Labour market programs as paths to social inclusion for public housing tenants in New South Wales

A report to Shelter NSW prepared with the assistance of an internship from the Ronald Henderson Research Foundation

Melanie Hughes
December 2004
Acknowledgments

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Any opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the board of directors of Shelter NSW or the trustees of the Ronald Henderson Research Foundation.
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

This research addresses the following objectives:

- To identify the economic, social, and public policy contexts of labour market programs targeted to public housing estates in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia;
- To identify the labour market programs targeted to public housing estates in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia;
- To identify the costs and benefits of these programs in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia; and
- To identify options for, and undertake a preliminary assessment of, possible new labour market program initiatives for public housing estates in New South Wales.

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the policy and program management issues surrounding labour market initiatives. It is not an evaluation as such. It does not assess the outcomes for tenants except where these are identified by informants. A tenant based ‘customer satisfaction’ methodological approach would have required a much greater research project than the project resources allowed.
1.2 Background

The socio-economic profile of public housing tenants throughout Australia presents a picture of disadvantage compared with the general population. Public housing is not what it was after the Second World War, when low-income workers (and their nuclear families) sought it. The profile of tenants has been affected by changes in broader society in late modernity, including unemployment, under-employment, chronic social security dependence by some, and reconfigurations of family structures including the growth of single person and sole parent households. The increased demand for public housing has led to tighter rationing of it, with a perverse outcome being the residualization of public housing – it has become a refuge of last resort, and now serves a welfare function. The increasing length of waiting lists has meant that priority allocations are common in most locations across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. ¹

Public housing estate areas are localities in which there exists a high concentration of public housing dwellings. In such neighbourhoods, problems of an interpersonal nature can emerge, such as petty crime and various anti-social behaviours. Estate areas typically suffer from problems of spatial mismatch due to their geographically distinct location from job rich areas, skills mismatch due to workers being deficient in the skills necessary to fill available job opportunities, and locational discrimination arising from neighbourhood stigmatisation and often having an adverse effect on employment outcomes (National Shelter, 2001, p.iii). These factors are further compounded by a lack of access to private transport and inefficient public transport networks.

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

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

In a study of three regional cities in South Australia, Beer and Maude (2002) found that significant numbers of public tenants could be assisted into employment. While there were low levels of employment among tenants, this was not explained simply by the location of the public housing. The authors

¹ To qualify for a priority allocation in NSW, for instance, an applicant must meet criteria which can include homelessness, escaping domestic violence, suffering disabilities or mental illness (NSW Department of Housing, 2001b, p. 3).
suggest that Australian community renewal strategies be widened to encompass economic development activities.

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

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

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

Community economic development activities in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia fall generally into the categories identified in Box 1. Such activities are consistent with the ‘mixed approach’ identified by Temby et al. (2004, p. 2) whereby employment initiatives are coupled with education and training programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1: TYPOLOGY OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN DISTRESSED AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity for economic development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Provision/renovation community based facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support for community based economic strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community needs appraisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Capacity building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Creating Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Facilities for youth enterprise schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community enterprise/self-help initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Workspace/incubator provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Start up/employment cost support for small and medium enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- IT take-up projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Business counselling, after care services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing an entrepreneurial culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathways to Skills, Training and Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Support to set up local training schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improvements to existing training facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outreach, customised training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pre-vocational, basic training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Re-skilling, improving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Targeted training linked to job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- NVQ, Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community leadership training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work placement initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cost of trainee’s dependents care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Career guidance counselling services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Regeneration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Security measures to assist economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Targeted environmental improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- External renovation of key buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Urban landscaping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Improvement to public transport links, facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Study into long term transport needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research into public transport improvements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Methodology

The methodology for the project had two dimensions:

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

Prior to all interviews consent for participation was obtained from respondents. Those further consenting to the utilisation of information provided are identified according only to their method of preference.
Chapter 2. Issues and programs in New South Wales

2.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

The financial eligibility criteria for public residency in NSW ensure that only those at the lower end of the income distribution reside in state accommodation, see Table 1.

**TABLE 1: NSW PUBLIC HOUSING INCOME LIMITS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 1996 AND STILL CURRENT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household size</th>
<th>Total gross household income*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>$395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 people</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>$580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 people</td>
<td>$665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>$720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 people</td>
<td>$775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including wages, pensions and allowances and interest on investments


For the overwhelming majority of public tenants in NSW (90%), government benefits are their primary income source, see Figure 1. A mere 6% of NSW public residents are wage earners. High percentages of residents receive parenting (18%) and disability payments (26%).

**FIGURE 1: NSW PUBLIC HOUSING SUBSIDISED TENANTS – INCOME SOURCE**

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

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

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

**Figure 2: Percentage of NSW public housing tenants receiving Centrelink benefits**

Another indication of the financial hardship faced by public housing tenants is their diminished ability to obtain emergency money, with the majority (68%) unable to raise a sum of $2,000 within one week. Both private renters (47%) and the combined sum of all tenure types (81%) reported greater ease in raising such funds. Table 2 demonstrates that public tenants have a reduced capacity to draw on their own savings, obtain loans from various sources and sell assets.

The financial stress experienced by public tenants is compounded by the finding that some 21% of all public renters have some type of formal household debt (Burke and Ralston 2002, p. 15). Although less than the proportion of household debt held by home purchasers (98%) and private renters (38%), the lower-income earners typically borrow from institutions that have the highest lending costs whereas the more affluent from those with the lowest (Burke and Ralston, 2002, p. 30). It has been suggested that this is due

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2 This includes subsidised tenants only.
to the reluctance of banks to take on what they perceive may be households with a greater lending risk. Finance companies are generally willing to take on higher risk households, and do so at much higher interest rates (Burke and Ralston 2002, p. 30), this compounds the financial burden experienced by public tenants.

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

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

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

The current household structure of public tenants in NSW is graphically illustrated in Figure 3, which indicates that a high proportion of single parent families reside in state accommodation in NSW (20%).
There are approximately 130,000 public housing units in NSW, which accommodate a minimum of 750,000 residents. More than 30% of these housing units are in estate areas. Many tenants of public housing are socially excluded, in that they are generally characterized by:

- Low incomes,
- High levels of unemployment,
- High levels of welfare dependency,
- Poor educational attainment,
- Poor health,
- High portions of single parent families, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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4 See glossary on page 91.
Prior to piloting tenant specific employment and training programs, The NSW Department of Housing identified the following benefits for participants and regions alike:

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

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

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

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

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


Socio-economic and education data are not generally available for public housing estate areas as a statistical unit. However, as part of the Airds Bradbury Employment Plan, a suburb profile of Airds was devised comparing the area with the Campbelltown local government area (LGA) using 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Airds</th>
<th>Campbelltown LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with children</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple without children</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent family</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of total population</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being purchased</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented, state housing</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented, other sources</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-199</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200-399</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400-599</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600-799</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$800-999</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000-1499</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of schooling completed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 or below</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9 or equivalent</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 or equivalent</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11 or equivalent</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 or equivalent</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still at school</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to school</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-school education completed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4: AIRD’S BRADBURY – CAMPBELLTOWN COMPARISON OF SELECTED INDICATORS, 2001 (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-school education types (proportion of all post-school education)</th>
<th>Airds</th>
<th>Campbelltown LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma &amp; Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma &amp; Diploma</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment**

| Full-time (% employed persons)                                  | 55.7 | 67.9           |
| Part-time (% employed persons)                                  | 35.3 | 28.5           |
| Unemployment rate                                               | 30.1 | 8.5            |
| Total labour force (% of total population)                      | 23%  | 46.30%         |

**Occupation (proportion of employed persons)**

| Managers, administrators                                       | 1.3  | 5.1            |
| Professionals                                                  | 5.2  | 11.7           |
| Associate professionals                                        | 4.8  | 10             |
| Tradespersons                                                  | 9.4  | 14.1           |
| Advanced clerical                                              | 2.1  | 3.9            |
| Intermediate clerical                                          | 17.7 | 20.7           |
| Intermediate production and transport                          | 19.6 | 12.4           |
| Elementary clerical                                            | 13.7 | 10.6           |
| Labourers                                                      | 20.8 | 9.4            |

**Car ownership (motor vehicles per household as a proportion of all households)**

| No motor vehicles                                              | 27.8 | 10.9           |
| 1 motor vehicle                                                | 42.8 | 39.7           |
| 2 motor vehicles                                               | 12.9 | 31.1           |
| 3+ motor vehicles                                              | 2.3  | 11.5           |
| Not stated                                                      | 14.2 | 6.7            |


Data indicate that the vast majority of residents reside in public housing (85%) in the Airds Bradbury area. Also, higher concentrations of single parent families, Indigenous populations, those on lower incomes, and with records of poor educational attainment are reported. A strikingly high unemployment rate (30% compared to 9%), a poor labour force participation rate, and a lack of car
ownership have also been identified. Hence the Airds area is seen to clearly suffer from social exclusion.

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

- Lack of access to computers, Internet, telephone and fax,
- That information is very confusing, people get lost in the system and don’t know that supports they are entitled to and what is available,
- Jobseekers are too old,
- Jobseekers have no relevant recent work experience although have had some training,
- Criminal records and high fines that people simply can’t pay off,
- Childcare and family responsibilities,
- Reading, writing and numeracy difficulties,
- Health and disabilities,
- Lack of appropriate training for the current labour market,

The public policy costs arising from socially excluded areas are reflected in another study of the Airds area which estimated the costs of unemployment, crime, housing turnover, vandalism and family stress to be a conservative $28 million per annum (cited by NSW Department of Housing, 2001b).
2.2 Overview of initiatives

The Department’s community economic development agenda took the early form of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), which began addressing social exclusion on public housing estates in 1994 (NSW Department of Housing, n.d., p. 1). At implementation, the regional vision of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program was to remove the stigma associated with public housing estates and to ensure that they look and operate in a way comparable with other residential areas due to the Radburn planning design in suburban estate areas and symptoms of social exclusion. Selected estates were the Airds, Macquarie Fields and Waterloo housing estates (Randolph and Judd, 1999, p. 5).

The Department’s NIP has since been replaced with the Community Renewal Strategy (CRS). High priority estates remain the focus of the CRS with the impact of the concentration of socially excluded individuals evident in a number of housing management indicators. These estates often have high:

- Turnover,
- Refusals of offers of housing,
- Rent arrears,
- Vacancy rates, and
- Levels of complaint about anti-social behaviour (NSW Department of Housing, 2001b, p.5).

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

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

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

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

5 See glossary on page 91.
**Community Contracts**

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

- Lawns and grounds maintenance,
- Landscaping,
- Fencing,
- Painting and

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

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

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

**Box 4: Two Bishops Trust**

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

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

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2002, p. 34.
In 1999 public housing residents living on the Goonellabah estate in Northern NSW identified that access to casual work opportunities was a key need. In response to this, the Department developed a partnership with Hotline Employment and Training in Lismore to provide employment opportunities for residents. Under the partnership, the Department contracts Hotline Employment and Training to carry out some of its maintenance work in the area. Hotline Employment and Training finds residents on the Goonellabah estate interested in doing the work, supervises the work and provides informal, on-the-job training for participants.

Over 60 residents have participated in the project so far. A high percentage of residents have found employment or training outside the project including:
- Full-time or permanent part-time work for 9 residents;
- Casual work for 15 residents;
- More than 14 hours of work per week on average maintained by 9 residents; and
- Enrolment in further accredited training, TAFE or university for 4 residents.

Lex, The Hotline Employment and Training worker who supervises the project has also noticed a number of non-employment outcomes for participants including:
- The building of greater respect between people through the interaction of people from different age groups, genders and races in the project;
- Being able to get employment and character references from Hotline Employment and Training;
- Being more involved in community activities; and
- Being more motivated to achieve things or improve their life in other areas.

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

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

More recent data indicate that by 2003, 150 residents had been employed by the program. Of these, 33 had gone onto outside employment (including full time, part time and casual employment), 10 had begun TAFE courses and 3 residents commenced university studies (Johnston and Hopkins, 2003).
“This job has opened the door for me to:-
Address fines and obtain my drivers license,
Find a house to rent,
I now have access to my daughter,
Get a work reference” Ed.

“I could work flexible hours that fitted in with children going to school”
Maryanne.

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

“It’s good to experience that going to work feeling” Terry.

“I now walk with confidence, my spirits are uplifted” Tony.

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

The WorkiT Program

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

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

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

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

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

WorkiT was launched in 2003. Table 5 provides a list of estate areas where the program is currently implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WorkiT Location</th>
<th>Partner Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle LGA</td>
<td>HGT Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner West, Inner City and Eastern suburbs</td>
<td>Oasis Youth Support Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta and Blacktown LGA</td>
<td>Maincom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown LGA</td>
<td>Spectrum Employment Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra LGA</td>
<td>Wesley Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taree</td>
<td>Newtrain Inc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2004e, p.5.
The facilitating role played by partner organizations is indicated by HGT Australia pledging to:

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

**Box 7: WorkiT Results in the Hunter Region**

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

Source: Ms B Noble confirmed this by letter on 31 August 2004.
BOX 8: JOB HELP FOR PUBLIC TENANTS

Public housing tenants, many of whom have been out of work for long periods, are getting jobs and training through a new employment program set up just for them.

Under the scheme, which has been running for about three months, the Department of Housing is subsidising private contractors in the Parramatta, Blacktown and Campbelltown areas to employ tenants to do maintenance work on these housing estates.

Applicants do not need references or previous work experience, two major hurdles in the past to find a job.

The 36 tenants who already have jobs with the scheme are also being trained while they work.

The Department’s executive director of housing services in western Sydney, Ross Woodward, who was speaking at the launch of the WorkiT scheme at Parramatta last Friday said the Department had realised solutions to problems on many housing estates were more than just repairing houses. “Unemployment is a scourge of some of these communities,” he said. “We started to look at ways we could help people break out of that cycle.”

Housing Minister Carl Scully said the scheme would give people skills and experience and build up a record of employment that they could take with them into other jobs. And while it was not the overall solution to unemployment on housing estates, it would at least help some people to find work. “Maybe we can get them not just employment experiences but out of public housing”, he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2004c, Tailor made employment scheme for government assisted housing residents launched in NSW, media release, 4 February.
Social housing residents from Western and South Western Sydney are benefiting from a unique Government employment initiative, Minister for Housing, Carl Scully, said today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2004d, Local jobs for local people, media release, 6 February.
The Minister for Housing, Carl Scully, has launched four WorkiT and 13 Handyperson initiatives since November 2003, with the aim of improving the lives of residents living in these communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2004b, p. 8.
Handyperson Program

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

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

Following a successful trial in a number of locations the program has now been expanded to all 18 Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM)\(^6\) sites. The Department has contracted a range of organizations in these locations to employ a social housing resident as a full-time handyperson (NSW Department of Housing, 2003a, p. 28), including those involved in the WorkiT Program.

Handyperson initiatives are currently in operation in the following areas:

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

**Box 12: Handyperson Program Operating in Bolton Point**

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

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

The Handyperson Program is now ongoing on this estate.

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

\(^6\) See glossary on page 91.
Landscaping Traineeship

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

WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres

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

Research confirms that the lack of Internet access is creating a new dimension of disadvantage in Australian society with 2001 ABS census data indicating that only 4% of households with an annual income up to $14,000 have access to the Internet, and 15% of this income group having a computer at home. Only 10% of households with an annual income of $25,000 or less, have access to the Internet (WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, accessed 7 July, <www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>). In light of the financial criteria for state accommodation outlined in Table 1, these income groupings are highly representative of public housing residents.

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

The first NTC was established in Macquarie Fields in 2000 and has attracted high usage from seniors and young people alike, including students and job seekers. From this successful pilot, additional Neighbourhood Technology Centres can be found in the following areas:

- Claymore
- Waterloo
- Woolloomooloo.

There are further plans to replicate Neighbourhood Technology Centres on up to fifty public housing estates in NSW and throughout Australia ((WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centres, accessed 7 July, <www.workventures.com.au/ntc/NTC%20web%20page.htm>>).
At the launch of the Claymore NTC, WorkVentures Chief Executive Steve Lawrence said, “This is an urgent response to an important need in our society. As governments and the wider community race to embrace technology in every aspect of life, the gap for those who cannot access technology just widens their disadvantage and exclusion from opportunities the rest of us take for granted. It is hoped that through the benefits of computer skills training and access residents will develop new skills, become active IT users, improve their quality of life and find employment as a result of the support they find here” (NSW Department of Housing, 2003f, Claymore residents to benefit from affordable Internet access at new Neighbourhood Technology Centre, media release, 9 September).

In addition to the NTC, a number of new technology projects were established on the Cranebrook estate in 2001. The very successful Internal café, set up by Barnados Australia and funded by the Department for Women, continued to operate and is complemented by another innovative project aimed to bridge the digital divide, The E-Commerce @ Cranebrook Project. This is a partnership with the Department of Information Technology and Management and supported by a range of stakeholders such a Penrith City Council and provides residents of Cranebrook with improved access to information about employment opportunities, government services, online commercial transactions and education and information services (NSW Department of Housing, 2002, p. 31).
Macquarie Fields is a large public housing estate with nearly 1,400 dwellings. The provision of community on-line learning, technology, access and Internet facilities is a direct response to what has been recognised as a widening gap between the information rich and the information poor. The inability of many tenants to access information on the Internet is increasingly being seen as a barrier to sustainable employment and also as a barrier to ending welfare dependence. The establishment of a NTC on the estate is an attempt to address this issue.

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

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

During 2001-02 the Macquarie Fields NTC at Eucalyptus Cottage recorded:
An increase in clients using the facility, from 50 local residents in July 2001 to 234 by June 2002;
That there were slightly more women participants (131) than men (103);
The age groups using the facility covered the whole community ranging from children under 12 to people aged over 60; and
7,507 access hours were logged by clients during the year.

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

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

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

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

**Box 14: Woolloomooloo Residents to have Affordable Internet Access Only a Step Away**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2003g, ‘Woolloomooloo residents to have affordable Internet access only a step away’, media release, 1 December.
Tenant driven businesses

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

One such business was Cover-Up Curtains, see Box 15. However, as this particular cooperative was heavily reliant on the input of one particular Departmental official, the business ceased when the official moved out of the NSW Department of Housing (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

**Box 15: Cover-Up Curtains**

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

Source: NSW Department of Housing Annual Report 2000-01, p. 27.

The Department currently supports the following tenant driven businesses:
- Riverwood – Furniture recycling business,
- Claymore – Triple C Catering, The Enterprise Project, Dust Devils cleaning business, Coffee Shop and Laundromat,
- Macarthur Area – Paint and Play mobile playgroup.

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

- Create sustainable, long term and meaningful employment for the people of Claymore,
- Be a model of good employment practices for the people of Claymore,
- Establish and/or support viable businesses,
- Create pathways to employment and education,
- Assist in building a positive image of the Claymore community,
- Create a learning environment that acknowledges and develops the skills and experience of the CCDC members.

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

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

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

**Box 16: Triple C Catering – Individual Outcomes**

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

2.3 Strengths, weaknesses and potential

The fundamental strengths, weaknesses and potential of the estate tenant employment and training initiatives have been derived predominantly from qualitative interviews and available literature. Many of these issues were echoed in workshop discussions, see Attachment 17: Workshop report.

Strengths

The utilisation of in-house Department of Housing opportunities

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

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

“The Handyperson program provides quicker responses to minor maintenance work” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

Diversity of projects available

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

“A strength is in recognising the need for different programs to be in place to capture the skills and knowledge within tenants in estates” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

“There has been a raft of initiatives, all hitting different spots” (M McRae [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 7 July).

The targeting of specific employment barriers for estate tenants

All initiatives have been specifically designed to address the key barriers to employment that exist for estate tenants.
The lack of positive role modelling
“We target estate areas, look at the recruitment of social housing tenants to work in communities they know, re-connect with people, provide better role models for people, see opportunities around the estate and use those opportunities” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

The lack of self-esteem and confidence
“Identifying those who really want to take on opportunities. Many in public housing estates don’t have access to tap into the labour market, they need encouragement” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

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

Transport problems
“Many job network agencies wait for people to come to them, they’re not actually out there so the Department’s clientele is missing out on resources” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

“… That’s a real barrier, just travelling, going beyond that area. In a recent partnership between Centrelink and a training provider, they had a work preparation type course (i.e. confidence, presentation etc.) located in Liverpool, outside the area. They noticed that that had a very good attendance rate, people came despite the travel, a couple of work opportunities came up in that location at the end of it, women took them up. It is interesting because they probably wouldn’t have taken that before, but just getting them familiar with travel and to establish those patterns” (L Tinney [The Benevolent Society] 2004, interview, 12 July).

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

“One of the things we’ve really noticed amongst our 9 trainees and casuals is that only one of them has a driver’s license… Their opportunities for seeking other employment is limited in some degree… So there’s some alienation from mobility which is a key factor of employment – the more mobile you are, the much greater your job chances are. By being reliant only on public transport, especially in regional communities, their employment opportunities are very limited. This project has allowed people who don’t have a license to access, employment which is basically on their doorstep” (C Webb [HGT Australia] 2004, interview, 7 July).
Lack of access to information technology
“Technology is a critical factor for people these days, you need to keep up with the level of advancement, providing access in estates so that tenants and their children gain access in order to break the digital divide in disadvantaged communities” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

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

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

Tenant driven initiatives
The utilisation of tenant input, particularly in identifying the barriers that exist to work has been a key driver of the success of labour market initiatives. Literature support this approach as ‘there is a unique opportunity to incorporate real community participation into the NIP, opportunities whose effect will be potentially more far reaching than the life of the Program itself. It is also likely that the savings to the community in social and economic terms will be greater and longer lasting if effective community participation strategies are put into place from the outset of the Program’ (Stubbs and Storer, 1996, p. 46).

