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Workshop Session – Bill Randolph and Bruce Judd

**A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL - LESSONS
LEARNT FROM NEW SOUTH WALES AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

DISCUSSION PAPER

1. Background

One of the major shifts in public housing policy in the last decade has been a change in emphasis away from the construction of new housing stock to better asset and tenancy management. Nowhere was the need more acute for this than on the large public housing estates where changes in the social profile of public housing tenants due to targeting of assistance to people in most need combined with an ageing, a poorly maintained and increasingly inappropriate housing stock had led to many estates becoming highly stigmatised communities with serious social problems.

By the mid 1990's both federal and state governments had begun to address these problems through policies of neighbourhood renewal and a spate of projects on key public housing estates of concern eventuated (NCPA 1993, SGS 2000a). Approaches and interventions vary somewhat between states and projects but include various combinations of the following:

- Asset (or physical) improvement strategies
- Wholesale or partial asset disposal and redevelopment
- Management strategies (eg. intensive management, transfers to community housing)
- Community Development (or social) strategies
- Whole of government approaches (eg. place management)
(Randolph & Judd 2000a)

In the early projects there is a strong emphasis on asset based strategies, but later the importance of management and community development initiatives has been increasingly recognised and integrated into these programs, in some cases moving towards a whole of government approach.

Evaluation of these programs and projects is clearly important as they represent significant shifts in both policy and expenditures of governments. However, despite recognition of the need for evaluation, the urgency to implement neighbourhood improvement programs has often meant that evaluation procedures have at best been patchy and at worst not rigorously developed or implemented. Consequently, knowledge about the effectiveness of these programs and interventions is often not easy to establish and thereby inform future practice and policy development.

This discussion paper is based on the authors experience in two neighbourhood renewal evaluation projects. The first was an evaluation of the NSW Department of Housing's (DoH) Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), one aim of which was to develop "an appropriate performance monitoring framework" (Randolph et al 2001). The second was a project undertaken for the City of Salisbury and the South Australian Housing Trust to develop an Evaluation Framework for the Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project (SNUIP) in South Australia. The authors work on these projects raises a number of important issues and principles that may inform the future development of monitoring and evaluation framework for neighbourhood renewal.

The Paper will outline our experience of attempting to assist two state housing authorities in developing evaluation tools for community renewal. This work owes much to the experience and endeavours of the housing authorities in their own development of evaluation tools upon which we

have tried to build, and consultants who have been engaged to advise on or undertake evaluation from time to time. This will be followed by a discussion of the implications of issues arising from this paper for future development of better monitoring and evaluation tools. The panellists are all people that have had a significant involvement in neighbourhood renewal evaluation, either in a public housing management role or as consultants to government, including in the projects discussed in this paper.

2. The Spectrum of Approaches to Evaluating Neighbourhood Renewal

Neighbourhood renewal is a complex and multi-faceted process often without clear boundaries between local and broader social and economic processes. This means that evaluation is not simple and can involve the use of a wide range of evaluation methods. These methods range from purely economic analyses right through the spectrum to sociological approaches that attempt to deal with much more intangible outcomes such as social cohesion or social capital. The economic approaches are well discussed in the report by SGS Urban Economics & Planning on Public Housing Estate Renewal in Australia (SGS 2000a,b). These are of great interest to policy makers given the current demands of all governments for financial efficiency and economic justification for government intervention. Managerial approaches such as the use of performance indicators are also attractive as they can provide a quantitative evaluation of performance against objectives. However the more qualitative approaches aimed at understanding the perceptions of residents and other stakeholders and the dynamics of community are also acknowledged as being important – particularly given the current interest at both state and federal government level in building ‘sustainable communities’.

Governments around Australia have used approaches from all parts of this spectrum. Although through our research work into neighbourhood renewal we are familiar with many of these, they will not be reviewed in detail here. A useful overview is included in the SGS Report (SGS 2000a). However, some from NSW and South Australia will be briefly reviewed later as part of the context for our own work.

