Government’s strategic plan (NT Government 2009).</p> <p>NT government has established a social inclusion sub-committee within The Territory 2030 Steering Committee to drive social inclusion actions as part of <i>Territory 2030</i> (p.20).</p>	<p><i>Territory 2030: Strategic Plan 2009</i> outlines a range of strategic priorities, goals and actions, under the broad fields of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Society Economic Sustainability Health and Wellbeing Environment Knowledge, Creativity and Innovation <p>These priorities are underpinned by a range of objectives. Targets under these priorities and objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2012, the Northern Territory Government to develop an approach to social inclusion, including a strong focus on joined-up government responses and a people-centred approach; Improve access to accommodation: by 2030 every Territorian will have access to appropriate accommodation (p.21); A balanced housing market offering good value for money and affordability, ultimately becoming one of Australia’s most affordable housing markets, across all market segments (p.22); People with disabilities have access to a wide range of opportunities (p.25). Improve access to support for Territorians with a disability (p.28). <p>Within <i>Territory 2030</i> a number of areas of immediate action have been identified, these include: a balanced housing market; reforming the education and health sectors; making genuine progress in regional and remote areas; and kick-starting key projects and initiatives.</p> <p>See: http://www.territory2030.nt.gov.au/</p>
<p>South Australia</p>	<p>Social Inclusion Initiative from 2002 supported by a Social Inclusion Unit (within Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and advised by a Social Inclusion Board. SIU overseen by Social Inclusion Minister (also the State Premier).</p> <p>Social inclusion actions lead by Social Inclusion Unit and Board from 2002. Summary of social inclusion strategy (Government of SA 2005).</p> <p>Social inclusion focus underpins SA’s <i>Strategic Plan</i>.</p>	<p>Range of areas of priority currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reducing homelessness;</i> Mental health reform; Increasing school retention rates; Reducing offending (and repeat offending) by young people; Improving Aboriginal health & well being; <i>Disability – including development of a blueprint for disability services in SA;</i> Reducing economic disadvantage. <p>Past priority areas include: drugs, international youth leadership, suicide prevention, and a specific community/urban renewal project.</p> <p>See: http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/index.php</p>
<p>Tasmania</p>	<p>Social Inclusion Unit (within Department of Premier and Cabinet) established March 2008.</p> <p>Social Inclusion Commissioner (part-time position) from mid-January 2009.</p> <p><i>A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania</i> released by SI commissioner (September 2009); and <i>A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania: Preliminary Response</i> by government – outlining initial priorities and actions (October 2009)</p>	<p>Overriding goal: <i>ultimate goal of: a fairer Tasmania where all Tasmanians have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources and relationships that make life healthy, happy and productive.</i></p> <p>Current government priorities/strategies for social inclusion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 1 – Access to the Basics: Making Ends Meet Strategy 2 – Accessible Goods and Services: In Our Reach Strategy 3 – Learning for Life: Diversity and Skills Training Strategy 4 – Building Supportive Local Networks: Connected Communities Strategy 5 – Social Enterprises: A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out Strategy 6 – Volunteering: A Robust Civil Society Strategy 7 – Building Local Capacity: Home Grown Solutions Strategy 8 – Digital Inclusion: Equity for the Information Age Strategy 9 – Planning and Liveability for Social Inclusion: Enabling Future Communities Strategy 10 – Good Governance: Changing The Way We Work (<p>See: http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu</p>

<p>Victoria</p>	<p>Social inclusion approach to social policy through <i>A Fairer Victoria</i> – the Victorian Government Social Policy Action Plan (launched 2005 and revised/updated annually).</p> <p>Current strategy: <i>A Fairer Victoria: standing together through tough times (2009). Emphasis on actions to address bushfire devastation and effects of GFC.</i></p>	<p><i>A Fairer Victoria</i> 2009 current priority areas:</p> <p><i>Priority area 1</i> - Getting the best start: Improving the health, safety and development of children and families most at risk <i>Priority area 2</i> - Improving education and helping people into work: Reducing educational inequality, supporting young people at risk and reducing barriers to workforce participation <i>Priority area 3</i> - Improving health and wellbeing: Reducing health inequalities and promoting wellbeing <i>Priority area 4</i> - Developing liveable communities: Strengthening neighbourhoods and local communities.</p> <p><i>A Fairer Victoria</i> 2009 has a place-based and population group focus giving 'a high priority to social, economic and civic participation (social inclusion)' (State Government of Victoria 2008, p.3). Provision of affordable housing for vulnerable/disadvantaged people central to building <i>A Fairer Victoria</i> and for social inclusion, for example, 'The aim is to give Victorians more scope to choose housing that meets their needs, is affordable, better located and promotes social inclusion' (State Government of Victoria 2009, p.56).</p> <p>The Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–2012 has a strong focus on building and sustaining inclusive communities (Disability Services Department 2002).</p> <p>See: http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/web14/dvc/dvcmain.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/building+resilient+communitiespublications+and+templat esa+fairer+vic toria</p>
<p>Western Australia</p>	<p>Social Inclusion Reference Group established in August 2008 – to advise the Minister on the development of a social inclusion policy framework for WA, as well as best practice examples.</p>	<p>No formal state government plan documented (Department of Premier and Cabinet pers. comm [1 April 2010]). The Premier's statement of February 23 2010 outlines the WA Liberal National Government's policy and legislative priorities for 2010. Such priorities are broad ranging and include a commitment to 'social responsibility', including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'reducing the regulatory burden imposed on non-government agencies, which sees too much money and time being spent on administration rather than practical service delivery; and • progressively shifting the delivery of some services away from government agencies to the community sector' (Barnett 2010). <p>And practical actions that have provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'more social housing to help people move along the path between homelessness and home ownership'; and • 'more funding for disability services and a change to government policy so government agencies no longer have to go to public tender when there is an opportunity to award work to people with disabilities' (Barnett 2010). <p>Other advances were made under previous governments but not specifically described as 'social inclusion'.</p> <p>See: http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Results.aspx?ItemID=133160</p>

Sources: Given in table

Note: a useful summary of the integration of state and territory housing and disability policies as at 2006 is provided in Tual ly (2007). This report provides a good starting point for understanding the focus of particular state and territory disability strategies and actions (albeit some now are dated or are the strategies of governments' no longer in office).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the policy context for this research on housing assistance, social inclusion and people with disabilities. The discussion shows the Australian Government's clear focus on addressing and promoting social inclusion through a range of strategies and actions. Achieving and promoting social inclusion for all Australians is now an overriding outcome and performance indicator for the Australian community generally, with specific attention paid to promoting social inclusion for the most vulnerable individuals and groups.