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

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

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

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

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

Integration among partner organizations

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

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

“Where I’ve seen success has been where agencies do work together… There are lots more projects happening now where you’ve got training providers working with (the Department of) Health, working with government, the Department of Housing, so you’re actually working across those sectors and not in isolation, working in a co-ordinated approach” (L Tinney [The Benevolent Society] 2004, interview, 12 July).
“WorkiT is a very resource intensive program to implement, it requires a certain level of expertise. It is essential that people working in this area understand the labour market program field, the importance of working in partnerships and who those partners are, the contracting system area and being able to marry those two effectively so that people in the program get as much support as they require. It is a difficult area to work in anyway because the kind of people we are targeting have a host of other issues to deal with – complex needs require, sometimes, complex solutions. Oasis Youth Support Network in the inner city are working with very disadvantaged groups that have had multiple barriers to employment and training, e.g. they have been through corrective services, have had intergenerational unemployment, homelessness etc” (Respondent no. 3 2004, interview, 2 July).

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

Success stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This creation of pride and lack of vandalism is especially significant in light of the traditionally high rates of nuisance, annoyance and crime often reported at public housing estate areas. These social spillovers that have occurred complement the employment and training outcomes.
Daniel Armishaw, a public housing resident and school-leaver undertaking a TAFE computing course, volunteered at WorkVentures Connect at the NTC at Macquarie Fields last year.

In addition to his studies, Daniel volunteered installing computer security measures and providing administration support at Macquarie Fields. "Volunteering benefited me in so many ways I didn't even realise," Daniel says. These benefits include forming new friendship’s and learning about the local community, as well as the opportunity for Daniel to put his studies into practice and to gain critical work experience in his chosen career. According to Daniel. ‘There’s no greater satisfaction than someone saying thank you for service you’ve offered.'

After completing his TAFE Certificate and beginning a Diploma in Systems Administration, Daniel was successful in obtaining a position at WorkVentures Connect NTC at Waterloo during 2000-03. Daniel has negotiated a flexible employment agreement that allows him to work 2 days per week whilst still spending one day per week performing volunteer work at Macquarie Fields. The remainder of Daniel’s time is spent completing his studies.

Source: NSW Department of Housing, 2003a, p. 25.
Steven’s new career is going from strength to strength. Following a five-year period of unemployment, he has found himself promoted to an Assistant Supervisor’s position with WorkiT partner Maincom in the space of just three months.

Steven Slater, aged 26, has lived in a Department of Housing property in Penrith for the last three years. He has two children aged 4 and 7 years old.

“I began working for Maincom through the WorkiT project on the 1st of October 2003,” said Steven. “They have trained me in a range of duties from general maintenance of lawns and gardens, to landscaping, cleaning techniques and unblocking drains. I have really enjoyed the work and after three months on the traineeship was promoted to an Assistant Supervisor’s position.”

“The WorkiT program has given me the change to get back into the normal routine of working life after five years of unemployment. I enjoy my work and it is great to be around people every day.”

“My job with WorkiT gets me out of the house, has taught me new skills and gives me a challenge to focus on in life. It has improved my life in a big way and it feels so good to be earning a wage.”

“The best thing about the WorkiT project is that it gives people who may have experienced difficulties in life another chance. You don’t need a reference or previous work experience. Before I was employed by WorkiT my life was a bit of a jumble but now I have a new purpose. I have recommended the scheme to all my friends and my brother-on-law started work with Maincom a couple of weeks ago”.

Source: NSW Department of Housing, n. d., p. 1
Rhiannon’s new position as a Trainee Receptionist has transformed her from a shy school leaver into a confident and articulate young lady who is saving up to move out of home.

Rhiannon, who has lived with her parents in a Department of Housing property in Airds for the last five years, left school at the age of 16 last February. She found it difficult to find work as she didn’t have a TAFE trades certificate, after eight months of searching for work she found employment as a trainee receptionist at Spectrum.

“I heard about the project through a friend of a friend and have been working full time since October 2003. I enjoy my work which consists of answering the phone, collecting and delivering mail and general admin duties.”

“I’ve learnt so much in just four months and it has given me the opportunity to develop my computer skills and an understanding of what working life is like. After a year I will have an Indenture Level II certificate and a Certificate III in Business and Office Admin from MTC Training Solutions; hopefully I will be able to continue working at Spectrum or will be able to use the experience and qualifications I have gained to find work elsewhere.”

“It has really changed my life, I was very shy before I started work but working as a receptionist has really helped me to develop my people skills and I really enjoy that part of the job.”

“Now that I am working I have started saving money so that I can move out of home and in with a friend. I have told all my friends about the project because it has been so good for me.”

Kelly Cross has been working as a cleaner through the WorkiT program at Department of Housing units in the Balmain, Redfern, Waterloo and Eastern Suburbs Areas of the city for four months. Since joining the program she has been able to overcome many challenges that she has been faced with in life.

Kelly had been homeless and was living in a youth crisis refuge when she heard about the WorkiT program. Since starting she has moved to more permanent accommodation.

“I was living at an Oasis refuge when I heard about the WorkiT scheme for the first time. It seemed like a really good way of finding a job without a reference. I had had a couple of jobs before joining WorkiT that hadn’t worked out, this program is different because it gives people like me a chance to get back into the workforce.

“After about a month on the program I saw a real improvement in my circumstances and am now able to focus long term on a career in childcare. After I have worked for WorkiT for over six months I will be able to get references for child care college.”

“The great thing about WorkiT is that it’s so flexible. When I start college I will be able to work part time for WorkiT and fit my studies around work. There aren’t many employers that would make it so easy for you to do this.”

Source: NSW Department of Housing, n. d., p. 3.
Weaknesses

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

The lack of information available

The NSW Department of Housing has procedures in place relating to the administration and evaluation of their employment and training initiatives; such as the maintenance of tenant databases and the direct measurement of outcomes, objectives and key performance indicators (Tenant Employment Project, 2000, p. 2). WorkiT Program Guidelines contain very specific outcomes and performance indicators and program management procedures which include the production of 6-monthly and yearly data reports, briefings, program evaluations and forums. The program evaluation guidelines contain requirements to be met by both Departmental staff and the relevant partner organizations (NSW Department of Housing, 2003c, p. 7-9). It is crucial that any public policy be evaluated, and therefore promising that the Department has gone to such lengths to ensure a streamlined and consistent methodology for evaluation of its employment and training initiatives. However, the information stemming from such procedures predominantly remains internally within the Department and is not publicly available.

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

“There is a lack of sharing around the best practice that is happening around the different communities” (M McRae [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 7 July).

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

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

“Some really hard research and evaluation done on the projects would be invaluable…” (L Tinney [The Benevolent Society] 2004, interview, 12 July).

**Resourcing issues: funding and the rigidity of guidelines**

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

“There is the problem of State and Commonwealth funding issues. The Commonwealth funds bits and pieces, its role is not really understood” (J Paszek [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

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

“The biggest constraint is money, it’s needed for start up and also for economic incubators, though it’s not always forthcoming” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

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

“For Claymore, the constraint has been a lack of funding. There is funding, the problem is that the government makes policy decisions to do something that doesn’t match the needs of the community. The ‘Strengthening Families and Communities guidelines are so tight that they don’t match anything you can do. So in developing programs at the local level to try and meet guidelines (which are not very flexible), you need flexibility to bend around the guidelines” (B Murnane [ACH] 2004, interview, 6 July).

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

**The lack of business guidance**

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

“With Triple C, it’s difficult if you’ve got community ownership, the constraint is getting the entrepreneurial leadership that is often an important part of building a successful small business…” (Respondent no.11 2004, interview, 12 July).
“The social enterprise approach is the new way of doing things, I don’t think there are very clear guidelines about the outcomes that we really want to achieve…” (L Tinney [The Benevolent Society] 2004, interview, 12 July).

Stability of staff

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

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

Rigidity in allocated timeframes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sustainability

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

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

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

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

Financial disincentives to gaining employment

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

- During 12 weeks the tenant and their employer would have determined whether the employment was to continue into a long term arrangement,
- Twelve weeks would give the tenant an opportunity to meet the costs associated with return to work, such as increased transport costs, suitable clothing, child care etc., and
- One adjustment after a 12-week period would keep administrative tasks to a minimum.
These reforms encompass all types of work tenure; full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal and self-employment. The Department expect to be notified within a four week period after a tenant has secured employment (NSW Department of Housing, 1999b).

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

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

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

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

The NSW Department of Housing’s core business

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

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

“We need a better framework for delivering resident employment strategies. The Department’s expertise is different, it’s public housing management not employment. It would be good to have a stronger link to Job Network agencies where we could use their expertise. The Department has done much but are novices in the employment field, we don’t know what opportunities are out

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

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

Funding

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

“It would be good to have better linkages with the Commonwealth government in terms of different funding sources available” (M Yeum [NSW Department of Housing] 2004, interview, 5 July).

The desire to replicate learning elsewhere

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

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

Youth programs

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

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

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

The introduction of more gradual steps to employment for estate tenants

There exists potential for more introductory training initiatives.

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

This same issue was also mentioned by Colleen Bastow, particularly in relation to the overflow issues that arise when estate tenants live and work in the same area, “because they live on site and they work on site their personal lives do flow over into the workplace. They are not used to how the workplace environment operates, it’s basic skill training that has to go on…” (C Bastow [HGT Australia] 2004, interview, 7 July).
Chapter 3. Issues and programs in Victoria

3.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

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

As Figure 4 indicates, when compared with the Victorian state average benchmark of 100, Neighbourhood Renewal areas suffer from various indicators of disadvantage.

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

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

- Lack of advice and advocacy to individuals to consider employment and learning opportunities,
- Lack of access to affordable childcare,
- Local culture of welfare dependency,
- Lack of supportive work and learning models, often resulting in intergenerational unemployment and welfare dependency, and
- Lack of public transport to and from Neighbourhood Renewal areas to allow easy access to work and learning (Mr M O'Driscoll confirmed this by email on 9 September 2004).

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

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

- Increasing people’s pride and participation in the community,
- Enhancing housing and the physical environment,
Lifting employment, training and education opportunities and expand local economic activities,
- Improving personal safety and reduce crime
- Promoting health and wellbeing, and
- Increasing access to transport and other key services and improve government responsiveness (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2002a, p. 3).

Each Neighbourhood Renewal area has its own Community Action Plan, where the specific barriers to obtaining employment and training are targeted with initiatives tailored to individual communities (Mr M O’Driscoll confirmed this by email on 9 September 2004).
Figure 4: Indicators of disadvantage in Neighbourhood Renewal areas compared to State averages (by area postcode)

Source: Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2002a, p. 5.
3.2 Overview of initiatives

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

Neighbourhood Renewal commenced in 2000 with projects in:
- Latrobe Valley (Morwell, Moe, Churchill and Traralgon)
- Wendouree West (in Ballarat)
- Collingwood Public Housing Estate
- Atherton Gardens (in Fitzroy)
- East Eaglehawk (in Bendigo)
- Long Gully (in Bendigo)
- Parkside (in Shepparton)
- Seymour
- Maidstone and Braybrook (in Melbourne’s West)
- Corio and Norlane (in North Geelong) (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2002a, p. 7).

Recently new projects were implemented in:
- Broadmeadows
- Colac
- Werribee
- Doveton/Eumemmerring
- Chadstone/Ashwood/Ashburton (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2003a, p. 5).

Current employment and training initiatives include:
- Work experience and accredited training opportunities through the Victorian State Government's Community Jobs Program.
- Traineeship schemes and allocated places via the State Governments' Youth Employment Scheme (YES). Development of linkages between Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Government to recruit residents under the Victorian Jobs for Young People traineeship program.
- A dedicated Employment and Learning Coordinator funded for each Neighbourhood Renewal area to assist in the strategic targeting of resources and programs to create ongoing and sustainable employment and learning opportunities.
- Local work and learning infrastructure established in partnership with employment and training providers to assist residents better access employment programs & services.
- Pilot Cleaning and Gardening Contract across two inner city high-rise estates with a requirement for contractors to employ one-third of their workforce as tenant employees. The contract requires local employment providers to deliver recruitment and employment support services to assist residents with their transition to sustainable employment.
Centrelink and NR Engagement Framework to provide a more cohesive environment to establishment of locally based community enterprises.

- Targeted training to Neighbourhood Renewal areas including job preparation, Leadership Skills, Information Technology and Aged Care.
- Residents employed by local contractors in the upgrading and maintenance of public housing estates.
- Residents employed directly by the Office of Housing in a range of activities such as concierge, office administration and maintenance.

### Community Jobs Program

The Community Jobs Program (CJP) is the largest community economic development initiative. It entails

- Employment Initiatives, and
- Job and Training Initiatives.

#### Community Jobs Program – employment initiatives

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

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

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

This includes:

- recently arrived migrants less than two years in Australia, or temporary protection visa (TPV) holders up to three years in Australia;
- job seekers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- young unemployed people 15-24 years of age – particularly those who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) or at risk of long-term unemployment, including young offenders and early school leavers;
- Indigenous job seekers;
- long-term unemployed mature aged (45 years and over) job seekers; and
- retrenched workers. (Department for Victorian Communities, 2004b, ‘Community Jobs Program Employment Initiatives Program Overview’, accessed 24 November,
Attachment 19: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – Employment Initiative projects contains a listing of current initiatives and is indicative of the vast range of projects and partner organizations involved.
A plan to give jobs and training to 100 long-term unemployed people at Wendouree West was yesterday described as "pennies from heaven" by the area’s resident’s group.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"This is just like pennies from heaven."

Community Jobs Program – jobs and training

Under this program a minimum of 12 job seekers are employed for up to 15 weeks and provided with the opportunity to experience paid work, develop skills, be involved in projects that benefit the local community and improve their prospects of finding ongoing employment and/or further education within their local communities ( Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2004, Community Jobs Program – Jobs and Training, accessed 24 November, <http://www.employment.vic.gov.au/CA256BC200830268/All/A29EC177662C5A61CA256DBE000DBF0B?OpenDocument> ).

Attachment 20: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – Jobs and training funded projects 2003-04 illustrates the range of projects currently available.

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

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

Additionally, the multi-cultural community consists of various nationalities, nearly two-thirds of which are from non-English speaking backgrounds. The Collingwood estate area shares a common demographic theme, with both areas suffering from a high incidence of unemployment.

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

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

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

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

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

- 734 community job places have been created through the partnership with the Employment Programs Division in the Department for Victorian Communities; over 50% of graduates of the program are going into further employment or training.
- A number of local community-based enterprises have been created to provide continuing employment for residents in professions such as catering, construction and furniture removal and restoration (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2003a, p. 3): see Box 25.
Kelly Bryans is a mother of three who has lived in Wendouree West for over eight years. She was also part of a team of Wendouree West residents employed with Ballarat Group Training on a 12-month traineeship. The work was funded by a grant of $250,000 from Sustainable Energies Victoria (SEAV) to carry out environmental upgrades on some houses in the area to make them more energy efficient.

Kelly’s story:

‘I had been a full time mother bringing up three children and had seen my youngest start prep this year. I saw some information on the Community Jobs Program in a community newsletter and although I had never had any formal training in building and landscaping works I had always been interested in it. At first I was still a bit hesitant but after talking to my neighbour I decided to give it a go.

I got a gig and started with a group of 20 others including eight women. It was a great experience as we gained skills in painting and landscaping and I now also know how to build a fence.

Near the end of our 16-week with CJP they asked if anyone was interested in starting a 12-month traineeship. I borrowed a computer from my Mum and put in my resume. After my interview I was rapt to find out I had one of the jobs. I was looking forward to learning heaps more over the 12-months and then was hoping to get a job in this field.

As well as this I made new friends and gained a lot of confidence to go and try things. Where previously I used to stay in my house a lot, I now get out with the kids and do a lot more activities. I now feel a lot happier and work has helped give me a purpose.

One of the things I was worried about was finding care for my children, but I have found that there is plenty after school and holiday care available. And although the kids are sometimes a little grumpy that I get them out of bed a bit earlier than they’re used to, they’re also happy that I’m working and are actually quite proud of me.

I would advise anyone that is in the same situation that I was in to go out there and have a go. You’ll love it’.

Others involved in Community Renewal at Wendouree West have made the following comments:

‘When I first heard about the Renewal I was really excited and wanted to be involved as it felt like the first time in years that Government wanted to work with the community. The Renewal is the chance for us to grow personally, develop skills, and have an input into changing the perception of Wendouree West and making us a model neighbourhood. To be a success though, residents need to be involved. We want to see residents supporting and looking out for each other and joining together to start programs like Neighbourhood Watch. My final message would be – this is our opportunity – the resources are available and the Government is ready to support us. Get behind your community and watch it grow’. Gayle Britten.

‘I never intended to give up illicit drugs – the Neighbourhood Renewal gave me something better than illicit drugs. It let me give something back to the community – rather than take from it in illicit ways. The Wendouree West Community Renewal team has put the human face back into human services. We are all in this together. We are there – there are changes going on for all of us. People look you in the eye now, people on the street’. Kevin Waugh

‘I am enjoying the Renewal and I am getting a lot out of it because I suffer with dyslexia and about 12 months ago I would not have been doing this at all. I encourage more people who have the same problems as I have to do it. If I can do it, all of you who are out there in the community can do it too’. Vicki McMillan

‘I love the people here in Wendouree West, there is no class distinction, we are all struggling to make ends meet, and we are here to support and care for each other because we understand the loneliness and isolation we have all been through as some time or other. I feel secure walking down the streets, even when it is dark, knowing there is always a warm welcome in most of the homes in Wendouree West for me. And I could not imagine living anywhere else’. Elly Green

‘Although it has been at times frustrating, I would recommend the Renewal to anyone. My involvement has made me more outgoing and I am more conscious of community issues and aware of community attitudes. I now no longer see the government as bureaucrats and lawmakers but now as people who are concerned about the community’. Barry Stannard.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Box 26: Training for the Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The homes of Wendouree West residents will be cooler in summer and warmer in winter thanks to a project that will also help train younger residents for jobs in the building industry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sustainable energy project will improve the energy efficiency of public houses with improved insulation in floors, walls and ceilings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps around doors, windows and other places will also be sealed as part of the project being implemented by Ballarat Group Training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat Group Training has employed a team of five trainees for the project that will complete work on 40 houses but general manager Peter Lane is hopeful up to three teams could complete similar projects in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think the critical thing is when these young people have finished in 12 months they will have a certificate two in general building and construction and that will open the doorway to take on a full-time apprenticeship, or the like, in the future,” Mr Lane said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We are really proud to be able to work with the people of this area because of the opportunities we can open up together,” he said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendouree West Community Renewal project manager Gerardine Christou said a grant was received from the sustainable energy authority to complete the works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She said the pilot project would be monitored to see what difference it made to the energy bills of renovated homes but already residents were reporting improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERNATIONAL DELegates ATTENDING A HOUSING AND PLANNING CONFERENCE IN MELBOURNE TODAY VISITED TWO OF VICTORIA'S SUCCESSFUL Neighbourhood Renewal SITES IN Collingwood AND Fitzroy.

The delegates are in Melbourne for the 19th Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Housing (EAROPH) World Planning & Housing Congress.

Ms Broad said the visit provided delegates with an opportunity to see the Bracks Government's highly successful Neighbourhood Renewal Program, which had proved it was possible to re-engage marginalised communities.

"Neighbourhood Renewal was launched in 2002 as a partnership between the State Government, Local Government, local communities, local business and support agencies to redress the concentration of poverty in some of Victoria's most disadvantaged areas," Ms Broad said.

"Fifteen Victorian communities, ranging from inner-urban high-rise estates to regional centres, have benefited from the Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives - whether it be creating more local jobs or improving access to transport, health care and social services or providing better quality housing."

Ms Broad said the Neighbourhood Renewal sites at the Collingwood and Fitzroy housing estates were living proof of the success of the program.

"Collingwood has Australia's first information centre located on a public housing estate - staffed largely by volunteers from the estate, bringing information and service providers to the community," Ms Broad said.

"There is also a youth space and gym, and a number of arts projects underway.

"At Atherton Gardens in Fitzroy, residents are employed as part of a project to provide each flat with free recycled computers and access to email and intranet.

"Both estates have community gardening and landscaping projects, which have seen outdoor areas transformed into beautiful gardens."

Ms Broad said the Bracks Government had already invested $108 million in Neighbourhood Renewal, with another $45 million allocated to the program in both 2004/05 and 2005/06.

"Neighbourhood renewal is improving lives, creating jobs and upgrading properties. Most importantly, residents are having a real say in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods."

Wendouree West residents today joined the Minister for Victorian Communities, John Thwaites, the Minister for Housing, Candy Broad, and the member for Ballarat West, Karen Overington, for a $1 million funding announcement.

Mr Thwaites said the announcement marked the next phase of a highly successful partnership between local residents, Uniting Care Ballarat and the Bracks Government.

"The funding will develop a community hub that will house learning, health-care, child-care, employment and recreation facilities for the local area," he said.

"Anyone visiting Wendouree West for the first time in four or five years would immediately notice the changes that have already taken place in this area. Plants and grass have replaced dirt in Jaycee Reserve, homes have been updated and improved and lights installed in previously dark corners.

"The biggest change is a newly thriving sense of community spirit. In a great example of community building in action, residents have pulled together, with Government support, to create a place of which they are proud."

Ms Broad said the success of the neighbourhood renewal project was a key factor in the Government's decision to fund the first stage of the community hub project.

"I am very proud of our involvement in the Wendouree West neighbourhood renewal project. It shows enabling communities to participate in the planning and delivery of physical improvements to housing and other local buildings can be linked with job creation and other lasting changes," Ms Broad said.

"This new hub will offer a focus for community interaction, early learning and recreation as well as a chance for residents to access education, training, counselling and employment opportunities."