3. Overview of the NIP and the SNUIP

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP): The NIP represented the first phase of the public housing estate renewal program in NSW. It grew out of the earlier Estate Improvement Program (EIP) which involved pilot projects implemented on three estates – two outer suburban estates in Sydney’s south-west (Macquarie Fields and Airds) and one in inner-city estate (Waterloo). The NIP was formalised in 1996 and was targeted to some of the Department’s most run down and difficult to manage estates both in Sydney and regional areas. The EIP/NIP ran for approximately five years (from 1994/5 to 1998/9) funding projects on 13 estates to a total of a little over \$100 million. While there were renewal activities that took place outside this program (eg. the demolition and sale of the East Fairfield (Villawood) estate, and intensive management projects at Claymore and Minto) the bulk of renewal activity during these years took place under this program supported by Neighbourhood Advisory Boards (with representation from residents and other stakeholders) and community workers funded under other programs (HCAP and TCIP). In mid 1999 it was replaced with the current Community Renewal Strategy.

The Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project (SNUIP): Unlike the NIP which is a state-wide renewal program, the SNUIP is a renewal project focussed on the suburb of Salisbury North, 20 km north of the Adelaide CBD, with a high concentration of public housing. Approximately 40% of the properties in the suburb are public housing, mostly austere, old, and poor quality ‘double units’ (duplexes) dating from the 1950’s and 60’s, and highly concentrated in one part of the suburb. In 1997 the City of Salisbury and the SAHT jointly commissioned a feasibility that recommended a comprehensive, whole of government approach involving social, physical, environmental, housing and economic strategies to be undertaken in partnership with the community in a number of stages (Phillis 1997). The SNUIP is based on a partnership between the City of Salisbury and the SAHT with the Council responsible for public domain improvements and community facilities and the

SAHT for sales, redevelopment and renovation of trust properties and relocation of existing tenants. It also involves a formal partnering agreement with a Community Reference Group. Like most other South Australian public housing estate improvement projects, the SNUIP utilises a revenue neutral approach whereby estate improvements are funded by land harvesting and property sales with an intention of reducing the concentration of public housing in the area to introduce housing tenure social and mix.

4. Objectives of the NIP and SNUIP

Both the NIP and the SNUIP had a formal set of objectives established at the commencement of the program. In the case of the NIP it was a list of 10 objectives articulated in the Neighbourhood Improvement Framework document (NSW DoH 1997). These contain a mixture of asset and non-asset objectives ranging from broad social objectives (such crime reduction, economic rejuvenation and improving integration of estates within the surrounding community) to asset and housing management objectives (such as acceptance levels, tenant satisfaction, and housing asset sustainability). Within these overall objectives each Region was able to develop its own set of specific objectives for each project taking into account the particular local needs and circumstances.

The SNUIP's overall objectives are outlined in the Project Agreement between the City of Salisbury and the South Australian Housing Trust and are a list of 14 (SNUIP 1998). However a second list of 8 objectives, developed by the Community Reference Group is also formalised in a Partnering Agreement between it and the project Steering Committee (SNUIP 1999). Although there is some overlap between the two sets of objectives, not surprisingly there is clear difference in emphasis – the former being focussed much more on improving public amenity, changing the social and tenure mix housing and asset performance and financial outcomes, and the latter focussing more on community perceptions, sense of pride, community spirit and self reliance. A third set of 8 objectives was also developed the first stage of the project that differs from both the above but incorporates some of each (Phillis et al 1998). Unlike the former two, these are categorised under four key result areas – social development, urban improvement, asset performance, financial performance and economic growth.

5. Evaluation Strategies of the NIP and SNUIP

There was a strong commitment to evaluation in both the NIP and SNUIP from the outset and some precedents within each state for the evaluation of renewal programs. The NIP Framework document was explicit in its intention to evaluate “all specific NIP initiatives in addition to the impact of the NIP overall”. It identified key aspects of an evaluation methodology as including surveying tenants, evaluating against key housing management criteria, financial assessment and social impact assessment against indicators of social disadvantage. Selection of estates for inclusion in the NIP was to be on the basis of Strategy Statements which were required to identify baseline indicators, strategies and sources of data for measurement and tangible and measurable key performance outcomes. (NSW DoH 1997)

Similarly, the SNUIP Project Agreement also recognised the importance of monitoring and evaluation and a Steering Committee was established with responsibility for monitoring and annual reviews of the project against the project or stage objectives using key performance indicators. As the project became operational, a two tiered monitoring and evaluation process emerged, including a monthly monitoring report – mostly concerned with asset and financial performance – and a broader annual evaluation which looked more broadly at achievements against the objectives of the overall program, and its particular stages (Arthurson 1999). Our understanding is that the monthly reporting process has been effectively operating throughout the project as part of the project management process. The annual and stage evaluation framework was developed by the authors in 2000.

