



'Changing the mix': a case study of public housing stock transfers in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

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The Study

- rationale and practices of stock transfer from State Housing Authorities to community housing associations
- Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.
- Work in progress



Global Context

- conflicts and tensions that surface in moves to reconfigure the management of public housing
- developments in contemporary housing policy stem from affecting welfare provision across industrialised world
- support private sector agencies to undertake many of the activities formerly associated with direct state provision.
- assumptions about how each nation state can best secure competitive advantage in the global economy
- centering of 'community' in discourses about the future of welfare.



National Context

- new CSHA: State Housing Authorities to establish partnerships with private and non-profit sectors
- growth driven by a programmatic response by governments
- 'top down' and 'bottom up' processes.
- "tenant's choice" and the benefits of a multi-provider system require greater practical scrutiny
- 'policy vacuum' about the future direction of public housing in Australia



Victoria

- tenant advocates cast community housing as private provision
- community housing providers see themselves as occupying a 'third space', between the market and the government.
- tenant advocates critical of the lack of direction and openness
- concern that 'system needs' such as financial viability, stock profiling and infrastructure override tenant outcomes
- shifting deck chairs



NSW

- 2003: 1000 tenanted transfers in the current budget year.
- new properties constructed in the course of redevelopment of old public housing areas
- Housing Associations submit expressions of interest
- nomination rights ??? .
- plans to rapidly accelerate the transfer program (10,000 units??)



Tasmania

- 120 empty properties transferred in 1998; ST now a policy option in 'Affordable Housing Strategy'
- Issues: additional funds via CRA; limited capacity of Community HAs; insufficient policy instrument to increase supply; diminution of SHA's role in public housing?



Rationale

- Commonwealth Rent Assistance: Cost shifting
- gearing new finance into the system through secured debts



Issues

- HAs little influence over stock selection in terms of location or condition
- additional costs of managing housing on large estates
- *nomination rights*
- lower pay and working conditions
- lack of transparency
- a strong sense of this practice being imposed on Housing Associations



Summary

- stock transfers do not in themselves result in an increase in supply of social housing – a strangely limited concept of choice
- that there is limited capacity within the Community Housing Association sector to manage more transferred stock
- significant stock transfer would result in a diminution and further residualisation of the SHA's role as a direct provider of services