We know from the discussion of social inclusion policy in this Chapter that people with disabilities are a core group among those experiencing multiple disadvantages and social exclusion generally, and therefore are one of the key groups where general social inclusion actions are being targeted. This fact is already evident in other policy areas, including employment, and to some extent, housing (particularly to do with the homeless). On this point, it should also be noted here that it is likely that many of the actions to address homelessness and housing affordability discussed in the national housing policy section above, will also benefit people with disabilities in particular. By and large, this is because we know from other studies that a significant proportion of the homeless population have some form of disability/mental health issue (see Johnson et al. 2008; also past AHURI research, for example Robinson 2003, also forthcoming work being undertaken by Flatau on homelessness and services and system integration), and this often affects their abilities to maintain accommodation. Moreover, we also know from annual data that a significant proportion of newly accommodated social housing tenants have a disability or disabilities (including mental health issues).¹¹ However, what we know little about is what impact housing assistance (such as social housing, private rental assistance etc.) has on social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities—the next Chapter specifically looks at the literature in this area. This research will build a much-needed evidence base in this area of policy interest.

¹¹ As reported in the Productivity Commission's annual *Report on Government Services* and the *CSHA National Data Reports* on housing assistance.

3 SOCIAL INCLUSION, HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

3.1 Social inclusion and disability

Social inclusion is a priority of national governments both in Australia and elsewhere (Gillard 2007) and is also a policy concern for state, territory and local governments (Arthurson & Jacobs 2003). Debates over social inclusion/social exclusion have a long history both nationally and internationally (Beer & Morphett 2002) but relatively little attention has been paid to how disability intersects with housing assistance and social inclusion. This section focuses on the relationship between disability, housing and social inclusion and considers which aspects of disability result in social exclusion (Goggin & Newell 2005). It examines what we mean by social inclusion and how disability is both defined and measured across Australia. The section considers the number of persons affected by disabilities in Australia in order to gauge the potential – or real – challenge confronting housing policy before moving on to examine the available evidence on the relationship between housing in Australian society, disability and social inclusion.

3.1.1 What is social inclusion?

Social inclusion is often considered to be the converse of social exclusion and globally there is considerable academic and policy literature on social inclusion. The idea of social exclusion has been adopted in a variety of contexts (academic, policy development) and by a number of different types of organisations (national governments, supra-national organisations, non-government bodies) and this has inevitably resulted in a multiplicity of definitions. Social exclusion was strongly associated with the incoming Blair Labour Government in the United Kingdom and the Social Exclusion Unit within the UK Cabinet Office argued that:

Social exclusion is shorthand for what happens when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown. (Social Exclusion Website 1998)

While Mandanipour (1998, p.77) commented:

The question of social exclusion and integration, it can be argued, largely revolves around access ... to decision-making, access to resources, and access to common narratives, which enable social integration.

The definition of social exclusion has been discussed more extensively elsewhere (see Beer & Maude 2001) but it is important to note that the term is generally used to refer to multiple and linked social, economic and cultural problems within an area or group. It is concerned with 'joined up' problems, to use the language of the social exclusion literature. However, it should be noted that the concept of social exclusion has not received universal acceptance in academic and policy circles, even within Europe where its origins lie. Blanc (1998) observed that social exclusion was a problematic and sensitive issue in France, with many social scientists openly critical of the term. However, its adoption by the European Union, and its social policy programs, has ensured its widespread adoption.

Somerville (1998) reviewed policy documents and academic work on social exclusion and concluded that those suffering from social exclusion experience greater disadvantage than poverty alone.

What all these groups have in common, and what lies at the heart of all processes of social exclusion, is a sense of social isolation and segregation from the formal structures and institutions of the economy, society and state (Somerville 1998, p.762).

Somerville (1998) noted that social exclusion has three drivers within advanced economies:

- First, social exclusion can arise out of disadvantage within the labour market.
- Second, it may be a consequence of political/legal structures that disadvantage some individuals or groups and disenfranchise them from publicly provided benefits.
- Finally, exclusion may arise out of predominant ideologies.

Institutionalised racism is one such ideology, as is the gendered division of our society, which forces many women out of the formal workforce and devalues their work within the domestic economy. Importantly, the socially excluded do not generally suffer the consequences of just one of these processes, but instead experience the impact of all three.

Within this context it is worth reflecting upon the definition of social inclusion offered by Jacobs and Hulse (2003):

[social inclusion] ... describes the ideal situation whereby individuals are able to participate in the relevant institutions of society and to share in the goods and services. It is often used to denote the apparent converse of social exclusion. That is, bringing people into mainstream society versus people outside of the mainstream society. (Glossary)

Following this definition, people with disabilities are potentially denied social inclusion if the very presence of a disability results in exclusion from the mainstream of society; that is, they have a reduced capacity to gain access to the goods and services offered by society, they are subject to the negative impacts of predominant ideologies and/or they are disenfranchised by political or legal structures.

One of the critical issues for this research is to understand if and how disability generates *social exclusion* in the sense of stripping away a sense of control over one's life.

3.1.2 Defining and measuring disability

The definition and measurement of disability is significant because disability as a social phenomenon and a lived experience varies greatly between individuals and groups within society. Beer and Faulkner (2009) suggested that there were three key dimensions of disability that were pivotal in shaping the housing careers of people with disabilities:

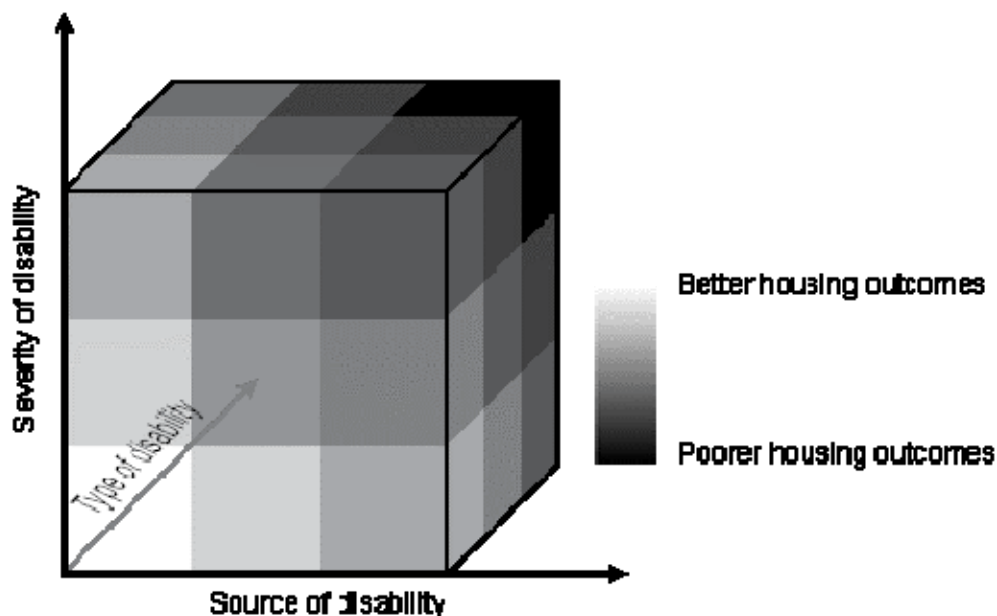
- the extent of the disability
- the source of the disability¹²
- the type of impairment.