However, trying to develop an evaluation framework for a state-wide program is very different from that for an individual project. It is not surprising therefore that despite the good intentions of the NIP Framework and senior NSW DoH management, implementation initially proved problematic. A

number of factors appear to have contributed to this. Firstly, the regional structure of the department meant that collection of data was inconsistent across the regions. Secondly, resources available at regional level for monitoring and evaluation were limited and do not appear to have been adequately considered in the NIP funding structure. Thirdly, the limited resources and the quantum leap in management culture required to properly manage neighbourhood renewal meant that staff were often already stretched to the limit in implementing the project leaving little capacity for monitoring and evaluation. Finally, these problems were compounded by the inability, at that time, of the a central housing data system to deliver data in the form required for evaluation - which placed an additional burden on the Regions for reporting based on local records.

By 1997 it seemed clear that a centralised approach to monitoring and evaluation was required and a working group was established at Head Office which deliberated over 18 months and canvassed a wide range of potential performance indicators, however eventually settling on only six housing management indicators for quarterly reporting. In 1999 the authors were commissioned to undertake an overall evaluation of the NIP that was to include recommendations for a performance evaluation framework. Part of this work involved the development and testing of 8 asset performance indicators in collaboration with members of the steering committee.

6. Other Precedents for Neighbourhood Renewal Evaluation in NSW and SA

In both states there were also precedents for evaluation of neighbourhood renewal. These are outlined briefly below.

6.1 New South Wales

In NSW, despite the difficulties in implementing a comprehensive, overall evaluation framework for the NIP, one particular region (South West Sydney) has been very active in exploring ways of evaluating the various approaches to neighbourhood renewal in its area. These include:

Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the Airds NIP (Stubbs & Storer 1996)

More a feasibility analysis than an evaluation, the method for this study involved the use of forums and interviews with residents and other stakeholders to identify 4 major problem areas (unemployment, crime, vandalism, family and community stress) on the Airds estate from which a set of 8 indicators was developed, taking into account the availability and cost of data. Social and economic costs were quantified for each of the key indicators from a variety of sources, as were savings due to neighbourhood renewal interventions. From this, cost-benefit ratios were calculated followed by an evaluation of the feasibility of returns being achieved. Data from Airds were compared with two other 'control' areas and the state average in Western Sydney. As well as investigating the *potential* benefits of the NIP in Airds and the extent to which social problems would have to be reduced to provide a return on investment, the study also provides a set of indicators, baseline and benchmark data and a possible methodology for later evaluation.

Evaluation of the Proctor Way, Claymore Project (Office of Community Housing, c1999)

This is an evaluation of a non-asset, non-NIP approach to neighbourhood improvement project involving a transfer of the management of 80 properties on the Claymore estate to a community housing organization. Four key result areas (Housing Management, Environment, Personal Safety, and Sense of Community) comprising 23 indicators were identified for the evaluation of the project. The evaluation was based on a combination of available quantitative data on housing management and crime together with qualitative research from two focus groups. The study was carried out by the Office of Community Housing in collaboration with the Department of Housing and the Community Housing provider.