Ms Overington said the project plan for the community hub arose out of needs identified by local residents involved in the Wendouree West Neighbourhood Renewal Project.

"Ultimately, the community hub project will include the development of an early learning centre and TAFE facility and upgrades to transport, parks and streetscapes," Ms Overington said.

"Other activities to be located in the community hub will include vocational training, a Community Jobs Program and leadership development."

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

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

The sample size of the Community Survey was large, with 609 face-to-face interviews plus an additional 300 phone surveys conducted in the two pilot areas of Wendouree West and Latrobe Valley (Salvaris, 2003, p. 6). Utilising the ‘net’ approach.7

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

Conditions receiving the most favourable ratings included:
- People’s own housing (+58)
- People’s own health (+47)
- Local community services generally (+42)
- Public transport (+38)
- Positive feeling about the neighbourhood as a place to live (+24)
- Local education and training opportunities (+23)
- Housing conditions in the neighbourhood (+17).

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

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7 The percent of those who think that conditions are good less the percent who think conditions are bad is given. This simple approach ignores ‘average’ values and ‘don’t know’ responses (Salvaris, 2003, p. 6).
- 55% of people aware of the NRS overall, this increases to 66% for Wendouree and
- 95% of residents agreeing that it was a good idea (Salvaris, 2003, p. 8).

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

Various beneficial changes were reported to have occurred in the 12 months to the interview in 2002, including residents noticing improvements in the following areas:
- Housing (+27)
- Community pride (+19)
- Local education and training opportunities (+17)
- The physical environment (+11)
- Public transport (+10)
- Community participation (+7)
- Health and welfare services (+5)

The following comments are representative of feedback gained after the completion of the interviews in both areas:
- ‘You had faith in the residents who conducted the surveys, which gave them a lot of self-confidence and made them feel proudly part of the survey’
- ‘Using local people was a good idea. People seem more comfortable knowing I was a resident and could meet them on equal footing… It made the community closer’
- ‘(I have got) a better perspective of the community and its wide range of opinions, lifestyles and beliefs’
- ‘I have gained a lot more confidence in myself. The interviewers were a fantastic group and I enjoyed working with them’.

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

Strengths

The decentralised approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The most significant achievement is that we’ve embedded ourselves in a community and we’re not delivering welfare…” (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

The diversity of partner organizations

The variety of partners involved complements the tenant driven nature of the initiatives as there exists a wide field of specific expertise available to be drawn upon by local communities. Attachments 19 and 20 are indicative of this.
“This needs to be a whole of community approach, needs to be tackled by all of the key stakeholders in a consensus model” (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

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

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

**Role of the Employment and Learning Co-ordinator**

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

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

**The tailored approach undertaken**

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

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

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

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

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

Success stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

These benefits are also reflected in the following case studies.

**BOX 29: WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT FOCUS ON LATROBE VALLEY**

In June 2001, after wide consultation, the Latrobe Valley Ministerial Taskforce announced a range of initiatives to take the region forward.

The Taskforce has allocated $17 million to renew the Valley. This funding will allow creative Neighbourhood and Urban Renewal projects to go ahead.

Some of the projects include: the development of the Latrobe Regional Hospital as a health promoting hospital; investigation into improved transport coordination for older people and those with disabilities; a literacy and information technology program for parents of young children; an asbestos education and support program; a one-stop-shop for youth services; additional mental health services for young adults and targeted support for men’s wellbeing.

Recently, The Victorian Government announced that an $8.2 million Office of Housing Call Centre would be set up in Moe, creating 65 jobs.

In summing up, a striving vote of confidence can be gleaned from recent results.

Since Neighbourhood Renewal began in More Heights, Morwell East and Traralgon, there have been increases in the rates of employment and decreases in the number of people leaving the area.

A responsive government combined with funding and thorough assessment of international research is proving that, with commitment, the quality of life in our local communities can be improved.

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

**Weaknesses**

**Funding**

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

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

“There’s still a huge dependence on government funding… (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

The changing nature of target populations

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

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

Potential

The need to be lead by evaluation

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

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

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

The Swinburne Institute of Social Research recognise that there exists an important task of making information publicly available as soon as possible’ (Salvaris, 2003 p. 11).
Tackling the financial disincentives to employment

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

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

Sustainability issues

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

“The dilemma we face is, where does the employment come from? The first 2 pilots were about government providing the resources to create more employment. That was an economically unstable model and vulnerable politically, as governments change and could re-direct this program and funding. We’re going through this now. We need to think about more economically sustainable models. We know that unless you have a firm economic and social model, you can’t move away from welfare. We want to move away from welfare. We want to move out of it and into more constructive and alternative ways of job creation” (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Desire to implement initiatives elsewhere

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

“With little or no thought we can redistribute some of our resources as opposed to adding new resources, the tenant employment clause is a model that can be implemented right across this country, and in theory, create more jobs. We need to be thinking about these communities in skill shortage areas, and the relationship between jobs that are becoming less and less favourable and how we bridge that gap… Longer term, we’ve got a financially sound model, making an investment up front and probably getting it back over the longer term” (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May). Box 28 raises this same issue.

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

The further utilisation of a new style of liaison between government and NGOs

The desire to further develop the newly discovered innovative method of government- non-government organization liaison has been mentioned.

“What we’ve been able to explore, over the last 2 years, is a very different form of communication between NGO’s and government. Historically, the problems of an advocacy organization have played a key role in pushing/prodding government to be more accountable. For my team of people, we’ve been involved in a very different liaison with government. More partnership, more
‘let’s work this out, let’s see if we can do this better’. A huge step forward.” (G Housakos [Brotherhood of St Laurence] 2004, interview, 20 May).

‘The challenge is for Government agencies across the board to respond flexibly and strategically according to the agreed local priorities. This does not come naturally, and can often cause tensions with centrally determined programs and accountability requirements. Strategic and joined up local solutions remain a challenge for traditional bureaucratic structures, and resolving these issues will require goodwill and new thinking at all levels’ (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2003c, p. 12).
Chapter 4. Issues and programs in South Australia

4.1 Economic, social and public policy contexts

In 1999, Public housing represented nearly 10% of all housing in South Australia (South Australian Housing Trust, 1999, p. 9). Figure 5 indicates that there has been steady growth in the number of low-income earners eligible for rental rebates over the last decade.

![Figure 5: Percentage of existing tenants receiving rebates](image)

Over the same period, the percentage of new applicants working has consistently declined with the percentage not working also growing considerably. See Table 6.

A snapshot of the household structure of South Australian public tenants illustrates that the majority are singles (57%). A high percentage of single parent families (22%) is also evident. See Figure 6.
TABLE 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF NEW APPLICANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of new applicants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>33.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>28.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>15.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>15.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

FIGURE 6: REBATED TENANTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE AT 30 JUNE 2000

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

South Australia has also experienced an increase in the number of priority allocations over the last decade. This is primarily due to reduced incomes and increased levels of unemployment.
While receipt of age pensions and the New Start allowance has remained relatively stable over the past decade, Table 8 shows the fall in applications for state accommodation by wage and salary earners. This has been accompanied by an increasing number of applications from disability support recipients and single parents.

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

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

A whole of government approach has been adopted with the involvement of key organizations (South Australian Housing Trust, 2002c, p. 10).
The Urban Renewal strategy forms part of the overall sustainable communities objective. Although primarily centered around physical housing improvements, Urban Renewal activities have included specific employment and training measures as part of the Trust’s recognition of the ‘number of complex and inter-related issues in areas selected for renewal… including poor socio-economic performance and a concentration of households that have limited incomes and resources’ (South Australian Housing Trust, 2002b, p. 20).

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

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

Table 9 is indicative of the discrepancies that exist between sites chosen for Urban Renewal activities and South Australia in general. Although unemployment rates fell in South Australia, Murray Bridge, Port Lincoln and Whyalla, from 2000 to 2001, the persistence of the Urban Renewal area’s unemployment rates above that of the state is cause for policy intervention.
4.2 Overview of initiatives

Urban Renewal

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

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

Urban Renewal – The Westwood project

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

Strategic objectives of this project are:

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

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

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

Proposed short-term actions included:

- Promoting and assisting attendance at the Morgan & Banks Youth Jobs Day
- Local business questionnaire survey and promotion of employment incentives
- Promoting New Apprenticeship Group Training Scheme to Contractors
- Promote the establishment of Master Builders Association facility
- Establish local Job Search touch-screen facility and Job Network service
- Environmental scanning to identify new employment opportunities
- Creating employment links
- Establishment of jobs noticeboard
- Sponsor Vocational Education Training (VET)
- Liaison with local employers
- Promotion of local jobs fair ‘Youth Festival of Opportunities’
- Develop landscape and horticulture work experience and training opportunities,

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

Long term actions are proposed to be devised subject to the monitoring and review of both short and medium term objectives.

**The Westwood project: program successes**
Under the Western Youth Directions Program, which assists young people who have left school early to return to school, undertake training or obtain employment, over 60 people have secured employment (South Australian Housing Trust, 2002a, p. 23).
Successful training programs conducted over the twelve months to 2004 were conducted in the aged care, automotive, hospitality, office administration, retail and stores and warehousing industries.

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

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

The Office Administration course was aimed at young people wishing to secure employment in an office environment. This introductory course offered training in:
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Internet/ E-mail
- use of office equipment
- customer service
- occupational health and safety
- work experience


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

Salisbury North: program successes
As part of the Urban Renewal of Salisbury North, an Employment and Enterprise Coordinator has been enlisted to work closely with the area’s unemployed residents to create sustainable employment opportunities, see
Box 30. The focus of these efforts has been to identify employers willing to take on new staff, and consequently train unemployed residents to fill these specific positions. Under this alternative approach, trainees are guaranteed work before they even begin training. Outcomes during 2001-02 included:

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

An apprenticeship training project was undertaken at McInerney Place by the Housing Trust, Master Builders Association, Alphine Constructions, the Building Industry Training Scheme, TAFE and the City of Marion. Through this project, 30 unemployed young people were given the opportunity to participate in an accelerated training program. With a value of $2.6 million, a team of dedicated apprentices completed the construction of 24 villa style dwellings, consisting of attached and detached homes, units and townhouses. 12 of the homes were retained for Housing Trust rental and the other 12 homes were sold on the open market.
Businesses in Salisbury North should look to the local area for the perfect employee, says Salisbury North Employment and Training Coordinator, Michelle Brodie.

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

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

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

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

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

Source: South Australian Housing Trust, 2004, Trust talk tenant link, issue 13, p. 5.
The Easy Computing Community Centre's Computer Training is a project designed to provide low-cost, in-house computer training for the local community.

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

Participants acquire knowledge and skills in:
Basic computing,
Computer terminology,
Buying a computer,
Computing virus protection,
Word processing,
Desktop publishing,
Creating a budget,
Writing reports and letters,
Preparing a resume, and
Microsoft Windows programs.

Recent employment and training outcomes

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

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

Work Bank

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

4.3 Strengths, weaknesses and potential

Strengths

Integration among partner organizations

It has been mentioned that, not only does the variety of organizations enhance the success of employment and training outcomes, but so too does the opportunity for organizations and tenants alike to assess the suitability of a work relationship with the other.

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

Wide variety of programs available

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

“There have been a variety of government training and employment opportunities provided, in various industries; warehousing, fork lifting, retail, aged care, etc. The key is a broad range of training and employment opportunities are provided to meet diverse needs and skills” (M Ward [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 18th October).

The decentralised approach adopted

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

Success stories

The number of participants in training and employment courses alike are testament to the success of the labour market programs implemented as part of the South Australian Housing Trust’s commitment to Urban Renewal.
For instance, “With the ‘How to be enterprising in the new world of work?’ course, an amazing 100% of participants went onto other training opportunities due to the motivation gained, an incredible outcome” (S Zivkovic [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 8th October).

**Weaknesses**

**The need for evaluation**

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

**The lack of support available for social enterprises**

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

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

**Potential**

**Need for a higher level of agreement between government levels**

“There is a need for a strategic higher level of agreement between Commonwealth, State and local governments, and between local Chambers of Commerce to facilitate more employment and training opportunities. At the moment, funds tend to be for individual Commonwealth initiatives and individual State initiatives, there’s not always as much co-operation or collaboration as there ideally should be” (M Ward [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 18th October).

**Desire to expand initiatives elsewhere**

Following successful outcomes, the want to replicate programs elsewhere and expand exists as “there is a desire to expand” (M Ward [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 18th October).
The need for more support and agencies involved

The need for further support and more integration among agencies has been mentioned.

“A holistic approach would be good, to get on board a range of different agencies” (M Ward [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 18th October).

“I would like to see everyone support what’s happening, so communities can take more control of their opportunities and develop and address those opportunities. Much is to be taken from the small business sector to support community businesses. It’s a direction to be seen as favourable, use as training and advice service. The upskilling of small business training and advisory providers of social enterprise is an opportunity” (S Zivkovic [South Australian Housing Trust] 2004, interview, 8th October).
Chapter 5. Conclusions

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

Improvements in unemployment result in both increased incomes for individuals and reductions in government expenditure allocated to unemployment benefits. In the context of public housing, however, additional benefits present themselves as the increased earnings from employment serve to reduce the rental subsidies outlaid by the various state housing budgets, these funds can then be put to alternative uses. Further to the financial benefits, labour market programs have demonstrated their ability to amend forms of anti-social behaviour as tenants develop a sense of pride in their work efforts. Given that the costs of anti-social behaviours- such as crime and vandalism- are borne by government agencies, taxpayers and the general community; the potential of NSW Department of Housing, Victorian Office of Housing and South Australian Housing Trust labour market programs for estate tenants should not be underestimated.

In endeavouring to assess the initiatives undertaken, a series of common issues were resonated in multiple states, these are summarised in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Labour Market Programs – Common Themes Raised8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity of initiatives available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific targeting of barriers to work for public housing estate tenants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenant involvement in the development of initiatives</td>
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<td>Specialist contribution of partner organizations</td>
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<td>Integration among partner organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of information available</td>
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<td>Lack of evaluation conducted</td>
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<td><strong>Potential</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tackling the financial disincentives to employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>The desire to replicate initiatives in other locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>The need for information to guide future directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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8 These issues have been raised by respondents in more than one of the three states covered by this research.
1. The issue of the NSW Department of Housing's labour market programs clashing with its core business could be overcome if NSW were to adopt a whole-of-government approach as is the case in Victoria and South Australia. Due to the centralised involvement of key agencies in these programs, effective partnerships could be forged at the state level, potentially resulting in more efficient outcomes and less resourcing stress within the Department. Broad (2003, p. 14) states that six factors are crucial for the success of projects implemented via the whole of government approach, including:
   a. Leadership – the importance of local leaders who command respect and can harness resources,
   b. Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders – the broader the partnerships, the greater the likelihood of a strong network of relationships emerging,
   c. Local ownership and control – addressing the challenge for government in supporting ‘bottom up’ initiatives while still retaining levels of accountability and state government policy frameworks,
   d. Encouraging the involvement of volunteers - the active involvement of volunteers is a clear indicator that community strengthening objectives are being delivered,
   e. Facilitating innovation and creativity – highlighting the importance of doing things differently,
   f. Sustainability – Does the project have the capacity to respond to changing circumstances, and take on a life of its own?

These issues have been raised by various respondents in NSW, hence much is to be gained from the consideration of a whole of government approach.

2. The need for information to be made more readily available to the general public remains a key area in which the Department can contribute to the growth of labour market programs for its estate tenants. Merely making information publicly available regarding the actual estates where the Community Renewal Strategies are operational would significantly reduce the uncertainty that surrounds the Department’s training and employment programs.

3. The importance of evaluating public policies can not be stressed enough. There exists a great thirst for evaluative material by partner organizations and stakeholders alike. Although it is promising that the NSW Department of Housing has such streamlined procedures in place for the evaluation of its WorkiT program, the key findings from such evaluations need to be made publicly available in order to facilitate information sharing and guide the future direction of initiatives implemented.
Glossary

**Social housing** is the term used to cover government-subsidised rental housing. It includes:
- Public housing (owned or provided by the Government)
- Community housing (owned or leased by non-Government organizations and local government)
- Aboriginal housing (owned or provided by both the Government and community organizations), and
- Crisis and emergency accommodation (usually provided by non-Government organizations) (NSW Department of Housing, 2003b, p. 1).

**Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM)** is a NSW Department of Housing initiative that aims to improve tenant satisfaction via improving the management performance of problematic estates. The key elements of ITM are:
- An on-site housing management team,
- A flexible local allocations strategy,
- A smaller number of tenancies per housing manager than in other areas,
- The use of a local handyperson for small general maintenance items, and
- Support for local community development work to enhance community cohesion.

It is envisaged that improvements will lead to more sustainable tenancies and communities and to the improved financial viability of public housing (NSW Department of Housing, 2001b, p. 23).

The **Radburn** layout design was intended to separate cars from pedestrians, its fractured service roads accommodating garages at the back of houses, while the house fronts are linked by pathways and open spaces. The layout was originally thought to encourage neighbourly interactions, and allow for greater safety of children playing in common spaces (NSW Department of Housing, 2001b, p. 5). Nowadays, however, the pedestrian walkways have provided an opportunity for criminal activity. The unusual layout acts as a distinguishing feature indicative of public housing, thereby contributing to the stigma often attached to estates.
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Attachments
Attachment 1: Interview schedule – non-NGO respondent

Respondent Name
Respondent ID

Questions

1. What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

2. Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in VIC/SA or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in VIC/SA? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

3. What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

4. Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

5. Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?
Attachment 2: Interview schedule – NGO respondent

Respondent Name
Respondent ID

Questions

1. What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

2. Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

3. Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

4. What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

5. Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

6. Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?
Interview Date: Wednesday 19th May 2004
Respondent Number: 01
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions:

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

I work in the Neighbourhood Renewal branch of the Office of Housing, Department of Human Services, for the Victorian Government. Neighbourhood Renewal is a place-based intervention that operates on 15 sites throughout Victoria. It has a variety of objectives including health and well being amongst them. The key area that I work on is employment, learning and enterprise. And we are looking to lift both prospects and opportunity for the people in those place based housing estates, through a series of interventions based around employment, learning and enterprise approaches. We have an employment learning strategy in place. That strategy is developed from within the community. Part of Neighbourhood Renewal’s approach is that action plans, ideas and activities are generated from within the community. We just help to try and focus that if we can. Each community is developing it’s own employment and learning strategies designed to improve access to employment programs and employment services being achieved through a couple of ways, we are operating very specifically at the moment linking labour market type programs through NR areas through the jobs programs, which is run through the Department of Victorian Communities and we have had quite a deal of success and a far bit of interaction with that program in the past. In Latrobe, well over 240 people for instance, but probably in the region of 500 – 600 across the state. We have also looked to use CJP to link residents to enterprise opportunities, improve their skills across a variety of areas, in doing the housing works we have done in the CJP and see whether they can stretch that into a community enterprise of some sort. I’d say with limited success to date, but it is very new for us and it’s very new for them. We’ve still got a couple of irons in the fire in terms of trying to develop that, we’re trying a few others places and maybe improve some of the ideas around enterprise, but it’s going take a while, but there is certainly some prospect there.

Our next key activity is the implementation/induction of 13 employment and learning coordinators, which we have funded across the State. Those positions are designed to work specifically in the communities. They are auspiced by quite a wide variety of organizations, from Local Government to employment and training type organizations, to health and welfare type organizations. So a very wide variety of auspice there, which is terrific from our point of view. We should be able to use that to really enhance the overall capability, I think, of the network, which is how we are regarding the employment learning coordinators network. We are very keen, as a part of that employment learning...
coordinator role, to have a presence within the community both physically and in terms of contact and as part of that we are encouraging very, very heavily, Centrelink. We have had some terrific support from Centrelink to date/Centrelink and the Job Network to provide outreach services in conjunction with an employment learning coordinator. We’re reasonably confident, I think, that that is going to lead to something. We are also speaking with DEWA at the state level to try and gather some support in moving up a Job Network around that. So there are certainly some things happening.

The key thing that we have found in this whole employment and learning field is disengagement. The particular families we are dealing with have a very high level of disability support pension, sole parent benefit, recipient of those kinds of categories that don’t have, necessarily, the contact with the Job Network through cause. They also probably have a few more barriers to employment, whether they have been through looking after their children or possibly substance addiction type problems. So there is an issue around disengagement. So certainly one of the key things that we are looking to do is just develop some trust and some confidence in the communities, provide some of the services on site or institute in the place itself, with the idea of really moving those who we can encourage to go there towards employability, as in many cases, they are not probably there yet, there is a gap between them and a job, a pretty significant one.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in VIC or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in VIC? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

In some shape or form we will have access to most, if not all, of these documents, I think. The releasability of those documents is another issue, but I can certainly take this and have a bit of a look at what we can do. We will be happy to do that. What I think you’ll find in some of this review work is that they won’t so much review the labour market programs. We tend to try and access the labour market activity that’s out there. We don’t have funds ourselves to specifically run programs and so don’t. Our role is more about infrastructure and community development and try and plug the community into programs and services that are already available and maybe encouraging those programs and services that are already available to interact a lot more closely with the communities that we are involved in, so there may be some discussion around labour market programs. The bulk of the discussion, I think, will be more around the idea of place-based intervention as apposed to generic service delivery. But certainly we can have a look at that and there may be one or two other things in relation to employment and learning coordinators. We’ve certainly got some very solid documentation on that, that we can look at getting for you.

Something that might be handy to you and I’ll have to get you to request this of me, if it’s not in a solicited document, but certainly the Community Action Plans
will be valuable on a couple of fronts I think. One is it will give you an understanding of the way we have tried to interact with the community and the types of survey questions that are being asked and in the ways that the communities have responded. So the interest there, I think will be both around a level of response and a level of involvement, but also may be the different kinds of responses you get from different places. So there’s probably a couple of things around that that we might have, which is why I was thinking your interviewer training notes, community survey stuff, while it may not appear on the surface as interesting as some of the larger evaluative things, you might actually get something out of that.