Beer and Faulkner's (2009) conceptualisation of this relationship is presented in Figure 1 and it attempts to reflect the multidimensional nature of disability. Critically, while some types of disability may have little, if any, impact on housing, others

¹² The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) notes that environmental factors are important contributors to the source of disability (see AIHW 2003b).

profoundly reshape the capacity of individuals and their household members to move through the housing market or gain access to housing assistance.

Figure 1: Conceptualising disability and its impact on housing career



Source: Beer and Faulkner (2009, p.3)

The ABS provides the most robust estimates of disability within the Australian population and defines disability as:

... any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. Examples range from hearing loss which requires the use of a hearing aid, to difficulty dressing due to arthritis, to advanced dementia requiring constant help and supervision. (ABS 2004)

In the 2003 ABS *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* one in five people in Australia (3 958 300 or 20.0%) had a reported disability. This rate was much the same for males (19.8%) and females (20.1%). After removing the effects of different age structures the ABS found that there was little change in the disability rate between 1998 (20.1%) and 2003 (20.0%). The rate of profound or severe core-activity limitation also showed little change between 1998 (6.4%) and 2003 (6.3%).

The AIHW (2003a) discussed the various approaches to measuring disability both internationally and within Australia, including the development of estimates based on: all disabling conditions; disabling conditions and activity limitations and participation restrictions; all disabling conditions and a severe or profound core activity restriction; and main disabling condition. Clearly, how disability is defined will influence the count of persons with disabilities and the discussion presented here focuses on both severe and profound core activity limitations, as well as all disabling conditions.

3.1.3 Estimating the number of persons with disabilities

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (June 2007) completed a major piece of work estimating the current and future demand for specialist disability

services. Their work focused on enumerating the population using services funded under the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA). They estimated that in 2004–05 there were 200 493 users of CSTDA services in Australia and that this number had grown from 187 806 in 2003–04 (AIHW 2007, p.1). Importantly, of this number:

- 17 per cent (33 787 persons) used accommodation support services
- 46 per cent (92 610 persons) used community support services
- 22 per cent (44 166 persons) used community access services
- 12 per cent used respite services (23 951 persons)
- 32 per cent used employment services (64 835).

An intellectual/learning disability was the most common form of primary disability supported by the CSTDA (45%), followed by: physical/diverse disability (19 %); psychiatric disability (8%) and sensory/speech disability (7%). However, data presented in the AIHW report (2003) show that physical/diverse disabilities are the most common among the disability population (see also AIHW 2005, p.213).

The AIHW (2007) also estimated the level of unmet demand using data from the ABS *Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers*. They assumed that the CSTDA target group corresponds to the survey definition of people with a 'severe and profound core activity limitation' – that is, people who *sometimes* need help with self-care, mobility or communication. On this basis the AIHW estimated that there was an unmet demand for CSTDA-funded accommodation and respite services of 23 800, but within a range between 15 900 and 31 700. This includes a percentage of 'under-met demand', that is, persons who had some, but not all, of their needs supplied.

The 2003 ABS *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Careers* showed that in 2003 there were 677 700 persons aged under 64 in Australia with a 'severe or profound core activity limitation'.¹³ Of this group, 16 300 were living in cared accommodation and 661 400 were living in households within the general community. The AIHW (2007) estimated that between 2006 and 2010 the number of people aged under 64 years with severe or profound core activity limitations would rise to 752 100 persons. *Clearly, the number of persons with significant disabilities is substantial and the potential implications for housing assistance profound*. Nationally only 4.2 per cent of persons with severe or profound core activity limitations occupy specialist housing and this is to be expected given the policy settings that have been in place for two decades or more in all jurisdictions (Quibell 2004). Disability, therefore, is an issue for mainstream housing provision and housing policy, and the capacity of people with disabilities to gain access to adequate and appropriate housing through the market is thus a test of the social inclusion of this critical group within society.

3.2 Housing, housing assistance and disability

Relatively little has been written about housing, housing assistance and disability in Australia, with the notable exceptions being work completed as part of AHURI's

¹³ The ABS Survey identified four levels of 'core activity limitation': profound – unable to perform a core activity or always needs assistance; severe – sometimes needs assistance to perform a core activity, or has difficulty understanding or being understood by family and friends; moderate – does not need assistance but has difficulty performing a core activity; mild, has no difficulty in performing a core activity but uses aids or equipment because of disability' or cannot perform the activities of easily walking 200 metres, walking up or down stairs without a handrail etc. Effectively this disability metric would exclude most persons with a psychiatric disability.

National Research Venture 2 (NRV2): 21st century housing careers and Australia's housing future (see Kroehn et al. 1997; Saugeres 1998, Zacharov & Minnery 2007; Tually 2007; Beer & Faulkner 2009). The disability component of NRV2 focused on the housing needs and experiences of persons with four types of disability: mobility impairment, psychiatric disability, cognitive impairment and a sensory disability. The research also considered the housing of family members with care responsibilities. By contrast, there is a much more robust literature on this topic internationally, including work by Beresford and Oldman (2002), Harrison and Davis (2001) for the UK and National Council on Disability (2010) Guilderblom and Rosentraub (2006), Clarke and George (2005), Allen (2003) and Little (2003) on aspects of the US situation. Critically, much of this research reports housing market outcomes for people with disabilities very similar to those evident in Australia and this suggests that the outcomes of this research in Australia could have applicability internationally.

As the discussion above has shown, the overwhelming majority of people with disabilities live within the community and rely upon mainstream housing markets and housing market processes to meet their accommodation needs. Published research on housing and disability in Australia clearly shows that people with disabilities are disadvantaged in their housing for a number of reasons and these are discussed below.