Evaluation of Three Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies in South Western Sydney (Stubbs & Hardy, 2000)

This study was also commissioned by the South West Sydney Region to evaluate three different approaches to neighbourhood renewal within the region (Stubbs & Hardy, 2000): Airs (a Neighbourhood Improvement Project involving predominantly physical interventions), Proctor Way, Claymore (a transfer to Community Housing management with little physical intervention) and The Hill Project at Minto (an Intensive Tenancy Management approach with some physical interventions). The study revisited the methodology of the earlier Stubbs & Storer study to estimate total cost savings in Airs due to the interventions revealing a cost-benefit ratio of 2.6:1, or 2.6 times the NIP investment. However the report raised questions about causality, particularly in relation to crime vis a vis "...the extent to which the NIP is responsible for these reductions in social problems and hence the production of community benefits." (Stubbs & Hardy, 2000) The comparative part of the study used a household survey, informal discussions with residents and other stakeholders, structured interviews and focus groups to collect comparative data on the three projects. These, along with comparative statistics for the three areas collected from the local courthouse, Centrelink, the Department of Housing and the ABS were used to evaluate the projects according to seven themes (crime, nuisance and annoyance; housing turnover and residential stability; resident satisfaction with their area, housing provider and neighbourhood renewal strategies; communication, consultation and participation; Social stigma; resident and outsider perceptions; asset management; and social and economic development).

6.2 South Australia

Public housing estate renewal in South Australia dates back to the mid 1980's with the physical upgrading of the Mitchell Park estate, but gained impetus in the early 1990s with a succession of de-concentration projects including Mitchell Park (second stage), Rosewood, Hillcrest & Oakden, The Parks, and eventually Salisbury North. In 1998, a number of evaluations of these were undertaken by sociologists from the University of South Australia and Flinders University which are summarised below.

Evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal in Mitchell Park (Carson et al, Social Policy Research Group, University of South Australia 1998)

This evaluation was a sociological study using a '*quality of life*' conceptual framework with three components (living standards; environmental and infrastructure factors; and sense of community) each of which was assessed via a set of social indicators as outlined below. The study method involved a combination of demographic analysis (based on 1986, 1991 and 1996 Census Collectors Districts), three focus groups and a random sample survey (self administered) of 108 residents. The study did not include relocated residents and did not attempt to evaluate financial aspects or cost-benefits of the project, but did conclude that there was a need for "the articulation of a set of desired social outcomes against which [urban renewal] projects can be evaluated" including a key set of social indicators which could provide "...a snapshot of a community in which redevelopment has occurred at a particular point in time" including both quantitative data and qualitative information.

Evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal in Rosewood (Carson et al, Social Policy Research Group, University of South Australia, 1998)

This project involved the majority of public housing being upgraded and sold, and only 25% remaining in public ownership. The evaluation used the same conceptual framework and methods as the Mitchell Park study and, once again, did not survey the relocated residents. It also noted the need for more specific "goals for the social outcomes of urban redevelopment" which were regarded as "an essential step to ensuring that the evaluation of social outcomes becomes a standard part of the evaluation of redevelopment projects." It also noted that "social outcomes indicators are complex,...relating to a range of intangibles that must be evaluated over time and include "both quantitative data about outcomes as well as qualitative data about residents' perceptions of the redevelopment."

Northfield Precinct One – A review of the Social Objectives (Biggins & Hassan, Department of Sociology, Flinders University, 1998)

This study was also conducted from a sociological viewpoint with the aim of exploring the extent to which the social objectives of the initial stage of the neighbourhood renewal of Hillcrest and Oakden had been met. Like the Mitchell Park and Rosewood studies, it involved three focus groups (two of residents, one of other stakeholders) and a self-administered survey of 151 (10%) quasi-randomly selected residents. It did not, however attempt any analysis of ABS statistics, or consider issues of value for money or cost-effectiveness/efficiency. The survey was structured around five key outcome areas (access to services and facilities; community involvement; community identity and image; housing choice and design; and housing and transport).

Social Impacts of Urban Renewal and Relocation in Hillcrest (Ruediger, 1998)

Unlike other South Australian evaluations outlined above, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate the “social, economic and psychological effects of the relocation process.” A semi-structured, in-depth interview of 17 relocated tenants was undertaken from a list of 33 provided by the South Australian Housing Trust. Questions were asked concerning the respondents experience of living in Hillcrest (in terms of past and present sense of community, friendships and spatial identity) and comparing before and after access to services, employment, financial situation, etc. The study provided rich qualitative data on the experiences and perceptions of tenants relocated by the renewal process.