**What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?**

Again, particularly talking about Neighbourhood Renewal here. There are other activities and other interventions that occur elsewhere naturally as they would in any other community. But particularly in relation to Neighbourhood Renewal, Community Jobs Programs that I mentioned earlier has been our largest activity to date, both in terms of numbers and in terms of results. We have tried to use it in a variety of ways to generate ongoing employment both through enterprises, but also using tenant employment clauses in contracts with our service providers. An excellent example, and one where we have probably pursued the hardest, is at Fitzroy/Collingwood. We use the tenant employment clause to have the cleaning company employ the Community Jobs Program participants after they have completed. Our request of them is that they employ, in terms of 15 – 30%, on that estate being residents of the estate. The outcomes were terrific in terms of the employment levels. It was certainly higher than we requested of them, it might have been in the range of 50% were employed on that estate. All 50% of the cleaners employed on that estate were residents coming out of the Community Jobs Program, quality of service went up significantly as a result which is something we were certainly hoping to see, because the residents were looking after their own place in a sense and in the end some of the residents actually got employment in other estates beyond Collingwood and Fitzroy. So it was a very, very positive outcome through that tenant employment type of activity. We still haven’t buttoned down all of the whys and wherefores to make that a larger program or a larger effort, we’re still really evaluating that, but there is some prospect, I think, across the Office to at least consider it a bit further. We actively try and promote employment learning activities within each of the NR areas but with a view to those activities being affective locally, for instance, in Latrobe we know there are significant school shortages in building and construction, we know that there is a lot of infrastructure work coming up as a result of state and federal government building and infrastructure activities, so our encouragement down there at the moment is certainly around building and construction. At Collingwood/Atherton Gardens we did quite a bit in IT, Info Exchange went into those buildings and wired them for the Internet. So we do try and focus it around things that are happening at any particular time and again some small success around local enterprises, suggest you may look at the CreateAtWork website. An organization, CreateGeelong, who are one of our auspices
agencies for employment and learning coordinators, but have also run Community Jobs Programs with us and do have a reasonable scale enterprise that they are trying to operate at a very community minded/community dedicated type of organization, fiddling around with a lot of things and trying/testing to see what works.

**Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?**

The constraints and limitations are wide and many. Both in terms of the capacity of a program or an intervention, which is how I try to describe this, rather than a program or a place based activity. Like I say, we haven’t got program dollars, it’s more about focusing the attention than actually providing a service. But there are issues around a program like that, how many people can you employ to really involve and engage and move on? There is an obvious financial and structural constraint or limitation there. Also if you promise too much you are just setting yourself up to not deliver. Then, on the other side of the ledger, you are dealing with a community that has been ignored for a long, long period of time, in all sorts of ways across all of that range of things, crime and safety, health and well being, physical place, employment and learning. They’re not very confident in dealing with government. They’re not very confident in dealing outside their communities; in many ways sub-cultures and things develop within their community and enables them to operate reasonably effectively within their own communities here, so it is breaking down some of those barriers as well which are very, very difficult. It’s all about confidence and trust. Money for employment programs to this kind of client group is not great. Most of the employment program money really does seem to suit people who are more or less work ready or just one step away. Work for The Dole for instance doesn’t even apply to most of this group. Work for The Dole is probably not what most of them need anyway; the broadest ranging program across the country doesn’t even apply to most of them because they are not engaged through Job Network. So real issues about the delivery of employment programs to this group in terms of how much you can offer, the spread of it, engaging the people to take up your offer and then delivery of the right programs to the right people. So there is a whole series of issues around that, which need to be thoroughly considered and do operate as constraints. Simon likes to describe some of that as non-vocational barriers for the individuals themselves, substance abuse, mental health problems, literacy and numeracy, basic skills levels all leading to a significantly diminished confidence, a comfort within their own community and a bit of a fear of moving out of that, and the fear isn’t just around confidence sometimes its around loosing your income. Centrelink benefits can be adjusted if you start to earn money. A whole lot of issues that just seem to thrust up that barrier and not encourage them out of their current circumstances.

**Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?**
I think the evaluative processes that we are undertaking will probably inform a lot of that, certainly for Victoria this is fairly new as it is, Neighbourhood Renewal has only been around for a couple of years and we are learning as we go. The future will be a combination of unwrapping a few things. We’ve got some knowledge already from the U.K. about the need for whole of government intervention. There is service delivery available and there are service delivery agents out there. It’s a matter of being able to focus those services into the areas where we feel they are most needed and to deliver services that are going to help that particular community. Then there is the other side of going through our evaluations, how effective are we being in getting that whole of government support? How effective are we in getting through the engagement, just through our Offices? So through the Neighbourhood Renewal sites themselves, are we being effective? So setting ourselves a task to engage government and engage the communities, and I think, some of that will inform future processes. I think the other thing then is, what is successful in terms of engaging the communities will have a significant influence on approaches into the future. At the moment we are hoping this idea of trust and gaining confidence, and certainly trying to deliver services against their Action Plans, in language that is understandable within that community, is successful. So if that doesn’t prove successful, I guess, then we really need to try to look at an underlying approach. That whole place based service ideal.

Then I guess there is sustainability for Neighbourhood Renewal itself into the future. And there is a horizon of funding at the moment and it’s not the sort of thing that 3 or 5 years of funding is going to achieve long term results, you are looking at 10, 15, 20, 30 years effort in that community to achieve long term results. By the same token you can’t expect government just to keep channelling money. The very specific service deliveries that we are looking for, the community connection, all those sorts of things need to happen. But I guess if they do happen then there is no longer a need for a Neighbourhood Renewal office. So what is the sustainable model into the future is the question, where do we operate? How do we continue to engage and cajole and do all those sorts of things, when really, if we’ve been successful we shouldn’t need to be doing that? There is a bit of a conundrum there because you wouldn’t want to not be around in case it started not to happen, because you need to be there to re-encourage and re-engage, if things start to fail. So, yes, there are issues around that we really need to understand and we wont for a couple of years yet.
Attachment 4: Interview summary – respondent 02

Interview Date: Thursday 20th May 2004
Respondent Number: 02
Respondent Name: George Housakos
Respondent Details: Enterprise Development Manager
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Melbourne VIC
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions:

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

Primarily we’ve been involved in a 2 year pilot in Atherton Gardens in the Collingwood public housing high rise inner Melbourne estate, a quite a diverse multi-cultural population, with roughly 2,000 people per estate. One of the reasons why we became involved 2 years ago is that we saw a high incidence of welfare dependence/income support, with 90% of people in this estate dependent on government handouts. We chose to explore how we could re-engage this community, thinking and using employment as that tool of engagement. We identified that Commonwealth employment support programs weren’t supporting this community, and that the community was made up of people with very diverse and complex needs (ranging from mental health, drug and alcohol dependence, social isolation, family breakdown etc.). We trialed a program with the Office of Housing; to take 12 tenants through a 15-week paid employment program and we designed 3 types of jobs.

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

All of this came out of community consultation, which took place prior to us starting and the community had identified that safety, security and employment were their key wants. We designed employment around those wishes. At the time we were testing whether or not this community really wanted to work, to break down some of the assumptions that we had about this community. We advertised 4 positions and we had 42 people apply out of a population of 2,000 that’s not statistically that relevant, but it does indicate that the opposite is the case. Was our methodology wrong? Was our approach wrong? What this community cautious? Were we embedded deeply enough in the community to really understand what was happening? Of the 42 who applied, we screened down to 12 who went into the 15 week course, which was intended as a pre-vocational skills development course, working on people’s self esteem. Fifteen weeks later, all 12 got through, which was an amazing outcome for us. 100% retention. We provided an intensive support person through that whole training period, that, and the combination of the training and skill development really
pushed this audience through. The audience for this first pilot were people who were unemployment for more than 5 years, long term unemployed people. From there, we then moved into the traineeships model so we could access Commonwealth funds for support. This also provided for a continuation of further skilling, under Certificates 3 and 4 in certain industry areas. Those jobs were then created in government; a layer was put in, successfully those people stayed in employment for longer than 9 months. The majority are still working. What we’ve identified in this whole process is that we now have an interesting delivery model, although we were still concerned that it wasn’t the appropriate audience, or that we weren’t getting the appropriate responses from the audience. We replicated this model in another inner Melbourne housing estate, Collingwood, and saw a very huge difference in response. One hundred people responded to the same 12 jobs. We didn’t alter any of the program outputs or designs; we just replicated it exactly as it was. When we interviewed the 100 people, we found that they had been watching this process, that there was this sort of internal culture/suspicion. We ran the program, same retention (100%), same results. We were starting to build momentum in this community and still are. Year to date, we have now put 100 people into employment. The dilemma we face is, where does the employment come from? The first 2 pilots were about government providing the resources to create more employment. That was an economically unstable model and vulnerable politically, as governments change and could re-direct this program and funding. We’re going through this now. We need to think about more economically sustainable models. We know that unless you have a firm economic and social model, you can’t move away from welfare. We want to move away from welfare. We want to move out of it and into more constructive and alternative ways of job creation.

We worked with policy makers in the Victorian Department of Human Services and inserted a public tenant clause inside a commercial cleaning contract. The basis of the model was that we know that there is a certain percentage of profit for the commercial provider. When on the ground, they are very skilled at making sure that they get that profit. Our assumption here is to say, let’s redistribute the profit and create more jobs, force the contract to specify that they must employ local residents. Interestingly enough, it was inserted, it was pretty brave/a pretty strong initiative by the Bracks government to inititiative something of this nature. The outcome of this was that 25% of tenants had to be employed by the contractor. For the commercial contract, this was a new venture. For the tenderer, they had no idea, they were forced to comply with a specific request that was in the contract. Subsequently, on both estates, 16 people are now employed by this model. Government’s role here is to adapt policy and then enforce that/that policy is put into place. We like the model, we think it’s replicable, sustainable, its not politically bound, it makes sense. It’s still allowing tendering, allowing contractors to price accordingly. For these communities, employment is a key factor. We know this is an economically sound argument, and there is some incredible economic spin-off’s from this process. As you get people who live in the community to work in the community, there seems to be greater ownership of that community. All of the research we’ve looked at in the UK and some of the early examples of Urban
Renewal in NSW, indicates that estates are cleaner. For the upkeep of an asset, there is a better return, anything that’s going to prevent damage/less wear and tear will only improve the longevity of the asset. These are assets (housing). We know that, in the investment in the concierge model, that safety has increased considerably. A report by the Office of Housing indicates that the number of calls 2 years ago has significantly halved in response to safety issues. We now have some raw data that is much more factual. We now know that the community is responding in a much more responsive way around participation in employment which can only be a positive thing. It means that those people are getting off benefits, which is a prime objective. Its also led to a discussion of a different type of arrangement with a commercial provider, cleaning provider, they’re seeing that their retention rates are much higher since they started employing tenants. They’re now saying that being forced into this wasn’t that bad. It’s interesting that the dynamics change.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in VIC or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in VIC? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

There’s Neighbourhood Renewal. There’s also an evaluation of this model, one not yet released (not the Swinburne University one) that would probably be of interest, to evaluate this tenant employment clause. It still hasn’t been publicly released, but eventually it would be. Contact Mark (O’Driscoll), effects and recommendations of tenant employment clauses. The Office of Housing Victoria are looking at and have implemented Neighbourhood Advisory Boards which make up structures of community key tenants and agencies, structures designed to bring whole of government agenda’s together. We’re part of that agenda. For an idea of how place based management occurs. There’s a whole lot of information that they should be able to give you, stats and data on economic development, how the regeneration process occurs, the key factors of that regeneration.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

The most significant achievement is that we’ve embedded ourselves in a community and we’re not delivering welfare. We’re saying that it’s OK to have lots of issues, but instead of you trying to solve all of those issues independently, you can do it in the context of employment. That’s been a major breakthrough within a community. People are now saying that they can step forward to something they thought they had to wait to step forward for.

We’ve worked with non-traditional parts of government and are working with employers in a very different way. We’ve actually started some of the essence of whole of government approach. It’s forced us to work with tenant’s stakeholders in a very different way.
Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

There’s still a huge dependence on government funding. We’ve still got to make more policy issues to accommodate these new ways of thinking, we need to make a commitment at the ministerial level to make this redirection of resources happen. NGO’s need to be open to the idea of working in very different ways.

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

Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

Our demonstration projects over the past 2 years have indicated that targeted initiative programs, specifically to disadvantaged communities, can show incredibly diverse results. With little or no thought we can redistribute some of our resources as opposed to adding new resources, the tenant employment clause is a model that can be implemented right across this country, and in theory, create more jobs. We need to be thinking about these communities in skill shortage areas, and the relationship between jobs that are becoming less and less favourable and how we bridge that gap. We’re exploring a model at the moment where we’re taking tenants into our own aged care facility as personal care attendants. Again, that’s come out of research around the aged care sector and its issues. So taking non-traditional people/people who we’ve never thought of to fill that gap, that skill shortage. Current discussions with a major hospital at the moment, St Vincent’s. There is a growing use of agency staff in these facilities, costing these structures a lot of money. We think that policy makers are changing their thinking about targeting interventions. Longer term, we’ve got a financially sound model, making an investment up front and probably getting it back over the longer term.

For the future, there’s lots of wish lists. We’ve got to be careful that we don’t look at this in a short-term context, this is a long-term investment. We now know that we’ve got to be there for at least 5-10 years, embed structures in there long term. Not just welfare, but embed a different form of engagement. Looking at working through issues, one of the major ways of doing this is through a job. It’s a bit idealistic, but to not ever be dependent on 1 key stakeholder, this needs to be a whole of community approach, needs to be tackled by all of the key stakeholders in a consensus model. Not just us saying to government ‘You must’, or government saying to us ‘You will’. What we’ve
been able to explore, over the last 2 years, is a very different form of communication between NGO’s and government. Historically, the problems of an advocacy organization have played a key role in pushing/prodding government to be more accountable. For my team of people, we’ve been involved in a very different liaison with government. More partnership, more ‘lets work this out, let’s see if we can do this better’. A huge step forward.
Attachment 5: Interview summary – respondent 03

Interview Date: Friday 2nd July 2004
Respondent Number: 03
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions:

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

Senior Project Officer, Housing Services Section, Department of Housing Head Office. Began working with the Department of Housing about 3 years ago, was employed to look at employment and training opportunities for public housing residents. At that time the Department had been trialing a number of programs – e.g. Tenant Employment Program, DEWA funded, project had been done and initiatives implemented. Consequently DEWA also funded another project called Community Contracts, which was in the beginning of its implementation when I started. Following that work, another initiative that the Department had been trialing was in needs assessment options and in consolidating the work that had been done over that time; funded a project called WorkiT which is funded through its new products and services, to trial a program that incorporated a number of initiatives/the lessons learned from previous examples to deliver an employment and training program in 6 locations in NSW, combining core funding components to external organizations and also linking it to the awarding of service maintenance contracts so that those organizations could directly employ a limited number of residents to undertake that work.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

I think there might be some work undertaken around the area of opportunities for Indigenous communities, don’t quite know that name of the report at the moment, but know that there has been some work done on increasing the opportunities for Indigenous communities. Case studies available from when WorkiT projects have been launched, media releases.
Fact sheets – Community Renewal updated for new initiatives but Tenant Employment Fact Sheets have not been updated. Website may give ideas of new initiatives through the Fact Sheets.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?
Quite a lot of effort by divisional staff to use the opportunities that exist within housing to create employment and training opportunities for social housing residents. E.g. trying to bring in new stakeholders and partners that could work with us, e.g. for traineeships that can happen in the areas of lawns and grounds, landscaping and so forth. E.g. effort in areas like Airds/Bradbury, through initiatives that have taken place they're with a focus on engaging the community and key stakeholders and identifying an economic development plan for the area. Plan developed called Strengthening Communities Program, in partnership with Housing and other stakeholders.

I think the Department has a commitment to work in this field because it sees employment and training as a key area for people to be able to actively participate in our society, so it's committed to using the in-house opportunities that they may have, through, e.g. our contract assistance, and also to engage other key stakeholders working with us to ensure that there are as many opportunities as possible for social housing residents to have access to employment and training.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

WorkiT is very resource intensive program to implement, requires a certain level of expertise. It is essential that people working in this area understand the labour market program field, the importance of working in partnerships and who those partners are, the contracting system area and being able to marry those two effectively so that people in the program get as much support as they require. It is difficult area to work in anyway because the kind of people we are targeting have a host of other issues to deal with – complex needs require, sometimes, complex solutions. E.g. Oasis Youth Support Network in the inner City, are working with very disadvantaged groups that have had multiple barriers to employment and training e.g. have been through corrective services, have had intergenerational unemployment, homelessness etc. Trying to tailor a program to address the needs of those people in the employment and training field is difficult in the competitive employment market is. There also issues around the resourcing these projects. Adequate funding is important. Being able to work with organizations that have demonstrated expertise in the delivery of these services is important. For the Department it is an area that is not our core business, so trying to provide enough resources and focus, because it is an important area, in bringing as much as possible of that area into core objectives, is also challenging.

Competitiveness of employment market, e.g. in Sydney competition is fierce and then there are other issues e.g. for non-metro areas where there is a chronic lack of employment and the high incidence of unemployment in other areas, being able to provide enough incentives for people to be able to trial/test/ be able to engage in initiatives that may be in place. The balancing of the disincentives that exist for people in accessing employment and training is a real challenge because a family that is on income support, for example, needs to firstly address/make sure that there is a regular stream of income support to be able to meet the needs of that family and if the type of
employment available does not equate to what income support offers, then it is very difficult to actually get those people to move from an income support status to not.

Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

Working in partnership with the State or the Commonwealth level is very important, particularly in addressing the disincentives that exist in the system in order to get people to be able to increase their motivation and also not to penalise people for seeking employment.

The variety of entry areas, particularly for people who have been out of the employment field for a long time. There need to be gradual steps to be able to get people from, say, intergenerational unemployment, to training, to gain job seeking skills, to be able to hold a job perhaps not full time but casual or part time basis, and the necessary support structures we need to get people to long term employment.

Also, there is such a variety of things happening that trying to simplify, in terms of communication, some of the options, is also important. Sometimes it is very difficult to navigate the systems that we have in place.

Access to funding for these programs is also very important. Also looking at programs that ensure sustainability, e.g. with WorkiT we are experiencing this very issue at the moment. The Department has been able to put forth its funding to implement the program for the next 2 years, but it is crucial that we are able to identify options for sustainability beyond those two years so that those organizations that are doing it well can continue working and providing those services.
Attachment 6: Interview summary – respondent 04

Interview Date: Monday 5th July 2004
Respondent Number: 04
Respondent Name: John Paszek
Respondent Details: Community Renewal Strategy Co-ordinator
Greater Western Sydney Division
NSW Department of Housing
Sydney NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

Have worked with the Department of Housing for over 30 years, largely worked on estates, spent the majority of time on both property management and community renewal perspectives.
For the last 6 years have worked in Community Renewal area, role has been:
- Attempting to remedy the Radburn planning design across Western Sydney,
- Working in a fairly high level community development role to bring government and community sector organizations together to provide a better level of service delivery to clients,
- Assisting the Department of Housing to improve its level of service delivery to our clients.
Extensive amount of experience gained.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature?
Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

The Department of Housing’s estate strategy
Much documentation exists around the area of social capital:
- Eva Cox
- Professor Tony Vinson – report on degrees of disadvantage across estates
- Professor Bill Randolph
Employment side – WorkiT
Also, Mission Australia Landscaping traineeship, no formal review, but know that it is extremely successful as most participants go on to get permanent jobs in other related areas; this is quite a constant.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?
Landscaping has been extremely successful. Also, Work for the Dole program and WorkiT, the Department’s strategy, is providing good results. Also have attempted a program where builders employ tenants. However, not all builders are willing to take on local labour. Most have used it/local labour. If one person gets employment, that’s a success. The builder’s program hasn’t been as successful in terms of numbers as other initiatives. But there is a view that the government is more supportive than before. Partnerships made with Job Network providers are useful, they help to deliver programs in communities better. Have attempted to mainstream those partnerships with core business in Community Renewal. In the Department of Housing, generally most property management through client service tenant process, where the core business is different, is focused on rent arrears, maintenance, etc., with little time to look at employment initiatives. Aim is to make contacts and push them down to client service teams so that they can be used as much as we do (use them, the partnerships). Has been successful. The focus is more about the program rather than specific initiatives.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

Constraints – funding
Limitations – issue strengthened with Work for the Dole, you must expect work to take longer to be done by tenants due to upskilling, rather than commercial contractors. This is factored in/allowed for, is not a problem if it falls within the Department’s budgetary process. Better framework for delivering resident employment strategies. The Department’s expertise is different, public housing management not employment. It would be good to have a stronger link to Job Network agencies where you could use their expertise. The Department has done much but are novices in the employment field, don’t know what opportunities are out there for use. Need a better framework for sharing of information, best practice, information pact, to tap into all programs – this would be a good source document to have.

Problem – State and Commonwealth funding issues, the Commonwealth funds bits and pieces, its role is not really understood.

Issue – incentives that need to be there for public housing tenants whose role modelling has been restricted to an environment of unemployment is difficult to change. Therefore, trying to get people interested in work is a real challenge, due to lack of positive role models, intergenerational unemployment etc. The major problem is that you can’t change the mindsets of people in short times.

Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

Better framework around getting better outcomes for participants. Privacy issues sitting around clients of different agencies, how to be more proactive is restricted, this affects the ability to engage in the community.
Funding issues – E.g. Landscaping traineeships program cost in the order of $500,000 for a 12-month program of 10 trainees, 2 leading hands and 1 program supervisor, plus material costs. Hence $41,000 per participant per annum just for Western Sydney, funded entirely from the Housing budget. If we could develop partnerships with other agencies that could put money in the pot, we could expand the traineeships. The problem of getting more money to support, is critical overall to continue the huge costs of programs because one significant outcome where people live and work in the same area, is that they generally protect what they’ve worked on. E.g. In Cranebrook, used Landscaping trainees to upgrade the childcare centre, finished in 1999. To this day there is no graffiti or vandalism to any part of the building/precinct. Sense of pride/ownership, the more you can generate this, the better individually and also for the community. It’s very important to do this, role modelling. Stories are repeated elsewhere.
Attachment 7: Interview summary – respondent 05

Interview Date: Monday 5th July 2004
Respondent Number: 05
Respondent Name: Maggy Yeum
Respondent Details: Community Renewal Strategy Co-ordinator
Greater Western Sydney Division
NSW Department of Housing
Sydney NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

My role is with the core South Western Sydney centre, co-ordinating the Department of Housing’s approach to trying to create employment and training opportunities in housing estates, via:
Participating in meetings,
Actually taking on particular projects, initiating ideas, identify source channels, participating in local forums with agencies and tenants in identifying issues relating to communities,
Supporting corporate projects, implementing them at a divisional level.
Generally, look at identifying opportunities to move ideas forward.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

PhD student who did a project on tenant employment work in the Claymore Area – project target, came to co-op groups etc.

Department of Housing’s head office document – competed a couple of years ago, involved in setting up/initiating projects to support tenant employment initiatives, developed a training package for Department’s staff. Lead to the beginning of setting up 2 tenant co-operatives. Trisha Adams, 2-year position, then she moved on and the gap not filled. The Department not focused in this area, as much as it is now.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

Identifying those who really want to take on opportunities. Many in public housing estates don’t have that job-readiness, many do but don’t have access to tap into the labour market, need encouragement.
Have looked at, within Housing, maintenance contracts, questioning whether we can get tenants to do this, create and environment for employment. The WorkiT program engages an external agency with labour market expertise to recruit public housing tenants into job areas where they could be supported and take on a full time job, not as internal service provider but as an incubator for employment.

The Department of Housing has expanded this opportunity, not just in the inner City but now works with a range of Departmental staff, more contacts, expansion of the WorkiT program. Internally, it’s good for staff to think outside the box, just don’t see tenants as hopeless people who can’t do anything, they have skills and they can be used, given opportunities to participate back in the workforce.

There are a number of initiatives to generate the wellbeing of community pride; the next step is to break the poverty cycle, generation gap. WorkVentures – new communities, technology centres into more disadvantaged housing estates. Technology is a critical factor for people these days, need to keep up with the level of advancement, providing access in estates so that tenants and their children gain access to break the digital divide in disadvantaged communities.

The Handyperson program provides quicker responses to minor maintenance work.

Target estate areas, look at recruitment of social housing tenants to work in communities they know, re-connect with people, provide better role models for people, see opportunities around the estate and use the opportunities.

There are a number of Work for the Dole projects recognising that people are at different skill levels and participation rates, they are the most basic in helping people re-enter the workforce at a slower pace. Helping the long term unemployed to get into routine again, commitment.

Target estates, involvement to stay in the estate, not daunted with the task of travel.

Landscaping traineeships are multi – faceted, they create better surrounding neighbourhoods, and provide recognised skills to take to established places, varied pathways to employment of community renewal activities, not one program fits all approach. There are a wide variety of skills, language, culture, needs etc. we have made progress here, have a number of different programs.

Other possibilities:
Removalist business, where different interests are addressed
Refurbishment business – recycling used furniture made available to new tenants to provide a helping-hand

The most significant initiative is the Department of Housing looking at the meaning on tenant employment opportunities in real terms for estates: it was a small part of the program that focused on physical renewal. Now we have moved on to say that those things are important but also need to look at what happens after that – life changes for tenants to better themselves.

Projects in partnership with Families First, Community for Kids Co-ordinator employed in Macarthur area – Paint and Play mobile playgroup into the community in the street, more willingness/integration.

Learning curve, but in partnership with TAFE, feedback from the 23 participating residents approximately 20 have graduated. Not only focus on
children’s needs, also mothers for possible careers in childcare. Short TAFE program, so not so daunting.

South Western Sydney try to promote the idea of tenants creating their own co-ops in starting up businesses of their own. E.g. Concept, which is a generalised maintenance work crew, and Cover-Up Curtains providing curtains for Department of Housing houses. Both folded due to Trisha leaving, floundered due to lack of support. Issue – getting into business takes longer links, support etc in terms of pay, tax, etc, etc.

A co-op still going is Triple C Catering providing catering services to any sector – government, private etc. Still going due to support provided. Based in Gumnut, a Department of Housing owned dwelling, with kitchen space provided. The Benevolent Society help with the admin, etc.

Strengths are in recognising the need for different programs in place to capture the skills and knowledge within tenants in estates.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

Co-ops-You need expertise in order to run small business, need for ongoing support, was missing when Trisha left. Running a small business is not simple, also tenants often haven’t got work experience, let alone experience running a business. Also different backgrounds, education, etc. Good idea, but many underlying issues need to be sorted out, otherwise setting up projects for failure.

Biggest constraint is money, start up and needed for economic incubators, not always forthcoming.

Need to get people to recognise that this is important work especially to break the poverty cycle, intergenerational unemployment, need good role models, not just volunteers, also need to see family members going to work, self esteem etc. worthwhile

Focus - people with expertise internally taking on employment and training haven’t had the luxury of resources to focus, need to rely on few individuals to carry out the entire process.

Still missing strategic partnerships with key agencies – e.g. Centrelink - in encouraging tenants to take up opportunities, they’d lose benefits therefore need to work at a smoother transitional process, this is in place. Internally, the Department has a 12-week period where rent is unchanged (rather than immediate increase in rent once received first wage from employment), leeway is provided by Department. Not too sure if Centrelink has the same incentives in place. Tenants have knocked back jobs due to losing out on benefits – medical, transport, child allowance, etc. Need incentives to encourage people to break the cycle.

Need to focus on youth in estates, they are the next generation, need to develop focus now otherwise we will lose them. Problems in estates centre on youth – due to the lack of aspiration, training programs, etc. It’s a Department of Housing problem and also a problem for society. Campbelltown Macarthur Youth Commitment looks at ways to try to encourage youth to stay in school
longer. Passport project, looks at what you need before you leave school, agencies to support – e.g. writing skills, dress etc. Also Transition Broker Money focus in Macarthur not extended elsewhere despite the need out there.

**Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?**

It would be good to have better linkage with Commonwealth government programs in terms of different funding sources available.

Starting to have more focus on the importance of creating these employment opportunities, also need to back it up with resources. Currently we only spend a limited amount on programs therefore need to change internal funding/resource focus.

It would be good if some sort of way that all Job Network agencies/labour companies responsible for employment have a forum to talk about where the programs fit together.

Not like old CES, one stop shop. Communities are missing out, have to move around this puzzle of going to agencies.

Fairfield Employment Taskforce, try to set up a one stop shop for consistent help of tenants. Since involvement, I’m still sorting out where they are all coming from, target groups etc. Many job network agencies wait for people to come to them, are not actually out there so the Department’s clientele is missing out on resources.
Attachment 8: Interview summary – respondent 06

Interview Date: Tuesday 6th July 2004
Respondent Number: 06
Respondent Name: Brian Murnane
Respondent Details: Manager
Argyle Community Housing Association Inc.
Macarthur NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

Position – Argyle Community Housing (ACH) invited into Claymore in response to the need to bring a different style of management to the estate in 1995. Prior to 1995 there had been 1,150 houses in the suburb, all where Department of Housing’s. One Housing Manager was appointed, also from within the Department of Housing. A number of areas/precincts were having difficulties – e.g. anti-social behaviour, social problems etc. Proctor Way house fire, 5 people died. The Department of Housing used the fire to look at its total operations, invited ACH to manage 50 properties in Proctor Way. ARC – small organization, could trial ways of management that the Department (being big) couldn’t do.

First measure – located office in street/precinct near where the 5 people had died (no-one wanted to live there).

Question – are any changes made going to be sustainable/ongoing?
Initially ACH was only invited for 6 months.

Driving force/principle – sustainability.

Found that, in order to ensure sustainability, have tenants in control, part of the partnership in making changes – has proved to be successful. E.g. was 60 police incidents in a month, now zero. Also, no one accepted the houses in Claymore, now there is a 400 long waiting list within 12 months, 12 month wait. Changes have quickly been made.

Focus – developing and strengthening communities.
After initial problems overcome, look at major needs, housing.

Claymore – 50% unemployed, therefore need for jobs. High concentration of unemployment.

There were two things - Pool of workers,
- Work that needed to be done, e.g. repairs, maintenance.

But, no money to pay them (See diagram).

Tried to get money to employ people to work in their own neighbourhood.

E.g. Handyman services – tendered for contracts, employed local labour to work in area to provide handyman services.

E.g. Catering Co-Op – women’s group, supplies to Department of Housing, schools, private individuals etc. use for functions, again capturing money that would normally leak out of the community.
E.g. Laundromat and coffee centre – women set up this community Laundromat, a survey identified the need for it due to transport issues/needs. Again, recirculates money.
Trained tenants – 3 assisted to become handymen, one now a full time painter.
E.g. Cleaning company, called Dust Devils – women.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?


Taylor – Housing Studies – Combating Social Exclusion on housing estates.

Internet – sustainable communities.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

Business is housing provision, came to estates to develop Intensive Tenancy Model (ITM) which grew out of Proctor Way work, take some of staff, put in house and set up office in precinct experiencing difficulties. Staff to work with community to strengthen and make it resilient so that it can function like any other community. Provide resources, services etc. Determining what the communities needs are and achieving those needs. E.g. Claymore, Bradbury. 18-19 ITM projects across NSW based on our (ACH) model. Each have similar successes in responding to local needs.

Department of Housing website – ITM information source.
Success – evaluated in terms of responsiveness to local needs.
E.g. Proctor Way – crime and police involvement.
Claymore - in 1995 were 100 vacant properties in any one-day. Last week there were 7 vacant properties. People didn’t want to come, now there is a waiting list.
Getting on top of social issues, making it a desirable place to live, reduced vacancy rates, increases amount spent on repairs etc. – links/flow on effects. Positive cycle.
At start, community was in downward spiral. Incidents would happen leading to media attention, negative stories, reinforcing negative image, making it an undesirable place to live.
Try to reverse, make it a positive story, good news media stories and flow on effects etc.
People don’t like the style of housing, they hate the houses, but love the community – this was non-existent in 1995.
Success in terms of turnover rates, amounts spent on repairs and maintenance, complaints about nuisance/annoyance etc.

Media Claymore was synonymous with bad news due to long history of bad happenings. In reality – the number of people involved in incidents was no more than any other community, but Claymore is different in terms of its high proportion of people who are economically depressed, architecturally, Radburn estate, no lot numbers (1,150 houses all with 1 lot number), therefore different, easy to highlight, hence name synonymous with bad news. The number of incidents was approximate to the average number of incidents in other suburbs.

Proctor Way was dubbed the worst street in the worst suburb in NSW by the media. Now seeing the imagination of the press ‘Dead end lives again – The miracle of Proctor Way’, total turnaround, positive community impact.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

Tenant driven initiatives. Claymore – agencies signed agreement to work together ‘Working together in Claymore Agreement’, therefore not just the Department of Housing or ARCH or The Benevolent Society, but all working together, each taking responsibility for courage of tenant driven services. E.g. Handyman service and Laundromat – St. Vincent de Paul.

The Benevolent Society – Catering Co-op.

WorkVentures – technology centre.

All initiatives driven from bottom up/tenant driven, not top down/Department driven. E.g. Catering Co-op, women had the idea, then got the skills (in terms of OHS, accounts etc.) and made it happen. Same for Laundromat, ACH responses to tenant driven ideas. Needs - training, very successful.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

Constraints – Claymore – lack of funding. There is funding, the problem is that the government makes policy decisions to do something that doesn’t match the needs of the community. “Strengthening families and communities”. Guidelines are so tight that they don’t match anything you can do. So developing programs at the local level to try and meet guidelines (which are not very flexible), you need flexibility to bend around the guidelines.

Time issues – sustainability. Funding – 2 years, projects begin to make a difference and then stop as funding stops.

Ideal – policy decision at government level then bureaucrats and local communities come to some decision of the guidelines.

Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?
Needs to be greater flexibility between middle level and community level to achieve outcomes the government wants to achieve. Government has a role to play in policy decisions.

E.g. In Claymore the question is often asked ‘Why wasn’t this done years ago?’ There has been many programs, but the attitude of the community is – What are they going to do now? No real room for continuation of outcomes to be achieved. 1995 attitude – What are you going to do to us?

Agreement tried to overcome, not what government or NGO can do, but partnerships between government, non-government and community, all parties to bring something to the table. Communities have got something, government’s financial resource is only one part of the equation.
Attachment 9: Interview summary – respondent 07

Interview Date: Wednesday 7th July 2004
Respondent Number: 007
Respondent Name: Margaret McRae
Respondent Details: Community Renewal Co-ordinator
Northern Division
NSW Department of Housing
Newcastle NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

As the manager of Community Renewal for the Hunter area, involved in the overarching support and direction of tenant employment and training projects as attached to the broader Community Renewal strategy. Work both on the ground and in a consultation role in relation to those activities.

There are 6 key community development regions/workers in the Hunter region:

- Hamilton South
- Windale
- Raymond Terrace
- Bolton Point
- Wyong – 2 estates (Tumbi Umbi and Bateau Bay)

The ground workers have ground knowledge, provide linkage in getting people more work ready rather than direct employment.

The major opportunities have been though our lawns and grounds contracts. We have two ways of going about that. One is either a community contract quarantined directly to a community group (which is what he had in place with Samaritans at Windale and Bolton Point). Our major direction now is looking at least getting a 30% tenant employment component into lawns and grounds contracts; each individual team is quite keen on this being an outcome on each estate. We’ve seen training as a huge linkage to this, where it couldn’t work in isolation and that we didn’t want our contractors using the tenants just to get the statistic up, but we had built in the fact that they had to come out with a Cert 4 (or whatever) so that they could actually use this to go along etc. etc.

Has always been a huge focus with us – e.g. with the 2 Handypersons projects, this has been the focus, would like to see it increase. Has been very successful. Are doing an analysis of the cost effectiveness of that project compared to using our traditional head contractors, the quicker response time part is hard to quantify. We feel that that would be cost effective and would like to see it more rolled out across the areas. WorkiT is the major one that has come into Hamilton South, are looking at how to extend WorkiT to Raymond Terrace.
Have a WorkiT project officer we employed. Part of WorkiT funding also goes to region’s money to employ a project officer, Bernadette Noble, who has been working on specific training linkages with the community development workers across those estates, looking at different training for putting out newsletters, IT skills required to do that for a range of community members – E.g. have just run a session on IT skills in Bolton Point. Also have given the community group free rent in return for cleaning the offices there; as part of that we have just put them through Cert 4 in cleaning course with a view that they use the cleaning as a practical base and then hopefully can move through, almost becomes a training ground there. Smaller scale skills - Barista/coffee making training (project report), range of smaller things tailored to each of those communities and a lot around the general training that we provide them/tenant and community groups around, like how to run meetings and self esteem stuff so people start becoming involved at that level/build their skills up and then link in to the other training initiatives to go through pathways. E.g. we have a woman working in our office in Windale as the client service officer, she started as a volunteer, no job skills and got experience in front counter work and so forth through that, and now she’s got a full time job. So also minor/individual cases as well. You can’t negate the importance of the individual cases, it’s not a numbers game, it really is about individuals. Communities are very surprised that Housing is supporting this, even if they see the lawns and grounds being done by the local community, it does act as a role model.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

We work off the Transforming Estates into Communities framework that is fairly general. We access the usual sites on the Internet for community builders etc. etc. to get a sample of what’s happening in other areas and tap into the Community Renewal branch in Ashfield for resources. Locally, we had, in Windale, a business development and economic specialist employed for several years as part of the Premier’s Community Renewal project; they were doing ad hoc sort of reports but their position finished up last year. There was going to be a review of that particular project and that role; don’t know if that actually happened, but Premier’s here in Newcastle were a driving force for that role - contact Anne Kempton re: information flowing from this.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

There has been a raft of initiatives, all hitting different spots. For us, the Handyperson scheme has probably been one of our significant in terms of best outcome initiatives. Have been able, in both the cases of Hamilton South and Bolton Point, to get residents of the estates to become the Handyperson. Has always been conflicting ideas on whether it’s better to have
someone from outside the estate or whether it’s complicated to have someone who lives and works on the estate, but we have been very lucky to get people from the local community. There has been a flow on effect, apart from the fact that we suddenly had the ability to service minor maintenance within 24 hours, which is something that we never had. People have also not had to travel and just been a really good role model for the community.

Using the lawns and ground contracts have been very useful, because we outlay significant amounts of money so it is a way we can actually outlay that money to actually get some outcomes we want for those communities. It tends to be a little bit gender specific, which is one of the drawbacks, although this is changing a little bit, thankfully. Also less structured than WorkiT. WorkiT has been able to bring together a little more structure into that initiative. WorkiT has been a culmination of all of these little things that have been happening in isolation or in pockets, more of a structure that has brought all of this together.

**Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?**

The experience that we’ve had at the moment is that we didn’t have enough understanding of the actual levels/the complexity of the issues – e.g. literacy issues, job readiness issues, the amount of background support and work that’s required to get people job ready as distinct even from having those job opportunities. People who haven’t worked for a long time don’t have, even those social interactions, skills lacking, there’s a lot of initial hiccups even in working with other people – How/Who to support background? It’s why WorkiT has been quite effective, because there has been that resource attached to the project to actually then deal with those issues. So it’s actually quarantined a lawns and ground contract so has linked real jobs with real support throughout the period to help people maintain the job – e.g. Hamilton South have had quite good retention rates, but not necessarily the case in other projects. E.g. in Handyperson’s interviews you forget how hard it is, particularly for people without a driver’s licence, a lot of people don’t have a driver’s license or they have outstanding fines, car ownership, all those limitations that you forget with a very disadvantaged client base.

Important to always link it to job opportunities, it would be dangerous to start a program and get a community’s expectations up and then to not actually have outcomes at the end of it. Again, it’s why WorkiT is quite good. E.g. Windale, part of role of business development co-ordinator, lawns and ground contracts given to local clients/taken on by residents, but the vision from the worker’s point of view was that they would then become a small business and then take over that contract, this fell over once it happened because the skill levels to run a small business and maintain an ongoing contract is quite different, to do that required a lot of mentoring and support from the partnership agencies and they didn’t have the business skills to do that. It’s hard to anticipate the complexities of these schemes when you’re targeting those clients that are the most disadvantaged.
Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

It is having a clear direction. Where WorkiT has been fundamental is in having the resourcing behind it to provide that clear direction because it’s difficult to engage partners. WorkiT has provided partners who have those specific job requirements. In terms of Housing, how far does our role go? We don’t have skills in that area. How do we get those partnerships going? We have the client base and a raft of opportunities – such as the lawns and grounds contracts – but need other agencies to provide those other linkages, we can’t do that alone. It really is about clear partnerships and mutual/mutual directions for all those projects. There is a lack of structure, lack of sharing around the best practice that is happening around the different communities. E.g. Windale put together a work wardrobe at the local community centre because people didn’t even have clothes appropriate for work; presentation skills to go out to a job interview, there is just so many facets of this to link into. Every community is going to be different, but a more structured approach would be nice to bring that together. It is a question that we struggle with in terms of how the departments come together and where does The Department of Housing sit and so forth. We find that our clients aren’t really aware of their entitlements from some of the government schemes. It’s even been useful, in working in places, even to get to a point where clients are accessing their entitlements through credits and all sorts of training opportunities that they’re not availing themselves of – where that gap is in the market is around the fundamental motivation.

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

Again those linkages to how you increase literacy – we found in Windale one of the lawns and grounds guys had huge literacy issues and was too ashamed to actually do anything about it. If literacy training was linked to work, that they were more likely to avail themselves of it than if it was just seen as just a literacy course, totally unconnected. Holistic approach to some of these issues.

For WorkiT it really is about sustainability now, we got it up and running and HGT have done all they can and we are left with a lot of people who aren’t job ready and are really lacking in skills – where do they go to from there with the project? It’s about sustainability, they’ve got 2 years with this project to look at how they make it sustainable and they’ve got to look at branching out with other contracts/that fundamental sustainability. The WorkiT officer’s role is to work closely with them and try and link in some sustainability because it’s a
fantastic scheme but it has to be made sustainable and it certainly does have that potential. Its scale of size that is much more cost effective, provided the areas have already got the equipment up front, but they need to win contracts to get the scale/be more cost effective. It's important to get partners that have at least/where possible share some fundamental philosophical beliefs in the program. HGT have been fantastic partners because of where they’re coming from, it’s not just economically driven, it is around the whole social justice framework. Given the complex clients that we are dealing with they have to be coming from that background otherwise it is difficult to make it work.
Attachment 10: Interview summary – respondent 08

Interview Date: Wednesday 7th July 2004
Respondent Number: 08
Respondent Name: Cathy Webb
Respondent Details: Special Projects Manager
HGT Australia
Newcastle NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

Individually - My involvement has been in developing my organization’s response to a request for tender from the Department of Housing under the WorkiT program to implement a tenant employment and training program at the Department of Housing’s estate at Hamilton South in Newcastle. Since that tender’s been written I’ve also had involvement in setting up that project initially in recruiting the staff that we needed to run the project and since then I’ve been keeping a watching brief on that role.