- *Low rates of participation in the formal labour force* among people with disabilities and their family-member carers has a profound impact on the ability of this group to secure a adequate, appropriate and affordable housing. People with disabilities and their family members have reported significant problems in finding and maintaining appropriate employment because of: difficulties in getting to employment; the limited range of employment opportunities available to some sections of the population with a disability; the episodic nature of some disabilities; inappropriately designed workplaces; and the often high costs to individuals and households who work (Kroehn et al. 2007). Family members who provide care and/or support to people with disabilities report that the demands of caring significantly reduces their capacity to find and maintain paid work, forcing them onto income support. The overall impact of low rates of employment is a heightened dependence on pensions and low average incomes; this in turn reduces the capacity of households where one or more persons is affected by a disability to meet their housing needs through the market (Beer & Faulkner 2009).
- *The need for housing that is accessible to public transport* is critical for many people with disabilities but such well-located housing is often relatively expensive and/or the housing form not suitable for a person with a disability. Many forms of higher-density housing, for example, are simply not appropriate for those with mobility impairment. Households where one or more persons affected by a disability are often forced to choose between inappropriate accommodation in accessible locations and more appropriate housing in less accessible places. Kroehn et al. (2007) found that even home owners were affected by this constraint, with some forced to remain in relatively inaccessible homes because of the inability to 'trade up' to housing in more central neighbourhoods.
- *Rental housing is often seen to be inaccessible to people with disabilities*, both because of the high cost of renting privately and the physical characteristics of the dwelling stock. Beer and Faulkner (2009) noted that many households where one or more persons had a disability were confronted by unaffordable housing, with more than 15 per cent of such households paying in excess of 50 per cent of income for housing. From their qualitative research Kroehn et al. (2007) observed that while the high cost of rental housing was a growing concern—and one which had escalated with house price rises since the year 2000—there were other

concerns also. Kroehn et al. (2007) heard evidence that many rental properties could not be occupied by households where one or more persons had a disability because of their physical layout or the reluctance of landlords to make necessary minor renovations. Some landlords were also unwilling to allow tenants to make and pay for renovations themselves.

- *Home purchase is seen to be too expensive and beyond the reach of many households affected by disability.* Saugeres (2008) and Kroehn et al. (2007) both noted that many households where one or more persons were affected by a disability aspired to home ownership but considered it to be beyond their financial reach. They lacked both the capital to establish a deposit and the income to service a mortgage. This problem was seen to have become more acute over the last decade and while the situation may have eased in 2009 as the housing market felt the effects of the economic downturn associated with the GFC, the resurgence in the Australian economy is likely to result in renewed pressure on housing affordability for those affected by a disability.
- *Many people with disabilities are reliant on public rental housing* and this dependence reduces their options within the Australian housing system. Beer and Faulkner (2009) found that people with disabilities were significantly over-represented in the public housing system and this outcome reflects contemporary public housing entry processes. The AIHW (2008) has noted that people with disabilities now constitute a significant percentage of new entrants into public rental housing because they most clearly meet the 'need' criteria used to access waiting lists.¹⁴ The Disability Housing Trust (Allen Consulting Group 2007) has also noted the lack of alternatives for accommodating people with disabilities, especially those with high support needs. Others such as Williams (2008) argue that there is a need for individualised support packages for those with a disability, with that package including appropriate financial support for housing. Recent developments in national housing policy – including both NRAS and NAHA – may result in a greater range of social landlord options for people with disabilities, but as of yet, there is limited evidence on the magnitude and direction of any change.
- *There are non-economic barriers to participation in the housing market among some groups within the housing market.* Reynolds et al. (2002) noted that those with a psychiatric disability often struggled to maintain tenancies because of the episodic nature of their illnesses. They observed that persons admitted to hospital would often return to find that in four to six weeks they were admitted they had been evicted for the non-payment of rent, the failure to pay bills or for other reasons. Beer and Faulkner (2009) reported similar experiences among those with a psychiatric disability in Brimbank, Victoria, while Hulse and Saugeres (2008) noted that psychiatric disability was a key component of precarious housing. They noted that 'the most striking finding was the incidence of mental health problems...with many suffering from anxiety disorders and depression, sometimes over many years' (Hulse & Saugeres 2008, p.2). Similarly, those with a hearing disability may struggle to gain access to information on home purchase because of the absence of information in a form that they can use.
- *People with disabilities living in rural and remote regions are seen to be especially disadvantaged* as they are often distant from services (resources and opportunities) and specialist assistance. The AIHW (2009) has noted that people with disabilities tend to be concentrated in fringe and outer suburban local governments where housing costs are lower. For example, in Sydney the greatest rates of disability in the population are in the local government areas of the Blue

¹⁴ It is important to acknowledge that some caution is necessary in the interpretation of the AIHW data in this instance as the Institute applies a proxy, rather than a direct, indicator of disability.

Mountains, Hawkesbury, Wyong North-East, Blacktown and Liverpool East. In Melbourne the highest rates of disability in the non-aged population are in Melton, Dandenong, the Yarra Ranges and the Mornington Peninsula. While the problems of transport have been noted above, this challenge is especially acute in rural and regional Australia where there may be little, if any, public transport. At the same time government support programs and medical assistance tend to be concentrated in the capital cities, which results in a transport challenge locally and on a regional basis.

The evidence presented above clearly shows that those affected by a disability—and their households—are profoundly affected by social exclusion. They have limited opportunities to participate in the mainstream housing market because of their low rates of employment and consequent limited purchasing power within the market. At the same time, they are further excluded by a range of other processes, including the physical inappropriateness of much of the housing stock, the attitudes of landlords, the challenge of gaining access to centrally located housing, concentration in one of the most marginalised sections of the housing system, and social, communication and legal barriers that effectively exclude people with disabilities from large sections of the housing stock. For example, those evicted from their housing because of psychiatric disability may find that gaining access to private rental housing in the future will be difficult if not impossible because of the use of tenant data bases (Short et al. 2007). For all these reasons, we can comprehensively conclude that people with disabilities are denied social inclusion within the housing market.