First Annual Evaluation of the SNUIP, Stage 1 (Arthurson, 1999)

This independent evaluation was undertaken prior to our development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The stated purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether the Stage One objectives had been achieved, or could reasonably expect to be achieved. The study method used stakeholder interviews and an analysis of project documentation to list the achievements of the project under the ‘Key Performance Indicators’ associated with each Stage 1 objective. These were mostly qualitative descriptions of activities undertaken in each category, supplemented with some numerical data in a few cases (home buyer interest, economic performance and employment/trainee initiatives). The study found that Stage 1 objectives were being met, but recommended further consideration of how to monitor community perceptions, financial performance and the management of the project.

One thing that is clear from a review of these evaluations is that in NSW there seems to be a stronger emphasis on financial analysis (including cost benefit analysis), performance indicators and quantitative data. On the other hand, in South Australia the approaches have been sociological with a greater emphasis on perceptions of residents with regard to satisfaction with housing, access to services, community identity etc. Both are important and complimentary in informing future neighbourhood renewal evaluation. The NSW studies, have provided the only substantive source of evaluation to date of individual community renewal projects in NSW and are some of the first attempts to apply cost-benefit analysis in a way that is inclusive of social factors. The SA studies, on the other hand, provide useful models for assessing the less tangible, but important, social outcomes which are always present in the objectives of neighbourhood renewal programs, but at the same time acknowledge the need for a set of specific social goals and performance indicators. Both approaches need to be integrated into a more comprehensive evaluation framework.

7. Key Evaluation Issues

A review of local and international attempts to evaluate neighbourhood renewal reveals a number of key issues that need to be considered when devising an evaluation framework.

Objective Setting: It is clear that the careful framing of objectives is critical to the evaluation process. Our review of objectives in NSW, SA and other states suggests that, while well intended, objectives often embrace issues that have causal factors well outside the parameters of the renewal project (eg levels of crime and unemployment) and often lack specificity or measurability.

Short vs Long Term Effects – Evaluation Time Frame: Strategies will differ in terms of their ability to achieve results in the short, medium or long term and may vary throughout the duration of the project as issues change or arise. This will have implications for when, and how often monitoring or evaluation needs to be undertaken. Projects may also be relatively open-ended or have funding for a fixed period of time – in which case exit strategies and post-project monitoring will need to be considered to test the sustainability of changes due to renewal.

Monitoring vs Evaluation: *Monitoring* and *evaluation* are related but different activities. *Monitoring* suggests systematic data gathering and periodic reporting on performance indicators for a program or project, and does not necessarily imply substantive interpretation of the data. *Evaluation*, on the other hand, is the rigorous analysis of monitoring and other data to allow assessment of whether the objectives of the program/project have or are being achieved.

Output vs Outcome Measurement: An important question in evaluation is - what is being measured, *outputs* or *outcomes*? *Outputs* are direct indicators of success against stated objectives, whereas *outcomes* refer to the end contribution of the program/project to a sustained change in the area in line with stated objectives and allowing for displacement effects. Outcome monitoring or evaluation is about assessing progress towards achieving strategic objectives, and the impact of neighbourhood renewal activities on the underlying local social, economic and environmental conditions.

Process vs Outcomes Measurement: A related issue is to what extent is the evaluation measuring the *outcomes* or the *process*. There is a tendency in neighbourhood renewal evaluation to focus on the outcomes rather than the processes (eg. project management, community participation, collaboration of stakeholders) whereby these are achieved. However, evaluating the processes are critical to learning the lessons of renewal programs in order to improve the subsequent delivery of later renewal programs.

Causality and Additionality: Another critical evaluation question is to what extent were the changes that occurred due to the neighbourhood renewal program/project or to other factors? In other words, can causality be established? A second question concerns the margin of difference or additionality arising from the interventions. Additionality refers to the measured impact of the program/project over and above any change that would have happened without intervention.

The Audit Trail: This is a relatively simple but often overlooked exercise of linking renewal activities to objectives to establish an audit trail so that expenditures can be related to outcomes and enable value for money analysis.

