What is the impact of social housing on employment, education, health, homelessness and incarceration?

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

- 30-year infrastructure strategy

- Independent advice to Government

- Research

INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA

BACKGROUND TO THIS RESEARCH

Infrastructure Victoria, in its 30-Year Strategy, recommends investing in social and other forms of affordable housing to increase supply.

As part of IV's research program we also sought to improve project appraisal for social housing by estimating its impacts for use within Cost benefit analysis.

Today's presentation is based on the results of this research with the paper to be finalised early in 2018.

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MAIN FINDINGS

Comparing short-run outcomes for people in social housing with similar people in private rental shows:

Placing an individual in social housing means they are less likely, compared with other individuals also at risk of homelessness not in social housing, to become homeless.

This is an important benefit for at-risk people.

Employment, education, physical and mental health, and incarceration outcomes are similar

INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS

1. The main reason for similar outcomes between
those in social housing and those not in is probably
the increasingly targeted approach to selecting
individuals and families into social housing.

2. There are important potential areas in which social housing might improve
outcomes, which currently cannot be assessed due to lack of data and for which data
should be collected to the extent possible in the future.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Use the Journeys Home Survey – nationally
representative longitudinal survey – followed individuals
twice a year for three years.

All participants were identified by Centrelink as being
at risk of homelessness

Select from the survey the treatment group of individuals
living in social housing (residents) and a control group selected to match the characteristics of
social housing residents.

Also select a smaller treatment group of entrants into social housing and a matching control
group and looked at changes in outcomes – to deal with differences due to when entered.

WHAT INDICTATORS DID WE LOOK AT?

- Employed or not

- Highest educational qualification

- Self assessed physical health

- Long term health condition or not

- Psychological Distress Level

- Incarcerated or not

- Homeless or not

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ROBUSTNESS OF RESULTS

We used two different methods to select individuals

 for the control group :

1. Mahalanobis Distance Method (similar characteristics)

2. Propensity Score Matching (similar probability of being

   in social housing)

The findings were similar in size across the two methods

SEVERAL NEW RESULTS - OTHERS
CONFIRM EARLIER RESULTS WITH BETTER DATA

Indicator	Qualitative	Quantitative
Employment	Phibbs and Young (2005) – mixed Hulse and Saugeres (2008) highlight barriers	Productivity Commission (2015); Feeny et al (2006) – no effect
Education	Phibbs & Young (2005) good for kids	
Health	Phibbs and Young (2005) – improvement	Wood et al. (2016) reduced usage Goering et al (2014) - no effect.
Incarceration	Nil	Nil
Homelessness		Goering et al (2014) Johnson et al (2017) also reduces
Other	Wiesel et al (2012) – tenure & affordability	

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