3.3 Conclusion

The discussion in this section has shown five key points that highlight the importance of this research at the current time. First, disability is important with regard to housing in Australia as one in five households report that at least one member of the household has a disability. Second, a significant proportion of the population has a profound or severe disability (6.3% of the population) and this frequency of disability will likely determine the nature of housing needs. Third, most people with disabilities live within the community, with specialist accommodation only used by a small minority. Fourth, the nature, source and extent of the disability can affect an individual's housing experiences. Finally, the published literature shows that people with disabilities experience social exclusion and are confronted by multiple processes that remove or limit their capacity to participate fully in society.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter outlines the methods that will be used in the next stage of the research to answer the projects' two overarching research objectives:

- What impact does housing assistance have on social inclusion for people with disabilities?
- How can governments ensure that they maximise the social inclusion benefits from the housing assistance they provide now and into the future?

The research design integrates a number of data sources in order to understand the level of social exclusion/ inclusion experienced by people with disabilities and the role of housing, or specifically housing assistance, in that outcome. The subsequent phases of this project will employ the research methods specified in the project proposal, and these are outlined in section 4.2 below.

Importantly, the research methods employed allow those at the centre of the disability, housing and social inclusion nexus – people with disabilities – to themselves present their views and experiences, as well as discuss what has worked for them in terms of their personal social inclusivity. Additionally, the views of service providers assisting people with disabilities with their housing circumstance, service and support needs and/or their participation in the broader community (i.e. their social inclusiveness) will also be sought.

The research will be conducted with people with lifetime disability/disabilities and service providers assisting people with such disabilities. The research focuses specifically on people with lifetime disabilities because their relationship with housing over their lifetime is fundamentally shaped by their disability (Beer & Faulkner 2009). Specifically, interviews will be undertaken with those with cognitive impairment, mobility impairment and psychiatric disabilities. The fieldwork will be undertaken across three jurisdictions: South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. As noted in Chapter 2, both the South Australia and Victorian governments have a strong commitment to social inclusion across government programs and service, with the South Australian government being the first in Australia to commit to a whole-of-government social inclusion focus. Accordingly, the actions of the South Australian government with regard to social inclusion initiatives are arguably more advanced than in other jurisdictions. The South Australian government has also prioritised disability within its social inclusion initiative, making it a logical jurisdiction to study.

4.2 Research methods

This research uses four main methods to answer the overarching research question above.

First, *a review was conducted of the published literature and policy documents* for each state and territory on social inclusion, housing and disability. This component of the research will provide an important policy context for the remainder of the project. This review will include analysis of AIHW data on the number of people with disabilities in receipt of housing assistance and the forms of assistance they receive. This component of the research is primarily contained within this Positioning Paper.

Second, *60 semi-structured face-to-face interviews* (20 each in SA, Vic and NSW) with persons with lifetime disabilities who have experienced significant housing transitions over their life course will be conducted. The interviews will focus on the

ways in which social inclusion has varied with the form of housing assistance received and will include an instrument for measuring each of the four areas of participation identified by the Australian Government as important for determining social inclusion/exclusion (discussed in section 2.2.3 of this paper): working, learning, engaging and having a voice—the key elements).

The interviews will use a self-reporting measure of housing outcomes that will inform an indicative assessment of the impact of a range of housing policies and forms of assistance. Persons included in this phase of the research will be recipients of a range of housing assistance types – public housing, non-government association housing (such as community housing), private rental assistance, specific Indigenous housing etc. It is anticipated that five of the 60 interviews will be with Indigenous people with disabilities. An Indigenous consultant will be employed to assist with these interviews.

The data gathered from interviews with people with disabilities will be qualitative in nature and will be analysed with reference to the key dimensions of social inclusion identified in the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda. The qualitative data analysis program NVivo will be one of the tools used to undertake this analysis, with the investigation also focusing upon the core research questions.

Third, *one focus group with service providers will be held in each jurisdiction* (SA, NSW and Victoria) and one focus group with people with disabilities will be held in each jurisdiction. These focus groups will discuss the role played by housing assistance in achieving social inclusion among people with disabilities. The focus groups will not be impairment-specific as research expertise within this research team indicates that restricting focus groups to people with certain disabilities or to providers of services for people with certain impairments is a medical service delivery-focused ideology and both service providers and people with disabilities prefer not to be limited to discussion of the issues they face/their thoughts with only similar people/groups.

Fourth, 10 interviews with social housing providers in each of the jurisdictions (30 in total) will be held. These interviews will include discussions with both public sector providers and benevolent society or non-government providers.

A *delphi analysis* will be undertaken to collect relevant information from both service providers and social housing providers on the relationship between disability and social inclusion. A delphi study is being included in this instance because of its capacity to draw upon the insights of a wide group of experts and affected individuals, as well as its capacity to draw that information into coherent themes. It aims to develop a consensus from a group of experts about opinions on a strategic issue, through anonymous contributions in response to questions, and then a further opportunity to comment on the feedback received from all respondents. Delphi studies can be undertaken remotely, via postal questionnaires, or through face-to-face meetings where participants have the opportunity to reflect upon several iterations of the outcomes of prior deliberations (Beer & Paris 1990).

5 CONCLUSION

This Positioning Paper provides the context for important empirical research on the relationship between housing assistance and social inclusion for people with disabilities. The paper has outlined the current policy environment with regard to social inclusion, disability and housing and explored the links between these important policy spheres. It has also outlined the current literature regarding disability and housing, including utilisation of housing assistance by people with disabilities. The research is timely given current reforms to, and significant investment in, disability services and affordable (social) housing by government, as well as the commitment by the Australian Government and some state and territory governments towards ensuring all their actions promote and achieve social inclusion outcomes for all individuals.

The paper outlines the research methods to be used in the next stage of this research project for AHURI. Once complete, this stage of the research will be able to inform housing policy development (as well as disability and social inclusion policy and practice) in a number of important and useful ways; for example, by:

- Making explicit the contribution housing assistance—including public housing—makes to the social inclusion aspirations of governments.
- Providing a greater depth of understanding of the ways housing assistance programs contribute to social inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Identifying those aspects of housing assistance that have social inclusion impacts in order to produce policies which produce stronger social inclusion outcomes in the future.
- Documenting the ways in which social inclusion among people with disabilities varies by location (metropolitan/non-metropolitan; inner versus outer urban) and type of disability, as well as the role housing assistance plays in contributing to better outcomes.
- Examining the housing transitions of persons who have moved from institutional to more independent forms of housing and how this has affected their levels of social inclusion.
- Considering ways in which housing assistance and support services could be integrated to maximise social inclusion outcomes.