Performance Indicators: The selection of appropriate performance indicators is a critical issue for neighbourhood renewal evaluation. The broad objectives of many neighbourhood renewal projects often encourage the use of indicators that reflect broad measures of social well-being or quality of life when in fact these are often only very marginally related to specific renewal objectives or interventions. Where possible, indicators should be specific and adequate to measure performance with respect to all key objectives and targets, but not so comprehensive as to be too complex or uneconomical.

Source, Availability and Reliability of Data: Selecting performance indicators is highly dependent on the sources and availability of data. An initial question is to what extent does one rely on primary (eg through commissioned surveys etc) or secondary data (ie already collected for other purposes)? A second question is whether the data is quantitative or qualitative? We would argue that to achieve an appropriate mix of evidence both primary and secondary and quantitative and qualitative data are likely to be necessary. A third question concerns the source of the data, its availability, cost and reliability. Sourcing data from a wide range of providers can be a difficult and time consuming process. Often there are privacy/ethical issues with access to and use data, and the cost of data from

external agencies can be enormously variable depending on their level of involvement/commitment to the project or any mutual benefits.

Baseline Positions, Benchmarks and Targets: A *baseline position* is simply a measure of conditions prior to interventions taking place. Measuring the baseline position is essential if *additionality* and *outcomes* are to be successfully assessed. These can often be objectively determined prior to the commencement of the project, or retrospectively if such data is available. *Benchmarks*, on the other hand, are *comparative* and usually *external* to the project and may represent 'normal' or 'ambient' measurements in another neighbourhoods. *Targets* are a means of translating objectives into measurable goals. All three provide important reference points for measuring change in relation to existing conditions, comparable cases and objectives and may be expressed in quantitative or qualitative term. Establishing baseline data and benchmarks is relatively straightforward for some quantitative indicators where data has been collected and reported at regular cycles across a number of neighbourhoods or areas (eg management data such as vacancy rates, turnover rates, refusals of offers) but is difficult for most qualitative indicators and some quantitative indicators which require baseline survey work which can be expensive and time consuming. This underlines the importance of thorough documentation prior to the commencement of the project. Determining *targets* is often a more subjective process requiring judgement based on experience.

Geographic Level(s) of Analysis: Another problematic issue concerns the appropriate or available geographical level(s) of analysis. Again, this is determined to a large extent by the constraints of available data – compounded if they are from a variety of sources. State housing authorities may, or may not, be able to easily provide management data at the estate, or sub-estate (eg street, block) level. Many administrative statistics may also be available only at broader suburb or regional level. Much ABS Census Data while available at Postcode and Collectors District level will not be compatible with housing estate boundaries and some will only be available at Local Government level. A second geographical question concerns comparative analysis with other surrounding or control areas. If change is being measured within the boundaries of a public housing estate subject to neighbourhood renewal, to what extent is this different from what is happening in other public housing or surrounding public or private housing areas? Answering this question may require various levels of analysis (eg Estate, selected surrounding Estates, CDs or Postcodes, as well as the LGA and the Region).

Targeted Groups: Another important question in evaluating neighbourhood renewal is - which groups are targeted in the evaluation? Most neighbourhood renewal projects involve a wide range of stakeholders including residents, housing officers, other government and non-government agencies and community groups. To measure outcomes for some objectives (eg crime, stigmatisation of the area, etc) it may be necessary to include people outside the estate boundaries such as the surrounding residential or business community. One important group that is also often overlooked is relocated public housing tenants.

Resources: A key issue in successful evaluation is what provision is made for this important activity in allocating resources within the program/project. Too often the desire for effective evaluation is not matched with appropriate budgets or staff allocation to ensure that it is thoroughly, systematically or rigorously carried out. This is compounded by the complex and demanding nature of neighbourhood renewal projects that often require changes in organisational culture and management methods and demand quick outcomes due to short term funding cycles. Compared to the UK and USA, it would appear that Australian evaluation of neighbourhood renewal is usually well under-resourced.