Overall HGT role – HGT has been contracted as a result of that initial work from the Department of Housing to implement the WorkiT program, our tender was successful. We have now moved into (and I supervise staff who are involved) in the delivery of services under that contract. There are two aspects of that contract:

- A core funding program where we provide general employment and training assistance to residents, whatever that need may be – resume support, interview techniques, following up on jobs for them etc.
- We manage two commercial contracts for the lawn and garden maintenance and the cleaning of that estate and we employ tenants to do that.

‘HGT’ historically stood for Hunter Group Training. Have been around since 1980, started off employing apprentices in the construction industry and hosting them out to local employers. Started with 11 apprentices, we have now got over 520 apprentices and trainees that we employ directly but that who we host out to different organizations (they might take them for 3 months, 2 years or for the whole of the term of their traineeship or apprenticeship). We provide employers that flexibility. We also do Work for the Dole programs where we implement training and job creation type programs. We run a job placement business, we do recruitment services and we also do, my area of operations – which is Special Projects – anything that might have something to do with training or employment or job creation type roles.
Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

Last part of question – no, probably not.
For first part of question – Yes, probably not going to be able to enumerate them for you, but, when we were doing some research to originally tender and set the program up we did a literature search through the Department of Housing’s website for the various publications on Community Renewal and also did a broader literature search to look at academic journals and things that might be available to us on Community Renewal elsewhere, particularly interested in any other experiences, in Australia or overseas. We didn’t have a lot of success in that respect because were looking at it in a housing context. Was interested in where these type of programs/community economic development on housing estates had operated elsewhere, didn’t get a lot of input from the Department, would have liked a bit more. HGT doesn’t publish anything in this regard.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

At this stage, the umbrella really is the WorkiT program, a number of projects sit under that. The primary one is the employment of tenants as trainees by us delivering the commercial contract, we’ve had those individuals engaged since October.

In terms of gauging success for that major program, it’s been on a number of fronts:

- Compliance with the contracts so that the Department of Housing is happy that we are delivering a commercially viable service because, even though its under an economic development/community renewal type program, we still have to do it to commercial standards, that we provide monthly information to them and seek feedback on our performance.
- Our engagement with our employees and with their level of satisfaction with their employment and with the training that they’re undergoing. We’re looking at things like staff turnover, attendance and those sorts of things. We currently have 9 trainees, we have had in total 11 trainees, 2 trainees have left the program and have since been replaced. I probably shouldn’t call it a program, because we are very keen to consider it to be employment not just a training program. We now have a very stable crew of 9 trainees and we have a number of casuals who we call on and they are also Housing tenants as well. All trainees are Housing tenants, the majority of which are from estates, they come specifically from that area in which we are working – Hamilton South, quite a large estate, 2,500 people.
- The non-commercial part of the contract, the actual core funding part which is where we’re offering broader employment and training services to residents. Success there is based on achievement against our contractual
obligations, again, outcomes that we’ve achieved. Some of those outcomes are as simple as moving someone along the continuum to finding employment, might mean going from having no aspirations to actually having a resume and be starting to apply for jobs. Others may be placed into employment, we help them to maintain that employment as well.

- Within WorkiT we are also looking at ways to help residents to develop their own employment opportunities, such as co-operatives. We’re doing that in partnership with a number of other agencies, the Department of Housing being one, but also TAFE. We are looking at a foodservices training program with TAFE, one of the by-products of this might be the development of a co-operative/a catering business. At this stage, its engaging with residents who’ve got that interest in that area and looking at whether they are seeking employment elsewhere or in fact they can generate some kind of business in that particular environment.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

Our experience has been limited to the program and the by-products of that program, I can’t judge more broadly than that, can only talk of within the program we’re working on. Having the opportunity to work directly with people who are tenants and take them along that continuum of being out of work (and in some cases being out of work for long periods of time) through that whole employment cycle which is being able to employ them ourselves, go through a customised induction program for them (8-9 days of induction training before there was any site work done), a lot of structure, systems and processes. That element of our involvement has been successful because it’s been a slow development process and continual. And supported people from being, in a sense, dependent to become independent. It’s been a slower process than we envisaged. The success we felt we’ve had with this project in employing the trainees has been about having a long-term commitment to their employment. It is our ambition to make sure that a qualification is achieved at the end and, hopefully, for us to continue to be able to employ you with other contracts that we’re looking to generate. Training programs/work preparation programs run in conjunction with TAFE for some residents.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

We would like to employ more people, but to employ more people we would need to generate more commercial work for them to do. It’s a bold statement, but, I like to think that we could probably do all of the lawn mowing and cleaning on Housing estates in the area, employing residents now that we have this system and procedures in place, so well tuned and established and we’ve got this experience under our belt. Our only limitation in expanding success is the viability of commercial contracts. We could fairly readily extrapolate the experience we’ve had here to employ more residents in those functions across a broader geographical area. We’re looking at an opportunity with the Department of Housing to extend that and to the Raymond Terrace...
area, subject to Housing being able to quarantine the contract there. In some respects, it would be a shame to lose all the learning and all the experience we’ve had in this project by not being able to transfer it to others and/or to expand its applications ourselves because we had some preconceived ideas about how the project would run and in some ways it hasn’t run that way. We thought that we would be inundated by young people, in this project we haven’t, we don’t have a trainee under the age of 35, they’re all mature aged adults. We have a trainee who might be in his 50’s in the horticultural team. So there are things that we were planning/preparing for that didn’t come to fruition so we’ve had to modify as we’ve gone along and it would be a shame not to extrapolate that learning elsewhere. Only limited by our success to win other business and to employ more people. Both the Department of Housing’s Property Services Business and that in the private sector were just putting a tender in on Friday for a large horticultural contract elsewhere and its our ambition to increase the hours and the number of tenants working for us

Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

There is a lot of opportunity where those contracts can be quarantined and residents can be encouraged to apply and be employed and to deliver services within what is effectively their own community. One of the things we really noticed amongst our 9 trainees and our casuals is that one of them has a driver’s license, that probably is an issue about limitations in some respects in that their opportunities for seeking other employment is limited in some degree, their chances of getting a driver’s license now is perhaps even harder because of the amount of hours they now have to log etc. to get a licence so there’s some alienation from mobility which is a key factor of employment – the more mobile you are, the much greater your job chances are. By being reliant only on public transport, especially in regional communities, their employment opportunities are very limited. This project has allowed people who don’t have a license to access employment which is basically on their doorstep. By gaining employment, they’ve got more disposable income, more capacity to invest in the cost of gaining a license, therefore the minute they do that and are able to get a vehicle, it opens their opportunities for further employment. It’s quite a barrier and one that we didn’t realise was just so significant for people. Its that pathway, that most of us take for granted that we can pick up and look in the paper and find jobs and know that we can get there, opportunities without a license are very limited. By providing the employment on the doorstep gives people access, they then get into a mindset of being in regular employment. A lot of these people have had quite lengthy employment in other situations, but not necessarily recently, the age of their references and so on is starting to date and that is another alienating factor when it comes to their competitiveness for other employment. Our aspiration is that, if we can’t at the end of their training period continue them as our own employees with other projects, we would be seeking to place them with other employers and
support them through that. That recency of experience would certainly be a factor improving their job prospects.

Roles for the Commonwealth government and DEWA, we’ve liaised fairly closely with the Job Network in this project, were there’s been opportunities for the Job Network to support their members/clients, who in some cases happen to also be our mutual clients. Whether it’s identifying an opportunity for employment for someone and then going back to the Job Network and then seeking some financial support for them. The Job Network have supported us in that they’ve helped us with the cost of some medicals and things that we’ve had to have our employees do – E.g. Transport thing, one of our employees with a license will actually be cleaning our premises here shortly. He was able to, with our support, encourage his Job Network member to pay for his car registration on the basis that that would then allow him to access more employment. The role for the Job Network/DEWA is to be responsive to the needs of organizations like ours who are trying to do direct employment related projects to encourage economic development in those areas. One of the projects that I’d like to see us try to run, because of our experience in the community and of our partnership with Housing – we now have a large number of mutual clients - we have a concept idea to develop a café as a training centre. But not just a training centre, similar to the program we’re working in now, its real employment, the person doesn’t just come in and do a course. We have quite well qualified people living in social housing, they’ve done lots of courses, but it’s the employment as the practiced experience that they’re missing. The concept were trying to get off the ground is in partnership with Housing and a need probably for support from the Commonwealth and maybe also from local government to set up a café that can be used as training but employment area. As a group employer, we can employ those people, just like we do with the lawn and garden maintenance and cleaning, they can do their training in a real life situation, receive a wage while there doing it, have a qualification at the end, all under a very supported umbrella in terms of explaining the requirements of maintaining employment. We’ve had experiences with our staff where they may not turn up, or something else might have happened. A lot of employers might have said ‘To bad, the job’s not there for you’, but because we’re in a closer relationship with the Department of Housing, and also the values of this organization too, we’ve supported people through various things that were happening in there lives, and that’s been a big area of success of the program, understanding that employment is one area, but you’re employing the whole person. For a lot of people in general, that’s certainly our experience in social housing, there are many other aspects affecting their opportunities for employment, you need to be able to support a number of those things through their transition in becoming a full time employee again. So we’ve got other concepts that we’d like to see up and running, but it’s getting all of the agencies on board. If we could get all of the ticks in the boxes then we could replicate this kind of program that we’re running, but in other occupational areas and off social housing sites. Running training at venues in other locations. You’re probably looking at a whole of government response to be able to deal with that. The other question that someone might ask is ‘Why should you single out social housing residents as
your client group for a particular program?’ It’s been good for us to get in at a very grassroots level and work with people and understand that you do employ the whole person. I don’t know that anyone chooses to live in social housing. If you’re in a situation where you are living in social housing but you’re trying to develop the most productive lifestyle you can for yourself, then they’re might be other things that impact negatively on your ability to do that, just because of – sometimes – the location in which you live. We’ve learnt a lot, and probably had our eyes open to a lot of things, but, the end result is that we’ve got 9 really reliable and dedicated workers. Its not like we’re in there meddling in their lives, we’re not, but when they come to work and say ‘I’ve got a childcare problem or I’ve got to go to court today, I’ve got a problem at home, my clothes were taken off the line’(due to shared clothes lines), we understand because we’ve got staff working there with them. At the end of the program, which is July next year, if we don’t employ them, I would like to think that every one of those people that we’ve been on a journey with, is in a much better position to apply for employment than when they started just in terms of their mindset and experience in a supportive work environment. Maybe we have to get a bit tougher with them too, between now and then. They weren’t ready to walk into jobs and say ‘Yes, I’m ready to commit to this fully. There’s nothing else going on in my life and I’ll be here everyday.’ Exposure to elements that, unless your in that environment – We’ve had our cleaning crew clean up after assaults, we’ve had a member of our cleaning crew almost be assaulted, the police arrived. Different situations. Without judging them, that’s just the situation people live in and they’ve got to deal with it. We, as their employer, have to acknowledge it. That’s the thing where the program has really helped, because its not that case of I don’t care what’s going on, if you’re not here, you’re not here, that’s it the job’s gone. I think we’ve been a bit more supportive than that. The dependency issue is probably the part that surprised me, the things that some of us may just take for granted about making decisions about being pro-active, about feeling that you’re in control of your life and your destiny. It’s been a surprise to me personally that it took quite a time for our employees to see that that was a role that they could have. They were very needy, they would need to ask permission for everything. To some degree they would have a level of expectation that we would do some running around – e.g. would negotiate with Centrelink for them, organise their travel concessions, all personal things need to be done by them. Complex area. On one hand people have an experience of being in a system and probably rejecting aspects of that system or being hostile towards it, at the same time being quite dependant on that system to do things to help them. When we’ve had to say No, this is our role and as our employee you’re expected to do these things, has been the biggest learning curve from us – from dependency to independence. It’s a hard cycle, it happens at such at micro level, all the little things, not the big things. Balancing that with also having to work.

Our 500 trainees are with our Employers Hosts, out with businesses throughout Newcastle e.g. plumbing firms, with the council, different places. It would be our expectation that we would be able to refer our employees through this program to our Hosts. And also support them by referral to other recruitment agencies and help them with jobs in the paper. Really, we would
be trying to recommend them to other organizations that we deal with. We run
some commercial type training for business as well, so we have contact with
enterprises there so I would think that every one of our cleaning trainees, e.g.,
would probably be able to be referred by our cleaning supervisor to a cleaning
company and would be getting work. So if we don’t employ them ourselves
because we’ve got more contracts. Have scheduled a need to start planning
an exit strategy now (even 12 months before this program is due to finish)
about just what we will do. This will mean talking to individuals about what their
preferences are and where they’d like to end up. I hope it’s with us, I hope that
we’re doing other things and they can stay with us as employees. If not, then
we need to start talking to them so we can start shaping that direction for them.
Starting to plan for that eventuality.
**Attachment 11: Interview summary – respondent 09**

**Interview Date:** Thursday 8th July 2004  
**Respondent Number:** 09  
**Respondent Name:** Graham Smith  
**Respondent Details:** HCAP worker  
Cranebrook Housing Estate  
Macarthur NSW  
**Interviewer:** Melanie Hughes

Questions

**What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?**

HCAP – Housing Community Assistance Program, it’s a Department of Housing funded program that works in conjunction with the Community Renewal Strategy (CRS) on identified troublesome public housing estates. Usually these estates are the old Radburn design that have created a lot of social problems (i.e. the laneways, the way the estates were laid out).

I’m an employee of Barnardos Australia. Barnardos have been auspiced to run the HCAP program here at Cranebrook, and we’ve been doing it for just on 7 years. We are virtually in the heart of the estate. There is roughly 500 properties that are all located together and there are about 30 properties that are scattered throughout the private residential area of Cranebrook as well. I’ve been here for 7 years and I think that that has been a stabilizing factor; I’ve had a long-term involvement with the estate. Previously, and in other HCAP projects, there’s been very much a too-ing and fro-ing of workers over 12-18 months. One of our positives has been the stability of the workers. That’s important to be noted.

My involvement has been, over the last 7 years, very major. I’ve been an integral part of working with the Department of Housing on the estate here in Cranebrook where the CRS program was announced (then called the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan). Myself and the CRS co-ordinator set up links with all the service providers to look at the issues of this particular estate. Over a number of meetings with service providers, we developed a master plan. We involved consultants to do some research which involved the interview of residents, service providers. We came back together with a blue print of the changes on the estate. Then we looked at a number of the other issues involving the estate, from the Department of Housing’s side. There wasn’t really any Department of Housing representation on the estate, the office being in Penrith, and residents finding it difficult to get into Penrith. They didn’t have a car; we’ve got a limited bus service. A decision was made by the Department, the then Area Manager, to locate one of their Housing Manager’s out here on the estate. That was a very positive thing. The next issue we had was identifying a suitable property that we could establish as a Community
Cottage, in a central part of the estate. Part of the success is our location in the centre of the estate, we're located near the 2 main bus stops, the car park, the pre-school. Another important step for the Department was to identify the building and then to modify that building to make it suitable for a Community Cottage. That was a fairly major economic investment by the Department in the estate area. Then the outreach worker moved out here and he and I, started working very closely together on some of the Housing issues involved in the area. The Cottage became the basis of the CRS meetings, which residents have been involved with all the way from day 1. We’ve worked with residents, getting their opinions, their ideas; residents were involved in looking at the master plan when it came to things like laneways. The residents have had a fairly good voice on what we’ve been able to achieve here. The CRS program of the Department has tended to look at the physical, looking at the Radburn properties (they’re around the wrong way). The Department has seen its role as to look after the changes in the Radburn properties in doing the reversals, laneways, general works on physical change. Whereas the HCAP project is there for the people, to work with the people. My role is to see and assess what the people are after. The role of HCAP has been very broad based. One of the aims of HCAP is to improve the quality of life of residents. The HCAP project here has expanded into a whole range of issues. Over the years we’ve had a major program with the PCYC taking kids off the estate for activities on a Friday night, we’ve run basic computing courses for residents. We’ve had a number of success stories out of those computer courses where people have got the bug for computers. We’ve got one lady that started who didn’t know how to turn on a computer, four years down the track she’s finished IT at TAFE. Which is a great success story, it’s just one story of people being involved. We’ve run First Aid courses here, that was something residents were concerned about with the high number of kids that are around this area. Even knowing how to cope at home if there was an accident in the home. We obtained the funding and have put about 45 people through First Aid courses, adult certificate First Aid courses. We ran another program called Food Share, which, for me, has been another key piece in pulling the community together. It is a program involving people doing some community service (2 hours a month), once that is done, they can then buy a box of food through us (as the host site for Food Share) for $20. That box of food is usually fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, pasta etc. The emphasis is on healthy food, the food fits around the healthy eating triangle. There’s no junk food in the boxes, it’s supported by a number of nutrition foundations. We’ve had about 5,000 voluntary hours put into the community around Cranebrook and Penrith over the 6 years we’ve been running the Food Share program. About 2,500 boxes of food have gone out over the 6 years of the program. It’s a monthly program that’s not supposed to replace people’s food, it’s a supplement. Some people find it a way of saving. To me, what Food Share has done, is given people a model that they can work together on. It’s made people think about their neighbour – e.g. voluntary gardening and housework. Predominant number of single mums in the area, childminding. It’s reversed, a way of helping the community. Food Share has been an important part of this community, its rebuilt part of the community and it has helped people to start
talking to each other, it’s made networks across the community. It’s really helped to rebuild part of the problems of the community.

In practical terms, we’ve been able to offer some employment projects over the years. One of our residents actually cleans this building (the Community Cottage) as a casual employee of Barnardos. We also have another resident who acts as the caretaker to this building, who assists us when we need to have the building opened up at different times. That’s a fairly trusting situation to be in. We’ve run a traineeship through here for a local resident in basic office skills/admin, involved a TAFE course for that person. I’m currently in the process of setting up a lawn-mowing project, which will also be paid employment again employing local residents. CRS – when there has been work completed on the estate, the contractors that have been involved in that work have been required, by the Department, to have a percentage of tenants. Probably one of the shining examples of tenant work and their experience was the modifications they did to the pre-school. That used to be a cyclone wire/mesh type fence around the pre-school, through the CRS landscaping course, the fence went down and they did landscaping. To me, they’ve really changed the whole image of the pre-school. That was tenant involvement. In the first group that we put through, there was 12 tenant employees, 10 of them ended up with full time employment out of their traineeships. In the successive programs we probably haven’t been as successful, but certainly a high percentage of people who’ve gone through the landscaping program, have ended up with full time employment out of the opportunity

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

Yes for Cranebrook. One of the advantages of being a long term HCAP worker, for me, has been a very successful working relationship/partnership with the Department of Housing. That has gone right through to the individual worker’s I’ve worked with, through to the Area Managers, regional directors. We’ve had the Minister for Housing, over the years, visiting here. My involvement has been right up to the regional director level. Directors have talked to me about issues on the estate, they value my opinions because I’m a mature person, I’ve got a bit of experience of life, I’ve been here a long time and I’ve got fair handle of what it’s like to be at the grass roots on the housing estate. Three years ago there was a report commissioned by the Department of Housing for ITM. This was one project that was used for that report. This area has been photographed a couple of times for the Annual Report of the Department of Housing. Barnardos got a report commissioned on the HCAP project, an evaluation. We had been in the program for 4 years, and felt that we were doing a good job, things were happening, so we commissioned a consultant to produce the document, it confirmed our thinking, that there has been a positive change here and it is a valuable project for this estate area. I have been told various
times by various Department of Housing people that this is a model of successful community development on a large housing estate. They certainly hold it in very high esteem, because of what we’ve been able to achieve. We’ve had numerous visitors come and look at the estate, from interstate, from New Zealand, to see how we operate. Just as a confirmation of what we do here, I was at conference in Melbourne, UK City of Liverpool speaker who talked about the one-stop-shops where people living on their government housing areas come and access services. We basically do the same here, we have Centrelink here, we have drug and alcohol counselling here, Wentworth Area Community Health come, Aboriginal services come here, we run tax help once a year to help residents with their tax returns. A whole range of service providers use this cottage, they have this springboard to access their clients or to have an outreach service in the estate area. Liverpool movement to provide a place that people can access that’s right in their backyard. Instead of going into Penrith, particularly with the limited bus service, it’s very difficult. It can take the whole day. What we’ve been able to achieve here is to help people and really to be here for the residents themselves and try to work with the residents. Over the years the residents have had a fair degree of input into how we do operate.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

I simply assess success by people’s involvement. E.g. Food Share program, we’re doing regularly 60-70 boxes a month, to me that’s a successful program. People need it, people want it. We’ve done up to 100 boxes. When we were operating the PCYC program with the police, we were having 70-odd kids involved every Friday night. Sometimes, the bus would have to come back twice because we had too many kids. On average we were having 50-70 kids, we weren’t offering them much, just taking them to PCYC and the kids were getting involved in activities there. The Commissioner of Police gave us an award for the work that we did, again another successful program.

With the computer course, the lady who went through and completed her IT at TAFE, to me that measures a success of the project. Quite often people don’t thank you but you hear it in indirect ways. People do appreciate what you’re doing here, what you’re trying to do. People respond to people who care and that’s what we try to do, we’re here and we try to answer their problems and resolve their issues. My job is certainly made a lot easier because I have the resources of a major welfare body, Barnardos, to help people. We’re a family and children’s welfare organization, this is not just one little building working in the community, at my fingertips, I’ve got a much broader support service that I can plug people into. That’s, again, another reason why this project is a success.