These contributions to housing (disability and social inclusion) policy and the wider housing, disability and social inclusion literatures are fundamental to building our understanding of what are appropriate supports for the large and growing number of people with disabilities in Australia, and especially for ensuring that people with disabilities are able to participate in the social and economic life of the country to the extent they desire and are capable of: the Australian Government's social inclusion vision.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Community Response Task Force

This Community Response Task Force is a group of prominent Australians (mostly from the not-for-profit sector and including two members of the Australian Social Inclusion Board) whose activities are aimed at providing advice to Government on the impacts of the GFC on vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, as well as identifying assistance for people feeling the effects of the GFC, especially those disengaged from the labour market. The actions of the Task Force then (see the terms of reference, outlined below), aim to promote social inclusion by facilitating re-engagement with the workforce for vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians affected by the GFC.

Terms of Reference

'The Community Response Taskforce (the Task Force) will initially focus on three issues:

- What Government and the community sector, working with financial service providers, can do to provide relief and support to Australians experiencing difficulty with personal and household debt through emergency relief, financial counselling and other forms of support.
- What assistance can be offered to Australians facing redundancy or finding themselves unemployed, including young people, workers being made redundant and others facing the risk of long-term labour market disadvantage.
- Options for regulatory reform in the Third Sector that could help agencies to focus even more on meeting the needs of vulnerable Australians by cutting red tape, streamlining contracts and compliance procedures and improving collaboration between governments'. (Australian Government 2009c, p.1)

Other potential areas/issues to be addressed by the Task Force

Information on the activities of the Task Force also note that a range of other areas/issues may be addressed by the Task Force, including:

- 'The role of pensions, allowances and participation requirements in maximising social and economic participation.
- Supporting Australians to find work in occupations where there is growing demand.
- Supporting the skills and development of workers in the community sector to ensure that they are able to provide the best possible support to the wider community.
- Working to maximise the contribution made by infrastructure to social inclusion and the reduction of disadvantage' (Australian Government 2009c, p.1).

The Task Force is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister (who is also the current Minister for Social Inclusion) and/or the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, with assistance for the Task Force Chair provided by the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion. The Task Force has thirteen members.

Secretariat support for the Task Force is provided by the SIU in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australian Government 2009c, p.1).

Appendix 2: National Compact with the Third Sector – National Compact: Working Together

A central component of the Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda is working with the Third Sector (not-for-profit) to promote social inclusion outcomes for all Australians. The not-for-profit sector is key in this regard because it is this sector that delivers and develops a significant proportion of the initiatives and programs that support social inclusion outcomes for the community. Accordingly, the National Compact with the Third Sector – known as the National Compact: Working Together – is an important document in understanding the social inclusion actions of the Australian Government. Areas of specific relevance to this research have been highlighted in the following information about the Compact.

The signatories to the Compact hold the following shared vision:

'The Australian Government and the Third Sector will work together to improve social, cultural, civic, economic and environmental outcomes, building on the strengths of individuals and communities. This collaboration *will contribute to improved community wellbeing and a more inclusive Australian society with better quality of life for all*' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, p.1, emphasis added).

In achieving this shared vision the Australian Government and not-for-profit sector have committed to ten shared principles:

- 'We [signatories to the Compact] believe *a strong independent Third Sector is vital for a fair, inclusive society*. We acknowledge and value the immense contribution the Sector and its volunteers make to Australian life.
- We aspire to a relationship between government and the Sector based on mutual respect and trust.
- We agree that authentic consultation, constructive advocacy and genuine collaboration between the Third Sector and Government will lead to better policies, programs and services for our communities.
- We believe the great diversity within Australia's Third Sector is a significant strength, enabling it to understand and respond to the needs and aspirations of the nation's varied communities, in collaboration with those communities.
- We commit to enduring engagement with marginalised and disadvantaged Australians, in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.
- We recognise the value of cultural diversity in a multicultural society and will respond effectively through culturally sensitive services.
- We share a desire to improve life in Australia through cultural, social, humanitarian, environmental and economic activity. To achieve this, we need to plan, learn and improve together, building on existing strengths and making thoughtful decisions using sound evidence.
- We share a drive to respond to the needs and aspirations of communities through effective, pragmatic use of available resources.
- We recognise concerted effort is needed to develop an innovative, well-resourced, sustainable Third Sector.
- We acknowledge *the need to develop measurable outcomes* and invest in accountability mechanisms to demonstrate the effectiveness of our joint endeavours' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, p.3).

The Compact includes a number of shared aspirations related to the relationship between parties to the Compact; for engagement and consultation and for achieving better results between parties and the community; and for building a more sustainable sector (see Box A1). The most pertinent of these aspirations for this research are highlighted below.

Box A1: Shared aspirations under the National Compact with the Third Sector

<p><i>Aspirations for our relationship</i></p> <p>We [signatories to the Compact] will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understand and value the Third Sector's contribution 2. work together respectfully, based on mutual understanding 3. communicate openly with each other 4. support networks and mechanisms that strengthen our ability to work together 5. develop new skills to work more effectively together. <p><i>Aspirations for engagement and consultation</i></p> <p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. develop and implement codes of engagement together 7. find ways for people who are vulnerable and excluded to have a direct, strong voice in policy and planning processes 8. protect the freedom of Third Sector organisations to contribute to public debate without impact on their funding or status 9. work in real partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, ethno-specific and multicultural community organisations. <p><i>Aspirations for achieving better results</i></p> <p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. improve our focus on achieving outcomes for individuals and communities 11. better coordinate policy, programs and services to improve these outcomes 12. share relevant information and data to help us all plan and evaluate our efforts 13. improve funding and procurement arrangements 14. reduce red tape and streamline reporting 15. implement consistent, simple financial arrangements across government 16. continue to improve management and efficiency of service and program delivery 17. achieve more transparent, accountable decision making and program delivery. <p><i>Aspirations for a more sustainable sector</i></p> <p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. foster research and innovation 19. work together to strengthen the capacity of the Sector 20. collaborate on workforce strategies to improve attraction, retention, development and recognition of paid workers and volunteers in the Third Sector 21. investigate and support opportunities for diverse funding sources and partnerships.

Source: Adapted from Commonwealth of Australia (2010, pp.5–6)

The Compact is overseen by a council of Third Sector and Government representatives and will be an office within Government. Currently, this role is being performed by the Board Secretariat of the Social Inclusion Board. The Compact council and office will develop an implementation strategy and action plans to promote the Compact and monitor the achievement of the vision, principles and aspirations of the Compact.