8. Evaluation Frameworks for the NIP and SNUIP

Both the NIP and SNUIP Evaluation frameworks developed by the authors were broadly similar – ie using what the Spiller Gibbons Swan report (2000b) refers to as the *performance oriented approach* and involving the identification of a set of performance indicators related to a set of program/project objectives. As indicated earlier, this was the model anticipated within the evaluation objectives of both the NIP and the SNUIP and which was assumed in the terms of reference of the briefing

documents for the authors' work. It also builds on earlier attempts within each state to develop a set of performance indicators for measuring the outcomes of neighbourhood renewal. In terms of the evaluation continuum discussed earlier, this approach has the capacity to incorporate both quantitative financial analysis and qualitative social analysis from both primary and secondary sources using a variety of methods.

Despite the strong interest in the application of *cost-benefit analysis* to neighbourhood renewal evaluation (SGS 2000b), it is not incorporated in this model, due to continuing difficulties in accurately estimating social costs and benefits, but does facilitate future cost-benefit analysis by establishing clear *audit trails* linking objectives to expenditure (inputs) and outcomes.

One significant difference between the NIP and SNUIP evaluation frameworks is that one is for evaluating a program, and the other a project. The former needs to be generalised over a number of different projects while the latter can be very specific to the particular circumstances of the local area.

8.1 The Performance Monitoring System

The performance monitoring system central to the frameworks developed for both the NIP and the SHUIP includes four logical steps:

(i) Defining (or redefining) objectives: In both cases desk research and stakeholder interviews were used to identify and confirm the currency of a core set of objectives. For the overall NIP, this was clearly defined as the 10 objectives in the Framework document and for each NIP estate project a different set of objectives was identified by the regional office. The overall objectives were used as the basis for developing the performance monitoring system. For the SNUIP it was necessary to reconcile three sets of objectives into one common set for the overall evaluation of the SNUIP. This was undertaken in consultation with the Steering Committee. An eventual set of 14 revised objectives were identified and nested within three broader objectives (physical, social and economic viability). Rewording of the objectives was undertaken to ensure a higher degree of specificity to facilitate their linkage to performance measures.

(ii) Determining performance indicators & measures: In both cases considerable work had been undertaken previously to identify possible performance indicators and measures. In the NSW NIP a set of 6 housing management indicators had already been adopted and a further 8 asset management indicators were identified and trialed in the evaluation. These were supplemented with a range of other performance indicators including administrative data on crime, health, social security and education from other government agencies (24 indicators); ABS Census data (11 indicators), and data to be obtained via community surveys (3 indicators), making a total set of 52 performance indicators.

In the SNUIP a set of 29 indicators were already being reported on in the Monthly Monitoring Report, mostly concerned with housing and economic outcomes. Also a set 38 indicators of social disadvantage in 6 sub-categories (housing, economic, social, crime, education, health) had been previously developed in the SAHT's Northern Metropolitan Study (1997). These were supplemented with a number of additional indicators from SAHT sources and community surveys to provide a total of 71 indicators. These were then each assigned to particular objective. For each objective 2 or 3 indicators (at least one quantitative and one qualitative where possible) were then selected as **Core Indicators** (a total of 31) to provide summary measures for headline reporting. The remainder were identified as **Supplementary Indicators** providing a larger set of measures for each indicator. A separate set of **Context Indicators**, based largely on the SAHT set of social disadvantage indicators were also identified for measuring broader aspects of community wellbeing and quality of life.

(iii) Establishing Baseline Positions and Comparable Benchmarks: Baseline positions were not determined by the authors for the NIP but were for many of the SNUIP indicators based on the commencement date and information on existing conditions provided by the SAHT and CoS.

(iv) Setting Appropriate Targets: As suggested earlier target setting requires judgement based on experience preferably involving key stakeholders. These were not proposed for the NIP, but were recommended for many of the SNUIP indicators in consultation with the project partners. In some cases these were represented by a direction (ie. increasing, decreasing, positive, improving, etc) rather than numerically expressed.

8.2 Geographic Levels of Analysis

In both projects this was determined by the availability of data. In the case of the NIP, evaluation framework housing management, asset management and survey data were to be reported at estate level, administrative data generally at Postcode level and ABS data at Collector's District and Postcode level.