Another indication of success – We’ve been in this building for 5 years. We have not had a graffiti attack on this building in 5 years. Its got lovely cream shutters, it really just warrants to be graffitied, but it has not been. I think that’s how the community sees this building. It’s their building, in some ways there’s
some community ownership. We have been broken into, that’s been a drug related crime. The lack of graffiti/vandalism is important in terms of how the community sees this place. One day it’s going to happen, and I’ll be disappointed when that happens. But at this present point, touch wood. I think that’s an indication that we are doing the things that people need. The time when we start upsetting people or not really meeting the people’s needs, is the time when things may start to happen.

**What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?**

Certainly the offer of traineeships through the CRS program, particularly in landscaping. A number of people have received full time jobs out of the traineeships. The fact that I can employ 3 tenants in this building (1 to administer Food Share), casual employees through the HCAP project. When you have been living on welfare dependency for quite a long time, for whatever reason, the expectation for you to go back into the workforce full time is a big ask. I’m not sure whether people are able to do that. Also through computer courses that we’ve done to skill people in that way. Even the First Aid certificate which is a qualification that people can put on their resume.

There is the WorkiT program that I am aware of, but, it doesn’t affect this particular area. It has been identified for certain areas around Sydney, and we weren’t one of the areas identified. It was a Departmental decision, I thought we may have, but the Department made some decisions about where they wanted to target the WorkiT program.

**Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?**

The limitations/constraints has been the Department constantly undergoing restructure. Over the years we’ve gone from the NIP to the CRS and there’s often been a lot of staff change within the Department. There’s been a lot of good ideas that people have had. Part of the problem has been this constant mode of restructure, unless you have consistency in their staffing, it’s very difficult to set up positive programs with the tenants if there’s all this staff changeover. This is one of the complaints that a lot of the tenants have had with the Department in general, that their staff do change. Their Housing Manager’s do change quite regularly. There’s probably lots of reasons for that. One of the things that we have found here, is that, it helps if you can get staff who are committed to this area, to spend a bit of time. We’ve now had a bit of stability in the Department of Housing staff in this area, we’ve had 1 Senior Client Manager now for over 2 years and the other one has been around for about 18 months. The tenants get to know them, they feel comfortable with them. It may not help rental arrears, but it’s the fact that they are here in this area and are committed to this area.

The other constraints/limitations are, in the training programs I’ve been involved with, they have had a fairly set timeframe. It would be good to be able
to offer, maybe, a lot more practical training for residents – E.g. in fencing etc. Where there’s some on-the-job training, working in their local area has been a good thing. But the program has only been for an identified period. For some, at the end of 12 weeks, if they haven’t got a job then they’re back home.

**Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?**

What should be offered is more training opportunities for the tenants that can gradually wean them back into the workforce. Expecting people to go from being long term unemployed or from looking after children for a number of years, straight back into full time employment, is a very big ask. The whole routine of getting up in the morning, maybe getting the kids off to school, and then getting to work is a fairly major ask for someone who has had a lot of spare/free time on their hands. Looking at programs that slowly introduce people back into the workforce, 5 or 10 hours a week maybe.

Another issue that’s on the side is the fact that when people do start earning more money, their rents go up. There have been cases of people going back to work and they have become behind the 8 ball in their rent, because their income is not sustaining their new rental amounts plus their living expenses. The Department does have a cooling off period of a certain number of weeks that tenants don’t pay the new rent on (8-12 weeks). But, sometimes, that just doesn’t seen enough either.

I’m trying to establish a lawn-mowing project, trying to set up a springboard into, maybe, someone setting up their own business. Our past cleaner here started working 5 hours a week for me and after 2 years has gotten a full time cleaning job, that’s another success story of what we can offer. I don’t think that any training/employment is going to happen quickly, it’s going to be a fairly slow process as we wean people back into the workforce.
Attachment 12: Interview summary – respondent 10

Interview Date: Monday 12th July 2004
Respondent Number: 010
Respondent Name: Liz Tinney
Respondent Details: Community Engagement Strategist
The Benevolent Society
Macarthur NSW
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

I manage a community economic development project which has been funded by FACS (Family and Community Services) for 2 years. It has been extended by 6 months, finishing in November. I'm overseeing the implementation of that project.

The program is in the Claymore Housing estate in the Macarthur region of NSW, it’s working with a group of residents. The overall aim of the project was developing economic initiatives and training initiatives/outcomes for the residents at Claymore. The idea being that we actually needed to build economic opportunities for residents within the housing estate, so that its actually bringing money into the estate rather than people going out and spending their money, as well as utilising the talents of the residents of the estate, as well as the strong social context of the project which is redefining Claymore as a good place to live, showing residents that Claymore isn’t the end of the earth which it has been seen as for some time. 1995 was the worst year in Claymore, with a lot of violence. Claymore had a bad public image, there’s been a lot of work from many organizations – across NGO’s, government, with residents – to turn that around and change that. This fitted into that context, came directly from those efforts – all those organizations working together with residents on the project, called the Claymore Integration Project which was running for 5 years and this is one of the initiatives that came out of it. In the initial application, the idea was that we would establish 5 micro businesses with residents as well as supporting and helping with numerous other community development activities. One of those businesses is the Triple C Catering business which has been one of the main focuses in implementation. Everyone has learnt a lot from the history of the project, the aims of the project and what was projected in the implementation just haven’t been achievable in any way. The idea behind the business was that they were sustainable and we’ve been working with Triple C just to try and get that sustainable. But there’s been a lot of learning around that and the aim is to establish even just one business to actually scale down the expectations and to establish one business that is actually sustainable, that’s not reliant on
government funding but is a business in itself and which is run by the community in a viable way.

A lot of the models that these projects have been based on are actually models that weren’t sustainable, were different to the situation/context that we are in, in Claymore. Some of the models were from QLD, and are often in areas where there was continued funding or because they were working with a group of people who would not necessarily find employment in other areas. Whereas this group is a group of perfectly able people. It is establishing a real sustainable/viable business being managed truly by the residents of Housing.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

We’ve mostly done it through word-of-mouth, have actually spoken to models in QLD and NSW, people who we’ve heard through the Department of Fair Trading have put us in contact with. Also we’ve worked with Accord as a developer of co-operatives. The main focus/idea of the group becoming a co-operative, so we’ve been working on a more personal level. The other source of information that has been useful has been <community builders>, the internet for examples of what’s happening overseas.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

I manage the community engagement program, run by the Centre for Women’s Health. We have numerous projects underneath that aimed around people actually coming together, learning new skills, creating pathways and opportunities to change. They take a very different form – E.g. current after school homework support program where we’re working on a model where we can network within the community and help primary school age kids get the support they need at school or outside school in ensuring their opportunities. It takes a very different approach. We work with Young Women Who Are Parents – E.g. one project, the Enterprise Project is similarly aimed at supporting with the development of business development and enterprise skills and to, in turn, recognise those skills within themselves. Have established a virtual business, have been training on-line as a way of learning business skills and are now in the process of setting up a real café through the fair that we had here (newspaper article), now in the phase of developing a business plan which will be assessed by local mentors and beyond. The aim is to establish (hopefully we will be getting funding)/continue that process to actually use that as a way of engaging Young Women Who Are Parents in supporting the opportunities. In community engagement it is, really, very broad, working on developing social capital in the area, networking, linking the different sectors. This project has fitted into that broad strategy of community engagement. The projects are not necessarily specific in terms of public housing estates. A broad
definition is where the community wants it and also where the community is where there is most need – they’re probably the 2 main judgements in terms of whether you would do something. The homework support program is on the border of the housing estate, its in Rosemeadow Ambervale where there is a significant housing estate. A lot of Young Women Who Are Parents are actually public housing tenants. But we wouldn’t rule anyone out if they weren’t. It is located here in the Centre for the community, working more across the community in bringing young women together. Its different for different projects, not necessarily target housing estates, usually in the area where there is greatest need. We’re working with communities who identified that need, we were approached by the community to actually take up this homework support program, while we see women’s health as very holistic, its not necessarily an area where we would go and seek something in, but what the community told us and what certainly is the case is that it doesn’t fit anywhere else. The focus is on 0-5 years in children, there’s a lot aimed at early intervention. In terms of an organization who could take that more community focused project approach, they asked us, it fitted within our community engagement role that we were taking at that time. In the community engagement area, especially with young parents mostly, we are working with public housing tenants.

Success – there are outcomes from the project application, there’s a degree to which that’s a level of success. How many people have completed the program? How many people, at the end of it, actually have that follow-on? Its not just ticking a box, it’s a relationship that’s created with a person and that they do move on, that they do decide to get involved in this and that they remain connected. That’s that level. A lot of the success, personally for myself, is on a very personal level, seeing a person grow and take up new opportunities with confidence. Giving something a go is one of the best outcomes that you can hope for. There are numerous people who are on a continual cycle of training. Training after training, group after group. Is that progression? What’s it for, what’s it to, does it really help where they want to go? E.g. Homework support program, its been reaching, and people have been coming. It has been a positive thing in establishing relationships amongst those kids as well as with projects, so developing those networks. Community engagement is all about networks, so however much we can further those networks, the better, amongst people as well as with all levels. Within the organization we use the Bonding Bridges method of building social capital, so that’s a guideline around the outcomes/aims for the community engagement project. For the Claymore project, success will be a economically viable, sustainable business that is owned by residents (being the Catering group, not a co-op at the moment, its still to be decided whether it will be a co-op or not).

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

Where I’ve seen success has been where agencies do work together, that’s the approach that we try to take working across sectors. There are lots more projects happening now where you’ve got training providers working with
Health, working with government, the Department of Housing, so you're actually working across those sectors and not in isolation, working in a co-ordinated approach. One of the aspects of the project we're working on in Claymore is setting up a network that goes across training and employment and enterprise, health etc. E.g. Centrelink are much more pro-active now in terms of seeking partnerships. E.g. for health, we get people where their needs are (e.g. domestic violence or whatever), they've got immediate needs that need to be assisted, but it's all part of a pathway towards a place where they want to be getting new opportunities/breaking down some of the barriers around accessing the opportunities. Making it safe for them to go to TAFE, the next step is making it safe to go outside your local area for employment – e.g. Centrelink often find that people don’t necessarily want to travel for work, that’s a real barrier, just the travelling, going beyond that area. In a recent partnership between Centrelink and a training provider, they had a work preparation type course (i.e. confidence, presentation etc.) located in Liverpool, outside the area. They noticed that that had a very good attendance rate, people came despite the travel, and a couple of work opportunities came up in that location at the end of it and the women took them up. It is interesting because they probably wouldn’t have taken that before, but just getting them familiar with travel and to establish those patterns. Its not necessarily on the housing estate, but looking at employment on housing estate’s is also looking at going outside the housing estate and how to actually not just ghettoise the housing estate so that people feel comfortable only in their area. Certainly we need to improve the infrastructure and the opportunities, the public image of housing estates. We’ve got to open people’s doors so that they can go outside and be proud to say that they come from Claymore. As has happened in the past, and continues to happen, people don’t want to say that they come from Claymore. All of those things affect work. I don’t think that the ideal is to have everything located on the estate, we don’t necessarily want that, it’s about getting a balance. There has been lots of potential on the estate and lots of potential off the estate – How do you help people feel comfortable in getting across those barriers?

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

About the Claymore project, one of the constraints was that the original model was based on models that weren’t suitable for this context. They were based on models which were geared around working with a group of people who would not necessarily find employment otherwise, they weren’t sustainable, they weren’t designed to be sustainable/totally/purely viable within themselves. That was a flaw in the original application. Also in the original model, it was aimed that there was going to be an umbrella co-operative that then supported these micro businesses/micro co-operatives. It was an incredibly complex structure that placed a huge responsibility on residents for governance issues/onus of financial viability of these resources. When we walked through with the Department of Fair Trading of what this would look like, what it would mean, what your responsibilities would be as a member of the executive of the board, the residents said ‘We don’t want it, we don’t want to be responsible, its
confusing, its complex’. Not complex in the sense that they can’t understand, but it just wasn’t suitable.

We inherited the project, it’s about the difficulty in an organization when it changes hands. It is about the rhetoric, and there is a lot of rhetoric around community economic development and employment projects. People talk the talk. People talk about sustainability, but what does sustainability mean? People would say that if something keeps going, then it’s sustainable. O.K but if keeps going and it’s reliant on funding, what happens when the funding stops? In my mind that’s not sustainable because its limited by something – E.g. Bishop’s Trust Co-op, the co-operatives there were reliant on a funded worker who held it all together. Some have continued on, but it’s really difficult. The difficulty isn’t actually talked about very much, to make something viable, to make something truly sustainable. Who’s actually doing this? Is it the residents leading this, or is it the organizations? Is there someone up there saying all of this rhetoric, and for what purpose? What we’ve tried to do with Triple C group is a really difficult thing around ownership, how much do you drive it? How much ownership does the organization have and how much ownership do the residents have?

Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

One of the limitations is that any of these projects is very slow to really look at something that’s really viable and sustainable. In projects we’re pressured by governments to have, at the end of 1 or 2 year funded projects, a sustainable business. Realistically, in the business world, developing a business plan can take a year. Developing anything can take a long time, it’s a very slow process. A longer-term approach would be much better suited to really achieve key milestones. Quite often, it’s not until the end of a funded project that we can identify if its autonomous/fully functioning independently. We would want some guidelines for the benchmarking of a good enterprise/economic development project, for halfway through or ¾ through the project. So there’s the phasing out of workers also, that you don’t have a worker employed until the end of the project. To really shift that responsibility, you have to phase out the workers, reduce it to 4 days, 3 days, 2 days, whatever or look at alternative means; and wean that off. Some guidelines around that would be useful, some benchmarking.

Some really hard research and evaluation done on the projects would be invaluable on all of the projects because there’s just so much rhetoric, so much talk. Even in co-operatives, there’s people pushing the co-operative agenda and yet if you’re actually looking at it in a different perspective you can say - How many co-operatives in this context, and with this framework around it, are still running? There’s none that we’ve been able to find, they’re a very difficult thing to do. You have to have minimum wages.
Furthering the partnerships, there should be better links across sectors, more on the business side. Most of this has been done through FACS, through government departments who are actually making this the new way of building community’s capacity/social capital in taking an enterprise/economic development approach. It seems to make sense that if you’re going to go down that track, wouldn’t it be better if you had partnerships and that governments were actually working together. At our local level we’re actually working with corporates/business people to try and bring that knowledge in. At a government level, to actually work across departments would bring a lot of benefit, than just keeping it within a FACS approach. Shifting that paradigm is a huge ask within one department. The social enterprise approach is the new way of doing things, I don’t think there are very clear guidelines about the outcomes that we really want to achieve. Are they realistic? Is it realistic to fund something for a year and expect that it’s going to be sustainable? More partnerships with different people. It’s about honestly working with residents.
Attachment 13: Interview summary – respondent 11

Interview Date: Monday 12\textsuperscript{th} July 2004
Respondent Number: 011
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

I’m currently working with Triple C Catering, which is a community enterprise project in Claymore. A group of women from the Claymore area are the participants in the program. The Benevolent Society operates in an umbrella co-ordination role. The aim of the project is to, hopefully, try to build a sustainable business that can create employment/create a more positive connection with Claymore/pathways to other employment.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

No, I’m not aware of them. I certainly feel that there is a need for bringing that sort of material together. Its been really quite difficult to source a review of what’s out there, what’s been working, what hasn’t and why. I did hear about a report that was a review of co-operatives, what influenced whether co-operatives were successful or not, never been able to track it down.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

In looking at community enterprise/community economic development, for this to work it needs to be able to translate into an ongoing sustainable business once you pull out the support. I’m unsure whether that will happen, there are a lot of difficulties in getting a model that works well where you’re blending business and enterprise with community ownership. There’s a whole raft of things that make it very, very difficult.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

I’m fairly new to the Benevolent Society, and so I’m not sure of/not that familiar with other initiatives, have just worked on this one.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?
With Triple C, it’s difficult if you’ve got community ownership, the constraint is getting entrepreneurial leadership that is often an important part of building a successful small business. By its very nature it tends to become a consultative process and inclusion is often through interest, it’s unlike a small business where if you’re wanting staff you advertise and might interview 50 people and you pick the people who’ve got the best skills and experience. In a community enterprise project, normally, you’re working with people who self select. So the skills base is normally different. There’s often slightly conflicted and confusing objectives that relate to community objectives and business objectives. As a small business, even if your sole focus is business and survival, you’re still going to be getting that. When you’ve got a lot of other conflicting things coming into it, it makes it extremely difficult, it’s a very difficult model. I would really like to know if there are any small business models that have been run on community enterprise models, without some form of subsidy. If there are, myself and, I’m sure, other people would really like to identify them.

Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

Before looking at where these things should go, there’s a need to really identify what is happening out there that is working and learn from those models, if they exist. If they don’t, then, either you’ve got to say that it’s a very difficult thing or start looking at different models. Without that objective data, you can’t say where they should go, really. The need for information on what models are out there, what’s working, what isn’t and why. The challenge with community enterprise projects is to identify whether they are sustainable. Is that one of the objectives? E.g. The coffee shop and Laundromat and other quite useful and interesting projects, is the expectation that they should be self-sustaining or is it acceptable to subsidise projects like that? That’s a fairly important question. E.g. Triple C Catering, if we were prepared to subsidise it on a really long term basis then that’s one thing, but the reality is that it’s very difficult to justify, particularly if you’re competing with the private sector, on a basis subsidised by government funding. Sustainability is a key thing.
Conversation with Colleen Bastow, Interview Date: Wednesday 7th July 2004

**Questions:**

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

I’m the WorkiT Project Manager for the Newcastle local government area, which is a partnership with HGT Australia Limited and the NSW Department of Housing. I have a team of 2 supervisors working under me, a whole-of-site supervisor and under him is the cleaning supervisor. We’ve structured the WorkiT program into 2 WorkiT teams, a lawn and gardening team, and a cleaning team. Those 2 supervisors directly supervise a team of 7 trainees who are all Department of Housing residents and were all Hamilton South estate residents at the time of their employment. We’ve only had 2 drop out/s to date and they were both mutual terminations, largely due to unsuitability of the work. They were amicable terminations. Out of that team of 9 trainees, they work 20 hours a week, spread over 4 days. We’ve also employed a casual person to back-up when people are off sick to enable the appropriate flow of leave etc. That casual bank of workers usually sits at about 2 people, also from the estate. At any given point, usually we would have 9 workers employed.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in NSW or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in NSW? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

No – I would like to get some information too, some evaluative information because you can use historical information to improve and to move forward. I don’t have any of that. The only documents that I’m working with are of a contractual nature – the tender documents, the deed of agreement, the program guidelines etc.

Can you tell me about the projects or activities your agency has been involved with? How do you assess their ‘success’?

I’m only very new to HGT, I started when the WorkiT program started (October 2003). Not appropriate to comment.
What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

The whole concept of WorkiT itself has been a wonderful initiative to get people interested and supported. Its OK to throw people into training courses, but if there’s no-one there to support them and help them along the way and take them through a whole regime of establishing an employment plan for them and supporting them each step of the way. That is a large part of what I do now, now that the service contracts and the actual workers are all well and truly established in their jobs. Apart from managing those contracts, I’m also the second and very important part of my job is supporting and assisting remaining residents who were not successful into other training and employment options. You can’t do that if you’re not prepared to support them along the way. That can be very time consuming and it comes at a cost. That’s probably the basis of this whole initiative, it is an initiative that has supported employment for public housing residents, it does come at a cost, but I don’t see another way of being able to get people who have not worked for long periods of time and that who have got significant gaps in their lives for a number of reasons, I don’t see how else you can do it and there’s also a cost. That’s the trade off, it’s the cost of keeping them on welfare, the flipside of the coin. The large support role that I play now is to actually walk them through every step of the way. Even the trainees in the WorkiT program who’ve been there now for 8 months, for the first 6 months they required very high levels of support from me because they live on site and they work on site their personal lives do flow over into the workplace. The are not used to how the workplace environment works/operates, its basic skill training that has to go on, on a one-on-one basis as each personal situation Arises. A lot of support happens there.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

There’s not enough dollars to help all these people. Some people require such intensive personal support/intensive rehabilitation just to even get them to a point of putting their name down for a training course, I don’t think that we have done that particularly well. I don’t think there’s enough resources allocated to actually help those people. Having said that, I recognise that there are some people who simply cannot be helped, we do try our very best but sometimes you’ve got your back against the wall. They are some of the initiatives that could be tackled in the future, intensive rehabilitation has to happen on a personal development nature.

Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

How big is the pot of gold? Cynically, at the end of the day, how much money is the government willing to put in to programs like these to support people?
There is a cost involved in supporting employment programs, you can’t but recognize that. It’s whether, at the end of the day, the governments are prepared to put the money into sustaining that. The outcomes I see, for the WorkiT trainee’s that we’ve got, I think they’ve got a very bright future ahead of them. We have a responsibility to do the very best we can to put in place a very positive exit strategy for them when they finish their traineeships so that they can then achieve employment in an unsupported workplace so that they become the supervisors of tomorrow in similar kinds of programs. That they, having been there, know the story, and know how to help the next lot after/that come behind them/generational change. We’re talking about 3rd, and in some cases, 4th generation unemployment, so there’s a lot of helping that needs to take place.
Attachment 15: Interview summary – respondent 14

Interview Date: Friday 8th October 2004
Respondent Number: 014
Respondent Name: Sharon Zivkovic
Respondent Details: Senior Project Officer Community Capacity
Customer Service and Development Unit
South Australian Housing Trust
Adelaide SA

Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions:

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

In 1999-00 I was the economic development officer for the City of Salisbury. I was involved in employment provision within the Urban Renewal of Salisbury North. There were a range of employment initiatives.

Course of WA – How to be enterprising in the world of work? Eleven participants compiled a 4-page letter, all signed it, telling of their ‘regained hope’ as a group of long term unemployed people. Amazingly, the reason for their regained hope was that they had worked out the changes to the world of work, the structural changes. The group formed and grew as a collective of people in the community. There were no support structures for people looking for fragmented work opportunities.