Appendix 3: Priority employment areas

The twenty priority employment areas identified as highly vulnerable currently or likely to be so in the future as a result of the GFC and economic change are:

- Canterbury-Bankstown and South Western Sydney (New South Wales)
- Illawarra (New South Wales)
- Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley (New South Wales)
- Mid-North Coast (New South Wales)
- Sydney West and Blue Mountains (New South Wales)
- Central Coast-Hunter (New South Wales)
- South Eastern Melbourne (Victoria)
- North Western Melbourne (Victoria)
- Ballarat-Bendigo (Central Victoria)
- North Eastern Victoria
- Ipswich-Logan (Queensland)
- Cairns (Queensland)
- Townsville-Thuringowa (Queensland)
- Caboolture-Sunshine Coast (Queensland)
- Southern Wide Bay-Burnett (Queensland)
- Bundaberg-Hervey Bay (Queensland))
- Northern and Western Adelaide (South Australia)
- Port Augusta-Whyalla-Port Pirie (South Australia)
- South West Perth (Western Australia)
- North West/Northern Tasmania

Source: DEEWR (2009c)

Appendix 4: The current housing policy environment

Box A2: Key features of the NAHA and supporting measures

National Affordable Housing Agreement

Effective: 1 January 2009 (ongoing; first agreement for five years).

Funding: \$6.2 billion over the five years of the Agreement (COAG 2008a, p.6); allocated to states/Territories on a per capita basis.

Agreement of the COAG with the "aspirational objective": '*...that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation*' (COAG 2009a, p.3).

The NAHA is a whole-of-government framework detailing outcomes, outputs, reforms and progress measures to improve housing affordability for low to moderate income households; reduce homelessness; improve Indigenous housing circumstances and reduce disadvantage; and better integrate mainstream and specialist housing and human services, including disability services (COAG 2009a: 3). It funds the following: social housing, assistance for private renters, a accommodation and necessary support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, assistance for home purchasers; and some planning reforms to improve housing supply (COAG 2008a: 6).

Under the Agreement the Australian and state and Territory governments have committed to a range of outcomes:

- (a) *people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion;*
- (b) people are able to rent housing that meets their needs;
- (c) people can purchase affordable housing;
- (d) people have access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market;
- (e) Indigenous people have the same housing opportunities (in relation to homelessness services, housing rental, housing purchase and access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market) as other Australians; and
- (f) Indigenous people have improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding, particularly in remote and discrete communities (p.4).

The NAHA includes a range of reforms that signatories have agreed to work toward, such as (c) 'creating mixed communities that promote social and economic opportunities by reducing concentrations of disadvantage that exist in some social housing estates'; and (h) 'creating incentives for public housing tenants to take up employment opportunities within the broader employment framework' (p.7).

The NAHA is supported by the following three National Partnership Agreements.

National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing

Effective: 1 January 2009 – 30 June 2010.

Funding: Commonwealth funding of \$200 million for both 2008/09 and 2009/10; allocated on a per capita basis.

This National Partnership Agreement sees implementation of a 'Social Housing Growth Fund', a *short-term capital investment initiative to boost social housing supply and address homelessness*. The purpose of this NPS/the Social Housing Growth Fund is 'to increase the supply of social housing through new, construction, and contribute to reduced homelessness and improved outcomes for homeless and Indigenous Australians' (COAG 2009d, p.3).

Around 1,850 new social housing dwellings are expected to be added to the sector through this initiative (FaHCSIA 2009c, p.1), primarily in the not-for-profit sector. These dwellings must be ready for occupation within two years of receipt of funding, and 'provide an appropriate response to an area of unmet need for social housing within the jurisdiction' (COAG 2009d, p.6).

States/Territories have developed Implementation Plans showing their intentions for this funding. These Plans are joint plans with the Social Housing Initiative under the NPA on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan.

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

Effective: 1 January 2009 – 30 June 2013.

Funding: Maximum of \$800 million; available based on states/territories share of the homelessness population at Census 2006.

NPA on Homelessness is new money intended to meet one of the primary aims of the NAHA: '*People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion*' (COAG 2009a, p.4). It provides funding to work toward the outcomes for reducing homelessness outlined in the White Paper on Homelessness: *The Road Home* (COAG 2009b, p.5), i.e.

- Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough;
- Fewer people will become homeless more than once;
- *People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation; and*
- *People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing.*

This NPA has four core outputs: (a) Implementation of the *A Place to Call Home* initiative; (b) Street to home initiatives for chronic homeless people (rough sleepers); (c) Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies, including through tenancy support, advocacy, case management, financial counselling and referral services; and (d) Assistance for people leaving child protection services, correctional and health facilities, to access and maintain stable, affordable housing (COAG 2009b, p.5).

State and Territory Implementation Plans outlining actions being undertaken to address homelessness under this Agreement are now available (see http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/housing.aspx).

National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

Effective: 1 January 2009 (for ten years).

Funding: \$836 million from 2008–09 to 2012–13; \$1.94 billion over 10 year term of the Agreement

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing 'aims to facilitate significant reform in the provision of housing for Indigenous people in remote communities and to address overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing condition and severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities' (COAG 2009c, p.1). Funding under this NPA is key to meeting one of the outcomes of the NAHA: 'Indigenous people have improved amenity and reduced overcrowding, particularly in remote and discrete communities' (COAG 2009c: 5). It is the key Agreement supporting the housing outcomes desired for Indigenous people in the *Closing the Gap*, the Australian Government's Indigenous policy (Australian Government 2009d).

Under the 10 year life of this Agreement it is expected that states and the NT Government will deliver up to 4,200 new houses for Indigenous people in remote communities and 4,800 existing houses in remote communities will receive necessary upgrades and major repairs. Additionally, funds under this Agreement are earmarked for: tenancy management, an ongoing program of minor housing repairs and maintenance; improvements to and audits of housing, infrastructure, essential services in remote areas, with these

activities to support economic development and employment opportunities for Indigenous people (COAG 2009c, p.13; COAG 2008a, p.29).

Implementation Plans for each state and the Northern Territory have not yet been formalised.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

Effective: July 2008 - June 30 2012.

Funding: \$623 million (Swan 2008).

The National Rental Affordability Scheme is a Federal Government initiative aimed at encouraging 'large-scale investment in housing by offering an incentive to participants in the National Rental Affordability Scheme so as to: Increase the supply of affordable rental dwellings; and Reduce rental costs for low and moderate income households' (*National Rental Affordability Scheme Act 2008 (Cwith)*).

The NRAS provides financial incentives to developers and organisations to deliver up to 50 000 affordable rental dwellings across the country. Such incentives are comprised of two parts: the Commonwealth commitment which is a per dwelling refundable tax offset (originally set at \$6000) and state/Territory incentive of (originally) \$2000 – both indexed annually. These incentives are offered to successful NRAS applicants for each dwelling rented at 20 per cent below market rent to an "eligible tenant" (i.e. who meets specific income criteria). Incentives are valid for 10 years provided the requirements of the program continue to be met (National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2008; FaHCSIA 2009d).