The SNUIP framework was more complex as the project was to be undertaken in stages (possibly with different objectives and activities) many of which involved a mixture of public and private housing. For this reason the smallest geographical level was the development stage at which housing management, asset management and some survey data would be recorded. For other Core and Supplementary Indicators data was to be recorded at Postcode level. Apart from five yearly ABS Census data, which were to be available at Collector's District level (where possible matched to stage boundaries) and postcode level, most data for Context Indicators from administrative sources was only likely to be available at postcode level.

8.3 The Survey Component

In both cases quantitative and qualitative data from social surveys was to be included in the evaluation framework. Ideally, the initial survey component would be a baseline survey. The extent to which this has been done in the NSW NIP Strategy Statements is not clear, but some baseline survey work was undertaken in the case of the SNUIP using self-administered questionnaires and a telephone survey.

In the NIP evaluation framework the survey component was not highly specified but did indicate three key areas of concern - social cohesion, attitudes & perceptions, and demographic, financial health and employment status data. This would probably best be undertaken in the form of an interviewed survey possibly supplemented by focus groups. An instrument such as Buckner's scale for measuring neighbourhood cohesion would probably be most appropriate as this has been already used by the authors in a number of public housing estates and other residential areas in NSW (Buckner, 1988).

The survey component of the SNUIP evaluation and monitoring framework was more sophisticated involving social surveys at the commencement and conclusion of each stage with questions clearly related to project objectives, the continuation of a previously regularly administered Community Attitudes Survey of LGA residents with some additional questions and a boosted sample from Salisbury North, and a periodic postal survey of relocated public tenants. Once again the use of an instrument such as Buckner's (1988) could be incorporated into end of stage surveys. It was suggested that after the conclusion of the project some ongoing monitoring of at least Context Indicators would be desirable to evaluate the sustainability of changes arising from the project.

8.4 The Evaluation Cycle

In the NSW NIP, an evaluation cycle was not specified. The SNUIP evaluation cycle was proposed as a four stage process commencing with baseline surveys at the commencement of each stage, a continuation of the current monthly monitoring report which in turn is aggregated with supplementary administrative data into an annual report. Data from annual reports would then be aggregated into an end of stage annual report supplemented with quantitative and qualitative data from an end of stage survey. In the appropriate year, five yearly Census data could also be incorporated into the annual report.

9. Conclusion

The evaluation frameworks developed for the NIP and the SNUIP are not intended to be an ideal neighbourhood renewal evaluation process. In many ways it is a pragmatic approach extending existing work carried out by the Departments and their consultants and utilising approaches already articulated within formal documents initiating the respective programs. We accept that value for money analysis is also necessary using a cost-benefit or other approach. This was difficult to achieve within the scope of our work due to the limitations of time and budget, a lack of adequate baseline data, difficulties in accessing appropriate housing data, and the outstanding work to be done on shadow costs as recommended in the SGS report (2000b).

Some of the key lessons we have learned from these two projects are that:

- Evaluation of neighbourhood renewal is a complex and difficult process;
- It requires a variety of approaches ranging from financial to sociological analysis involving both quantitative and qualitative data;
- Evaluation needs to be carefully considered from the outset including in the framing of objectives and collection of baseline data;
- Objectives need to be carefully framed to ensure specificity and measurability;
- It is important to establish audit trails to enable expenditure to be related to objectives and performance indicators and to enable value for money analysis;
- Effective evaluation requires access to appropriate data on assets and housing management;
- Causality and additionality are often difficult to establish;
- Ideally, evaluation should target a wide range of stakeholders including residents (public and private, remaining and relocated, within and outside the estate) housing and other agency staff, and other community groups.
- It requires appropriately trained people;
- And finally, it needs to be adequately resourced

The questions remaining for all who have a stake in the evaluation of neighbourhood renewal programs are:

Where do we go from here?

Can a general evaluation framework be developed that is flexible enough to cover the diverse nature of neighbourhood renewal projects, as well as providing useful comparative analysis across the range of programs, projects and jurisdictions?

If so, what are the next steps toward that goal?

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