In June 2000, I developed the Community Work Bank model as a support structure for the collective. In July 2000, the Welfare Reform Final Report came out, the fifth principle of which was social partnerships: community capacity building. The processes of community economic development, social enterprise, community business partnerships and micro-business formation were identified as methods for building community capacity. The Work Bank had all of this embedded in it. Sixteen members of the collective that formed went on to complete Certificate 4 in workplace training. They received paid work in schools, had a real sense of community and enterprise. In 2001, I went to work in the Parks where I ran workshops on community capacity building which highlighted that sustainable change can only be driven by the community. From this, the community developed and managed an IT centre where mature aged unemployed people supported young Work for the Dole recipients to get employment. The first group of work for the dole participants are now all working part time in IT. It’s still running, and has just taken out the SA Adult Learners Week Outstanding Community Organization Award – an outstanding outcome. Has expanded into finding employment for local people.

In Playford there are high level of public housing. Twelve months ago, a 3-day workshop was run for the community to explore community capacity building based around the 4 principles of the Welfare Reform Final Report. Asset
based community development. Held in a business incubator to get a business feel from the start. In total, 85 people attended, including representation from the whole of government, a third of residents; a good mix with all represented. Four subgroups formed and progressed project ideas from the workshop. The Work Bank model came up, and has been funded by SA Works, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST). A project officer has been employed to progress the work bank model. One of the subgroups is focusing on Small Business development and has attracted funding for the training of 60 participants from the region - closely linked to Work Bank.

My work has mainly been at the innovation level with the community capacity building approach about local people taking ownership and developing themselves.

The gap the Work Bank Model is filling is always highlighted, as traditional Job Network providers don’t look at the fragmented bits, the stepping stones for disadvantaged communities. Enterprise type activities allow people to take control of activities, rather than the traditional rejection of employment for residents.

In the Handy Hort subgroup, young people and community members are producing a brochure on gardening activities. They are now establishing a social enterprise called ‘Lavender Blues’ producing lavender products.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in SA or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in SA? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

In the work that I am doing I have access to documentation. There is the 10 page initial discussion from 2000, some evaluation, the Parks community IT group have a web page, the 3 day workshop program, an update for the method formed on the planning day.

The network is now continuing without me, the Council and business centre is now supporting it.

For SA it would be useful to contact the Department of Fair Trading Employment and Science Training (DFTEST) who work on the strategy Regions At Work. In this, stakeholders form committees within regions, with funding for the projects going to a regional level. The North have a formula for their funding. Also, potential for community capacity building projects. The Work Bank model funding comes out of that bucket. DFTEST has state-wide projects, they eventually move out and the regions take control for local decision-making.

Newcastle Conference speech – learning from outcomes achieved when the community makes the decisions as to what they do.

There is also lots happening in traditional employment programs.
My understanding of community economic development activities is as per the role in the Welfare Reform Report, it’s about communities mobilizing, about participation. I won an award, it’s a scholarship with the University of Adelaide to commercialise my work on community capacity building. The merit of community capacity building has progressed in SA.

**What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?**

With the ‘How to be enterprising in the new world of work?’ course, an amazing 100% of participants went onto other training opportunities due to the motivation gained, an incredible outcome. It is significant because of its sheer magnitude, the empowerment.

The start of Work Bank is also very significant, tracking opportunities for fragmented work. In SA the workforce is more casualised than the other states, therefore there are growth opportunities in the fragmented world. The opportunity for funding not on traditional work outcomes, that is significant.

What is a funded employment outcome? The data from the Work Bank project will provide potential for change. There is a significant impact of innovation of community economic development programs.

**Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?**

The reality is that everyone is talking about bringing down the wall between the economic and the social. Funding needs to be realistic in terms of outcomes, this is difficult.

Support for social enterprise in Australia is lacking. In the UK there is an incredible support structure. In SA there are no support services for social enterprises. If you’re lucky enough to have a sympathetic business services centre for business advice it’s easier. Advice and support needs are difficult due to the focus on social ownership and social aims being different than small business aims. There is a need for management advisors who have those skills (to link business advice with social enterprises’ objectives). Much needs to be done for infrastructure to promote social enterprise, we don’t have it in Australia. The UK have developed other company structures to support social enterprise development. In SA, the Co-operatives Act is gigantic, there is no ‘Easy As’ booklet. Other states have made attempts to make it easy to understand. There’s been talk of uniformity across states but I don’t know if this has ever progressed. But, there’s no support with regards to advising, support etc. Even if there is, it’s not going to be matched to the needs of community enterprise.

**Thinking of the future, where you do think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?**
I would like to see everyone support what’s happening, so communities can take more control of their opportunities and develop and address those opportunities. Much is to be taken from the small business sector to support community businesses. It’s a direction to be seen as favourable, use as training and advice service. The upskilling of small business training and advisory providers of social enterprise is an opportunity.

I’d like to see more programs that develop a social enterprise culture. The 1995 Enterprising Nation Report highlighted the need for enterprise programs in schools, and also for a social marketing type campaign for communities to become more enterprising. Whilst we have seen enterprise programs in schools supported, the social marketing program never happened. I’d like to see enterprise in both economic and social terms supported.

Home-based businesses is another area. One in ten homes in SA have a home-based business. The South Australian Housing Trust is looking at this area now, are in the process of researching a possible future opportunity.
Attachment 16: Interview summary – respondent 15

Interview Date: Monday 18th October 2004  
Respondent Number: 015  
Respondent Name: Martin Ward  
Respondent Details: Development Manager  
Capital Projects  
South Australian Housing Trust  
Adelaide SA  
Interviewer: Melanie Hughes

Questions:

What is your involvement with community economic development activities and public housing estates?

My involvement has been in the UK (Scotland) and SA. In Scotland I have been involved in 2 new housing partnership initiatives, in the North Lanarkshire area. Also, in a European funding initiative regarding employment development in the same area. For SA, I have been involved in the Westwood Urban Renewal Project, preparing an economic development strategy and participating in a steering group overseeing its implementation.

Are you aware of any documents/reports that outline the initiatives undertaken in SA or any documents/reports of an evaluative nature? Are there any other key documents that you think would be useful to me in order to get a better understanding of the situation in SA? (PROMPT: Government or non-government)?

Yes – both economic development documentation and evaluation project reports. The reports have been jointly commissioned with the private sector partner and may not be available to share. The Westwood project is the largest Urban Renewal project in the whole of Australia. The partner organization is Urban Pacific Limited, a subsidiary of Macquarie Bank.

What do you think have been the most significant initiatives to achieve training/employment opportunities for public housing estate tenants?

The provision of vocational training and work experience, related to relevant local industries. Essentially, giving people the opportunity to get back into the work environment on a trial and training basis without pressure. Work experience is most valuable when integrating with local organizations with current and future recruitment requirements. It also provides prospective employee experience for local organizations, without long term commitment on their part. It allows for assessment of both the suitability of the worker and the organization. Clear job outcomes have resulted. There have been a variety of government training and employment opportunities provided, in various
industries: warehousing, fork lifting, retail, aged care, etc. The key is a broad range of training and employment opportunities are provided to meet diverse needs/skills.

Do you think there are any constraints/limitations of these programs in the achievement of their objectives, to date?

a. In running the Urban Renewal project, an additional full-time employee is required to act as a catalyst to identify and access employment and training opportunities, resourcing issue.

b. Given the job readiness of the community, another issue of resourcing arises due to the task of giving them experience, confidence, work preparation to re-enter the workforce.

c. Among Job Network providers there is a tendency to ‘cherry pick’ applicants most likely to be successful, therefore those most in need haven’t always been able to get that help. Through the urban renewal project initiatives this group has been assisted.

Thinking of the future, where do you think these programs should go? Are there any new directions these programs should take in order to enhance/contribute to current programs for better outcomes? (Future roles, Commonwealth Government, DEWA)?

There is a need for a strategic higher level of agreement between Commonwealth, State and local governments, and between local Chambers of Commerce to facilitate more employment and training opportunities. At the moment, funds tend to be for individual Commonwealth initiatives and individual State initiatives, there’s not always as much co-operation or collaboration as there ideally should be. There is a desire to expand. A holistic approach would be good, to get on board a range of different agencies.
Attachment 17: Workshop report

Prepared by Melanie Hughes
10 August 2004

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

There were 36 participants.

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

Presentation #1 – Public housing tenants and the Sydney labour market
By Professor Bill Randolph from the University of Western Sydney’s Urban Frontiers Program

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

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

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

Presentation #2 – The Claymore Integration Project and Triple C Catering
By Robyn Brookes, Director, Centre for Women’s Health, Campbelltown, Liz Tinney Community Engagement Strategist, The Benevolent Society, Campbelltown, and Pat Jackson, member of Triple C Catering, Claymore

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

Triple C, a pioneering tenant run catering business as emerged from the CIP with very positive results. Not only does the enterprise provide employment and income for those tenants involved, a range of quality catering services are offered to various clients. Triple C is run on the housing estate in Claymore so transport and car accessibility issues are overcome.
The venture has been operating successfully for 2 years in the absence of any formal marketing and issues such as profitability and sustainability are beginning to emerge. Furthermore, the need to develop the business into the appropriate legal structure has become evident.

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

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

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

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

Positive lessons learned:

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

Negative lessons learned:

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

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

Possible future directions:

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

Note: The views expressed in this report are not directly attributable to any one individual participant in the workshop discussions.
Attachment 18: Workshop evaluation

‘Community economic development and public housing estates’ workshop: report on outputs and outcomes

Melanie Hughes
27th August 2004

Summary
The event was a half-day seminar held on 20th July 2004. The intended audience was stakeholders in the field of community economic development, namely NSW Department of Housing staff, community organizations, and public housing tenants.

Due to the fragmented nature of community economic development activities and the lack of formal communication between parties involved, the aim of the workshop was to facilitate forum-like discussion among the intended audience, increasing awareness and educating participants about current initiatives. Furthermore, the extraction of ideas and opinions towards the workshop questions presented was an additional objective.

There were 31 registered participants in attendance.

Outputs
The outputs were:
- Presentations made by speakers,
- Two fact sheets distributed to participants,
- Workshop discussions.

The workshop
The workshop was called Community economic development and public housing estates, held on Tuesday 20th July 2004.

It was held at the Coffee Shop, ground floor, Parramatta Mission. The program was a half-day, with a scheduled 9.30 am start and 12.30 pm finish. The venue was primarily chosen due to its centrality in Western Sydney where a concentration of community economic development activities can be found. The venue was in close proximity to public transport networks. The room, complete with whiteboard and overhead projection facilities, comfortably suited the forum-like discussions that were intended.

Professor Bill Randolph from the University of Western Sydney’s Urban Frontiers Program gave a presentation entitled Public Housing Tenants and the Sydney Labour Market.

Liz Tinney, Pat Jackson and Robyn Brookes presented the story of Triple C, a tenant run business operating in the Claymore housing estate in Campbelltown with the assistance of The Benevolent Society of NSW.
Upon registration, all participants were handed two fact sheets. The first featured a pie chart of recent data on income sources for public housing tenants. The second outlined the community economic development initiatives currently in operation. These were intended to better familiarise participants with the context within which community economic development activities fit and to increase awareness about the objectives, structure and location of current initiatives.

The workshops focused on a 3 key discussion questions:

- What are the main factors that inhibit or facilitate employment and self-employment outcomes for public housing tenants?
- What are the lessons from the various community economic development programs that have been part of regeneration activities on public housing estates?
- What are the opportunities for more or new community economic development with public housing tenants?

The seminar was advertised by:

- A notice inserted in the June issue of NCOSS News;
- A notice in the Shelter NSW Members Bulletin no. 68 3rd June 2004;
- A notice on the communitybuilders.nsw website;
- A notice on the Australasian Housing Information Network website;
- Broadcast email notices to Shelter NSW members and to miscellaneous contacts held in an e-list by Shelter.

There were 37 people registered to attend, of whom 31 actually attended including the speakers (N=6). Five Shelter NSW staff were present on the day.

Of the 31 participants, more than half (N=16) came from non–government organizations in housing and employment related services, just under one quarter (N=7) were public housing tenants themselves; and less than one-fifth (N=5) came from NSW government agencies. See Figure 18.1.

Most participants came from the greater Sydney metropolitan area (N=15), followed by the Macarthur region (N=13) and the Hunter region (N=3). See Figure 18.2.
The presentations

Copies of Professor Bill Randolph’s presentation were uploaded onto the Shelter NSW website after the workshop. A copy of the workshop notes taken has was also put onto the Shelter NSW website. Several participants, without Internet access, requested that hard copies of both the Randolph presentation slides and workshop notes be posted to them. These requests were fulfilled.

Evaluation

The evaluation methodology consisted of a ‘customer satisfaction’ style feedback from participants using a formal evaluation questionnaire.
Participants’ evaluation
An evaluation sheet was distributed to all participants in a workshop folder. This sheet was a simple easy-to-use self-administered tool comprising both open and closed questions.

Twenty-one completed forms were returned. The forms identified whether the respondent was a public housing tenant, employed in a non-profit non-governmental organization or employed in a government agency (see Box 18.1); no Shelter staff person completed a form. The number of respondents represents nearly two-thirds of all participants who attended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you…?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A public housing tenant</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in a non-profit non-governmental organization</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in a government agency</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box 18.2 indicates that when asked to rate the seminar overall, using a 5-point Likert scale, 11 respondents rated it as good, 4 as excellent, 5 as so-so, and 1 did not respond. The mean rating was 4 out of 5. Nine respondents indicated that there was a good mix between information from presenters and group discussions, 5 thought the mix was excellent, 6 as so-so and 1 did not respond. The mean rating was 4 out of 5. The venue received 9 ‘good’ ratings, 3 ‘excellent’ ratings and 3 ‘so-so’ ratings. The mean rating for the venue was 3.8 out of 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Poor</th>
<th>(2) Fair</th>
<th>(3) So so</th>
<th>(4) Good</th>
<th>(5) Excellent</th>
<th>Not answered</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how would you rate the workshop?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there a right mix between information from presenters and group discussion?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate the venue?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A dot-point summary of responses to the open questions is given at page 171.

Outcomes
The main outcome intended was a better-informed body of stakeholders involved in community economic development activities. This was achieved. The evidence for this achievement is in the overall high rating of the seminar by respondents who completed an evaluation form (15 of 20 rated it good or
excellent) and in the answers to the question ‘What did you learn that will be of use to you in your community or working in communities?’.
**Attachments:**
Shelter NSW workshop

**Community economic development and public housing estates**
A workshop for people involved
– public housing tenants, service providers, social housing managers, social entrepreneurs

Tuesday 20 July 2004
9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Coffee shop, ground floor, Parramatta Mission,
119 Macquarie Street, Parramatta

**Program outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Opening: welcome and introduction to the seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35</td>
<td>Introductions by participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45</td>
<td>Professor Bill Randolph, Director, Urban Frontiers Program, University of Western Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Liz Tinney, Pat Jackson and Robyn Brookes, Benevolent Society of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Workshop 1: What are the main factors that inhibit or facilitate employment and self-employment outcomes for public housing tenants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Workshop 2: What are the lessons from the various community economic development programs that have been part of regeneration initiatives on public housing estates?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Workshop 3: What are the opportunities for more or new community economic development with public housing tenants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>General discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shelter NSW workshop
Community economic development and public housing estates

Evaluation form
We want to know how useful this workshop has been. Your feedback will assist us with future workshops.

Overall, how would you rate the workshop, on a scale of 1 to 5? (Circle one.)

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = so so 4 = good 5 = excellent

Was there a right mix between information from presenters and group discussion? (Circle one.)

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = so so 4 = good 5 = excellent

How would you rate the venue, on a scale of 1 to 5? (Circle one.)

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = so so 4 = good 5 = excellent

What 2 things did you like most about this workshop?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What 2 things did you like least about this workshop?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What did you learn that will be of use to you in your community or in working with communities?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Do you have any other comments?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

About you
Are you … ? (please tick one)
___ a public housing tenant
___ employed in a non-profit non-government organization
___ employed in a government agency
___ other: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Summary of respondents' comments

This 'dot point' summary is taken from completed evaluation forms returned by 21 respondents. The points listed do not necessarily reflect the views of all respondents. Where two or more respondents identified the same matter, the matter has a number in parentheses indicating the number of reports.

Things most liked about the seminar

- That many ideas were presented
- That attendance was free of charge
- Bill Randolph's presentation was very informative (4)
- The chance to meet others interested and involved in this area (2)
- The discussion of issues/sharing of ideas (3)
- The diverse group of participants (3)
- That everything was well organised (2)
- The explanations were very good
- The facilitators were great, very skilled (2)
- That many service providers attended
- The mix of presentations was very informative (3)
- The opportunity for discussion/input (3)
- The practical discussions around the three workshop questions (2)
- The slices were fantastic (2)
- The Triple C story (2)

Things liked least about the seminar

- That is was difficult to read overheads
- That the room was cold (2)
- More time was required (2)
- People who dominate discussions
- That the discussion groups were not small enough to thoroughly discuss the ideas presented
- People who speak disrespectfully to each other, attacking rather than talking. Especially the antagonism towards the Department of Housing
- The battering of the Department of Housing was overdone, they are Housing not an employment agency

Anything useful that was learned

- General information was obtained about the current situation, current initiatives and activities from the presentations (4)
- Access to information/feedback about job and training initiatives
- Connections were made
- Discussion on ways of linking what is happening at the moment and how things can improve
- Greater understanding of services available re: employment and public housing tenants
- The opportunity for reflection and analysis (2)
That there are quite a few organizations that we can help with various issues
Information about the WorkiT program

Other comments

- Follow up is required
- Half-day workshop is great. The information is provided at the right level and length
- It’s good to have a say, but great to listen too.
- There was a lack of tenant representation. Do the tenants value these workshops? Do they know about them? There is a need to consolidate tenant group databases
- More presentations about what people are doing, sharing information would be good
- Would have liked to have pointers to what's happening in other states and overseas
- There is a need to have people from different sectors in attendance, especially business enterprise
- I thank Shelter very much for such a great seminar and congratulate you all. Thank you for keeping us up to date.
## Attachment 19: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – Employment Initiative projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor Name</th>
<th>Region / LGA</th>
<th>Project location</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows Employment Project</td>
<td>North Western Hume/Moreland</td>
<td>Broadmeadows</td>
<td>This project will provide careers counselling, job search assistance, community education &amp; post outcome support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong Ethnic Communities Council</td>
<td>Barwon Western Greater Geelong Golden Plains</td>
<td>Geelong West</td>
<td>The project will provide general employment and training support through a network of local community volunteers and an employment advocate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfields Employment &amp; Learning Centre</td>
<td>Loddon Mallee Central Goldfields</td>
<td>Maryborough</td>
<td>The project will provide an intensive case management model to engage the target group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs A New Approach Ballarat</td>
<td>Central Highlands Wimmera Ballarat/Hepburn</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>Targeting unemployed youth (15-24 years), the project will provide ongoing support to the target group through a mentoring program involving local service clubs to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs A New Approach Geelong</td>
<td>Barwon Western Greater Geelong Golden Plains</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>Targeting unemployed youth (15-24 years), the project will provide an early intervention &amp; case management model utilising mentors from local service clubs as well as networking with various education, training and employment providers to achieve outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Care</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Ripponlea</td>
<td>Targeting unemployed people in the orthodox Jewish community, this project will provide a comprehensive case management model which includes job search assistance, links to education &amp; training, mentoring, job matching and life skills assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre North East</td>
<td>North Eastern Melbourne Whittlesea Darebin</td>
<td>Preston / Epping</td>
<td>Targeting unemployed people from cultural &amp; linguistically diverse backgrounds with a focus on older unemployed people from the Greek and Italian communities, this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Employment Opportunities</td>
<td>Loddon Mallee</td>
<td>Greater Bendigo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Ethnic Representative Council</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Ormond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian Welfare Association</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre South Central</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre South Eastern</td>
<td>South Eastern</td>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project will provide a comprehensive case management model including ongoing support to the target group to achieve employment training or education outcomes.

Targeting unemployed youth (15-24) and mature age (45+), this project will offer training and skills development, enterprise creation and a job placement program that builds on strong local community links and partnerships.

Targeting unemployed people in the Russian & Slavic speaking communities, this project will provide a case management and mentoring program as well as group activities, including job clubs and tours to link with regional job opportunities for skilled migrants.

Targeting unemployed Serbian & Latin American people & unemployed migrant women, this project will provide an intensive case management model to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.

Targeting unemployed recently arrived migrants and Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders including a focus on older unemployed people from the Greek and Italian communities, this project will provide intensive case management, work experience and industry forums to achieve employment, training or education outcomes.

Targeting unemployed people from cultural & linguistically diverse backgrounds including a focus on the Vietnamese community, this project will provide intensive case management, mentoring, orientation to the Australian labour market, careers counselling and work opportunity sessions.
Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups | Metro Melbourne | Coburg | Targeting unemployed people from the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan & Iraq, this project will provide an intensive case management program including, workshops, work experience & training in the care industry meeting the community needs for culturally appropriate aged care, disability and child care services.

Western Metropolitan Youth Employment Project | Outer Western Melbourne Brimbank | Taylors Lakes | Targeting unemployed youth and people from cultural & linguistically diverse backgrounds including a focus on the Vietnamese community, this project will provide careers counselling, workplace orientation, job search training and employment placements targeting apprenticeships and traineeships.

### Attachment 20: Community Jobs Program (Victoria) – Jobs and training funded projects 2003-04

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Organisation Name</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No of Participants</th>
<th>Full Time or Part Time</th>
<th>Duration (Weeks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Geelong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BAGE Inc</td>
<td>Train &amp; Gain - Office Administration &amp; Tutor Skills at BAGE</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
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