The NRAS is comprised of two separate phases – an Establishment Phase (July 1 2008 to June 30 2010) and an Expansion Phase (July 1 2010 to June 30 2012). Two funding rounds have been conducted under the Establishment Phase, with over 10 000 incentives having been announced to October 2009 (Plibersek 2009a; 2009b). Round Three of the program is currently open (September 1 2009 to August 31 2010 – for the Expansion Phase) and priority under this round is being given to applications linking with proposals under the Social Housing Initiative; those seeking private sector development of state-owned land released for residential development; and those proposing construction of a minimum of 10 000 dwellings (National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2008; FaHCSIA 2009d).

Note: Together with the NAHA, the housing-related NPAs take the total investment in housing and homelessness assistance to around \$9.3 billion.

Box A3: Key features of the social housing Initiative

Social Housing Initiative

Effective: Feb 2009 – June 30 2012.

Funding: \$5.638 billion.

The Social Housing Initiative is a significant investment in the social housing sector in order to stimulate the Australian economy in the face of the GFC (COAG 2009e, p.13–14). It is funding the construction of some 19,200 new social housing dwellings between February 2009 and June 30 2012 (including fast tracking some dwellings already in state and territory government pipelines) (worth \$5.238 billion), as well as repairs, upgrades and maintenance to 2,500 social housing dwellings that are uninhabitable or will become so in the near future (worth \$400 million) (Australian Government 2009e; FaHCSIA 2010b).

Recent data on the initiative (FaHCSIA 2010b) shows that:

- As of March 4 2010, 645 new social housing dwellings have been completed and construction has commenced on 10,115 new dwellings; and
- As at the end of January 2010, repairs/maintenance has been completed on 43,884 individual dwellings and 21,490 dwellings have benefited from repairs to common areas. Estimates suggest some 70 000 dwellings will benefit from repairs and maintenance, significantly more than originally planned (Australian Government 2009e).

Appendix 5: Terms of reference: Productivity Commission inquiry into a National Disability Long-term Care and Support Scheme

Background

'The Australian Government is committed to developing a National Disability Strategy to enhance the quality of life and increase economic and social participation for people with disabilities and their carers.

The Commonwealth, along with the states and territories, has a major investment in disability-specific support. However, there remains a significant level of unmet demand for disability services which impacts upon the lives of people with disabilities, their families and carers. Demographic change and the anticipated decline in the availability of informal care are expected to place further pressure on the existing system over the coming decades.

While Australia's social security and universal health care systems provide an entitlement to services based on need, there is currently no equivalent entitlement to disability care and support services.

The Government is committed to finding the best solutions to improve care and support services for people with disabilities. An exploration of alternative approaches to funding and delivering disability services with a focus on early intervention and long term care will be an important contribution to the National Disability Strategy.

Scope of the review

The Productivity Commission is requested to undertake an inquiry into a National Disability Long term Care and Support Scheme. The inquiry should assess the costs, cost effectiveness, benefits and feasibility of an approach which:

- Provides long-term essential care and support for eligible people with severe or profound disabilities, on an entitlement basis and taking into account the desired outcomes for each person over a lifetime.
- Is intended to cover people with disabilities not acquired as part of the natural process of ageing.
- Calculates and manages the costs of long-term care and support for people with severe and profound disabilities.
- Replaces the existing system funding for the eligible population.
- Ensures a range of support options is available, including individualised approaches.
- Includes a coordinated package of care services which could include accommodation support, aids and equipment, respite, transport and a range of community participation and day programs available for a person's lifetime.
- Assists people with disabilities to make decisions about their support.
- Provides support for people to undertake employment where possible.

In undertaking the inquiry, the Commission is to:

1. Examine a range of options and approaches, including international examples, for the provision of long term care and support for people with severe or profound disabilities.

The Commission is to include an examination of a social insurance model on a no fault basis, reflecting the shared risk of disability across the population. The Commission should also examine other options that provide incentives to focus investment on early intervention, as an adjunct to, or substitute for, an insurance model.

2. The Commission is to consider the following specific design issues of any proposed scheme:
 - Eligibility criteria for the scheme, including appropriate age limits, assessment and review processes.
 - Coverage and entitlements (benefits).
 - The choice of care providers including from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.
 - Contribution of, and impact on, informal care.
 - The implications for the health and aged care systems.
 - The interaction with, or inclusion of, employment services and income support.
 - Where appropriate, the interaction with:
 - National and state-based traumatic injury schemes, with particular consideration of the implications for existing compensation arrangements.
 - Medical indemnity insurance schemes.
3. The Commission is to consider governance and administrative arrangements for any proposed scheme, including:
 - The governance model for overseeing a scheme and prudential arrangements.
 - Administrative arrangements, including consideration of national, state and/or regional administrative models.
 - Implications for Commonwealth and state and territory responsibilities.
 - The legislative basis for a scheme including consideration of head of power.
 - Appeal and review processes for scheme claimants and participants.
4. The Commission is to consider costs and financing of any proposed scheme, including:
 - The costs in the transition phase and when fully operational, considering the likely demand for, and utilisation under, different demographic and economic assumptions.
 - The likely offsets and/or cost pressures on government expenditure in other systems as a result of a scheme, including income support, health, aged care, disability support systems, judicial and crisis accommodation systems.
 - Models for financing including: general revenue; hypothecated levy on personal taxation, a future fund approach with investment guidelines to generate income.
 - Contributions of Commonwealth and state and territory governments.
 - Options for private contributions including copayments, fees or contributions to enhance services.
5. The Commission is to consider implementation issues of any proposed scheme, including:
 - Changes that would be required to existing service systems.

- Workforce capacity.
- Lead times, implementation phasing and transition arrangements to introduce a scheme with consideration to service and workforce issues, fiscal outlook, and state and territory transitions.

The Government will establish an Independent Panel of persons with relevant expertise to act in an advisory capacity to the Productivity Commission and the Government, and report to Government throughout the inquiry.

The Commission is to seek public submissions and to consult as necessary with the Independent Panel, state and territory governments, government agencies, the disability sector and other relevant experts and stakeholders.' (FaHCSIA 2010c).

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Level 1, 114 Flinders Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 9660 2300 Fax +61 3 9663 5488

Email information@ahuri.edu.au Web www.ahuri.edu.au